

Defining Logos (Part Two)

The Express Image of God

Richard T. Ritenbaugh

Given 04-Feb-06; Sermon #758

In my last sermon, we began with a word game wherein I asked you to define certain words. We started off with a simple word, "hat," the definition of which we all knew. Perhaps we had different ideas in our minds of what this hat would look like, but the definition was relatively simple. Next, we were asked to define the word, "board," which has a number of homophones; and they, too, all have different meanings. Then we saw that the word "foundation" has a few different meanings as well, some of which are rather obscure. For instance, foundation can refer to a woman's undergarment. And, finally, almost none of us had ever heard of the word, "aufrichtig," which is the German word for "sincere."

My point in conducting this particular exercise was to help us realize that our understanding of words, along with their definitions and uses, depends upon our perceptions, backgrounds, level of education, language skills, experiences, and dozens of other factors. We may not have even heard of some of the words or definitions that I had used as examples in our game. Our experiences with them may have been so narrow that, while we may have known some of their definitions, we probably did not know them all. But we do know that words can, and often do, have multiple meanings.

To confuse matters still further, the meanings of words may change over the course of time and come to develop completely different meanings. A familiar example of this is the word, "conversation." It used to mean "conduct," but during the course of approximately four hundred years, it has come to mean "what we say to one another; dialogue."

And we must remember, too, that some words mean different things to different people. An example of this is the word, "read." If I were to tell you that it is spelled "r-e-a-d," you would probably think of the past tense of "read." But, if we were from western Pennsylvania, we would think it to mean "to clear, or to ready up." We would say, in our home, to "read off the table." This meant that we were to clear off the table or clean it up. It is a meaning unique to the region where our family lived and, in the context in which it was used, we knew that it meant to clear off the table rather than, "I had read a book."

The southerners know of similar language idiosyncrasies unique to their region. What comes to mind when I say the word, "fix?" What if I say that I am "fixing" my car? We all know what that means. But if I were to say, "I am *fixin'* to fix my car," you would have to be a southerner to understand what I mean. It just depends on our experiences. Someone from the northwest or the northeast would never think of "fix" in terms of "getting ready to, or preparing to" do something. But in the south it is a viable definition of the word. It may be substandard, but it is still used in that manner.

Remember the German word that I purposely slipped into the game? I did that because words in another language mean absolutely nothing to us unless we are told what they mean or we research their meanings. Otherwise, they are merely nonsense syllables to us and have no meaning whatsoever. They could be the words of eternal life, but still be absolutely useless to us because we do not know what they mean!

This becomes important to us because the Bible is written in the Hebrew and Greek languages—which few of us can pronounce much less understand. It is important, however, to have a curiosity or desire to understand some of these words in order to better understand what God is trying to teach us. We do not have to learn Hebrew or Greek, but we can take the initiative and simply look up the meanings of some of the words. This will lead us, then, to better understand how the writer and the readers of the time would have understood them. This will aid us in understanding what God is trying to get across to us.

The last sermon was about *logos*, a Greek word having little meaning to us unless, of course, we are told what it means. We must look up the definition and see it in its usages or have someone explain it to us. Another problem with the word is that it has been invested with philosophical, religious, and even pagan meanings resulting in terrible confusion. We went through a lot of this the last time.

The bulk of that sermon was spent defining *logos* in context. We went through example after example to show how the New Testament writers used it. There had to be a baseline for the true understanding of the word. And by the end of the sermon, once the inane speculations of men cut off from God had been removed, *logos* became an understandable concept and really rather simple in its meaning.

Logos, we found, is a thoughtful and reasoned word, saying, speech, account, report, narrative, message, communication, or expression." It could mean all of these things. It depends upon how the writer wants it to be understood. When it is attached to God, or the Lord, *logos* is heightened to the concept of "truth" or "inspired preaching." We even saw that it could be used to refer to the message of the gospel—the whole "ball of wax" one might say.

Finally, we saw that when *logos* is personalized, it means "a speaker or spokesman." If you recall, we saw in the book of Acts that Paul, himself, was called the *logos*. Of course the people of Lystra were confused thinking that he was the god, Hermes, but it was evident that a speaker can be a *logos*. The most familiar *Logos* is, of course, Jesus Christ.

Today, I want to pick up where I left off last time—in the Old Testament. In order to get a running start, we will turn to the book of Genesis. My purpose is to show that, when the apostle John used the term *logos* in John 1:1, both his Jewish and Greek audiences, having knowledge of the Old Testament, were familiar with it. And more than just familiar, they had a firm and clear understanding of its meaning.

This is why there is no explanation in John 1:1. He does not take the time to write, "*Logos* means... this." He simply uses the term and continues his gospel account. He does, however, add a few wrinkles in order to *magnify* the meaning, but it is done without actually having to stop and define it. His audience was well aware of what *logos* meant!

And now, after we go through these Old Testament examples, along with John 1:1 and a few subsequent verses, we will see that John's deliberate choice of words will help define for us too what he meant. We will see how his description of Jesus' glorious words and works supports this magnified understanding of *logos*.

Genesis 1:1-3 is where the Israelites first became acquainted with the idea of *logos*, but it was not a Greek word with which they were familiar—it was a Hebrew word!

Genesis 3:1-3 In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light;" and there was light.

As we saw last time, the idea of the *Logos* does appear within the first three verses of Genesis 1, although it is not explicitly stated. The word "word" is not even in here. We read of God speaking, but that is about all there is to support the basic meaning of *logos*. However, as we had previously learned, there are five different revelations of God given here—all having to do with the idea of logos. These are the same five revelations to which John points in John 1:1.

The five revelations are:

1. God was pre-existent. He was around *before* the creation. "In the beginning God..." He was first. (That is in verse one.)
2. God creates. (That is also in verse one, the very next word): "In the beginning God *created*..." He was the one that did it. He brought the whole universe (and all that is in it) into being.
3. God is a Spirit. "The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters." God is an invisible, immaterial, but powerful Being. (This is in verse two.)
4. God is a Being of reason. This is brought out by the word, "hovering." God was overlooking the earth and surveying, designing, planning, thinking, and organizing things in order to do the actual work of creation. We get the picture of God thinking through, reasoning out, and planning the creation. (This is also found in verse two.)
5. God speaks and things happen; they become real. When God communicates, there is a special quality that brings things into reality and makes things happen. (This is found in verse three.)

Hold on to these five revelations of God because they will come up again. I find these three verses to be amazing in this regard! Moses packs so much in here. We read through three verses and we have five stupendous characteristics of God that jump out and hit us right between the eyes! And this is just as we are beginning in the book!

Then, if you remember, we looked at Genesis 15. I do not think I went through this section of scripture thoroughly enough, so we will go through it again.

Genesis 15:1-4 After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward." But Abram said, "Lord God, what will You give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Eliezer of Damascus?" Then Abram said, "Look, You have given me no offspring; indeed one born in my house is my heir!" And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir."

This was a very important revelation to Abraham (or Abram, as he was called at the time). This is the promise of the son to Abraham. We have to understand who Abraham typified and who, also, Isaac pictured in this typology. Abraham was a type of God, the Father and Isaac was a type of Jesus Christ the Son. It is remarkable in this occurrence that God chose to reveal Himself for the first time in the

book as the Word of the Lord. This is the first time in the entire Bible that this phrase is used. To an astute observer we now have a connection between the Word of the Lord and the promised Son. That is the theme of this particular promise. It may seem a bit obscure, but it is there nonetheless. When the promise of a Son is given, we have the Word of the Lord making it known.

We see in verse one that the Word of the Lord comes to Abraham in a vision. How many of us have had dreams where we see words? Most of us do not see words in a dream, but we do hear words in our dreams. We may hear someone say something to us. But here we see that Abraham saw something. It may be wrong to assume that he did not see actual words in Hebrew, but it is highly unlikely. What do we think he did see? It seems to me that he must have seen a person—a being who identified himself as the Word of the Lord!

We see that the first time this phrase is used we have a clear perception, almost blatant, that the Word of the Lord is a person and not just some disembodied speech or some words or letters written in the air. The Word of the Lord is a person! And even if it were words that were, somehow, made visible here, they still would have had to be put there by some one. So even if there were no person that he actually saw, there was still someone behind them. Speech does not simply happen; someone has to say it. Someone has to speak the words. The words are not an end to themselves; there is something beyond the words—a being!

Notice, also, in verse two, that when Abraham replies to this person he sees in the vision he identifies him as "Lord God." He knows exactly who this is. This is the one who had been speaking to him all along. He recognized Him in the vision. This is, at least to me, a clearly irrefutable exposition that the Word of the Lord equals the Lord God. They are the same Being with one being the title of the other.

The Hebrew word for "word," as in the phrase, "the Word of the Lord," is *dabar*. This is the Hebrew counterpart for the Greek *logos*. I am going to read the definition from *The Complete Word Study Dictionary—Old Testament*. I want you to see how closely *dabar* and *logos* resemble each other in meaning. It is almost an exact match.

"A masculine noun meaning word, speech, matter. This frequent word has a wide range of meanings associated with it. It signifies spoken words or speech; a command or royal decree; a report or tidings; advice; poetic writings of David; business affairs; a legal cause; the custom or manner of activity; something indefinite (a thing). Most important was the use of this word to convey divine communication. Often the Word of the Lord signified the revelation given to prophets. Similarly, the Ten Commandments were literally called, "The Ten Words of the Lord."

From our definition of *logos* we find that it had similar meanings. And the most important of the meanings, we found, was "divine communication." We see that these two words, then, are very close in association.

I Samuel 3:1 Then the boy Samuel ministered to the Lord before Eli. And the word of the Lord was rare in those days; there was no widespread revelation.

This is a parallel phrase, which is a literary tool the Hebrews frequently used. First, they say that "the word of the Lord was rare" and then, it is explained as, "there was no widespread revelation." What

we have here is a correlation between "the Word of the Lord" and "revelation." The Word of the Lord's primary purpose was to reveal the things of God. This is a good and basic definition of *dabar* in a spiritual sense—it is the revelation of God.

I Samuel 3:21 Then the Lord appeared again in Shiloh. For the Lord revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the word of the Lord.

We see here that the primary function of the Word of the Lord was to reveal Himself! This revelation could come through commandments, statutes, judgments, the whole way of the Lord, the will of the Lord, or a prophecy of something that was to occur. If we were to go through the books of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel, we would find in almost every chapter the phrase "the word of the Lord came unto me saying..." And then there is a revelation of a prophecy or of some spiritual concept that He wanted His people to understand.

The same thing happens again when we go into the Minor Prophets. They may say it in a slightly different manner, but in almost every case it says, "the word of the Lord came to me," or it says it in the third person, "the word of the Lord came unto Zechariah (or Haggai, etc.)." The purpose, then, of the Word of the Lord, in all of these cases, whether it was personalized or not, was to reveal something about God—His plan, His goals, His aim—something about His *will*.

We will now go forward in history (and in the Bible) to the life of Elijah. He is fleeing from Jezebel into the wilderness and comes to Horeb, the mountain of God.

I Kings 19:9 And there he went into a cave, and spent the night in that place; and behold, the word of the Lord came to him, and He said to him, "What are you doing here, Elijah?"

Notice that this is very clear. The Word of the Lord came and it was a *he!* It was a being, a person who spoke to him just as this same Word spoke to other prophets. In this case, the personification of the Word of the Lord is blatant: the Word of the Lord came and *He* said... An astute reader of the Old Testament would quickly figure out that there is a being who is "the Word of the Lord." It would not take much because the phrase is all the way through here; it appears 307 times in the Old Testament!

Here is an example that we can easily understand.

Psalms 105:17-19 He sent a man before them—Joseph—who was sold as a slave. They hurt his feet with fetters, He was laid in irons. Until the time that his word came to pass, the word of the Lord tested him.

Was this the word of some scripture that tested Joseph, or was it some *Person* who tested him? This was a divine Being who wanted to see what Joseph would do! God gave him an extremely long trial. I am not certain how long he remained in prison, but it was a test for Joseph. That is the sort of thing that God does in order to prepare His servants for the jobs that need to be done!

So we see here that the Word of the Lord (it is not capitalized in this verse, except for the "L" in Lord) conducting this test is a person. And when we have a trial (perhaps we are driving down the road and we blow out our right-rear tire and we need to get somewhere really fast, but we now have this trial, a test) do we conclude that it is the Bible which is testing us, testing our attitude? Are we not more likely to say something to the effect of, "God is testing me and I am going to keep my chin

up, go ahead and change this flat tire, and head off to keep my appointment." We do not say, "It is Psalm 105:19 that is testing me!" We do not think of the words; we think of the Person. There is a Being who is testing us!

Throughout the Old Testament there is the idea that the Word of the Lord is an actual Person. And even when it is not personified it remains clear that there is a Person behind the words.

We are going to hop, skip, and jump through some scriptures and we will see various ways in which the Word of the Lord is used to reveal the attributes of God.

Psalm 33:4-5 For the word of the Lord is right, and all His work is done in truth. He loves righteousness and justice; the earth is full of the goodness of the Lord.

The Word of the Lord is right, it is truth, and it is righteousness and justice. Plus goodness is added, as well. These are all connected with the idea of the Word of the Lord. We might quickly and wholeheartedly agree with these statements, but who spoke them to begin with? This is what I mean by saying that even if the scriptures do not personify the Word of the Lord, one still gets the unmistakable impression that there is a Person behind the spoken word.

Psalm 33:6 By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.

There is a personification in this verse—the Word of the Lord has *breath*. The Word of the Lord is Creator!

Psalms 107:20 He sent his word, and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.

The Word that is sent is able to heal and deliver; the Word is able to save people!

Psalm 119 has several verses describing attributes of God.

Psalm 119:50 This is my comfort in my affliction, for Your word has given me life.

There is life in God's Word!

Psalm 119:154 Plead my cause and redeem me; revive me according to Your word.

This is similar to verse 50 in describing God's Word as being full of life.

Psalm 119:105 Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.

The Word is a lamp and a light. It is a guide and revealer of the way

Psalm 119:41 Let Your mercies come also to me, O Lord—Your salvation according to Your word.

We have salvation by God's Word. His Word *brings* salvation!

Psalm 147:15-18 He sends out His command to the earth; His word runs very swiftly. He gives snow like wool; He scatters the frost like ashes; He casts out His hail like morsels; who can stand before His cold? He sends out His word and melts them; He causes His wind to blow, and the waters flow.

The Word of the Lord sustains the earth and the weather cycles. The Word is Sustainer!

Psalm 147:19 He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His judgments to Israel.

The Word is a Lawgiver!

I randomly selected these examples. There were so many from which to choose that I could have gone practically anywhere, but I wanted us to have a wide sampling of scripture.

Isaiah 40:8 The grass withers, the flower fades, but the word of our God stands forever."

It is eternal! God's Word never goes out of style. It never dies. It never ceases to be what it is.

Isaiah 46:11 Calling a bird of prey from the east, the man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.

Isaiah 55:11 So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish what I please, and it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it.

The Word is a *fulfiller* of prophecy; or it can be a *giver* of prophecy!

Had we been thinking (as we were going through these scriptures) of what Mr. Armstrong had been inspired to identify as the *seven proofs of God's existence*, we would have remembered that these very proofs are the same as many of the attributes through which we have just read: designer, lawgiver, life-giver, sustainer, fulfiller of prophecy, creator, etc. I did not do prayer in these examples, but I could have easily gone to a place where God's Word answers prayer.

The Word of the Lord has all the same attributes as The Word. The Old Testament is full of statements describing the power and efficacy of God's Word. Sometimes it is personified and sometimes it is not, but the idea is that when God speaks, when His Word goes out, things happen because of His power, His intellect, and His purpose behind them. When He speaks things happen. And one of the things which happens is that something becomes known about Him. This is why I said that the basic understanding of the Word of the Lord, or of *Logos*, is as revealer.

Another evident proof is that one cannot separate God from His Word. The writers of the Old Testament did not even try to do this. The Word of the Lord says things. The Word of the Lord does things. The Word of the Lord appears.

The Word of the Lord, the Word of God, and God, Himself, share so many attributes that they are considered as the same thing. It is this understanding that devout Jews (who had a good

understanding of the Old Testament) had when the apostles used the term "logos." They had equated the Word (*dabar*) of the Lord with logos. The Word of the Lord in the Old Testament is the same as the Word of the Lord in the New Testament! Only the languages were different!

It is interesting to note that, in the New Testament, when the phrase "Word of the Lord" is used, the Greek word for "word" is "logos" 11 out of 13 times. That is 85%. There is another Greek word, "rhema," which is also used. I will not take the time here to explain the difference between "rhema" and "logos," but it amounts to the splitting of hairs.

When "the Word of God" is used in the New Testament, the word, "logos," appears 38 out of 44 times. That is 86%. It is clear to me that the apostles understood the Old Testament concept of the Word of the Lord in the same vein as they understood "logos." And so when John opened his gospel account with the words, "In the beginning was the Word..." of what did they think? They thought of the God of the Old Testament, the Word of the Lord, and the One who had appeared to Abraham in Genesis 15. They recalled the One who had appeared to Samuel and given him a prophecy, the One who had appeared to Elijah and offered encouragement when it was needed most by using a still, small voice. They thought of the One who spoke to David, the One who spoke to Isaiah, the One who spoke to Jeremiah, the One who spoke to Ezekiel, the One who spoke to all the minor prophets, and all the others to whom He came and spoke in the Old Testament. This is the same One to whom John was referring. This was no big stretch for them. They were used to the concept.

We will now read straight through the first eighteen verses of the first chapter of John keeping in mind what we now know about "logos." Let us see now how easily and clearly understandable this is.

John 1:1-18 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. 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 His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, 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. And 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. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.'" And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

Does this not make a whole lot of sense when we understand that this is referring to the Word of the Lord—the God of the Old Testament; the One who had already done so much in the way of revealing the true God? And now He has come to do it in another way, a better way, and for an even greater purpose!

John's gospel was the last to be written. And it seems likely that he wrote it to fill in the gaps, to round out the picture of Jesus which was presented by the other gospel accounts. He was inspired and probably felt that it was necessary to make clear, beyond all doubt, who Jesus was, and is, and what His relationship to the Father was—and is!

Thus we have this magisterial opening, "In the beginning was the Word!" This was purposeful, the phraseology intentional! He wants us to think of Genesis 1:1 and immediately take the idea of "In the beginning *God*..." and equate it with "In the beginning was the *Word*!" It is fundamental that we understand this relationship.

These accounts begin, basically, at the same point. The same One who created all things is also this Word "who became flesh and dwelt among us." He wants us to understand right away, before we go any further into the book, the One with Whom we are dealing—how important He is to us and how truly wonderful He is! And he wants us to understand, too, and make perfectly clear to us, as we get toward the end of this section, exactly just how much He had given up and how far He was willing to go for us!

John sets all this up with this great introduction wherein he lays everything out. "The subject of my book is God, the Creator, in the flesh—and this is what He came to do!" We are supposed to be astounded right away! "Wow, our God came down and lived in human flesh and revealed all of these truths to us!" And then He did what He did!

John really does not mention that here except to say that "His own did not receive Him." But he opens the book in a way that can only be compared to Hebrews 1:1-4. Both books are intent on grabbing our attention and showing us how great this One is before going on to explain the details of this greatness. This is an important concept we have to have in order to understand the rest of the story. This was no normal man who did these things. He is saying that the One who revealed Himself to the patriarchs and the prophets as the Word of the Lord became a man—and they knew Him as Jesus Christ of Nazareth!

Let us go back in our memory to just a few minutes ago—to those five relations of God we examined in Genesis 1. All five of them appear again here. They are described in a different form and with different emphasis, but they are all present. This provides evidence that the same Being who worked and created at the beginning (in Genesis 1:1) is now among us doing the same thing—working and creating. I will not go fully into them, but I just want to point them out.

- The first one is that God was pre-existent. This is made clear in the first couple of verses. "In the beginning was the Word" and then it says in verse two that He "was in the beginning with God." He existed all the way back. If we could say that there was a beginning with God, Jesus was there—as the Word. He goes all the way back as far as God does.
- The second one is that He creates all things. John goes to great lengths to pound this into our understanding in verse 3 when he writes, "all things were made through Him and without Him nothing was made that was made." He says it positively and then he says it negatively. In verse 10 he says that "He was in the world and the world was made through Him and the world did not know Him." John makes it very clear, in these two verses, that the subject with whom we are dealing is Creator.

- The third revelation is that God is a Spirit—an invisible and immaterial, but powerful Being. This is only implied; it is not stated straight out, but obviously God is a spirit. And so saying that "the Word was God and was with God" is the same as saying that He was of the same nature. This is implied, too, in the figures of light that cannot be overcome and, in verse 4, where it says that in Him was life—He has life inherent. Only God has life inherent—and God is a spirit. There are also several references to the "fullness of His glory," which is John's way of saying that the Word is just like God and, therefore, a spirit. Only a spirit can have such glory, such light, and such life! So the revelation that God is a Spirit is in here and it comes out in verses 1-2, 4-5, 9, 14, 16, and 18. John's point is that the Word became flesh; he is making it much more personal to us. But John also says that the Word started as spirit and then intimates that He gave that up—for us—which makes Him all the greater!
- The fourth revelation is that He is a Being of reason, intellect, purpose, design, and logic. This is immediately apparent in John's use of the word "logos"—and is part of its definition. It is reasoned speech or reasoned communication. And we also find, in verses 14-17, that grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. Both grace and truth are logical and reasonable ideas. This can also be seen in the fact that He is Creator, as well. You cannot be the creator of all that is and not be incredibly intelligent and logical and purposeful, etc.
- The fifth revelation is that God speaks and things happen—they become real. This is where we will launch into the rest of the sermon. John handles this point in a subtle manner, even though it is a major theme for the entire gospel account—God (Jesus) communicates and things become real!

In this eighteen-verse introduction it appears in the last sentence:

John 1:18 The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.

This is the Logos in action! And it says here, because John is writing later in the first century, that it has been declared—in the past tense—it has already been done! This is a victorious statement and I truly feel that there should be an exclamation point after it! (This is just my personal feeling.)

In contrast to Genesis 1:1-3, the Word is no longer speaking with the intent of creating a material universe. But it is interesting to note (in verse 3) that the first thing said is, "Let there be light!" And when Jesus came to this earth, John described Him as the light!

What does light do? Light exposes and reveals. It opens up our sight to new things. It makes all things plain and obvious. Jesus came as the Light to reveal things. And we find (in verse 18) that what He came to be the light of—what He came to reveal and to make known—is the reality, existence, sovereignty, holiness, and good will of an even greater Being than He! That was Jesus' life's work! And when He spoke, when He communicated throughout His life, it was with one major goal in mind—to reveal God the Father.

The word "declared" in verse 18 is interesting, "...He has declared Him." It is *exegeomai* and means "to unfold in teaching; to reveal; to make known or explain." Various translations will use any one of these definitions. John is saying that the Word has "unfolded" God the Father to us; He has revealed Him and made Him known; He has explained Him to us. This word has the sense of, not simply "to

make known," but to make "fully and clearly known; to provide detailed information in a systematic manner." This is not something that was just quickly once and done. This is something that He unfolded over the course of His lifetime in the sermons and situations described in the New Testament. The implication is that He tells everything and leaves nothing of importance out!

Jesus' job during His human life was to communicate everything He could about the Father—everything!

John 20:30-31 And truly Jesus did many other signs in the presence of His disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name.

John 21:25 And there are also many other things that Jesus did, which if they were written one by one, I suppose that even the world itself could not contain the books that would be written. Amen.

John is saying that Jesus did such a good job of revealing the Father that His entire life would have had to be written down. And more than that, all of the books in the world could not have contained that revelation! But what we have been given in the four gospel accounts and the rest of the New Testament is enough.

This begs the question, "How did He do this? What did He do?" The simplest explanation appears in John 14. This is a familiar and simple explanation. We hear it every year at the Passover service.

John 14:7-11 "If you had known Me, you would have known My Father also; and from now on you know Him and have seen Him." Philip said to Him, "Lord, show us the Father, and it is sufficient for us." Jesus said to him, "Have I been with you so long, and yet you have not known Me, Philip? He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father?' "Do you not believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority; but the Father who dwells in Me does the works. Believe Me that I am in the Father and the Father in Me, or else believe Me for the sake of the works themselves."

So what did He do? His entire life was a revelation of the Father. We could say that the Father and the Son are like twins in their perfect and righteous and holy character. That which the Son did, the Father would have done—and in the exact, same manner. Jesus was the perfect expression (Logos) of the Father. He was the perfect communication of the Father. When Jesus did one thing, it was exactly what the Father would have done. And that is why the surprise at Philip's question: "Do you not know, Philip? You have seen the Father in Me this whole time!" I think it is interesting in verse 10 where Jesus says:

John 14:10 The words that I speak to you I do not speak on My own authority [Notice He said "words" that He speaks. Then notice the next statement.]; but the Father who dwells in Me does the WORKS.

It was not just the words that He spoke, but the works that were done in Him which revealed the Father. It was everything that He did and not only what He said. Every gesture, every work, every miracle (healing or casting out of demons or walking on water), everything was an expression of God the Father through the Son!

Remember that He had revealed Himself pretty well in the Old Testament. And then He came, in what we refer to as "New Testament times," to reveal another Being just like Him—except even greater! And He is the One to whom we ultimately have our loyalty—this great Being whom we call the Father. But we would have had no idea of what the Father was like because He was beyond human sight, beyond what we could grasp! And so the Son came down to express to humankind just what the Father is like!

Let us go to that great introduction in Hebrews 1:1 and just listen to the wording here.

Hebrews 4:1-4 God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds; who being the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person [this is such an important phrase, "the express image of His person"], and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had by Himself purged our sins, sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, having become so much better than the angels, as He has by inheritance obtained a more excellent name than they.

That is beautiful prose—almost poetic! This idea that Jesus is the express image of His person is an incredible thought! We can picture a stamp with an image on it being impressed into something that will hold the shape. You then take it away and look at the two of them side-by-side and see that they are exactly the same. He is the express image of God the Father. We do not necessarily need to see the Father because we see the Son. And so we can understand Jesus' somewhat exasperated response to Philip, "Oh Philip, you have seen Me all this time! I have been doing this My entire life! If you have seen Me, you have seen the Father! And that is sufficient!"

This is more difficult for us because we must *see* Him in faith. However, we do have enough in this Word to know what both Jesus and the Father are like. If we were to go through the whole of John's gospel account, we would clearly see this.

In chapter two, when Jesus, in anger, drove out the money changers from the temple, this is exactly what the Father would have done. The Father gets angry! When Jesus patiently explained true worship to the woman at the well in chapter four, that is what the Father would have done. He would have taken the time to patiently explain. When Jesus did not condemn the women in adultery in chapter eight, the Father would not have done that either. He would have said, just like Jesus, "Go and sin no more!" When Jesus called the Pharisees (later in chapter eight) "sons of the devil," the Father thought the exact same thing of them. When Jesus healed the blind man at the Pool of Siloam, the Father, had He been there (and He was there through Jesus) would have done the exact same thing. When Jesus wept at the sight of human bondage and hopelessness (in chapter eleven, just before He resurrected Lazarus) so, too, the Father would have wept. As Jesus washed His disciples' feet, so, too, the Father works in the same way to bring us into His Kingdom. As Jesus, on the stake, arranged for Mary's care with the apostle John, in the same way the Father cares for His own.

The things we see Jesus do are the express image of the things the Father does. They are perfectly united in character, will, purpose—in everything!

Jesus' prayer in John 17 may mean much more to us now. This is just prior to His arrest. This is personal with regard to us.

John 17:20-26 "I do not pray for these alone, but also for those who will believe in Me through their word [talking about us]; "that they all may be one, as You, Father, are in Me, and I in You; that they also may be one in Us, that the world may believe that You sent Me. And the glory which You gave Me I have given them, that they may be one just as We are one: I in them, and You in Me; that they may be made perfect in one, and that the world may know that You have sent Me, and have loved them as You have loved Me. Father, I desire that they also whom You gave Me may be with Me where I am, that they may behold My glory which You have given Me; for You loved Me before the foundation of the world. O righteous Father! The world has not known You, but I have known You; and these have known that You sent Me. And I have declared to them Your name, and will declare it, that the love with which You loved Me may be in them, and I in them."

Do you see what He is saying here? Jesus is saying that He was the first to be "at one" with the Father and to have the love of the Father in Him. He was the first to express who the Father is. And then He prays that we can do the exact same thing and, more than that, to reap the same rewards: the glory and love of the Father!

God wants multiple, exact copies of Himself; He wants express images of Himself all over the universe! This is what being one with God is. In other words, to be in the image of the Son is to be in the image of the Father and, so, united in mind, in will, in purpose—in everything!

Romans 8:28-31 And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?