

The Gospel of John Prologue

Interpreting the Text:

1. In the reference to “In the beginning” is there a recollection of Genesis? How might this connection function for John?
2. Are there other references to the Hebrew scriptures in the Prologue? How do they frame the start to John’s gospel?
3. What do the metaphors of “light” and “life” evoke?
4. Would you characterize the Prologue as “poetic”? How does a poetic style affect how we read this introduction, especially in comparison with the introductions to Matthew, Mark, and Luke?

Applying the Text:

1. What does the image of the divine “Word” convey? Does Professor Bartlett and Attridge’s framing of this word (logos) as ‘masculine’ affect how you understand it?
2. What kinds of distinctions are being drawn in the reference to different kinds of “birth”? How do these distinctions impact how you understand the story of Christ’s birth as we tell it?
3. How does the Prologue function in connection with the narrative that follows?
4. Does it introduce themes that run through the text? If so, where are they found? Are there elements of the Prologue that do not appear later in the text?
5. Some interpreters have argued that the Prologue presents Jesus as a “revealer” who explains who God is. How do we understand “revelation”?
6. What is the key affirmation about Christ in the Prologue? How does this continue to shape the way we understand who Jesus Christ is?

7. What does the expression “grace upon grace” in v 17 convey? How do you understand grace in your own faith practice?