

The Prologue to John's Gospel: Introduction to the Word

John 1:1-5

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What is a prologue:

- Provides important information regarding purpose, method and contents of the narrative which is key to understanding the rest of the book
- Explain both the seen and unseen forces within the plot
- A guide to understanding the rest of the Gospel
- Reveals 2 key strands, the visible and invisible, with the invisible introduced first to give meaning to the visible

1. The Introduction of the Word (1-2)

a. The Preexistence of the Word – “In the beginning was the Word” (1a)

i. “In the beginning”

1. Genesis 1:1 “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth”
2. Genesis introduces the old creation; John introduces the new creation.

ii. “Was”

1. An imperfect verb showing continuous action
2. The Word existed in the beginning and still is.

iii. “The Word”

1. ““Word” reflects the truth that it is the very nature of God to reveal himself” (Klink).
2. The Word is the perfect revelation of God; without the Word, we couldn't know God.
3. Since Jesus is the Word, this term won't be used in the gospel after the prologue.
4. The rest of John's Gospel will explain this term.

b. The Presence of the Word – “and the Word was with God” (1b)

- i. The Word was present with God in the beginning.
- ii. The Word belongs to God; *pros* (toward) vs. *para* (with)

c. The Person of the Word – “and the Word was God” (1c)

- i. Since the second occurrence of “God” is without the article in the Greek, some of the cults have tried to imply that the Word was a lesser deity than God Himself.
- ii. If John intended to show that Jesus was a lesser deity, he chose the wrong term.
- iii. In Greek grammatical structure, not only would this translation be rare, it would also need to be reflected by the context, which it is not.
- iv. The Word is God, while remaining distinct from God.

d. Summary – “The same was in the beginning with God” (2)

- i. “The same” – The Word
- ii. “Was in the beginning with God” – this Word eternally pre-existed, as Jesus would later declare, “Before Abraham was, I AM” (John 8:53).
- iii. This Word was in the beginning with God, is God, and yet remains distinct from God.

2. The Agency of the Word (3)

a. “All things were made by **him**” (3a)

- i. “All things” – all of creation
- ii. “were made” – “*egeneto*” became, came into existence (a key term in John), which will be used throughout the Gospel to take on a “creation” emphasis in order to declare the transformative power and work of Jesus Christ (Klink).
- iii. “All things **though him** came into existence” – The creation of all things came through Him.

b. “and without **him** was not any thing made that was made” (3b)

- i. Nothing came into existence without Him.
- ii. Nothing exists without His agency; every one of us owes his very existence to Him!

3. The Assertion of the Word (4-5)

- a. "In him was life" (4a)
 - i. Life, the pinnacle of creation, is "in Him"; Jesus embodies life.
 - ii. Life is a key term in John occurring 36 times; the remaining 34 occurrences refer to resurrection life or spiritual life.
 - iii. In Jesus is the fullest expression of life.
- b. "and the life was the light of men" (4b)
 - i. In Genesis 1:1-5, the creation of light was that which made life on earth possible.
 - ii. God created light before He created the sun, moon and stars; the Word was the light.
 - iii. Jesus is still the light that mankind cannot survive without.
- c. "And the light shineth in darkness" (5a)
 - i. John transitions from the context of physical creation to the context of spiritual salvation.
 - ii. The Light shines and continues to shine in the darkness.
- d. "And the darkness comprehended it not" (5b)
 - i. The rest of the Gospel will demonstrate mankind's inability to recognize the Light.
 - ii. Throughout the rest of the Gospel, Christ's appearance as the "Light of the World" is met with direct confrontation by the darkness (cf. 3:19-20; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35).
 1. 3:19-20 "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For every one that doeth evil hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved."
 2. 8:12 "Then spake Jesus again unto them, saying, I am the light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life."
 3. 9:5 "As long as I am in the world, I am the light of the world."
 4. 12:35-36 "Then Jesus said unto them, Yet a little while is the light with you. Walk while ye have the light, lest darkness come upon you: for he that walketh in darkness knoweth not whither he goeth; While ye have light, believe in the light, that ye may be the children of light..."
 - iii. Christ has given each of us life and light; if you don't believe in the Light before the Sun sets on your life, you will be plunged into eternal darkness.
 1. For those who have not yet believed in the light, with every sunrise, Jesus is reminding you of His offer of life and light, and with every sunset is the reminder that your life will one day come to an end. Believe in the light before the sun sets on your life here on earth and you are plunged into eternal death and darkness.
 2. For those who've believed in the light, let every sunrise remind you that eternal day is coming and the darkness of this world is temporary. Walk in the day as children of the Light!

Conclusion:

1. Have you believed in the Light?
2. If you have the light, are you still walking in darkness?