

1b John 1:18, The Prologue. J-B vol 12 (Willhauck) C 1.

I Introductions and announcements, joys and concerns.

II Prayer.

III John 1:1-3. Word is the English translation of the Greek logos. In hellenistic thought, God was pure eternal spirit and as such, could have nothing to do with temporary physical matter. The issue was resolved by taking the Old Testament concept of Sophia, Wisdom personified who was the force and energy involved in creation. This is most clearly presented in Prov 8:22-31. Hebrew Sophia becomes Greek Logos, the power and force in the creation, v3.
When did the Word originate?
What is the distinction in 1b and 1c?
What does the Word do?

IV 1:4,5,9. One of the conflicts John is facing is the attractiveness of Gnostic teaching. The Gnostics believed that they were the only possessors of the light which brings enlightenment and knowledge. John is using their language in order to emphatically refute them.
What is the source of true enlightenment?
To whom is it available?
What does v9 add?
This theme will be developed in a memorable way in C 9. Preview: 9:5.

V 1:6,7,15 introduces John the Baptist. There was ongoing concern in the early church about the person and role of John B. His followers tended to see him as a prophet and equal to Jesus, his younger kinsman. This gospel treats John B with great respect. It assumes that you know the background: his birth, Luke 1, his ministry, Luke 3, his death, Mark 6, his affirmation by Jesus, Mt 11.
In this gospel you will understand that John B was part of the plan of God to prepare the way for Jesus by his preaching of repentance, his baptism of Jesus and his early martyrdom.

VI 1:10,11. If there is light shining in the darkness, why, why, why is it not universally recognized, accepted, celebrated? This question is with us to this day. John expects you to remember this question.

VII 1:12,13. In the synoptics the followers of Jesus are considered to be part of the kingdom of God. John is going to broaden that concept in several ways. How does John describe you, a Christian believer here? This is his first answer. Keep a list..

VIII 1:14. Ezekiel perceived the glory of God leaving and returning to the Temple in Jerusalem, John is making a bold statement: Where is the glory of God dwelling now?

IX 1:16-18. In all religions it is difficult to envision God. The idols of sophisticated idolators were not gods but were attempts to represent the gods. This was prohibited in Judaism. How can one know God if one cannot see God? Heretofore it required the testimony of great teachers like Moses or of the major prophets like Is 6:1, Ez 1:26. John is going to open up for you a bold and major concept. What? v18.

X Conclusion: In this compact section you have been exposed to major issues How to know God? Who are God's children? What about the Jews? What about John the Baptist? What about Greek philosophy?
Our writer believes that if you pay attention, you will be informed, entertained, enlightened (his word), confirmed and strengthened. In 20:31 he plainly states his purpose in writing this masterpiece of Christian thought.

XI Next time: Jn 1:19-2:25, Willhauck C 2. First disciples, first sign, first conflict.