

PROLOGUE: CREATOR, CHILDREN, CHOICE

John 1:1-18



SYNOPSIS

Beloved disciple John was likely in his 90s when he wrote this gospel. The only disciple spared from martyrdom, John had two main motivations for writing a fourth gospel when three others already existed:

1. "[T]hat you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name." (John 20:31)
2. To address gnostic heresy, which had two main tenets:
 - a. Dualism between spirit (good) and matter (evil/meaningless)
 - b. Esoteric truth known only to a privileged few

This week's passage is the prologue. Prologues give context and set up the themes in the story. John's prologue introduces three main themes: Creator, children, and choice.



OUTLINE

1

CREATOR

John intentionally echoes the first two books of the Bible. Genesis

- "In the beginning": John couches his story in the grand context of creation with Jesus as the protagonist and his appearance as the climactic event.
- In Genesis, God creates. Out of a void/chaos, he brings order/beauty/logic/life through his Word.
- In John 1:3, Jesus gets full credit for that creative work. He both is and was with God.

Exodus

- The Word became flesh and "tabernacled" among us.
- The gnostic deity/superlative would have wanted no association with the material world.

2

CHILDREN

To *all* who received Jesus and believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

Ancient Jews did not refer to God as "father", yet "father" appears 250 times as a major theme in John's gospel. .

- The concept of "father" undergirds both the "parent-child" and the "master-apprentice" relationships.
- Example: The Father spoke life & light into darkness. Jesus spoke life & light into the physical/emotional darkness of a man paralyzed for 38 years (John 5:17,19).
 - Into the darkness of our own lives/work/marriages, God desires to speak shalom/order/life.
 - We tolerate darkness when we think it's manageable. Jesus brings light that darkness has never overcome. Light cannot "tolerate" darkness. (cf. Matt 5:22)

3

CHOICE

John 1:11 - His own did not receive him...

Why do we reject the Creator who is supreme light and life? Why are we selective about the areas of our lives that we invite Jesus to enter?



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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1

Is gnosticism simply a thing of the past? Do you detect any residues of it in modern theology or practice?

2

Do you believe you are a child of God? Do you live like it? What aspects of that identity do you struggle to accept?

3

How would you retell the gospel story if you had the lens of Father God as both parent and master?

4

What areas of your life have you chosen to accept/reject Jesus? What prompted those decisions?

5

In what ways do you sense Jesus desiring to speak shalom/order/life into your life? When you are ready, consider praying: "Lord, I invite you into... Let's go to work together, Dad."



BIG IDEA

John's prologue introduces Jesus as both protagonist and climax in a grand narrative context beginning at the genesis of creation.

In him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. (John 1:4-5)

