

March 1995

Frank W. Nelte

### **THE FACTS ABOUT "UNFINISHED BUSINESS"**

where we learn anything about receiving God's Spirit is in the Bible! Now where where all these ideas come from as you will ever get! It is precisely because it is not any Biblical revelation, that Dr. Hoeh doesn't refer to Scriptures except very superficially.

Early on in the sermon Dr. Hoeh also stated in regard to listening to the new doctrines being presented:

"What is important is also to carefully listen to what is being presented, either verbally or otherwise. The evidence may *or may not lie in the Bible!*"

So the "different point of view" which Dr. Hoeh explains at the start is different from the traditional (for God's Church) point of view, and it is in fact nothing other than the point of view of the Greek philosophers, the point of view of people who came from "an awful society", to quote Dr. Hoeh himself.

Listen to the tape again. That is what Dr. Hoeh himself admits.

Now obviously, Dr. Hoeh didn't turn to Colossians 2:8 to support his statements:

"Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ" (Colossians 2:8).

Is Paul talking about "the Greek logic" that led to these totally unbiblical ideas about the nature of God or not? Paul certainly knew what the word "philosophy" meant and how his readers would understand this word. "Greek logic" is just a part of "philosophy."

And obviously, Dr. Hoeh also didn't bother quoting Romans chapter 1, which has a lot to say about the pagan "deep thinkers" who tried to figure out God! You yourself know all these verses already:

"Because that, when they knew God, they glorified [him] not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened" (Romans 1:21).

This is speaking precisely about those philosophers who in their own imaginations, cut off from God, tried to reason out with Greek logic what God is like. And they thought they were pretty smart:

"Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools," (Romans 1:22).

Those very people who thought they were so wise created "an awful society," as Paul tells us:

"Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:" (Romans 1:24).

"For this cause God gave them up unto vile affections: for even their women did change the natural use into that which is against nature:" (Romans 1:26).

Let's not beat around the bush! Paul lived in a time when the Greek language and Greek culture and learning were considered the pinnacle of wisdom. So exactly who is Paul referring to in this section

here? And exactly who is Paul referring to in Colossians 2:8?

The conclusion is inescapable: Paul is speaking about Greek wisdom and Greek logic and philosophy!

And obviously, Dr. Hoeh also did not bother to quote 1 Corinthians 2:11:

"For what man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? Even so the things of God knoweth no man (Greek or otherwise!), but the spirit of God" (1 Corinthians 2:11).

This Scripture, all by itself, totally knocks on the head the idea that a group of Greek philosophers, by using Greek logic, can somehow figure out the facts about the nature of God, when they themselves are all along cut off from God. The nature of God is not something that any human being can "logically" reason out. Without divine revelation any conclusions about the nature of God are at best foolishness and at worst utter perversion!

And certainly, Dr. Hoeh didn't turn to Luke 10:21 to support his ideas:

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in spirit, and said, I thank thee, O Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou hast hid these things from the wise and prudent, and hast revealed them unto babes: even so, Father; for so it seemed good in thy sight" (Luke 10:21).

At no stage did Jesus Christ ever say, imply or insinuate that through Greek logic people would be able to figure out what God is like. The knowledge about God is hidden from the "wise" Greek logicians. Jesus Christ here contradicts the idea that deep wisdom and logic is needed to understand the truth about God.

### **Dr. Hoeh's Premise Is False**

Before we proceed any further, we need to acknowledge that Dr. Hoeh's whole premise is false! His premise is that the ideas of Greek philosophers are correct:

- his evidence is not from the Word of God;
- his evidence relies on the "logic" of Greek philosophers;
- his reasoning contradicts what Jesus Christ said;
- his reasoning contradicts what the Apostle Paul said;
- the Scriptures he presents are ornamental to this "logic";
- he assumes that it is possible to reason out God's nature apart from divine revelation from God.

The Scriptures I have thus far presented are easy to understand. They speak for themselves. They don't require special knowledge of Greek. They mean exactly what they say. And they reflect the mind of God!

Remember, the Word of God is quick and sharp! You are familiar with Hebrews 4:12. Don't be taken in by efforts to make it blunt, by attempting to "explain away" that these verses don't really mean what they "seem" to mean on the surface.

### **A Presentation of Dr. Hoeh's Argument**

The whole argument that Dr. Hoeh presents is built on **one single verse!** That's right, one single verse is what this "sermon" is all about. Yes, Dr. Hoeh actually does refer to Matthew 28 and to Genesis chapter 1, but those references are incidental.

The whole sermon is based on a new way of explaining John 1:1.

My printed copy of the sermon transcript is over 21 pages long, and it is all supposedly based on one single verse. That is an awful lot of "philosophizing" about one short verse.

That in itself should tell us that it is a presentation of the mind of Dr. Hoeh. It certainly is not a presentation of the mind of God; God's words don't feature anywhere, except as incidental references. There is no "rightly dividing the word of truth" anywhere. It is just a presentation of the results of "Greeks thinking about problems," dressed up with the ideas and analogies of Dr. Hoeh.

So let's now look at how Dr. Hoeh tries to explain John 1:1.

### **Dr. Hoeh's Explanation of John 1:1**

Here is the verse:

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

And here is the Greek text of this verse transliterated into our alphabet:

en archê ên ho logos kai ho logos ên pros ton theon kai theos ên ho logos (John 1:1).

Translated word for word in the same word order this reads:

"in beginning was the Word and the Word was with the God and God was the Word."

Dr. Hoeh now reasons as follows:

- 1) The Greek word "logos" doesn't really mean "word"; it supposedly means "utterance."
- 2) Mr. Armstrong didn't get his understanding of this verse from God; he only got it "on the basis of what Protestants were saying." It was supposedly the Protestant idea that "logos" means "Spokesman."
- 3) Next, Dr. Hoeh claims that when the Greek word "theos" is used with the definite article (i.e. "ho theos") then it means "God"; but if it is used without the definite article (i.e. only "theos") then it means "divine." **This is not true.**
- 4) From these assumed premises (at no stage does he present any proof!) Dr. Hoeh now presents the "Greek logic" which, as he admitted, isn't found anywhere in the New Testament. He reasons that "an utterance" requires "an utterer" (sounds logical) and that "an utterer" has "to think" in order "to utter" (that also sounds logical) and that therefore "the utterer" must be "a thinker" (hey, now we are getting somewhere!) and that what such "a thinker" "utters" must be "a thought" (brilliant Greek logic, isn't it?).
- 5) He now wants to transpose these ideas to God the Father and to Jesus Christ. Since he anticipated objections to this kind of "logic," Dr. Hoeh prefaced his reasoning with the statement:

"I don't want to argue the question of the external issue of image and likeness; that's not the point today."

In this way he very neatly disposes of all the Scriptures that clearly and obviously contradict what he is about to propose.

6) Having told us that it is not fair for us to use Scriptures at this point, Dr. Hoeh then said:

"The point of importance is that inwardly you are thinker and thought; and your mind cannot think only and have no thought and be complete. This is why God cannot be construed as only father and not son, as only thinker and not thought. It is impossible for God to be father and not son, thinker and not thought. That's the issue of what logos is!"

### **This is "Greek logic" at its best!**

This goes all the way back before Plato, before Socrates to Heraclitus (540-480 B.C.), who used the word "logos" to refer to "the principle which controls the universe", the "thinker" having a "thought."

7) So the reasoning he now wants us to accept is that "God the Father" is "the thinker" and "Jesus Christ" is "the thought." Realize that this has nothing to do with John 1:1. **We are now discussing the ideas of pagan Greek philosophers** (they really were "pagans"!) who lived long before the time of Christ's ministry and who in the imaginations of their hearts tried to "logically" figure out God.

8) To complete the trinity, Dr. Hoeh now reasons that it: "takes the presence of air to convey thought or utterance." **This is** where he slips the Holy Spirit into his equation.

He said:

"In the same way, we cannot imagine God as only thinker and thought without the sense of movement or to move or to act upon. So the thinker expresses thought and the thought leads to action. That's what it is! That is God! God is that spirit!"

Again, he has only paraphrased for us **the thoughts of the ancient Greek philosophers**. This is how they reasoned.

9) So the trinity that Dr. Hoeh presents to us based on his explanation of John 1:1 is as follows:

There is only one God, who is a thinker. Therefore he has thoughts and these thoughts lead to actions. The "thinker" Dr. Hoeh equates with "God the Father"; the "thoughts" he equates with "Jesus Christ, the Son" and the "actions" he equates with "the Holy Spirit."

10) Thus Dr. Hoeh's conclusion:

*One God= thinker + thoughts + resultant actions=God the father + Jesus Christ + holy spirit*

That is a summary of the reasoning Dr. Hoeh has presented in this sermon. That's what he wants you to believe.

### **An Examination of Dr. Hoeh's Explanation**

1) *The word "logos":*

As I already mentioned, the word appears as early as 500 B.C. in the writings of Heraclitus. Plato took up the word "logos" in a big way. The Stoics used the word "logos" to refer to "the soul of the world". Marcus Aurelius, a late Stoic (around 120-180 A.D.), used the expression "spermatikos logos" to mean

"the generative principle in nature" (you might recognize the word 'sperm' in the word 'spermatikos'). Philo (around 20 B.C.-50 A.D.), a hellenized Jew from Alexandria also used the word.

The point is this: for over 500 years before John ever wrote his gospel the word "logos" was used with a figurative meaning!! This figurative use of the word was well-known and well-established. And when anyone used the word "logos" to refer to origins and to God, then everybody understood that the figurative meaning was intended.

Listen!

In English you fully understand the difference between "driving a car" and "driving home a point in an argument". You fully understand the difference between "riding a horse" and "riding the crest of the wave of popularity," etc.. You don't need someone to tell you that "driving home a point" has nothing to do with cars, or that "riding the crest" has nothing to do with horses.

The very opening words John used, "in the beginning," made absolutely clear to his readers that in this context the word "logos" was not intended with its literal meaning! It was in fact a very well-known and frequently used figure of speech. It is called "metonymy", when one noun is used in place of another noun to which it stands in a certain relationship. This is done very commonly.

For example, when we say that "The White House issued the following statement," we don't mean that literally.

When Matthew wrote:

"Then went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judaea, and all the region round about Jordan," (Matthew 3:5).

everybody understands very well that this is also not meant literally. Matthew used one noun (Jerusalem) in place of another noun (the inhabitants of Jerusalem). That's easy to understand.

John used one noun (logos) to refer to another noun (Jesus Christ) because these two stand in a specific relationship to each other; Christ is the Speaker, the One who speaks the "words". That's what Christ Himself said very plainly:

"For I have not spoken of myself; but the father which sent me, he gave me a commandment, what I should say, and what I should speak" (John 12:49).

So Jesus Christ, out of His own mouth, tells us that He was the Spokesman for the Father! You can't get it plainer than John 12:49!

2) The claim by Dr. Stavrinides, and here promoted by Dr. Hoeh, that "logos" doesn't mean "word," but that it means "utterance" is nonsense! It is also an insult to Almighty God!

Listen!

God SPEAKS! God doesn't "utter." What do you mean: "utter"? God is not "an utterer"! **God speaks distinctly, precisely and clearly.** This introduction of the less 'user-friendly' term "utter" is nothing more than a striving about words, which God warns us not to get involved in (see 2 Timothy 2:14). For over 500 years before John's time the word "logos" had already been used to mean something other than "to utter" or "to mutter" (which means 'to utter indistinctly').

3) Dr. Hoeh's claim that Mr. Armstrong only got his idea from the Protestants is untrue and rather

disparaging of Mr. Armstrong. Read John 12:49 above; that is where Mr. Armstrong got the idea from that Jesus Christ is the Spokesman of the Father. But that is not a Scripture that featured in Dr. Hoeh's presentation. He preferred to present us with "Greek logic."

4) Dr. Hoeh's claim that the word "theos" without the definite article means "divine" is totally untrue!

Understand this:

Biblical Greek did not have the indefinite article! Can you grasp what this means? In biblical Greek you could only say:

- either "God" or "the God,"
- either "man" or "the man,"
- either "house" or "the house,"
- either "ship" or "the ship,"
- either "city" or "the city," etc..

When, in the English New Testament, you see the indefinite article used over 1000 times, this is never found in the Greek text. You need to understand this! It is always provided at the total discretion of the translator. It follows that when the indefinite article is omitted in a New Testament passage this too is totally at the discretion of the translator.

The argument that the New Testament nowhere says "A God" is utterly meaningless, since in biblical Greek it simply was not possible to say "A God," any more than it was possible to say "a man" or "a ship" or "a house" or "a sword."

Whether "theos" is translated into English as "God" or as "a God" or as "a god" is not decided by rules of grammar; it is really decided by the translators own theological perspective. When the translator's perspective is unduly biased towards a wrong concept, then you may get incorrect translations.

Next, in biblical Greek there are four different words we should be familiar with in this regard. They are:

- "theos," meaning "God" or "god," used over 1300 times;
- "theotes," meaning "deity" or "Godhead," used one time;
- "theiotes," meaning "divinity," also used only one time;
- "theios," meaning "divine," used three times in the New Testament.

The first three words are all nouns. "Theios" is an adjective, formed from "theiotes." One passage where where the body of Jesus had lain" (John 20:12, used twice in this verse).

"And in the midst of the seven candlesticks [one] like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt **about** the paps with a golden girdle" (Revelation 1:13).

The remaining 720 occurrences are with the **accusative** case. With this case "pros" means:

"with a view to anything, as an end."

In the New Testament **this is by far the overwhelming usage**. It also includes the verse we are specifically examining, John 1:1.

Let's look at a few of these 720 places where "pros" is used with the Accusative case and where