

John 1:1-18
Literary Structural Outline
English Text

Last Revised: 12/09/05

Step Parallelism: ABC // A' B' C'

A 1-5 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 came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. The **light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

B 6-8 There was a man sent from God, whose name was **John**. He came as a witness to testify to the **light**, so that all might believe through him. He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

C 9-13 The true **light**, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. But to all who **received** him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

A' 14 And the **Word** became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory, the glory as of a father's only son, full of **grace and truth**.

B' 15 **John** testified to him and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'"

C' 16-18 From his fullness we have all **received**, grace upon grace. The law indeed was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ. No one has ever seen God. It is God the only Son, who is close to the Father's heart, who has made him known.

Analysis of the Text:

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|-----------|---------------------|------------------------|
| A | Logos | light |
| B | John/witness | |
| C | received | light |
| A' | Logos | grace and truth |
| B' | John/witness | |
| C' | received | grace and truth |

Notes:

1. The central theme of both sections, vv. 1-13, 14-18, is the **Logos**, in as much as it serves as the header for each section. Thus the central theme of the entire prologue is **Logos**. Understanding the main point of the prologue then will depend upon an accurate

understanding of this key term.

2. The boundary markers to the first section, vv. 1-13, is the repetition of the word light. In the second section, vv. 14-18, the repeated phrase grace and truth serves the same role.
3. The center strophe to each section focuses upon the witness of **John the Baptist**.
4. The movement in each section flows from the Logos through the witness of John to the response of **receiving** the Logos through John's witness.
5. The conceptual structure of the first section, vv. 1-13 is universal: the Logos and all of creation including humanity. The Logos manifests himself, is witnessed to by John, but only a very small segment of humanity responds with acceptance.
6. The step, advancement of thought to a new level, occurs in section two, vv. 14-18, where the Logos is received by both Jew and Gentile in a fuller experience that brings the 'receiver' face to face with Almighty God himself.
7. The Logos reveals himself to the world in vv. 1-5 and is largely rejected inspite of John's witness. But in the section section, vv. 14-18, to those receiving the Logos He reveals himself dramatically as the Shekina glory of God who tabernacled with His people, v. 14 , and John's witness, v. 15, highlights that superior revelation. The second receiving section, vv. 16-18, opens up dramatically larger experiences of encounter.
8. Each of the three strophes of both sections contains an advancement of thought in the second section parallel to that in the first section.
9. Note the similar patterns in Strophes A and A'. In Strophe A the two-fold emphasis is upon the relation of the Logos to God (vv. 1-2) and then of the Logos to Creation (vv. 3-4). In Strophe A', a similar emphasis is found with appropriate advancement of thought to section 2. The Logos manifests himself to the believing community in creation by dwelling in their midst. But the impact of that dwelling is to reflect God to the believing community, since He is the Shechinah Glory of the Father.

