

The Biblical Unitarian Podcast - by Dustin Smith, PhD

Episode 120—The Mission of the Logos in the Prologue (John 1:10-13)

“The podcast that aims to start conversations about the oneness and unity of God and about the humanity of Jesus.”

Donations to help keep the podcast on the air can be sent here:

<https://www.paypal.me/10mintruthtalks>

You can now access the Biblical Unitarian Podcast online, on iTunes, and Spotify:

- Online - <https://biblicalunitarianpodcast.podbean.com/>
- iTunes - <https://itunes.apple.com/.../the-biblical-unita.../id1347983887...>
- Spotify - <https://open.spotify.com/show/7vpFwpN0XmxUh6VzLRkNJy>

We also have a Facebook group for discussing the various podcast episodes. Search “Biblical Unitarian Podcast” on Facebook and send a request to join!

Please feel free to rate and leave a comment on iTunes. This helps get the podcast to appear more frequently in Apple’s search algorithm.

Introduction

This episode aims to continue working through the Prologue of the Gospel of John, focussing specifically on words and phrases that appear difficult and confusing to interpreters. The tendency with teachers and readers alike is to zero in on the first three verses and verse 14, so the other verses of the Prologue, which is 18 verses long, often are marginalized. So this week, we will examine how those in the world respond to the Logos--the Logos which we know became flesh as Jesus Christ. It will be important for us to correctly discern how the Logos functions in regard to the person of Jesus during his ministry. Also, we will explore how Jewish wisdom traditions, especially God’s personified Wisdom, help inform our reading of the Logos and its functions.

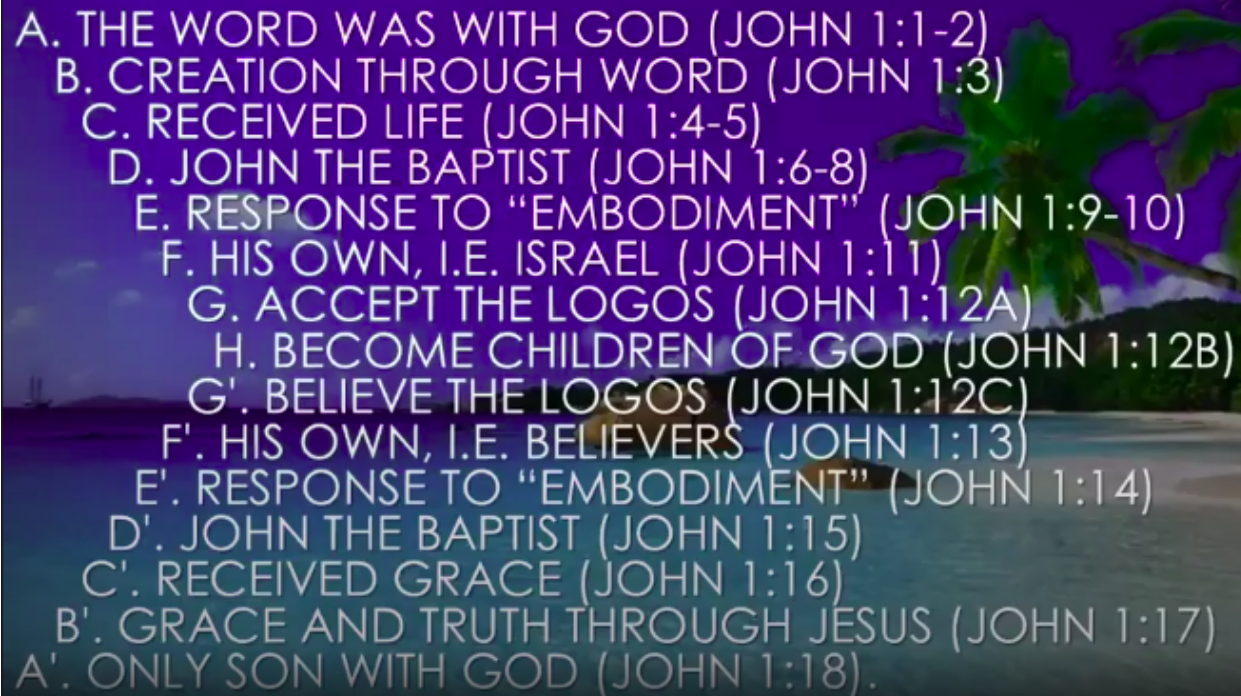
What does the Prologue mean when it talks about the Logos in the world? And what does it mean to believe in his name? Let’s find out on this week’s episode of the Biblical Unitarian Podcast!

1 – The Logos Interacting with Creation

- *There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him. (John 1:9-11)*
 - The depiction of the Logos draws yet again on the Jewish wisdom tradition which spoke of Wisdom coming to earth in order to dwell with men:
 - Among all these I sought a resting place; in whose territory should I abide? "Then the Creator of all things gave me a command, and my Creator chose the place for my tent. He said, 'Make your dwelling in Jacob, and in Israel receive your inheritance.' Before the ages, in the beginning, he created me, and for all the ages I shall not cease to be. In the holy tent, I ministered before him, and so I was established in Zion. Thus in the beloved city, he gave me a resting place, and in Jerusalem was my domain. I took root in an honored people, in the portion of the Lord, his heritage. (Sir 24:7-12)
 - Afterward, she appeared on earth and lived with humankind. She is the book of the commandments of God, the law that endures forever. All who hold her fast will live, and those who forsake her will die. Turn, O Jacob, and take her; walk toward the shining of her light. (Bar 3:37-4:2)
 - Wisdom found no place where she might dwell; Then a dwelling-place was assigned her in the heavens. Wisdom went forth to make her dwelling among the children of men, And found no dwelling-place: Wisdom returned to her place and took her seat among the angels. (1 Enoch 42:1-2)

2 – The Logos and Those who Believe

- *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)*
 - It is actually important to recognize how verse 12 functions in the arrangement of the Prologue, especially the chiasm



A. THE WORD WAS WITH GOD (JOHN 1:1-2)
 B. CREATION THROUGH WORD (JOHN 1:3)
 C. RECEIVED LIFE (JOHN 1:4-5)
 D. JOHN THE BAPTIST (JOHN 1:6-8)
 E. RESPONSE TO "EMBODIMENT" (JOHN 1:9-10)
 F. HIS OWN, I.E. ISRAEL (JOHN 1:11)
 G. ACCEPT THE LOGOS (JOHN 1:12A)
 H. BECOME CHILDREN OF GOD (JOHN 1:12B)
 G'. BELIEVE THE LOGOS (JOHN 1:12C)
 F'. HIS OWN, I.E. BELIEVERS (JOHN 1:13)
 E'. RESPONSE TO "EMBODIMENT" (JOHN 1:14)
 D'. JOHN THE BAPTIST (JOHN 1:15)
 C'. RECEIVED GRACE (JOHN 1:16)
 B'. GRACE AND TRUTH THROUGH JESUS (JOHN 1:17)
 A'. ONLY SON WITH GOD (JOHN 1:18).

-
- The theme of "believing in the name of Jesus"--which gets introduced here--appears in the narrative of the Fourth Gospel:
 - Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name, observing His signs which He was doing. (John 2:23)
 - He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already because he has not believed in the name of the unique Son of God. (John 3:18)
 - I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word. (John 17:6)

In conclusion, we have observed that:

The Prologue is a theologically rich introduction to the Fourth Gospel. It focusses on God's Word, the creative and powerful Logos that becomes flesh in the human Jesus. But the Fourth Gospel does not stop there, it insists that the proper response to the embodied Logos in the world is belief, trust, and obedience. We first noted that the Logos continues to function as the Logos when it is in the world. The Logos that is believed is clearly Jesus as the word's embodiment, so it is important that we recognize that the Fourth Gospel continues to regard the Logos as functioning in and through the man Jesus. The Logos does not cease to be when it becomes flesh.

Second, we noted that the portrayal of the Logos in the Prologue operates in the contextual matrix of Jewish wisdom traditions, where Lady Wisdom was formerly sent to earth in order to interact with God's people. Since God's personified Wisdom and his personified Word are close synonyms, the parallels with Jewish wisdom are critically important for reconstructing how the original readers of the Prologue would have understood its contents, especially in regard to the Logos being in the world and being rejected by many of those in the world.

Lastly, we examined the chiastic framework of the Prologue and noted that those who believe in the name of the Logos that was made flesh are given the right to be children of God. The identity of the people of God, in other words, is defined by correctly responding to God's revelatory word, which was embodied in Jesus. Those who believe in Jesus' name, which broadly stands for all that he represents but includes his saving gospel message, are identified as members of God's family. This portrayal of belief in the Prologue sets the bar high for readers of the Fourth Gospel, who are summoned to listen carefully to what Jesus says and to respond faithfully.

Join us next week as we continue to progress through the Prologue of John and look at how the Logos becomes flesh.

Please consider supporting the BU podcast as it aims to promote the sound truths about the oneness and unity of God and the humanity of Jesus! <https://www.paypal.me/10mintruthtalks>.