

Introduction: We return to John chapter one verses 1-18, commonly called the Prologue to this Gospel. It is soaring theology, speaking in hushed tones of awe about the eternal deity of the Son of God, who is called the Word in John 1:1. Such language reminds us of the place of the Son of God in creation and in every facet of life: in revelation as the “Light of the World” who illumines the true, saving knowledge of God; in history as the God who holds the nations in the palm of His hand, and in redemption as the Savior who confirms all our hopes of salvation because He came down to be born in our flesh.

Mon/Tues: read John 1:1-5 & John 1:14. The climax of John’s Prologue, according to J.I. Packer, (in Knowing God), is John 1:14: *“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.”*

But what do we mean when we say that the Word became flesh? Packer’s *first response* is: “Whatever may be said about this, it must be emphasized that John does not, and cannot, mean that He ceased to be what He was before.”

And John confirms the unchanging, eternal identify of this Word which became flesh, by declaring the following about Him, (*Adapted from J.I. Packer’s Knowing God*):

- 1) “This Word that became flesh *was* the eternal Word (verse 1), with no beginning of His own; when other things began, He – *was*.” (Packer)
- 2) “This Word was ‘*with God*’ (verses 1 & 2). The power that fulfils God’s purposes as the Word stands in eternal relation to God, in active fellowship in the Trinity as a distinct, divine, personal being.” (Packer)
- 3) “This Word ‘*was God*’. Here is the Word’s *deity*. Though distinct from the Father, He is not a creature. He is in Himself just as divine as the Father.” (Packer)
- 4) “This Word made all things (verse 3). He was the Father’s agent in every act of making that the Father has ever performed. All that was made was made through Him.” (Packer)
- 5) “In Him was ‘*life*’. The Word animates all parts of the creation. There is no life in the realm of created things except in and through Him.” (Packer)
- 6) “This all-animating life in the Word of God is also, ‘the *light of men*’ (verse 4). In giving life, He gives light too. Here is the Word revealing.” (Packer)
- 7) “This Word ‘*became flesh*’ (verse 14). The baby in the manger was none other than the eternal Word of God.” (Packer)
- 8) Our conclusion about this Word’s identity? “This Word made flesh is revealed in His identity in all His words, works and wisdom as *God’s Son* (verse 14). Thus John establishes the point at which he was aiming throughout. He has now made it clear what he means by calling Jesus the Son of God. The Son of God is the Word of God; we see what the Word is; well, that is what the Son is. Such is the Prologue’s message in John 1.”

Meditate and Pray: *“Lord, please never let our church or denomination lose this strong grip upon the eternally unique deity of God the Son. Cause all our worship and service to be profoundly Christ-centered! Sing about Christ’s eternal glory as a co-equal member of the Trinity in hymn # 162:*

*Of the Father's love begotten,
Ere the worlds began to be,
He is Alpha and Omega,
He the source, the ending He,
Of the things that are, that have been,
And that future years shall see,
Evermore and evermore!*

*Of that birth forever blessed,
When the virgin, full of grace,
By The Holy Ghost conceiving,
Bore the Savior of our race;
And the babe, the world's Redeemer,
First revealed His sacred face,
Evermore and evermore!*

*This is He, whom heav'n-taught singers
Sang of old with one accord,
Whom the Scriptures of the prophets
Promised in their faithful Word;
Now He shines, the long-expected;
Let creation praise its Lord,
Evermore and Evermore!*

Wednesday: read John 1:3-5 and Acts 17:31. We may be daunted by the depth of John's Gospel, and particularly His Prologue – speaking as it does of the eternal Son of God in His relationship with His Father in verses 1-2. Verses 3-4 are also deep, speaking of the *power* of the Word in creating all things, and of the *glory* of that Word as it shines with life-giving power. Verse 3 just soars far beyond our reckoning in declaring that the Word of God is the light of all men, giving light, as verse 9 says, “to every man.” What can this mean?

Well, this is simpler than we may at first grasp. John is *not saying what the Quakers claim*, (namely), that all men are savingly related to God by virtue of that universal spark of divine knowledge which we all possess. Instead, remember that John is speaking of creation here – establishing the fact that the Word (Son) of God was with the Father creating all things in the beginning. It is the light of creation which John speaks of. When God spoke, “Let there be light and there was light...”, – that light is what gives light to every man's conscience, so that those who stubbornly refuse to understand that light (verse 5, NIV), seeking actually to overcome it (verse 5, ESV), are unable to suppress fully the knowledge that *there is no light apart from the light of God's Word!* They know that this Word which made the whole world will one day come to judge that very same world, uncovering every man's unbelief, and will judge them for it.

Meditate and Pray: Give thanks that God has appointed a day when He will judge the world by the Man He has appointed, and has given proof of this by raising Him from the dead (Acts 17:31). It is this eternal Word, who became real man with real flesh in John 1:14 who is the One raised from the dead in order to one day judge the world. Sing about that day of coming Judgment, using the words of hymn # 545:

*When this passing world is done,
When has sunk yon glaring sun,
When we stand with Christ in glory,
Looking o'er life's finished story,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*When I hear the wicked call,
On the rocks and hills to fall,
When I see them start and shrink
On the fiery deluge brink,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

Gospel of John Bible Reading Notes
*When I stand before the throne,
Dressed in beauty not my own,
When I see Thee as Thou art,
Love Thee with unsinching heart,
Then Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

Pastor Carl Durham

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*When the praise of Heav'n I hear,
Loud as thunders to the ear,
Loud as many waters' noise,
Sweet as harp's melodious voice,
Then, Lord, shall I fully know—
Not till then—how much I owe.*

*Chosen not for good in me,
Wakened up from wrath to flee,
Hidden in the Savior's side,
By the Spirit sanctified,
Teach me, Lord, on earth to show,
By my love, how much I owe.*

Thursday: read Psalm 104:1-5 & John 1:3-13. John emphasizes God's mighty control of all that He has made through the Word, thereby helping us to trust that Word's saving power in our lives when we receive Him by faith (John 1:12). Thus John's teaching on creation builds up our faith in the Word as the source of our eternal salvation. The proof that the Word saves us is that, by receiving Him, we are adopted as sons and daughter's in the Father's family – born not of human good works, human flesh or human will, but born from above by God's Spirit (John 1:13)! We become members of the family, who belong to the mighty Creator of all things.

Meditate and Pray: Give thanks that God often uses the doctrine of creation in the Bible to encourage us to trust Him. When we are tempted to think that the direction, way and events of our lives are hidden from God, (as exiled Israel did in Isaiah 40:27), God reminds us that He has the same tireless power to attend to us and save us that He first displayed in creation –

“Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary ...”

Fri/Sat: read John 1:12-18 & Proverbs 8:22-31. We are beginning to see the beauty of John's Prologue in that it combines a depth of theology beyond what unaided human understanding can grasp, while at the same time giving us such a clear view of God's Fatherly love that even those with the simplest of faiths can rest in the picture of God's Fatherly love contained in these verses.

For example, the purpose of Christ's Incarnation, according to John 1:18, is to reveal God by coming down to us in human form from the Father's side. Only the unique Son of God can reveal the Father to us – because only He has come from the Father's side to become a man.

But can we not understand this, once again, as a simple picture of domestic love, shared between the Father and the Son? It is their shared joy in what they created which then makes them work together *to save that same creation once it has fallen into sin.* (Compare Proverbs 8:22-31). The Son comes from the Father's side short, desiring to demonstrate to the whole world His love for His Father - by *restoring to His Dad* what He had lost! It may help us at this point to give an illustration of how the Son restores the fallen creation to its rightful place and gives His Father the joy of receiving back His people into His family once again.

You have a burglar break into your house, making off with the most precious family heirloom you possess – the priceless portrait of your family ancestors. After a few months, the police break the burgling ring, and arrest the perpetrator who broke into your home. His case goes to trial, the one who stole your property is found guilty, and the appropriate sentence is handed down by the Judge. But yet there is no lasting closure for you, and no healing after this crime. Why is that? Because you want your painting back. Not until then will you be satisfied.

Just so with the Word of God's Incarnation. The Son becomes a man to restore our humanity, created in God's image, to its proper place – in the Father's possession.

Meditate and Pray: What joy must there be between the Father and the Son as they restore in us God's image as the redeemed people of God! If they shared a great joy *in first creating us*, (Proverbs 8:30-31), *how much more joy now* as we have been adopted anew into God's family, and authoritatively called the children of God! See John 1:12-13, and reflect on these verses as we will take up our study of this glorious Gospel next week, right there, at verses 12-13 of John's Prologue. To close this week, sing about such adoption in hymn # 525:

*My Father is rich in houses and lands,
He holdeth the wealth of the world in His hands!
Of rubies and diamonds, of silver and gold,
His coffers are full, He has riches untold.*

Refrain

*I'm a child of the King,
A child of the King:
With Jesus my Savior,
I'm a child of the King.*

*My Father's own Son, the Savior of men,
Once wandered on earth as the poorest of them;
But now He is pleading our pardon on high,*

That we may be His when He comes by and by.

Refrain

*I once was an outcast stranger on earth,
A sinner by choice, an alien by birth,
But I've been adopted, my name's written down,
An heir to a mansion, a robe and a crown.*

Refrain

*A tent or a cottage, why should I care?
They're building a palace for me over there;
Though exiled from home, yet still may I sing:
All glory to God, I'm a child of the King.*

Refrain