



CHRISTMAS BIBLE STUDY
“THE OTHER CHRISTMAS STORY”
JOHN 1:1-18

A literary structural analysis of the Prologue of the Gospel of John that highlights the arrangement of ideas about the identity of Jesus Christ as the divine Logos. This Prologue reflects huge creativity by John in communicating the message of Christ to his late first century readers.



THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

A 1-5 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

B 6-8 6 Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· 7 οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι’ αὐτοῦ. 8 οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ’ ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

C 9-13 9 Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. 10 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. 11 εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. 12 ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, 13 οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

A’ 14 Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

B’ 15 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

C’ 16-18 16 ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· 17 ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. 18 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

NEW REVISED STANDARD VERSION

A 1-5 1 In the beginning was **the Word**, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life, and the life was the light of all people. 5 **The light** shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

B 6-8 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was **John**. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

C 9-13 9 **The true light**, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who **received** him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 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 16 From his fullness we have all **received**, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; **grace and truth** came through Jesus Christ. 18 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.

Summary of the Text Structure:

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

Several points need to be observed here regarding how John has arranged this text.¹

1. The passage divides into two basic sections: vv. 1-13 and vv. 14-18. This arrangement is in the form of a 'step parallelism' which was a very common pattern of literary structuring of ideas in John's world, especially in the Jewish side of it. This means that the first idea is advanced forward in the second idea. But the second idea heavily depends upon the first idea.

In this instance, the first idea, vv. 1-13, asserts the existence of the divine Logos in connection to His relationship to the created world. Building on that, the second idea stresses the relationship of the divine Logos to the believing community, vv. 14-18.

Quite creatively John signals the boundaries of the two units by repetition of a key term or phrase at the beginning and ending of each unit. In the first unit of vv. 1-13, the key term is τὸ φῶς, *light*, in vv. 5 and 9. In the second unit of vv. 14-18 the repetition of χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, *grace and truth*, in vv. 14 and 17, ties this unit together.

2. The central topic of the entire passage is Jesus as the divine Logos. Writing to Christians in the late first century who lived in the Roman province of

¹Several modern commentators have recognized a quasi poetic structure embedded into this text, but most have been at a loss to know what to make of it. In the late 1970s and early 1980s as I was spending considerable extra time as a NT professor at SWBTS in Ft. Word in training myself in literary form analysis of ancient texts, I began noticing this poetic rhythm in the text but could not find secondary sources that accounted for all of the patterns. The sabbatical leave in 1981 - 1982 at the University of Bonn provided substantial extra time to not only develop my analytical skills but to also probe the Prologue of John's Gospel from a European point of view rather than from a dominantly English speaking point of view. With these skills sharpened to a much higher level, the text of the Prologue began yielding up perceptions that I had not seen before. The above analysis comes out of that background and has convinced me of it being the most accurate way to understand the arrangement of ideas in this passage. Several years later in supervising a PhD dissertation in which the student did massive research studies of the varieties of Prologues in the ancient world of Greek and Latin writings, along with Hebrew and Aramaic literature, the awareness of the literary function of Prologues was broadened substantially. Thus further confirmed my conviction of the accuracy of the above analysis against the backdrop of options available to John in telling his gospel story about Jesus.

Asia, John very creatively picked up on a major Greco-Roman philosophical theme of the role of Logos as a supernatural force that gave order, coherence, and stability to the material world. This thinking had its roots in the classical philosophers of the third century BCE, but was popularized greatly in the first century by Stoic philosophers such as Seneca.

This background served John well because laying behind his telling of the story of Jesus this way was a very clear intent to crush the growing influence of Christian influences in Asia that were oriented toward a mystical, philosophical way of thinking that later on would emerge as Christian Gnosticism. John challenges this phony mysticism by both using the philosophical language and Greek literary structures to make his powerful case for Jesus of Nazareth as the very essence of God Incarnate. His first main point, vv. 1-13, is to assert the intimate connection of the Logos with the material world, which his opponents denied as possible. The second point, vv. 14-18, asserted His connection to the believing community as the Divine Presence of God Himself, which was anathema to his opponents. John is advocating the same apostolic Gospel as is found in the synoptic gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke. But his approach is customized to address the needs of a readership living in the midst of very influential Greek and Roman ways of thinking. With most of his readers having grown up being taught these alternative perceptions of reality, John wisely chose to communicate divine truth using a framework familiar to his targeted readers.²

The irony, however, was that the later Gnostic teachers in the second and third centuries chose to 'cherry pick' the fourth gospel and turn it into the supposed foundation for their heretical views about Jesus. But properly understood, the fourth gospel is a power-

²It is important to remember how much change in the composition of this province of Asia took place in the second half of the first Christian century between the time Paul was there in the middle of the first century and the time John spent there in the latter decades of this century. Most significant is the dramatic increases in the Jewish population centers of the province. The destruction of Jerusalem and the Jewish temple there resulted in massive migration of Jews into this region where both peacefulness and prosperity abounded.

Even more significant are the changes in Christianity across this province. The centers of Pauline activity, mainly Ephesus, were now greatly expanded along with hundreds of new Christian communities scattered throughout the province in the smaller towns and villages. By the time of John's writings in the late 80s through the 90s of this century, Christianity had become firmly established as a dominantly Gentile oriented religion of the area. Huge tensions emerged between Jews and Christians that would erupt into violent persecution of Christians in the second and third centuries in this region. An anti-semitic attitude by Christians would be one of the consequences of all this.

ful polemic against their views.

Additionally, the Jewish philosopher Philo in the first century BCE had sought to identify the Greek philosophical idea of the Logos with the Spirit of God as taught in the Hebrew scriptures. Although not widely popular among traditionalist Jews in Palestine in the first century, Philo's writings and ideas were very widely read and influential among Hellenistic Jews of this time. Interestingly, by the end of the first Christian century the center of both Christianity and Hellenistic Judaism had gravitated to the Roman province of Asia. The majority of both Christians and Jews living at the end of the first century in the Roman empire were found in this province of the Romans. Alexandria Egypt had been Philo's home base and his writings were very widely accepted among Hellenistic Jews there and thus his influence spread to the other Hellenistic Jewish center of Asia through the first century AD.

3. Inside the two basic sections of vv. 1-18, one finds a **parallel thematic emphasis** that parallels each other across the two sections. This is highlighted in the above charting out of sub-units ABC//A'B'C'. The three key concepts repeated in each unit are Logos, John as a witness, and received.

Thus the three subunits of the first group emerge as vv. 1-5, 6-8, and 9-13, which are natural units of thought internally. In the second unit, the repetition of the three key ideas hold vv. 14-18 together and also set up the advancement of idea regarding the Logos, v. 14; John as witness, v. 15; and received in terms of the believing community's response, vv. 16-18.

4. **The literary role of vv. 1-18 as Prologue** is critical to understanding the fourth gospel. In utilizing one of the many options for Prologue to a philosophical tractate John makes extensive use of the Greek Prologue as the foundation to his telling the story of Jesus to his Christian readers in late first century Asia. The identity of Jesus as the real divine Logos, in contrast to the philosophical claims and to Philo's claims, enables John to set up every foundational motif that he needed into to present the story of Jesus as the divine Logos to his readers. Viewed another way, [every pericope](#) from 1:19 through the end of the gospel account builds off of one or more of the ideas in this Prologue. Another implication of this clearly defined literary function of vv. 1-18 is that every [subsequent pericope](#) narrating what Jesus said or did must be understood within the framework of the motifs set forth in the Prologue.

If biblical interpreters from the church fathers down into modern times had clearly understood what John was doing literarily, a large mountain of interpretive garbage could have been avoided. Unfortunately, only scattered interpreters of this gospel down through the centuries have grasped this simple role of the Prologue

and made good use of it in exegeting the fourth gospel.

Literary and Historical Backgrounds

Consideration of the settings of the scripture text always stand as important considerations to the interpretation of a passage of scripture.

A. Historical Aspects:

The history behind John 1:1-18 is important. The external history will center on both the Compositional and Transmission Histories. The Internal History will give attention to the surround thought world concerning the idea of Logos in John's world.

1) External History

These two historical aspects consider how the text first was written in terms of author, time and place of writing, and intended recipients of the writing. Then a tracing of the hand copying of this text, along with the document it is in, becomes necessary. This is because we do not have available the original copy of the document. Instead, we must reconstruct an understanding of the exact wording of the passage depending upon hand copied manuscripts that only reach back to within a couple or three of centuries to the time of the original composition.

a) Compositional History. The same person responsible for the fourth gospel is responsible for 1:1-18. Although most of the time, this is true generally in scripture occasionally a document writer will quote another writer and thus necessitate examination of the writing of the other writer as well. A good example of this is Paul, who in writing to Titus, quotes a Greek philosopher from Crete in Titus 1:12

εἶπέν τις ἐξ αὐτῶν ἴδιος αὐτῶν προφήτης· Κρήτες ἀεὶ ψεύσται, κακὰ θηρία, γαστέρες ἀργαί.

It was one of them, their very own prophet, who said, "Cretans are always liars, vicious brutes, lazy gluttons."

Thus an important part of the background of this passage has to do with the writings of the Cretan philosopher [Epimenides](#) of Knossos who lived around 600 BCE. Interestingly, upon his death on the island at an advanced age, the people of Crete 'deified' him for worship as a god and gave him great honor as one of their native sons who had risen to the status of a god.

Fortunately for us, Jhn. 1:1-18 does not contain any such additional responsibility.³ Since the same person responsible for the gospel document is responsible for this prologue text introducing the document, what

³Were we examining a passage in chapter twenty one, we would then have these dual authorship issues to analyze, with the chapter being widely acknowledged as a later added Addendum to the document.

we must do is determine who that person was and the circumstances of the writing of the document.

Some assumptions about this person that must be scrutinized closely. First and most importantly, nowhere inside the document itself is the author ever stated directly. The association of the fourth gospel with the apostle John is based solely upon a later tradition found in many, but not all, of the church fathers. To be clear, 21:24⁴ does suggest an unidentified author who is labeled in v. 20 as τὸν μαθητὴν ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς, [the disciple whom Jesus loved](#).⁵ Several church fathers, especially Irenaeus, identified this person as the apostle John.⁶ Over time this tradition became dominant and gained wide acceptance in Christian circles.⁷ Not until

⁴**John. 21:24.** Οὗτός ἐστιν ὁ μαθητὴς ὁ μαρτυρῶν περὶ τούτων καὶ ὁ γράσας ταῦτα, καὶ οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἀληθῆς αὐτοῦ ἡ μαρτυρία ἐστίν.

[This is the disciple who is testifying to these things and has written them, and we know that his testimony is true.](#)

⁵One of the challenges with this text is that it comes in chapter 21 which is generally considered to be an Addendum to the gospel document which originally ended at 20:31. If this evaluation is correct -- and good reasons exist to suggest that it is -- and it was therefore added later by another person from the gospel writer, then this issue requires separate investigation into its accuracy.

⁶“1. We have learned from none others the plan of our salvation, than from those through whom the Gospel has come down to us, which they did at one time proclaim in public, and, at a later period, by the will of God, handed down to us in the Scriptures, to be the ground and pillar of our faith.² For it is unlawful to assert that they preached before they possessed ‘perfect knowledge,’ as some do even venture to say, boasting themselves as improvers of the apostles. For, after our Lord rose from the dead, [the apostles] were invested with power from on high when the Holy Spirit came down [upon them], were filled from all [His gifts], and had perfect knowledge: they departed to the ends of the earth, preaching the glad tidings of the good things [sent] from God to us, and proclaiming the peace of heaven to men, who indeed do all equally and individually possess the Gospel of God. Matthew also issued a written Gospel among the Hebrews³ in their own dialect, while Peter and Paul were preaching at Rome, and laying the foundations of the Church. After their departure, Mark, the disciple and interpreter of Peter, did also hand down to us in writing what had been preached by Peter. Luke also, the companion of Paul, recorded in a book the Gospel preached by him. *Afterwards, John, the disciple of the Lord, who also had leaned upon His breast, did himself publish a Gospel during his residence at Ephesus in Asia.*”

[Irenaeus of Lyons, [“Irenaeus against Heresies,”](#) in *The Apostolic Fathers with Justin Martyr and Irenaeus*, ed. Alexander Roberts, James Donaldson, and A. Cleveland Coxe, vol. 1, *The Ante-Nicene Fathers* (Buffalo, NY: Christian Literature Company, 1885), 414.]

⁷“The Beloved Disciple who leaned on Jesus’ breast at the Last Supper (cf. 13:23) was present at the foot of the cross (cf. 19:25–27), and saw and believed when he found the clothes of death empty and folded in the tomb (cf. 20:3–10). John 21:24 claims that this character in the story is the author of the Gospel: ‘This is the disciple who is bearing witness to these things, and who has written these things; and we know that his testimony is true.’ The further identification of the Beloved Disciple with John, the son of

the modern era of the 1700s onward were questions raised. These came about with the adoption of more up to date methods of interpreting the Bible that evolved

Zebedee, is well attested in Christian art and history. This identification owes much to the work of Irenaeus (about 130–200 C.E.) who is often credited with having rescued the Gospel of John from the Gnostics of the second century, but Irenaeus may have been depending on even earlier traditions (cf. Hengel, *Die Johanneische Frage* 9–95). The Gnostics found the poetic, speculative nature of the Johannine story suited their myth of a redeemer who descended to give knowledge (Greek: gnōsis) to the unredeemed, wallowing in the darkness of ignorance. They found that the Johannine story of Jesus suited their schemes, and the earliest commentaries we have on the Fourth Gospel come from the Gnostic world (cf. Elaine H. Pagels, *The Johannine Gospel in Gnostic Exegesis: Heracleon’s Commentary on John*. Nashville and New York: Abingdon, 1973). Part of Irenaeus’ defense of the Gospel of John was to insist on the link between this story and an original disciple of Jesus. This authenticated the tradition: this story is not mere speculation; it goes back to the first-hand witness of John, the son of Zebedee.

“Was Irenaeus right? It is impossible to give a certain answer one way or the other. The vast majority of contemporary scholars do not regard it as a significant question, claiming that there is insufficient evidence within the Gospel to substantiate such claims, and that Irenaeus might have been strongly influenced by the need to authenticate the Johannine tradition, to save it from the speculations of the Gnostic writings. Most who have pursued the matter in recent times conclude that the author was a founding figure in the community, possibly a disciple of Jesus, but not the son of Zebedee or one of the Twelve. From the story of the Gospel itself, however, an interesting figure emerges. As John the Baptist sends two of his disciples to follow Jesus (cf. 1:35–42), one of them is eventually named: Andrew (1:40). The other remains *incognito*. There is the repetition of this practice in the non-naming of a character in the story known as ‘the other disciple’ (cf. 18:15, 16; 20:3, 4, 8). This enigmatic character eventually comes to be known as ‘the other disciple ... whom Jesus loved’ (cf. 20:2). In 20:2 it looks as if an early stage of the tradition simply had ‘the other disciple’ (cf. 18:15, 16; 20:3, 4, 8), but that in a final edition (or at least a later stage in the writing of the Gospel) the words ‘whom Jesus loved’ were added. This is ‘the Beloved Disciple’ (cf. 13:23; 19:26), identified in the Epilogue to the Gospel (John 21) as the author of the Gospel (21:20, 23, 24). From such evidence it appears that the narrative of the Gospel has traces of its ‘author.’ He was an ex-disciple of the Baptist (although many scholars would discount the non-named character in 1:35–42. Cf. note to 1:40), with Jesus from the beginnings of his ministry, present at the climactic events of the first Easter, the founding father of a community whose Gospel we today call the Gospel of John. Precisely because of his centrality to the birth, development, and life of the community in which he was such an important figure, his desire to keep his name out of the account of the life of Jesus was respected even after he had died. However much they respected the desire to remain *incognito*, those responsible for the present shape of the Gospel could not resist inserting a description that expressed their memory and their admiration. They described ‘the other disciple’ as ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ (cf. 20:2).”

[Harrington Daniel J., “Editor’s Preface,” in *The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 4, *Sacra Pagina Series* (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 6–7.]

both out of the Protestant Reformation and out of the emerging new understandings of history in this era across western culture.⁸ It is thus important to remember that most all the questioning of Johannine authorship of the fourth gospel comes from the Protestant side of Christianity, not the Roman Catholic or Eastern Orthodox sides. Suspicions about the accuracy of the conclusions of the church fathers exploded, and especially when those conclusions were diverse and often contradictory to one another as is the case concerning the fourth gospel.

Much of the investigation into compositional responsibility for this gospel document centers on identification of the so-called other 'beloved disciple,' who is mentioned in 18:15, 16; 20:3, 4, 8; 21:24. Ultimately the questions comes down to whether or not the church father [Irenaeus](#) was correct in linking this 'beloved disciple' to the apostle John at the end of the second century AD. The debate in scholarly circles over this is endless, while popularly in Christianity the resounding answer has been "Yes, Irenaeus was correct to link the two individuals together." My personal tendency is to go with this tradition, although realizing that genuine questions are present without adequate answers.

In the assumption that the apostle John is responsible for the composition of this document down through chapter twenty, First it is important to remember how common the Jewish name Ἰωάννης was in the first century world. It originated from the Hebrew יְחִזְקִיאֵל (yokhanan) meaning "Yahweh is gracious." Quite a number of individuals carried this name inside the pages of the NT. Thus the NT writers tend to add qualifiers to the name in order to specify specific individuals, e.g., Ἰωάννης ὁ βαπτίζων, [John the baptizer](#). Second, interestingly the apostle John is mentioned by name only in the synoptic gospels, Acts, and Galatians. The name never is used in the fourth gospel. The reference there is indirect: either the beloved disciple or as a son of Zebedee (21:2).

What was the scenario that prompted the composition of the fourth gospel? Internal signals point to a

⁸“The last of the four Gospels appears among the rest in a manner reminiscent of the appearance of Melchizedek to Abraham: ‘without father, without mother, without genealogy’ (Heb 7:3). Everything we want to know about this book is uncertain, and everything about it that is apparently knowable is matter of dispute. The Gospel is anonymous; argument about its traditional ascription to the apostle John has almost exhausted itself. We cannot be sure where it was written, or when. We are uncertain of its antecedents, its sources, and its relationships. This includes its relations with the synoptic Gospels and with the religious movements of its day. Whereas many scholars have spoken of it as the gospel for the Greek world, others have seen it as firmly rooted in Judaism by upholding the good news of Christ among Christians from the Synagogue.” [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), xxxii.]

Christianity at the time of writing that was increasingly distancing itself from Judaism. One of the aspects of this intense debate centered in a more 'elevated' view of Christ rather than merely as the Jewish Messiah. Christ came as a universal Deliverer of humankind from its enslavement in sin and evil. The concept of Him as the divine Logos was key to this different perspective. Another signal of this is the intensely negative meaning attributed to the term οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι, [the Jews](#). Used some 70 times in the fourth gospel in reference to Jewish people the term has a much more negative thrust than is found in the 125 other uses outside the fourth gospel. This points to a period late in the first century when bitterness between Christians (now mostly non-Jewish) and Jews reached a high point.

Several church fathers were convinced that after remaining in Palestine some twelve years after the persecutions of Herod Agrippa I (cf. Acts 12), John migrated to the well established Christian community at Ephesus in the [province of Asia](#),⁹ which was rapidly becoming the center of Christianity in the second half of the first century.¹⁰ Traditionally understood to be the [youngest of the Twelve](#) disciples of Jesus, he spent the

⁹“In the NT, Asia can designate a continent that is distinct from Europe (see Strabo, Geogr. 2.5.24, 31; 7.4.5), or it can be used with the adjective ‘Minor’ of the western peninsula of modern Turkey. Neither usage is found in the Bible. In the Apocrypha, Asia is used to describe the Seleucid Kingdom, and the ruler of this kingdom is called “the king of Asia” (1 Macc 8:6; 2 Macc 3:3; compare 1 Macc 11:13; 12:39; 13:32). Asia is most often used in the NT with the meaning of the Roman province. (For example, see Acts 19:10, 26–27; 27:2; Rom 16:5; 1 Cor 16:19; 2 Cor 1:8; 1 Pet 1:1.) In Acts 2:9–10, Asia is used to refer to a portion of the province, as is shown by the inclusion in the list of Phrygia, which was part of the province of Asia.” [Paul Trebilco, “Asia,” ed. Katharine Doob Sakenfeld, *The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 2006–2009), 1:304.]

¹⁰“By the end of the 1st cent. A.D., Christianity was strongly represented in the provincial cities, and had aroused the enmity of the Jewish and Greek population, as revealed in the book of Revelation. The ‘seven churches’ that are in Asia (Rev. 1:11) contained relatively large Christian communities and may have been missionary centers (W. M. Ramsay's theory: LSC).

“In the early 2nd cent., anti-Christian outbreaks by the population were checked by Hadrian's rescript to the proconsul Minucius Fundanus in 124/25, ordering that procedure against Christians must be kept within the framework of the law and protecting Christians against vexatious attacks by informers. Justin Martyr was converted and held his celebrated debate with the Jew Trypho at Ephesus ca 137. Later under Antoninus Pius and especially Marcus Aurelius there were severe local persecutions directed against the Christians, the most prominent victim being Polycarp at Smyrna (in either 156 or 166/67) (Eusebius HE iv.15). In the Decian persecution (250/51) the Christians in the cities of Asia were again affected (martyrdom of Pionius).”

[W. H. C. Frend, “Asia,” ed. Geoffrey W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, Revised (Wm. B. Eerdmans, 1979–1988), 322.]

remainder of his life in ministry throughout this Roman province and died sometime after 96 AD.¹¹ In his later years, Polycarp, who became a leader at Smyrna in the early second century, was trained by him and became a promoter of John's writings, traditionally understood to be the gospel, the three letters, and the book of Revelation. Polycarp was then the teacher of Irenaeus who played such an influential role in linking the fourth gospel to the apostle John.

This tradition of Ephesus in the late first century clearly 'fits' the orientation of the contents of the fourth gospel. In particular, the theme of the divine Logos linked to Jesus stands well in the religious atmosphere of Asia toward the end of the first century. The region had become a major center of [Judaism](#)¹² as well as

¹¹"An alternative account of John's death, ascribed by later Christian writers to the early second-century bishop Papias of Hierapolis, claims that he was slain by the Jews.^{[43][44]} Most Johannine scholars doubt the reliability of its ascription to Papias, but a minority, including B.W. Bacon, Martin Hengel and Henry Barclay Swete, maintain that these references to Papias are credible.^{[45][46]} Zahn argues that this reference is actually to John the Baptist.^[42] John's traditional tomb is thought to be located at Selçuk, a small town in the vicinity of Ephesus." ["John the Apostle," [wikipedia.org](#)]

¹²"*ASIA MINOR*: The western extremity of Asia, which seems to have been known to the Jews at a relatively early date; for to this region belong the greater number of the sons of Japhet mentioned in the ethnographic lists in Gen. 10. Von Gutschmid believes that there was a dispersion of Jews in Asia Minor in the middle of the fourth century B.C.; but it is probable that Jewish colonization did not antedate the Seleucids, though Josephus mentions the existence of relations between Jews and the inhabitants of Pergamus, extending back to the time of Abraham.

"Toward the end of the third century, at the time that Greek communities began to be formed in the villages along the coast, Antiochus the Great (223–187 B.C.) installed in the more thinly populated districts of Phrygia 2,000 Jewish families from Mesopotamia (Josephus, "Ant. xii. 3, § 4). The Jews formed military colonies at these places, the principal of which seem to have been Apamea, Laodicea, and Hierapolis. The name *κατοικία* (colony), which Hierapolis retained for four centuries, attests the nature of the settlement.

The Roman Occupation

"Before the death of Antiochus, Asia Minor passed forever out of the grasp of the Seleucids. Their successors, the Romans, followed the same favorable policy toward the Jews; at first protecting them in the various states in which the country remained divided ("Letter of the Roman Senate to the Kings of Pergamus, Cappadocia," etc., 139–138 B.C.); and, later, defending them from the ill will of the Hellenic population among whom they lived, when, after the year 133, these states were successively annexed by Rome. The Greek towns regarded with disfavor the settlement among them of this strange element, which, while claiming to participate in communal life, still adhered to its peculiar customs and organization. Hence, there developed a sentiment of hostility which in the second half of the first century before the common era provoked at Tralles Laodicea, Miletus, and Ephesus irritating measures, such as the seizure of moneys collected for the Temple, the prohibition of the exercise of the Jewish religion, and even threats

for Christianity,¹³ thus the intense competition between these two religions. But the large number of Jewish immigrants coming out of Palestine after the destruction of the temple and Jerusalem in 70 AD into this region meant a heated clash between traditionalist Judaism coming as immigrants from Palestine and a deeply Hellenistic oriented Judaism well entrenched in the region for several centuries. Much of the apocalyptic and other mystical writings among the Jews had originated from this province and were highly influential upon araea Jews. The writings of the Jewish philosopher Philo in Alexandria Egypt were widely read in Asia and his thinking played an important role in this mixture of very diverse Judaism which intensely competed with one another for dominance over the Jews. Add to all this the amusing story of Polycarp about the apostle, and one has the needed atmosphere for the writing of a story about Jesus such as the fourth gospel.¹⁴

of expulsion. Cæsar and Augustus, however, assured to the Jews the rights of sojourn and of free worship; yet it is improbable that in the Greek towns they possessed the right of citizenship and a corresponding share of public honors. On the other hand, they enjoyed freedom from conscription, the exemption from which was conferred on them by Dolabella, proconsul in Asia (43 B.C.). Roman officials seem to have departed from their benevolent policy in only one instance—when, in 62 B.C., L. Valerius Flaccus confiscated at Laodicea, Apamea, Adramyttium, and Pergamus money intended for Jerusalem. He had to answer for the illegal act before the courts.

"If the sums seized by Valerius Flaccus really represented the didrachma tax for one year, it might be concluded, according to the calculation of Theodore Reinach, that there were at that time 180,000 Jews in Asia Minor. But this number is possibly ten times too large; for, among nearly 20,000 Greek inscriptions found in Asia Minor, scarcely twenty can be attributed doubtless to Jews."

[Isidore Singer, ed., *The Jewish Encyclopedia: A Descriptive Record of the History, Religion, Literature, and Customs of the Jewish People from the Earliest Times to the Present Day*, 12 Volumes (New York; London: Funk & Wagnalls, 1901–1906), 2:211–212.]

¹³"The blossoming religious following of Christianity was evident in Anatolia during the beginning of the 1st century. The letters of St. Paul in the New Testament reflect this growth, particularly in his home province of Asia. From his home in Ephesus from 54 AD to 56 AD he noted that 'all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word' and verified the existence of a church in Colossae as well as Troas. Later he received letters from Magnesia and Tralleis, both of which already had churches, bishops, and official representatives who supported Ignatius of Antioch. After the references to these institutions by St. Paul, the Book of Revelation mentions the Seven Churches of Asia: Ephesus, Magnesia, Thyatira, Smyrna, Philadelphia, Pergamon, and Laodicea.^[37] Even other non-Christians started to take notice of the new religion. In 112 the Roman governor in Bithynia writes to the Roman emperor Trajan that so many different people are flocking to Christianity, leaving the temples vacated.^[38]" ["History of Turkey: Christianity in Anatolia during Roman time," [wikipedia.org](#)]

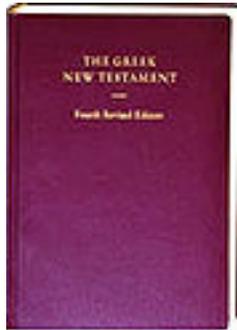
¹⁴"Irenaeus relates how Polycarp told a story of John, the

Thus in my opinion the most likely scenario behind the composition of the fourth gospel is this religious atmosphere in and around Ephesus in the final decade or so of the first Christian century. The sequencing of the gospel, the three letters, and Revelation is virtually impossible to nail down, although very plausible is the order in which they appear in the listing of documents inside the NT: the gospel first, followed by the three letters, and last the book of Revelation. That has been the understanding that I have worked from for many years in teaching these documents in the academic classroom.

b) Transmission History. In the history of the hand copying of 1:1-18 a number of issues arise regarding the wording of these verses. The Text Apparatus of *The Greek New Testament* (UBS 4th rev. ed.) contains several places where different readings surface:

1:3–4 οὐδὲ ἔν. ὃ γέγονεν ἐν {B}.

Here the question arises from punctuation issues, since the oldest manuscripts contained no punctuation marks. The issue centers around whether the relative clause ὃ γέγονεν should modify the number ἔν (not one thing which exists) or stand as the subject of the following verb ἦν (that which exists in Him was life). Thus should the period be placed behind ὃ γέγονεν or in front of it? The issue is very difficult to settle in part because theological controversies played a huge rule when primitive punctuation marks began showing up beginning in the fifth centuries.¹⁵ In the exegesis below



disciple of the Lord, going to bathe at Ephesus, and perceiving Cerinthus within, rushed out of the bath-house without bathing, exclaiming, ‘Let us fly, lest even the bath-house fall down, because Cerinthus, the enemy of the truth, is within.’^[41] [‘John the Apostle,’ wikipedia.org]

Cerinthus became one of the early leaders of Christian Gnosticism which was denounced vehemently throughout the second century by various church fathers. It is not known whether this actually happened or not, but John’s animosity against anyone who twisted the truth of the Gospel certainly stands from the synoptic gospels.

^{15c}“Should the words ὃ γέγονεν be joined with what goes before or with what follows? The oldest manuscripts (P^{66, 75*} ⲛ* A B) have no punctuation here, and in any case the presence of punctuation in Greek manuscripts, as well as in versional and patristic sources, cannot be regarded as more than the reflection of current exegetical understanding of the meaning of the passage.

“A majority of the Committee was impressed by the consensus of ante-Nicene writers (orthodox and heretical alike) who took ὃ γέγονεν with what follows. When, however, in the fourth century Arians and the Macedonian heretics began to appeal to the passage to prove that the Holy Spirit is to be regarded as one of the created things, orthodox writers preferred to take ὃ γέγονεν with the preceding sentence, thus removing the possibility of heretical use of the passage.

an attempt will be made to illustrate the impact on the meaning of ὃ γέγονεν triggered by where the period is placed.

1:4 ἦν, was, {A}.¹⁶

The issue here is whether the imperfect tense ἦν or the present tense ἐστίν is original. When ὃ γέγονεν was considered as the verb subject, the preference was for the present tense: *that which exists is life in Him*. Despite overwhelming evidence favoring the imperfect ἦν, these few copyists ignored the other fact that no present tense verb is used in the prologue of vv. 1-18.¹⁷

“The punctuation adopted for the text is in accord with what a majority regarded as the rhythmical balance of the opening verses of the Prologue, where the climactic or “staircase” parallelism seems to demand that the end of one line should match the beginning of the next.¹

“[On the other hand, however, none of these arguments is conclusive and other considerations favor taking ὃ γέγονεν with the preceding sentence. Thus, against the consideration of the so-called rhythmical balance (which after all is present in only a portion of the Prologue, and may not necessarily involve ὃ γέγονεν) must be set John’s fondness for beginning a sentence or clause with ἐν and a demonstrative pronoun (cf. 13:35; 15:8; 16:26; 1 Jn 2:3, 4, 5; 3:10, 16, 19, 24; 4:2, etc.). It was natural for Gnostics, who sought support from the Fourth Gospel for their doctrine of the origin of the Ogdoad, to take ὃ γέγονεν with the following sentence (‘That which has been made in him was life’ — whatever that may be supposed to mean).² It is more consistent with the Johannine repetitive style, as well as with Johannine doctrine (cf. 5:26, 39; 6:53), to say nothing concerning the sense of the passage, to punctuate with a full stop after ὃ γέγονεν. B.M.M.]”

[Bruce Manning Metzger, United Bible Societies, *A Textual Commentary on the Greek New Testament, Second Edition a Companion Volume to the United Bible Societies’ Greek New Testament* (4th Rev. Ed.) (London; New York: United Bible Societies, 1994), 167–168.]

¹⁶{A} ἦν P^{66, 75} A B C L Δ Θ Ψ 050 0141 0234 f1 f13 28 33 180 205 565 579 597 700 892 1006 1010 1071 1241 1243 1292 1342 1424 1505 Byz [E F G H] Lect vg syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{bo} arm geo slav Diatessaron^{arm} Irenaeus^{lat} Clement^{from Theodotus} Clement^{3/5} Origen^{gr, lat 1/2} Eusebius Didymus^{dub} Macarius/Symeon Epiphanius Chrysostom Cyril Hesychius Theodoret; Victorinus-Rome^{1/5} Jerome Augustine^{12/22 // ἐστίν} ⲛ D it^{a, aur, b, c, e, f, ff, 2, q} vg^{mss} syr^c cop^{sa} eth Diatessaron^{syr} Ptolemy^{acc. to Irenaeus} Valentinians^{acc. to Irenaeus} Irenaeus^{lat} Naassenes and Perateni^{acc. to Hippolytus} Clement^{mssacc. to Origen} Origen^{lat 1/2}; Cyprian Victorinus-Rome^{4/5} Ambrosiaster Hilary Ambrose Gaudentius Augustine^{10/22 // omit W^{supp}}

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament, Fourth Revised Edition* (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament, 4th Revised Edition* (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

^{17c}“In order to relieve the difficulty of meaning when ὃ γέγονεν (v. 3) is taken as the subject of ἦν (‘that-which-has-come-into-being in him was life’), the tense of the verb was changed from imperfect to present (ἐστίν) in several manuscripts, versions, and many early church writers. The presence, however, of the second ἦν (in the clause ἡ φωνὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς) seems to require the first.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Text*

1:13 οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν, who not ... were born, {A}.¹⁸

The primary issue is over whether the verb was plural οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν, *who were not born*, or singular ὁ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθη, *He who was not born*. The vast majority of evidence favors the plural.¹⁹ The plural relative pronoun goes back to ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, *as many as received Him*, in verse 12.

1:13 οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, nor from the will of man, {A}.²⁰

tual Commentary for the Needs of Translators (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 163–164.]

¹⁸{A} οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν (see also footnote 4) P⁶⁶ x B2 C Dc L Wsupp Ψ 0141 f1 f13 33 180 205 565 579 597 700 892 1006 1010 1241 1243 1292 1342 1424 1505 Byz [E F G H] Lect it^{aur, c, e, f, ff2, q} vg syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{sa, bo} arm eth geo slav Valentinians^{acc.} to Tertullian Origen^{gr, lat 1/2} Eusebius Asterius Athanasius Ps-Athanasius Marcellus Cyril-Jerusalem Didymus^{dub} Macarius/Symeon Epiphanius Chrysostom Severian Cyril Theodotus-Ancyra Hesychius Theodoret; Ambrosiaster Hilary Ambrose^{3/5} Chromatius Jerome^{2/3} Augustine^{10/14} // οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν P⁷⁵ A B* Δ Θ 28 1071 // οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν D* ita Augustine^{3/14} // ὁ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθη it^b (syr^{c, pmss} οἱ [sic]) Irenaeus^{lat} Origen^{lat 1/2}; Tertullian Ambrose^{2/5} Jerome^{1/3} Augustine^{1/14} Sulpicius^{vid}

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

¹⁹“Several ancient witnesses, chiefly Latin, read the singular number. ‘[He] who was born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.’ The singular would refer to Jesus’ divine origin. The Curetonian Syriac and six manuscripts of the Peshitta Syriac read the plural ‘those who’ and the singular verb ‘was born.’

“All Greek manuscripts, as well as the other versional and patristic witnesses, have the plural number, which refers to people who become children of God as a result of God’s initiative. (Several minor variant readings occur within the verse: a couple of manuscripts omit the article οἱ, thus leaving the verse without grammatical connection with the preceding sentence. Other variants in the verse are mentioned in the following entry.)

“A number of modern scholars have argued that the singular number is original. But the overwhelming agreement of all Greek manuscripts favors the plural reading, which, moreover, agrees with the characteristic teaching of John. The singular number may have arisen from a desire to make the Fourth Gospel allude explicitly to the virgin birth or from the influence of the singular number of the immediately preceding pronoun αὐτοῦ. The singular number is adopted in the Jerusalem Bible (1966), but not in the New Jerusalem Bible (1985) nor in the 1998 revision of the Jerusalem Bible.”

[Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 164–165.]

²⁰{A} οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν (see also footnote 4) P⁶⁶ x B2 C Dc L Wsupp Ψ 0141 f1 f13 33 180 205 565 579 597 700 892 1006 1010 1241 1243 1292 1342 1424 1505 Byz [E F G H] Lect itaur, c, e, f, ff2, q vg syr^{p, h, pal} cop^{sa, bo} arm eth geo slav Valentinians^{acc.} to Tertullian Origen^{gr, lat 1/2} Eusebius Asterius Athanasius Ps-Athanasius Marcellus Cyril-Jerusalem Didymus^{dub} Macarius/Symeon Epipha-

Due to identical beginnings of the clauses, οὐδὲ ... οὐδὲ, and also similar endings, σαρκός ... ἀνδρός, several copyists accidentally omitted some of the material. But the evidence is overwhelming for full inclusion of οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός, *neither from the will of flesh nor from the will of a man*.²¹

1:18 μονογενῆς θεός, only God, {B}.²²

This rather unusual phrase, *the only begotten God*, prompted copyists to seek ways around it.²³ But the

nus Chrysostom Severian Cyril Theodotus-Ancyra Hesychius Theodoret; Ambrosiaster Hilary Ambrose^{3/5} Chromatius Jerome^{2/3} Augustine^{10/14} // οἱ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν P⁷⁵ A B* Δ Θ 28 1071 // οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν D* ita Augustine^{3/14} // ὁ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθη it^b (syr^{c, pmss} οἱ [sic]) Irenaeus^{lat} Origen^{lat 1/2}; Tertullian Ambrose^{2/5} Jerome^{1/3} Augustine^{1/14} Sulpicius^{vid}

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

²¹“The second and third clauses have similar beginnings (οὐδὲ ... οὐδὲ) and similar endings (σαρκός ... ἀνδρός), which caused copyists to omit accidentally one or the other clause. The clause οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκός (nor from the will of the flesh) was omitted by the original copyist of manuscript E and by copyists of several other minuscule manuscripts; and the clause οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρός was omitted by the original copyist of manuscript B.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 165.]

²²{B} μονογενῆς θεός P⁶⁶ x* B C* L syr^{p, hmg} geo² Origen^{gr 2/4} Didymus Cyril^{1/4} // ὁ μονογενῆς θεός P⁷⁵ x² 33 cop^{bo} Clement^{2/3} Clement^{from Theodotus 1/2} Origen^{gr 2/4} Eusebius^{3/7} Basil^{1/2} Gregory-Nyssa Epiphanius Serapion^{1/2} Cyril^{2/4} // ὁ μονογενῆς υἱός A C³ Wsupp Δ Θ Ψ 0141 f1 f13 28 157 180 205 565 579 597 700 892 1006 1010 1071 1241 1243 1292 1342 1424 1505 Byz [E F G H] Lect it^{aur, b, c, e, f, ff2, l} vg syr^{c, h, pal} arm eth geo¹ slav Irenaeus^{lat 1/3} Clement^{from Theodotus 1/2} Clement^{1/3} Hippolytus Origen^{lat 1/2} Letter of Hymenaeus Alexander Eustathius Eusebius^{4/7} Serapion^{1/2} Athanasius Basil^{1/2} Gregory-Nazianzus Chrysostom Theodore Cyril^{1/4} Proclus Theodoret John-Damascus; Tertullian Hegemonius Victorinus-Rome Ambrosiaster Hilary^{5/7} Ps-Priscillian Ambrose^{10/11} Faustinus Gregory-Elvira Phoebadius Jerome Augustine Varimadum // μονογενῆς υἱός θεοῦ itq Irenaeus^{lat 1/3}; Ambrose^{1/11} vid // ὁ μονογενῆς vgm Ps-Vigilius^{1/2}

[Kurt Aland et al., *The Greek New Testament*, Fourth Revised Edition (with Apparatus); *The Greek New Testament*, 4th Revised Edition (with Apparatus) (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft; Stuttgart, 2000).]

²³“When scholars became aware of the readings of P⁶⁶ and P⁷⁵ in the mid-1950s (see the discussion concerning the Alexandrian Text in “The Practice of New Testament Textual Criticism”), the external support for the reading μονογενῆς θεός was considerably strengthened. The reading μονογενῆς υἱός (only son), followed by RSV and NJB, is certainly the easier reading, but it seems that copyists wrote this under the influence of John 3:16, 18; 1 John 4:9. There is no reason that copyists would have omitted the definite article before the noun θεός; and when υἱός replaced θεός, copyists would have added it. The shortest reading, ὁ μονογενῆς, may seem to be original since it would explain the rise of the other

weight of evidence, both external and internal, favors the longer reading of μονογενής θεός, even though unusual in expression.

This text apparatus only lists variations which the editors deemed of enough importance to impact the translation of the passage. The text apparatus of *Novum Testamentum Graece* (N-A 28th rev ed), however, provides a fuller listing of virtually all of the places where variations exist in the manuscript copies that exist today. In this instance, some 13 places are noted with manuscript evidence listed.²⁴ Most of these ‘corrections’ are in isolated man-



readings, but the manuscript support for this reading is too limited.

Some modern commentators take μονογενής as a noun and punctuate so as to have three distinct designations of him who makes God known (μονογενής, θεός, ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς). The reading in the text has been translated ‘It is God the only Son’ (NRSV) and ‘but God the One and Only’ (NIV). If the reading in the text is followed, Beasley-Murray (John, p. 2, n. e) says that ‘θεός must be viewed as in apposition to μονογενής and be understood as ‘God by nature’ as in v 1c’.” [Roger L. Omanson and Bruce Manning Metzger, *A Textual Guide to the Greek New Testament: An Adaptation of Bruce M. Metzger’s Textual Commentary for the Needs of Translators* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006), 165.]

²⁴1,3

* ουδεν P⁶⁶ κ* D f1; Cl^{ex}Thd (οὐδὲ ἔν·is replaced)

* : – et :1 . κ^c K Γ Ψ 050c f1.13 33. 565. 579. 700. 892. 1241. 1424. 1 844 M sy^{p,h} bo (variation in punctuation after ὁ γέγονεν)

| txt P^{75c} C D L Ws 050*. 1 2211 b vg^s sy^c sa; Ptol^{lr}

Theoph I^{lat} Tert Cl Cl^{ex}Thd Or (*sine interp. vel incert.* P^{66,75} κ* A B Δ Θ)

4

* εστιν κ D it vg^{mss} sa?; Ptol^{lr} I^{lat} Cl^{pt} Or^{mss} (ἦν is replaced)

| – W^s

* B* (τῶν ἀνθρώπων is omitted)

6

* κυριου D* (θεοῦ is replaced)

* ην κ* D* Ws sy^c; I^{lat} (ἦν is inserted before ὄνομα)

13

° D* (οἰ is omitted)

* B* (οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς is omitted)

15

* ο ειπων κ1a B* C*; Or (ὃν εἶπον is replaced)

| – κ*

* ος κ* Ws c (ὃς is inserted before ἔμπροσθέν)

16

* και A C³ K Ws Γ Δ Θ Ψ f1.13 565. 700. 892. 1241. 1424 M lat sy bo^{mss} (ὅτι is replaced)

| txt P^{66,75} κ B C* D L 33. 579. 1 844. 1 2211 it co; Or

17

* χαρις δε P⁶⁶ (° W^s) it sy^{h*} bo (χάρις is replaced)

18

* ο μονογενης θεος P⁷⁵ κ¹ 33; Cl^{pt} Cl^{ex}Thd^{pt} Or^{pt} (μονογενής θεός is replaced)

| ο μονογενης υιος A C³ K Γ Δ Θ Ψ f1.13 565. 579.

uscripts and generally represent efforts to either clarify the understood meaning of the text or else to update it stylistically.

Thus we can exegete the adopted reading of the passage in full confidence that it represents the original wording of the text.

2) Internal History

In the background of these verses especially stands the Greco-Roman and Jewish conception of ὁ λόγος, the *Logos*. In John’s late first century world of Ephesus in Asia swirled around him a multitude of differing ideas of the meaning and significance of this concept. Some of the ideas were religious but many were simply philosophical with little or no religious connection. Asia at this time was a hot bed for all of this coming from both Greco-Roman and Jewish sources.

In order to understand the Prologue in vv. 1-18, and even the entire gospel account of Jesus, one needs some awareness of the atmosphere in which John wrote speaking to Christians in a way to convince them of the link of the divine Logos to Jesus of Nazareth. This gospel story then provided believers in that part of the world with a presentation which could be used to present the Gospel both to Greek and Jewish neighbors from a viewpoint understandable to these non-believers. This gospel additionally armed believers with materials to help them defend their belief in Christ as the center of their religious faith.

Three background perspectives are relevant to the understanding of vv. 1-18. More existed in the ancient world, and many more in the world after John. But these three streams of thinking would have been found in abundance in Asia at the end of the first century, and would have been shaping the thinking of most of the

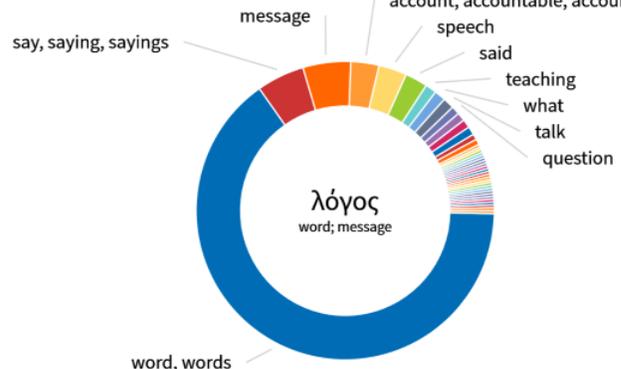
700. 892. 1241. 1424 M lat sy^{c,h}; Cl^{pt} Cl^{ex}Thd^{pt}

| ει μη ο μονογενης υιος W^s it; I^{lat} pt (+ θεου I^{lat} pt)

| txt P⁶⁶ κ* B C* L sy^{p,hmg}; Or^{pt} Did

* ημιν W^s c sy^c (ἡμῖν is inserted after ἐξηγήσατο)

account, accountable, accounting...



[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 292–293.]

population in one way or another.

The Logos in Greek thinking. Across the centuries of Greek thought prior to the end of the first Christian century many theories of Logos were set forth. The Greek word itself possesses a huge range of meanings as is illustrated by how the NRSV handles it just inside the NT (cf. below). In the larger Greek speaking world, the variety of meanings was much broader. The noun λόγος is also part of a large word group of words -- nouns, verbs, adjectives -- built off a common set of meanings.²⁵ This set of words played an important role in the ancient forms of Greek.²⁶ As the previous

²⁵λέγω, λόγος, ῥῆμα, λαλέω, λόγιος, λόγιον, ἄλογος, λογικός, λογομαχέω, λογομαχία, ἐκλέγομαι, ἐκλογή, ἐκλεκτός* [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:69.]

²⁶“Contents: A. *The Words λέγω, λόγος, ῥῆμα, λαλέω, in the Greek World*: 1. λέγω: a. The Basic Meaning of the Root; b. ‘To gather,’ c. ‘To count,’ d. ‘To enumerate,’ e. ‘To narrate,’ ‘to say’; 2. λόγος: a. ‘Collection’; b. ‘Counting,’ ‘reckoning.’ i. ‘Calculation,’ ii. ‘Account,’ iii. ‘Consideration,’ ‘evaluation,’ iv. ‘Reflection,’ ‘ground,’ ‘condition’; c. κατάλογος: ‘enumeration,’ ‘catalogue’; d. λόγος: ‘narrative,’ ‘word,’ ‘speech,’ etc. 3. ῥῆμα; 4. λαλέω, λαλιά.

“B. *The Logos in the Greek and Hellenistic World*: 1. The Meaning of the Word λόγος in its Multiplicity; 2. The Development of the λόγος Concept in the Greek World: a. The Two Sides of the Concept; b. Heraclitus; c. The Sophists; d. Socrates and Plato; e. Aristotle; 3. The λόγος in Hellenism: a. Stoicism; b. Neo-Platonism; c. The Mysteries; d. The Hermes-Logos-Theology, Hermeticism; 4. The λόγοι of Philo of Alexandria; 5. Hellenistic Logos Speculation and the New Testament.

“C. *The Word of God in the OT*; 1. The Hebrew Equivalents of the Greek Terms for Word; 2. The General Use of דְבַר as a Rendering of λόγος and ῥῆμα; 3. The דְבַר of Prophetic Revelation: a. Revelation in Sign; b. Revelation in Sign and Word; c. Dissolution of the Sign; d. The Writing Prophets; 4. The רִבְּרָא as Revelation of Law; 5. The Divine Word of Creation; 6. The Word in Poetry.

“D. *Word and Speech in the New Testament*: 1. Basic and General Aspects of the Use of λέγω/λόγος; 2. More Specific and Technical Meanings; 3. The Sayings of Jesus: a. The Quotation of the Sayings; b. The Authority of the Sayings; c. The Appeal to the Word of Jesus outside the Gospels; 4. The Old Testament Word in the New Testament; 5. The Special Word of God to Individuals in the New Testament: a. Simeon; The Baptist; b. The Apostolic Period; c. Jesus; 6. The Early Christian Message as the Word of God (outside the Johannine Writings): a. Statistics; b. Content; 7. The Character and Efficacy of the Early Christian Word (outside the Johannine Writings): a. The Word as God’s Word; b. The Relation of Man to the Word; c. The Word as Spoken Word; 8. The Word in the Synoptic Account of Jesus; 9. The Word in the Synoptic Sayings of Jesus; 10. λόγος/λόγοι (τοῦ θεοῦ) in Revelation; 11. Jesus Christ the λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ; 12. 1 Jn. 1:1 ff.; 13. The Distinctiveness of the λόγος Saying in 1 Jn. 1:1 ff.; 14. The Concern and Derivation of the λόγος Sayings in the Prologue to John, I: a. The Lack of Speculative Concern; b. The Allusion to Gn. 1:1; c. Other Connections; d. Relation to ‘Word’ Speculations in the Contemporary World; 15. The Concern and Derivation of the λόγος Sayings in the Prologue to John, II: Logos and Torah.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand

footnote suggests the range of ideas that λόγος and its cognates could suggest was vast.

At the moment our focus is on category B in the TDNT article: The Logos in the Greek and Hellenistic World. How was this term understood philosophically? Out of a very early pattern λόγος specified the process of counting, reckoning and explaining, especially with the verb form λέγειν. When something is ‘counted up’ in thinking the product is a λόγος.²⁷ Thus it is connected

Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:69–71.

²⁷“Although little used in epic,³² λόγος; achieved a comprehensive and varied significance with the process of rationalisation which characterised the Greek spirit. Indeed, in its manifold historical application one might almost call it symbolic of the Greek understanding of the world and existence.

The etym. enables us to perceive the decisive and, in their συμπλοκή,³³ basically significant features of the concept. The noun of λέγειν, λόγος means fundamentally “gathering” or “gleaning” in the selective and critical sense. Cf. Hom. Od., 24, 107 f.: οὐδέ κεν ἄλλως κρινάμενος λέξαιτο κατὰ πτόλιν ἀνδρας ἀρίστους.

“Figuratively, but even as mental activity directed to something present, λόγος has the original sense of “counting,” “reckoning,” “explaining.” Emphasising the critical as well as the counting side of λέγειν (cf. συλλέγειν), the use³⁴ of λόγος embraces the following senses.

a. “Counting up,” “recounting” (Hdt., II, 123, Where λόγος refers to the whole narrative), “account” (→ b.), the sum of individual words (ἔπη) to form the comprehensive construct “speech” or “language” (esp. prose as distinct from ποίησις,³⁵ Plat. Resp., III, 390a), “sentence” or “saying.” Because λόγος, as distinct from → μῦθος,³⁶ which is a developing or invented narrative or tradition in the poetic or religious sphere, always refers to something material, it is either that which is at issue (Hdt., I, 21; Soph. Trach., 484), or that which is recounted of someone, i.e., good or bad repute (Aesch. Prom., 732; Eur. Phoen., 1251; Heracl., 165), renown (Pind. Nem., 4, 71; Hdt., IX, 78; Heracl. Fr., 39 [I, 160, 2, Diels5]), saga (Pind. Nem., 1, 34b), history (Hdt., VI, 137).

b. “Account,” “reckoning,” “result of reckoning” (a) in a more metaphysical sense as the principle or law which can be calculated or discovered in calculation (Heracl. Fr., 1 [I, 150, 1 ff., Diels5]) or often the reason which is the product of thought and calculation (Aesch. Choeph., 515; Leucipp. Fr., 2 [II, 81, 5, Diels5]), the argument or explanation (cf. λόγον διδόναι, “to give an account,” “to account for”); (b) as an economic or commercial term: “reckoning” (συναίρω λόγον, Mt. 18:23; cf. P. Oxy., I, 113, 28; BGU, 775, 19); “cash account” (δημόσιος λόγος), “account” etc. (very frequently in the pap.).³⁷

c. As a technical term in mathematics:³⁸ “proportion,” “relation,” “element” in the sense of Euclid (ed. I. L. Heiberg, II [1884]). V Definitio 3: λόγος ἐστὶ δύο μεγέθων ὁμογενῶν ἢ κατὰ πηλικότητά ποια σχέσις, Plat. Tim., 32b; common in Democ.; Plot. Enn., III, 3, 6. Here the orderly and rational character implicit in the term is quite clear. With the interrelation of mathematics and philosophy, λόγος, as the rational relation of things to one another, then acquires the more general sense of “order” or “measure” (Hdt., III, 119; Heracl. Fr., 31 [I, 158, 13, Diels5]; Fr., 45 [I, 161, 2, Diels5]).

d. From the second half of the 5th century it is used sub-

to the human ability to think or reason, his *ratio* or νοῦς. Consequently it is interconnected to a host of related terms touching upon being able to conceptualize things or ideas: ἀλήθεια, λόγος / ἔργον, ἐπιστήμη, ἀρετή, ἀνάγκη, κόσμος, νόμος, ζωή, εἶδος, μορφή, φύσις, πνεῦμα, θεός, ἀριθμός etc.²⁸ The use of λόγος to reference an address or creative power as often used in both the LXX OT and the NT represents an extension

jectively for man's ratio, his ability to think (synon. with → νοῦς), "reason" (Democr. Fr., 53 [II, 157, 1 ff., Diels5]), the human "mind" or "spirit," "thought" (Democr. Fr., 146 [II, 171, 6 ff., Diels5]).

"Since λόγος has so many meanings,³⁹ for a right understanding it is important that they all converge into one concept and all-embracing content which is more or less systematically dissected again by later grammarians and rhetoricians,⁴⁰ esp. in the Scholia Marcianina in Artis Dionysianae, 11 (Grammatici Graeci, ed. A. Hilgard, I, 3 [1901], 353, 29–355, 15). Socrates refers back to the material connections present in the concept itself when in Plat. Theaet. he tries to give a progressive explanation of the untranslatable term λόγος, because he wishes to show that it is a significant preliminary stage in the rise of supreme ἐπιστήμη, of which the capacity for λόγον δοῦναι καὶ δεῖξασθαι is an important aspect, Plat. Theaet., 206d ff.: τὸ μὲν πρῶτον εἶη ἂν (sc. ὁ λόγος) τὸ τὴν αὐτοῦ διάνοιαν ἐμφανῆ ποιεῖν διὰ φωνῆς μετὰ ῥημάτων τε καὶ ὀνομάτων. The λόγος is first, then, the expression of διάνοια in words. It is secondly (206e–208b) the enumeration in correct order of the elements in a subject: τὴν διὰ στοιχείου διεξόδον περὶ ἐκάστου λόγον εἶναι (207C). Finally, it is the establishment of V 4, p 79 the particular, ᾧ ἀπάντων διαφέρει τὸ ἐρωτηθέν, within the κοινόν (208c), i.e., the definition⁴¹ and sometimes even the nature or essence.⁴²"

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:77–79.]

²⁸By reason of its structure λόγος in the course of its development necessarily entered into relations and parallels and connections and equations with a whole series of basic philosophical terms⁴³ such as → ἀλήθεια (Plat. Phaed., 99e ff.; cf. Heracl. Fr., 1 [I, 150, 1 ff., Diels5]), though it can also stand in confrontation λόγοσ/ἔργον (Thuc., II, 65, 9; Anaxag. Fr., 7 [II, 36, 4, Diels5]) and even antithesis; ἐπιστήμη (Plat. Symp., 211a; Soph., 265c); → ἀρετή (Aristot. Eth. Nic., I, 6, p. 1098a, 7–16; Plut. De Virt. Morali, 3 [II, 441c]: ἀρετή is λόγος and vice versa); → ἀνάγκη (Leucipp. Fr., 2 [II, 81, 5 f., Diels5]); → κόσμος (→ III, 873; 878); → νόμος (II, p. 169, 28f.; III, p. 4, 2 ff., v. Arnim M. Ant., IV, 4; Plot. Enn., III, 2, 4; Heracl. Fr., 114 together with Fr., 2 [I, 176, 5 ff. and 151, 1 ff., Diels5]); → ζωή (Plot. Enn., VI, 7, 11); → εἶδος and → μορφή (ibid., I, 6, 2 f.; VI, 7, 10 f.); → φύσις; → πνεῦμα, esp. in the Stoa (λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ = πνεῦμα σωματικόν, II, p. 310, 24 f., v. Arnim); → θεός (Max. Tyr., 27, 8; God is ὁ πάντων τῶν ὄντων λόγος, Orig. Cels., V, 14). λόγος and ἀριθμός are also related (Ps.-Epicharm. Fr., 56 [I, 208, 5 f., Diels5]). Acc. to Pythagorean teaching, the nature of things is expressed in numerical relations, and this gives us a close approximation to λόγος (cf. Plut. Comm. Not., 35 [II, 1077b]); Simpl. in Aristot. = Schol. in Aristot. (ed. C. A. Brandis [1836]), p. 67a, 38 ff.: ἀριθμοὺς μὲν οἱ Πυθαγόρειοι καὶ λόγους ἐν τῇ ὕλῃ ὀνόμαζον τὰ αἰτία ταῦτα τῶν ὄντων ἢ ὄντα (cf. Plot. Enn., V, 1, 5). [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:79.]

of meanings that go well beyond typical secular Greek usage.²⁹ In general a λόγος represented a reasoned thought which could be articulated, But every spoken word did not represent such and thus was not λόγος.

The philosopher [Heraclitus](#) (ca. 535 - 475 BCE) represents a water shed turning point for the use of λόγος in speculative philosophy. Two groups of meaning for λόγος emerge. 1) λόγος references "the rational power of calculation in virtue of which man can see himself and his place in the cosmos." Then, 2) λόγος refers to "a metaphysical reality and an established term in philosophy and theology, from which there finally develops in later antiquity, under alien influences, a cosmological entity and hypostasis of the deity, a δεύτερος θεός."³⁰ Out of both these concepts, and especially the second, there emerges what we might label a "theological" use of the term. And it is this side of the word λόγος that becomes important for our study of Jhn. 1:1-18.

This understanding stems from the fundamental approach of ancient Greeks that existing in things, the world, its course is an intelligible and understandable law or principle of being, which can be labeled the λόγος. But this principle of λόγος is not merely

²⁹It should not be overlooked, however, that for the Greeks λόγος is very different from an address or a word of creative power.⁴⁴ No matter how we construe it as used by the Greeks,⁴⁵ it stands in contrast to the 'Word' of the OT and NT. Naturally, concrete utterance is part of its content, especially when it is employed in an emphatic sense, as in human words of command (Hdt., IX, 4; Soph. Oed. Col., 66), divine or oracular sayings (Pind. Pyth., 4, 59), λόγοι μαντικοί (Plat. Phaedr., 275b), or philosophical dialogue. But there is implied the connected rational element in speech, which seeks to discover the issue itself in the demonstration,⁴⁶ as distinct from the harmony and beauty of sound, for which the Greek uses ἔπος or ῥῆμα, and especially in contrast to ῥῆμα as the individual and more emotional expression or saying, though this does, of course, fall into a pattern, so that the fact of speech is the essential thing,⁴⁷ and ῥῆμα thus denotes the word as expressed will,⁴⁸ as distinct from the explicatory element in λόγος. According to the acute definition of Aristot. (De Interpretatione, p. 16b, 26), λόγος is a φωνῆ σημαντική, a 'significant utterance.' Expressions like τί λέγεις; ('what is the meaning of what you say?') point to the fact that the essential thing is, not the saying, but the meaning. λέγειν cannot be used for 'to command,' or 'to address,' or 'to utter a word of creative power.' λόγος is a statement (ἀπόφανσις, ibid, p. 17a, 22) whether something ὑπάρχει or μὴ ὑπάρχει (p. 17a, 23). Hence the explanatory words are ἀποφαίνεσθαι (to cause something to be seen, p. 17a, 27); δηλοῦν (p. 17a, 16; cf. Pol., I, 2, p. 1253a, 14: ὁ δὲ λόγος ἐπὶ τῷ δηλοῦν ἐστίν); (λέγειν) τι κατὰ τινοσ (p. 17a, 21); 'This causing of something to be seen for what it is, and the possibility of being orientated thereby, are what Aristotle defines as 'word' (λόγος).'⁴⁹ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 79–80.]

³⁰Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:80–81.

theoretical; it stands as an animated force or power (νόμος) that controls the material universe including man. Gaining understanding of this dynamical life principle is knowledge. For Heraclitus such knowledge of the νόμος meant to build a connecting bridge between man and the cosmos.³¹ Thus λόγος takes on a mediating role opening up knowledge of the cosmos to individuals. This knowledge can enable the individual then to articulate the λόγος to others, who with proper knowledge, can comprehend the λόγος. But this is all in limited ways, since no human is capable of complete understanding of the λόγος.

The Sophist philosophers took Heraclitus' ideas and focused on λόγος as the rational power in a person which with proper education can turn into persuasive speech to change things in political life. This alternative perspective is developed into the first articulated theory of the λόγος in Greek philosophy.

With the fourth and fifth century emphasis upon reason as central to their conceptions of democracy, the idea of λόγος took on greater importance. Largely perceived as rationality in the mind of an individual, democracy works only through reason well articulated in the public arena. Λόγος stands behind this capability.

But Socrates and Plato take the idea of λόγος to new levels of definition. Since λόγος is essential as a powerful influence in all of life it then becomes the per-existing harmony between the thinking soul and the material world. The achieving of this harmony between thinking and the material world comes only by the power of λόγος and achieving it means arrival at ἀλήθεια, truth. But the source of all truth is λόγος. It takes on its own independent existence that man in his ψυχή, soul,

³¹“The λόγος is here the word, speech, or content of speech or book, but also what is meant by the word or in the work, the truth; for only of it can one say that it is eternally valid (ἀεὶ ἐόντος), and that everything takes place in its sense. Philosophical knowledge, the λόγος or → νοῦς → σύνεσις, is thus for Heraclitus the means to evoke the words and works of men. Both speech and action follow from it. This λόγος of Heraclitus is to be understood and interpreted as an oracular word. For men are bound by the λόγος and yet they do not see it. They live as though there were an ἰδία πρόνησις (Fr., 2). Heraclitus connects this λόγος with the ζυνόν (→ κοινὸς λόγος), Fr., 2. It is the transcendent and lasting order in which eternal flux occurs, binding the individual to the whole. It is the cosmic law⁵³ which is comprehended by the λόγος which grows in the soul (Fr., 115 [I, 176, 10, Diels5]: ψυχῆς ἐστὶ λόγος ἑαυτὸν αὐξῶν, cf. Fr., 45 [I, 161, 1 ff., Diels5]); as such it is the opposite of every individual or private δόξα. The deepest ground of the → ψυχή, which none can wholly plumb, is the λόγος. ‘He who hears the λόγος does not merely accept a claim which springs out of the situation and encounters him. He is aware of a claim, but in such a way that he truly understands it only if he realises that basically it is he himself who must raise the claim to transcend the ἰδία φρόνησις, 54 Fr., 50 (I, 161, 16 f., Diels5): οὐκ ἐμοῦ, ἀλλὰ τοῦ λόγου ἀκούσαντας⁵⁵ ὁμολογεῖν σοφὸν ἐστὶν ἐν πάντα εἶναι.’” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 81.]

is capable of grasping, and then articulating to others.³²

With the emergence of the period of Hellenism after Alexander the Great, λόγος moves into new definitional territory through the widespread influence of the Stoic philosophers. It is this perspective that John encountered in the Roman province of Asia in the late first century AD. Occasional earlier versions from the classical philosophers still floated around,³³ but did not

³²“Thus Plato in *Crito*, 46b/d can say of the λόγοι of Socrates that they were not just λόγοι ἔνεκα λόγου, a mere speaking, nor were they παιδιὰ and φλυαρία (46d), but they were essence and deed, since they stood up even in face of death.⁶³⁷ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:83–84.]

³³Many of these had undergone ‘updating’ by the end of the first century and competed vigorously with Stoicism for adherents. These include the:

a) *Neo-Platonism movement:*

In debate with Stoicism Neo-platonism⁶⁹ championed a developed logos doctrine. Here, too, the λόγος is a shaping power which lends form and life to things and is thus closely related to εἶδος and → μορφή (Plot. *Enn.*, I, 6, 2. 3. 6; III, 3, 6; IV, 3, 10), → φῶς (ibid., II, 4, 5) and → ζωή (ibid., VI, 7, 11: εἰ δὴ κατὰ λόγον δεῖ τὸ ποιοῦν εἶναι ὡς μορφοῦν, τί ἂν εἴη; ἢ ψυχὴ ποιεῖν πῦρ δυναμένη· τοῦτο δ’ ἐστὶ ζωὴ καὶ λόγος, ἐν καὶ ταῦτόν ἄμφω). Life is artistically fashioning power. τίς ὁ λόγος; it is οἶον ἔκλαμψις (irradiation) ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, νοῦ καὶ ψυχῆς (ibid., III, 2, 16). Where it works, everything is permeated (λελόγωται), i.e., shaped (μεμόρφωται) by the λόγος, III, 2, 16. Nature is life and λόγος and the working power of form, III, 8, 2: ... τὴν φύσιν εἶναι λόγον, ὃς ποιεῖ λόγον ἄλλον γέννημα αὐτοῦ. Indeed, the whole world is λόγος, and all that is in it is λόγος, III, 2, 2, the former as the pure power of form in the intelligible world, the latter in admixture with matter to the final λόγος ὁ κατὰ τὴν μορφήν τὴν ὀρωμένην ἔσχατος ἤδη καὶ νεκρός, which οὐκέτι ποιεῖν δύναται ἄλλον, and which was unknown to Stoicism in contrast to Neo-platonism, III, 8, 2. Thus Plot., like John’s Gospel, can say in III, 2, 15: ἀρχὴ οὖν λόγος καὶ πάντα λόγος.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:85.]

b) *The Mystery Religions*

In connection with deities of revelation the λόγος takes on esp. in the Hellen. mysteries an enhanced religious significance as → ἱερός λόγος “sacred history,” “holy and mysterious doctrine,” “revelation,” in a sense not found elsewhere in secular Gk. The ἱερός here belongs essentially to the content and is not just traditional. Hdt., II, 51 already appeals to a ἱρόν τινα λόγον of the Cabiri mysteries in Samothrace (Syr. Dea, 15, 4); and we hear of sacred history in the Dionysus cult, among the Pythagoreans (Iambl. *Vit. Pyth.*, 28, 146: Πυθαγόραν συντάξαι τὸν περὶ θεῶν λόγον, ὃν καὶ ἱερόν διὰ τοῦτο ἐπέγραψεν), cf. the ἱερός λόγος of the Orphics⁷⁰ (Suid., s.v. Ὀρφεύς, No. 654 [Adler]). In the Isis hymn of Andros, v. 12 (ed. W. Peek [1930]) there is ref. to the sacred doctrine of the mysteries of Isis which induces pious awe in the initiate, and in Plut. *Is. et Os.*, 2 (II, 351 f.) in connection with theological logos speculation, we read of the ἱερός λόγος, ὃν ἡ θεὸς [sc. Isis] συνάγει καὶ συντίθησι, καὶ παραδίδωσι (!) τοῖς τελουμένοις <διὰ> θειώσεως, and for which δεισιδαιμονία and περιεργία are not enough, 3 (II, 352b). Osiris is the half personified λόγος created by Isis, a spiritual reflection of the world (Is. et

Os., 54). In the Ἑρμοῦ τοῦ τρισμεγίστου ἱερός λόγος (Corp. Herm., III heading [acc. to Reitzenstein Poim.]) Hermes tells how by God's mercy he became λόγος and hence υἱὸς θεοῦ. As a special gift of God (XII, 12, 13) and as λόγος τέλειος this ἱερός λόγος⁷¹ leads to the mystery of union with the deity (IX, 1; XII, 12). Indeed, the λόγος can even be equivalent to → μυστήριον or τελετή (XIII, 13b: the λόγος is the παράδοσις of παλιγγενεσία), and the initiate himself is the personified λόγος θεοῦ, cf. I, 6 (Reitzenstein Poim.): τὸ ἐν σοὶ βλέπων (!) καὶ ἀκοῦον λόγος κυρίου ἐστίν, which extols God in the regenerate and in the λόγος offers Him all things as λογικὴ → θυσία, XIII, 18, 21. [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:86.]

c) *The Hermes-Logos-Theology.*

Hermeticism. Almost all aspects of the philosophical logos concept occur in Gk. theology, personified and comprehended in the figure of the god Hermes⁷³ and others. If in Gk. theology Helios, Pan, Isis etc.⁷⁴ are the λόγος as well as Hermes, there is no implied incarnation of the λόγος but the equation of a revealing and cosmogonic principle with one of the deities of popular religion. This is the kind of identification which is often found in, e.g., the theological system of Stoicism (Zeus-Λόγος, Isis-Θῶς, Isis-Δικαιοσύνη, Isis-Γένησις, etc.). In other words, a concept is hypostatized as a god, or identified with a god. There is no question of the divine word of power and creation becoming man, incarnate. This kind of Hermes-Logos-theology is to be found in Cornut. Theol. Graec., 16 (cf. Diog. L., VII, 1, 36 [49]: τυγχάνει δὲ ὁ Ἑρμῆς ὁ λόγος ὢν, ὃν ἀπέστειλαν πρὸς ἡμᾶς ἐξ οὐρανοῦ οἱ θεοί, μόνον τὸν ἄνθρωπον τῶν ἐπὶ γῆς ζῶων λογικὸν ποιήσαντες ... ἀλλὰ πρὸς τὸ σῶζειν μᾶλλον γέγονεν ὁ λόγος,⁷⁵ ὅθεν καὶ τὴν Ὑγίειαν αὐτῷ συνώκισαν ... παραδέδοται δὲ καὶ κήρυξ θεῶν καὶ διαγγέλλειν αὐτὸν ἔφασαν τὰ παρ' ἐκείνων τοῖς ἀνθρώποις, κήρυξ μὲν, ἐπειδὴ διὰ φωνῆς γεγωνοῦ παριστᾷ τὰ κατὰ τὸν λόγον σημαινόμενα ταῖς ἀκοαῖς, ἄλλελος δέ, ἐπεὶ τὸ βούλημα τῶν θεῶν γινώσκομεν ἐκ τῶν ἐνδεδομένων ἡμῖν κατὰ τὸν λόγον ἐννοιῶν. *New and significant here is the role of Hermes as a mediator and revealer who as κήρυξ and ἀγγελος declares and makes known to us the will of the gods.* He thus has a soteriological role in so far as the λόγος is present for σῶζειν.⁷⁶ Indeed, Hermes is the great power of conception and creation, the λόγος σπερματικός of the Stoa, honoured under the image of the Phallos:⁷⁷ γόνιμος ὁ λόγος καὶ τέλειός ἐστιν, and he finally rises to the level of the comprehensive κοινὸς λόγος: διὰ δὲ τὸ κοινὸν αὐτὸν εἶναι καὶ τὸν αὐτὸν ἔν τε τοῖς ἀνθρώποις πᾶσι καὶ ἐν τοῖς θεοῖς. It is interesting to see how in later antiquity the λόγος concept, which derives originally from the cultural and intellectual sphere, sinks back increasingly into the sphere of the natural which it was once fashioned to oppose. Thus in Hellenistic mysticism λόγος is essentially a cosmic and creative potency, the guide and agent of knowledge, increasingly represented as a religious doctrine of salvation, the revealer of what is hidden.⁷⁸

Under the influence of ancient Egyptian theology this philosophical and noetic concept ends, therefore, in the mystico-religious speculations of Hermeticism⁷⁹ concerning creation and revelation. The λόγος comes forth from → Νοῦς (Corp. Herm., I, 5a: the ἐκ τοῦ φωτὸς προελθὼν λόγος ἅγιος ἐπέβη τῇ ὑγρᾷ φύσει). It is the son of God (I, 6: ὁ ἐκ νοῦς φωτεινὸς λόγος is the υἱὸς Θεοῦ). It brings order and form into the world as its δημιουργός: Suid., s.v. Ἑρμῆς, Ὁ Τρισμέγιστος, No. 3038 (Adler): Ὁ γὰρ λόγος αὐτοῦ παντέλειος ὢν καὶ γόνιμος καὶ δημιουργικός, ἐν γονίμῳ φύσει πεσὼν καὶ γονίμῳ ὕδατι, ἔγκυον τὸ ὕδωρ ἐποίησε. Almost all the divine attributes are ascribed to it as such. But as the sum of all the δυνάμεις of the supreme deity it is still an intermediary making contact between God and matter, and also between God, the father of the λόγος, and cre-

ated being, man. The idea of an intermediate λόγος is further developed in the concept of the father-son relation, cf. Schol. on Ael. Arist., III, p. 564, 19 ff., Dindorf. Thus the λόγος is also the son of Hermes, related to Hermes as Hermes is to the supreme deity, Zeus. In accordance with this intermediate position in creation Horus/Osiris in Plut. Is. et Os., 53 (II, 373a/b) is not καθαρός and εὐλικρινής, οἷος ὁ πατήρ λόγος αὐτὸς καθ' ἑαυτὸν ἀμύγης καὶ ἀπαθής, ἀλλὰ νενοθευμένος τῇ ὕλῃ διὰ τὸ σωματικόν There is a graded connection which in the Hermetic conception of a world organism is elucidated in the thought of the image (→ εἰκὼν): The λόγος is an εἰκὼν of God, and man is an image of the λόγος, Cl. Al. Strom., V, 14, 91, 5: ἐκὼν μὲν γὰρ θεοῦ λόγος θεῖος καὶ βασιλικός, ἄνθρωπος ἀπαθής, εἰκὼν θ' εἰκόνας ἄνθρωπινος νοῦς.

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:87–88.]

^{34c}In Stoicism⁶⁷ λόγος is a term for the ordered and teleologically orientated nature of the world (Diog. L., VII, 74 [149] λόγος, καθ' ἃν ὁ κόσμος διεξάγεται). It is thus equated with the concept of God (→ θεός, III, 75; cf. Zeno in Diog. L., VII, 68 [134] [= I, p. 24, 7 f., v. Arnim] τὸ δὲ ποιοῦν τὸν ἐν αὐτῇ [sc. τῇ ὕλῃ] λόγον τὸν θεόν), with πρόνοια, εἰμαρμένη, with → κόσμος, → νόμος, → φύσις—acc. to Chrysipp. εἰμαρμένη is the Διὸς λόγος (Plut. Stoic. Rep., 47 [II, 1056c]) or ὁ τοῦ κόσμου λόγος or λόγος τῶν ἐν κόσμῳ προνοία διοικουμένων (II, 264, 18 ff., v. Arnim).⁶⁸ As such it can no longer be rendered actively as concrete speech which is uttered on a meaningful basis, as in Socratic-Platonic philosophy. It can be identified only passively with the (cosmic) law of reason. God is ὁ πάντων τῶν ὄντων λόγος, Orig. Cels., V, 14, and the basis of the unity of this world (εἷς λόγος ὁ ταῦτα κοσμοῦν καὶ μία πρόνοια ἐπιτροπεύουσα, Plut. Is. et Os., 67 [II, 377 f.]; ὁ τὴν οὐσίαν τῶν ὄλων διοικῶν λόγος, M. Ant., VI, 1). By assimilation to popular religion this world logos is equated with Zeus, as in the well-known hymn of Cleanthes, Fr., 537 (I, p. 122, 7, v. Arnim): ὥσθ' ἔνα γίγνεσθαι πάντων λόγον αἰὲν ἔοντα. It is the principle which creates the world, i.e., which orders and constitutes it V 4, p. 85 (ὁ τοῦ κόσμου λόγος, Chrysipp. [II, p. 264, 18 f., v. Arnim]; M. Ant., IV, 29, 3), which makes it a ζῶον λογικόν (II, p. 191, 34 f., v. Arnim). It is the power which extends throughout matter (ὁ δι' ὅλης τῆς οὐσίας διήκων λόγος, M. Ant., V, 32) and works immanently in all things. The world is a grand unfolding of the λόγος, which is, of course, represented materially (Diog. L., VII, 35 [56]: πᾶν γὰρ τὸ ποιοῦν σῶμά ἐστιν) as → πῦρ, → πνεῦμα (II, p. 310, 24 f., v. Arnim), or αἰθήρ. But as the organic power which fashions unformed and inorganic matter, which gives growth to plants and movement to animals, it is the λόγος σπερματικός (Zeno [I, p. 28, 26, v. Arnim]). That is, it is a seed which unfolds itself, and this seed is by nature reason. As λόγος ὀρθός, the cosmic law, the → νόμος of the world as well as the individual, it gives men the power of knowledge (Pos. in Sext. Emp. Math., VII, 93: ἡ τῶν ἄλων φύσις ὑπὸ συγγενοῦς ὀφείλει καταλαμβάνεσθαι τοῦ λόγου, cf. Diog. L., VII, 52) and of moral action (M. Ant., IV, 4, 1: ὁ προστακτικός τῶν ποιητέων ἢ μὴ λόγος κοινός). As all powers proceed from the λόγος, they all return to it again, M. Ant., IV, 21, 2: ψυχαὶ ... μεταβάλλουσι καὶ χέονται καὶ ἐξάπτονται εἰς τὸν τῶν ἄλων σπερματικὸν λόγον ἀναλαμβάνόμεναι. The particular logos of man is only part of the great general logos, V, 27; Epict. Diss., III, 3; M. Ant., VII, 53: κατὰ τὸν κοινὸν θεοῖς καὶ ἀνθρώποις λόγον, which achieves awareness in man, so that through it God and man, or the sage or philosopher as the true man who alone

away from connections to speech to the abstract idea of a pantheistic deity. It stands behind everything in the material world as the organizing, sustaining, creative divine Force. Knowledge of the λόγος remains still available through rationality gained in acquiring knowledge through education. But for the Stoics the goal of human existence is not so much learning λόγος as it is in living one's entire life in complete harmony with this dynamic standing behind all of life. This is the highest virtue achievable.

With a large majority of the church members in Asia that John's gospel message targeted having grown up in and around Stoic teaching and influence, to tell the story of Jesus around the λόγος theme made perfect sense and could be far a more persuasive message to that culture. The very different twist that John gave to the concept of λόγος in his gospel account presented ideas familiar to them and at the same radically challenged them to concretize the abstract Stoic λόγος into the flesh and blood person of Jesus of Nazareth.

The Logos in Jewish thinking. But there is another audience that John is targeting as well with Jewish roots and orientation. In Hellenistic Judaism Koine Greek had become the mother language of most Jews living outside Palestine with Hebrew and Aramaic as secondary languages. The huge chasm between the Greco-Roman way of living and the Jewish religious way of living presented big challenges to most of these folks.

But many Hellenistic Jewish leaders sought to build bridges over this chasm by finding ways to pull the two cultures together. Clearly the most influential Jewish writer in this era was the philosopher [Philo](#) (25 BCE - 50 AD) whose home base was Alexandria Egypt in the century before Christ and the early first century AD. He used the word λόγος over 1,300 times in his extent writings, but unfortunately with a variety of different and often contradictory meanings. But his goal was to synchronize Jewish and Greek cultural and religious ideas into a holistic unity, in order to demonstrate the has the ὀρθός λόγος and who thus lives ἀκολουθῶν τῇ φύσει (Philo Ebr., 34) are combined into a great κόσμος (II, p. 169, 28 f., v. Arnim: κοινωνίαν ὑπάρχειν πρὸς ἀλλήλους [sc. ἀνθρώποις καὶ θεοῖς] διὰ τὸ λόγου μετέχειν, ὅς ἐστι φύσει νόμος. The duality of λόγος as reason and speech (opp. πάθος) develops in Stoic doctrine inwardly into the λόγος ἐνδιάθετος and outwardly into the λόγος προφορικός (Sext. Emp. Pyrrh. Hyp., I, 65). An extension of content significant for later development is to be found in the equation of λόγος with φύσις (ὁ κοινὸς τῆς φύσεως λόγος, II, p. 269, 13, v. Arnim; M. Ant., IV, 29, 3) as a creative power. In the period which followed this aspect was increasingly emphasised, e.g., in Plut. Is. et Os., 45 (II, 369a): δημιουργὸν ὕλης ἓνα λόγον καὶ μίαν πρόνοιαν. In the Stoic λόγος the rational power of order and the vital power of conception are merged in one (Diog. L., VII, 68 [135 f.] = II, 180, 2 ff., v. Arnim).” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:84–85.]

legitimacy of the Jewish religious heritage.³⁵ Careful examination of some of the distinctives of Philo's λόγος have a clear echo in the fourth gospel. But many of his claims go very different directions as well in their synthesizing tendencies.

The Logos in Gnostic thinking. One other background influence that evidently was beginning to loom large on John's horizon was the emerging Gnosticism in the province of Asia. In the second half of the first century several mystery religions surfaced and gained numerous adherents both in Rome and in the eastern part of the empire. In Galatia, the [Cybele and Attis cult](#) arose and spread west ward across to Rome picking up many adherents in Asia. Cybele had roots in Anato-

³⁵“The vacillation is naturally due to the synthesising tendency in Philo's attempted uniting of Jewish religion and Gk. philosophical speculation. One can do justice to it only if one first considers the various aspects and understandings of the Philonic concept apart, not trying to harmonise them, but separating the incompatible Gk. and non-Gk. elements. In the main it is only the divine logos which is here at issue. The essential features of this cannot be explained in terms of the development of the Gk. logos concept. Even if we cannot be sure of the detailed roots of this new usage, they are manifestly non-Gk. The term is taken from the academic vocabulary of Hellenistic philosophy.⁸⁶ But it is decisively refashioned in a new, very different, and primarily mythologising direction.

“This λόγος θεοῦ or θεῖος λόγος, as the new use with the gen shows, is no longer God Himself as in the Stoa (I, p. 24, 7; II, p. 111, 10, v. Arnim; cf. also Orig. Cels., V, 24: ὁ τῶν πάντων λόγος ἐστὶ κατὰ μὲν Κέλσον αὐτὸς ὁ θεός, κατὰ δὲ ἡμᾶς ὁ υἱὸς αὐτοῦ) It is an ἔργον of God (Sacr. AC., 65). It is a god, but of the second rank (Leg. All., II, 86: τὸ δὲ γενικώτατον ἐστὶν ὁ θεός, καὶ δεῦτερος ὁ θεοῦ λόγος, τὰ δ' ἄλλα λόγῳ μόνον ὑπάρχει). As such it is called the → εἰκὼν (Spec. Leg., I, 81: λόγος δ' ἐστὶν εἰκὼν θεοῦ, δι' οὗ σύμπᾶ ὁ κόσμος ἐδημιουργεῖτο) of the supreme God, and in Philo's doctrine of creation it takes on basic significance not only as ἀρχέτυπον παράδειγμα⁸⁷ but also as ὄργανον θεοῦ (Migr. Abr., 6; Cher., 127). With Σοφία⁸⁸ God has begotten the κόσμος νοητός as His first-born son⁸⁹ (Agric., 51: τὸν ὀρθὸν αὐτοῦ λόγον καὶ πρωτόγονον → υἱόν). This is equated with the λόγος (Op. Mund., 24: οὐδὲν ἄν ἕτερον εἴποι [τις] τὸν νοητὸν κόσμον εἶναι ἡθεοῦ λόγον ἤδη κοσμοποιούντος). Thus the λόγος is a mediating figure which comes forth from God and establishes a link between the remotely transcendent God and the world or man, and yet which also represents man to God as a high-priest (Gig., 52) and advocate (Vit. Mos., II, 133). i.e., as a personal Mediator, and not just in terms of the genuinely Gk. ἀνα-λογία (Plat. Tim., 31c; Plot. Enn., III, 3, 6).

“As the κόσμος νοητός it is the sum and locus (Op. Mund., 20) of the creative powers of God, His → δυνάμεις (Fug., 101), the ideas, the individual logoi⁹⁰ whereby this visible world is fashioned in detail and also maintained in its ordered life (Rer. Div. Her., 188). As δίοπισ Καὶ κυβερνήτης τοῦ παντός (Cher., 36) it guides the world in exactly the same way as the Stoic νόμος or λόγος θύσεως.”

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:88–89.]

lia as a mother goddess.

The syncretism nature of the ancient world pulled together various religious ideas, especially if they possessed mystical strands, into differing collections of religious thinking. Sometimes this is labeled [Gnosticism](#), but less so in more recent times.³⁶ From all indication the label gnosticism would be apply in a very fluid definition to influences upon both Judaism and Christianity in the late first century and following. Not until the middle of the second century AD does it begin to have noticeable impact on some circles of Christianity with leaders such as [Cerinthus](#), Κήρινθος, from Asia and [Valentinus](#), in Rome. John and Cerinthus are linked together in church tradition, but whether this is correct has been debated. With a school in Asia, Cerinthus would have had occasion to experience the impact of John on Christianity in that region. But we know little of his specific teachings since none of his writings survive and mention of him comes only from hostile sources in the church fathers. Valentinus, when passed over for the leadership of the church in Rome, founded his own school in the city which became highly influential in the middle of the second century.³⁷ Leaders such as these two brought gnostic thinking full blown into Christianity and led the charge to remake Christianity into something very different than taught by Jesus and the apostles.

³⁶It is helpful to distinguish between terms here: γνωστικός gnostikos means learned, and comes from γνῶσις gnōsis, meaning knowledge.

³⁷“Even before the death of Valentinus some of his students were already becoming influential teachers. But soon after his death the Valentinian school split into two groups, the ‘Eastern’ (or Anatolian, mostly located in Alexandria) and the ‘Western’ (or Italic, situated in Rome). The Eastern branch produced such luminaries as Axionicus of Antioch, Kolorbasos (?), Mark, Theodotus (“Excerpta ex Theodoto”; Casey 1934; Sagnard 1948; and Hill 1972), Ambrose and Candidus, while the West produced Heracleon (Brooke 1891; Pagels 1973), Ptolemy (Epistle to Flora; Quispel 1966), Secundus, Alexander, Flora, Florinus, and Theotimus (Layton 1987: map 5; Rudolph 1983: 322–25).

“The heresiological assault on the Valentinian schools began in about the middle of the 2d century. Such orthodox thinkers as Justin Martyr (Rome, ca. 150), Miltiades (ca. 165), Irenaeus (Lyon, ca. 180), Clement (Alexandria, ca. 200), Origen (Alexandria, ca. 200), Tertullian (Carthage, ca. 195–207), Hippolytus (Rome, ca. 222–235), Ambrose (Milan, ca. 338), John Chrysostom (Antioch, ca. 386), Theodore (Mopsuestia, ca. 400), and Theodoret (Cyrrus, ca. 450) wrote merciless polemic against the Valentinians. The presence of Valentinian texts, representing more than one Coptic dialect, in the Nag Hammadi library attest to the continued interest in Valentinian concepts, in the mid-4th century, within circles of ascetic monks, who were themselves not Valentinian. The emperor Constantine proscribed the Valentinians, among other ‘sectarians,’ in about the year 325, while the last contemporary condemnation dates from the Trullan Synod (Canon 95) of 692 (Constantinople).”

[Paul Allan Mirecki, “Valentinus,” ed. David Noel Freedman, *The Anchor Yale Bible Dictionary* (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 784.]

From all indications John had to contend with some early forms of this kind of thinking, often labeled today as [Proto-Gnosticism](#).³⁸ From the gnostic writings in the [New Testament Apocrypha](#) one can tell that the Greek, especially Stoic, thinking about the λόγος played an important role in the emerging systems of Christian belief found among the different gnostic teachers. Just how sophisticated the false teachers were in Asia in their adoption of these Greek and mystical ideas is not clear in the way John presents his story of Jesus. But what is clear is that his presentation of Jesus as the divine λόγος in human flesh stood completely counter to anything they might have picked up from the culture around them.

If anything becomes clear in this background study, my prayer is that you the reader can see how danger-

³⁸The premise behind the massive commentary on the fourth gospel by Rudolf Bultmann have long since been proven incorrect. This gospel is not a gnostic writing transferred over to Christianity as he believed:

In research, a ‘gnostic’ character has always been claimed above all for two complexes of writings which were canonized in the second century as part of the ‘New Testament’, namely the Gospel of John and certain letters from the school of the apostle Paul. In particular, in the twentieth century it was thought that the first signs of the Christianizing of an originally pagan gnosis could be observed in this Gospel, but first sources had to be postulated for it. Above all the distinguished Marburg New Testament scholar Rudolf Bultmann (1884–1976) attempted to show with an impressive commentary on the Gospel of John that central views of the Gospel were ‘part of a gnostic doctrine of redemption’ which had been transferred to the person of Jesus and regarded the author as a Christianized gnostic (Glauben und Verstehen IV, 41984, 145). However, at decisive points the basic outlines of the Gospel of John do not fit the typological model outlined above: according to the Gospel, which follows Jewish-Hellenistic ideas here, the creation goes back to the Word of God (Greek ‘Logos’; cf. John 1:1–4), which already exists before the world, and not to a creator who is opposed to God. For the author of the Gospel of John it is evident, particularly in Jesus’ suffering on the cross, that Jesus Christ is the one Word of God, which has assumed a human body. Such an emphasis on the identity between the body of the earthly Jesus and the reality of a heavenly redeemer differs markedly from the occasionally more energetic occasionally more cautious differentiations of the literature of Nag Hammadi and Medinet Madi. Certainly, as I have already mentioned (p. 33), the first extant ancient commentary on the Gospel of John comes from Heracleon, an adherent of the school of the Roman teacher Valentinus, and many outlines of systems which with good reason can be assigned to ‘knowledge’ use terms and notions from the Fourth Gospel. But this striking preference could also simply be connected with the fact that the Gospel of John is the only one of the four canonical Gospels to begin with the creation of the world and thus is particularly attractive as a biblical basis for theologians who are interested in total theories. The same goes for abrupt separations between light and darkness or between God and the world with which the Gospel offered additional points of contact.

[Christoph Marksches, *Gnosis : An Introduction* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2003), 71–72.]

ous it becomes to allow the cultural world around you to define your Christian understanding about Jesus. When contemporary culture frameworks became more important than the divine revelation given to the apostles, nothing but corruption and perversion of the Christian life followed. That spiritual principle is just as applicable today as it was at the end of the first Christian century.

B. Literary Aspects:

The literary aspects are highly important and highly controversial at the same time.

1) **Genre** Without questioning the broad genre is that of gospel. John 1:1-18 stands as an integral part of the fourth gospel. Among literary forms used commonly in ancient Greek writing, gospel was not one of them.

Most scholars who work in the discipline of Formgeschichte are convinced that the NT writers utilized elements of the Greek and Roman [βίος](#) in order to create a distinctive literary form found only in Christian writings for the first three or four centuries. Some of those elements include concentration on a single character in the story; promotion of his story around central themes as an extraordinary person worthy of the respect of the readers; developing the central character's story out of historical elements; the writing of the story based upon careful analysis of a variety of sources of information (cf. Lk. 1-1-4). Some of the distinctive elements include building the story around the religious significance of the central character; drawing from ancient history writing principles of beginning with significant events and ending with significant events with the story focused on how the character moved from the beginning to the end of the story. Numerous other minor points could be included in profile as well. The resulting pattern developed by the canonical gospel writers, and imitated in varying ways by the apocryphal gospel writers later on, has come to be called εὐαγγέλιον, [gospel](#), rather than βίος, [life of](#).

One of the interesting side impacts of this is the early Christian extension of the word εὐαγγέλιον. Inside the NT the word only means the proclaimed message of salvation preached by the apostles under authorization of Christ Himself. But in early Christian writings another meaning of εὐαγγέλιον is added. That is, it also comes to specify one of the four documents at the beginning of the NT listing. And thus it becomes widely used as a part of the title heading that is placed at the beginning of each of these documents for identification purposes.³⁹ Here the church fathers are labeling the

³⁹ *KATA ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ

Inscriptio: εὐαγγέλιον κατα Ιωαννην P⁶⁶.75 (A) C D K L Ws Δ Θ Ψ f1 33. 565. 700. 892. 1424 M vg^{ww}
 | εὐαγγέλιον του κατα Ιωαννην αγιου εὐαγγελιου Γ
 | το κατα Ιωαννην αγιον εὐαγγέλιον 579

document by their genre perception of it as a gospel.

Our text, 1:1-18, is clearly a sub-genre form that is most often labeled a prologue.⁴⁰ Some commentators have debated whether this material was added later or not to the rest of the document, but careful exegesis of the remainder of this document will demonstrate just how closely the concepts in the prologue are integrated into the document itself as D.A. Carson in the Pillar NT commentary series on John as convincingly demonstrated.⁴¹ My contention for many years has been that

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[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 292.]

⁴⁰In more technical scholarly circles, a distinction must be made between the beginning text of John (1:1-18) and the anti-marcion gospel prologues that circulated in attachment to each of the four gospels evidently from the last decades of the second century onward that were written either in Greek or in Latin.

[Anti-Marcionite Prologues. The short introductory prologues, prefixed to the Gospels of Mk., Lk., and Jn. \(that of Mt., if it ever existed, has been lost\), which are contained in some 40 MSS of the Vulgate. They were written in Greek, but only that to Luke has survived in its original language. D. de Bruyne and A. *Harnack held that they were the earliest of the extant Gospel Prologues, dating from the latter half of the 2nd cent., and thus threw important light on the origins of the Gospels. They are now held to have been neither directed against *Marcion, nor written so early, nor even to be of the same date.](#)

Text in A. *Huck, H. *Lietzmann, and F. L. Cross, A Synopsis of the First Three Gospels (Tübingen, 1936), p. viii; also ed., with full discussion, by J. Regul (Vetus Latina. Ergänzende Schriftenreihe aus der Geschichte der Lateinischen Bibel, 6; 1969), with bibl. In Eng. there is a good summary of the points at issue, with refs. to de Bruyne and Harnack and subsequent discussions, in E. Haenchen, The Acts of the Apostles (Eng. tr., Oxford, 1971), pp. 10-12.

[F. L. Cross and Elizabeth A. Livingstone, eds., *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2005), 78.]

⁴¹“The Prologue is a foyer to the rest of the Fourth Gospel (as John’s Gospel is often called), simultaneously drawing the reader in and introducing the major themes. The following parallels between the Prologue and the rest of the book immediately stand out,¹ although as we shall see there are many others of a more subtle nature:

	Prologue	Gospel
the pre-existence of the Logos or Son	1:1-2	17:5
in him was life	1:4	5:26
life is light	1:4	8:12
light rejected by darkness	1:5	3:19
yet not quenched by it	1:5	12:35
light coming into the world	1:9	3:19; 12:46
Christ not received by his own	1:11	4:44
being born to God and not of flesh	1:13	3:6;8:41-42
seeing his glory	1:14	12:41
the ‘one and only’ Son	1:14, 18	3:16
truth in Jesus Christ	1:17	14:6

one cannot correctly understand the fourth gospel without first understanding the prologue in 1:1-18.

The prologue as an ancient literary form could take on several differing formats. Clearly the prologue of Luke 1-14, as a single Greek sentence with different terminology etc. from the rest of the third gospel functions in a different role than John 1:1-18. Luke's prologue functions something as an introductory Preface that provides background understanding of how the document was produced. First developed in ancient Greek theater by Euripides, the προλόγος provided an introduction to the play in order to make it comprehensible to the audience.⁴² John picks up on the general purpose of the ancient προλόγος to provide an introductory explanation of the larger document, and gives to us as readers a synopsis of his story of Jesus built around Jesus as the divine λόγος. For that we can and ought to be profoundly grateful.

2) Literary Setting Clearly by simple definition the prologue functions as introduction to a larger body

no-one has seen God, except the one

who comes from God's side 1:18 6:46

"Not only so, but many of the central, thematic words of this Gospel are first introduced in these verses: life, light (1:4), witness (1:7), true (in the sense of 'genuine' or 'ultimate', 1:9), world (1:10), glory, truth (1:14). But supremely, the Prologue summarizes how the 'Word' which was with God in the very beginning came into the sphere of time, history, tangibility²—in other words, how the Son of God was sent into the world to become the Jesus of history, so that the glory and grace of God might be uniquely and perfectly disclosed. The rest of the book is nothing other than an expansion of this theme.

"The tightness of the connections between the Prologue and the Gospel render unlikely the view that the Prologue was composed by someone other than the Evangelist. Suggestions that the Prologue, though written by the Evangelist, was composed later than the rest of the book (as the introduction of this commentary was written last!) are realistic, but speculative."

[D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 110–112.]

⁴²"The invention of prologue is attributed to Euripides. He prefixed a prologue to his plays as an explanatory first act in order to make the upcoming events in a play comprehensible for his audience. Other dramatists followed in his footsteps and prologue became a part of the traditional formula for writing plays. Almost all Greek prologues told about events that happened much earlier in time than the events depicted in the play." ["Prologue Definition," literarydevices.net]

^{1.1}
 1 In the beginning
 was the Word,
 and
 2 the Word was
 with God,
 and
 3 divine was the Word.

of material. And thus it comes at the beginning of the document. Whether this was written before the composition of the document or after it, is largely irrelevant since it was attached to the beginning from the outset of the copying and distribution of the document.⁴³

3) Literary Structure Here is where most of the controversy over 1:1-18 centers from a literary standpoint. Is it a poem or not? Most likely not.⁴⁴ Is it structured in the form of a chiasm or not? Most likely not. Most of the controversy centers over exclusively concentrating on the surface level text, and completely ignoring a subsurface level structure that comes out upon careful reading of the text. With John having to address a hugely Greek thinking audience at Ephesus toward the end of the first century, one cannot -- and must not -- overlook his ability to address such a readership on their terms not just with a central them of λόγος, but also in the myriad of other ways to present a persuasive case for Jesus as the divine λόγος. Unfortunately, a host of commentators express opinions here with utterly no comprehension of how thinking worked in the Greco-Roman world of John.

The typical block diagram of the text is presented below as a foundation to the structural arrangement of ideas presented at the beginning of this study. Extension connections between the two exist and will play an important role in the exegesis of the passage.

⁴³This claim is based upon the absence of a single manuscript that did not contain this text at the beginning of the document. To make any claim of its independent existence from the rest of the document is utterly preposterous!

⁴⁴"Many suggestions have been made that the Prologue was originally a poem from some other religious tradition (perhaps gnostic³, though there is no shortage of theories) that John took over and adapted for his own ends. Every writer uses sources in some sense, but the strong form of this hypothesis goes so far as to try to strip away John's alleged accretions in the hope of exposing the 'original'. The more specific the suggestions as to the shape and content of this 'original', the more speculative the arguments seem to be, with the result that few adopt so strong a form of the theory today. If John has used sources in the Prologue we cannot isolate them, for they have been so thoroughly re-worked and woven into a fabric of fresh design that there are no unambiguous seams." [D. A. Carson, *The Gospel according to John*, The Pillar New Testament Commentary (Leicester, England; Grand Rapids, MI: Inter-Varsity Press; W.B. Eerdmans, 1991), 112.]

STEP PARALLELISM

A #S 1-10
B #S 11-13
C #S 14-20
A' #S 21-23
B' #S 24-26
C' #S 27-31

4 ^{1.2} **This one was**
in the beginning
with God.

5 ^{1.3} **all things. . .came into being,**
and
apart from Him
6 **came into being not one thing.**

7 **What exists**
8 ^{1.4} in Him
life was,
and
8 **this life was the light of men;**
9 ^{1.5} and
in the darkness
9 **the light. . . shines,**
and
10 **the darkness does not comprehend / overpower it.**

11 ^{1.6} **There was a man,**
sent from God,
the name to him John;

12 ^{1.7} **this one came**
for a witness
so that he might witness
about the light,
so that all might believe
through Him.

13 ^{1.8} **He was not that light,**
but
13 **(he came)**
so that he might witness about the light.

14 ^{1.9} **He was the true light,**
which enlightens every man,
coming into the world.

15 ^{1.10} in the world
He was,
and
through Him
16 **the world. . . came into being,**
and
17 **the world Him did not recognize.**

18 ^{1.11} into His own (people)
He came,
and
19 **His own (people) Him did not receive.**

1.12 But
 as many as received Him,
 20 **He gave to them authority**
 | children of God to become,
 to those believing
 | in His name,
 1.13 who not out of bloods
 neither out of the will of the flesh
 nor out of the will of a man
 but out of God were birthed.

1.14 And
 21 **the Word flesh became**
 and
 22 **set up His tabernacle**
 among us,
 and
 23 **we gazed upon His glory,**
 glory
 | like an only begotten One
 | from the Father,
 full of grace and truth.

24 1.15 **John witnesses**
 about Him
 and
 25 **he cried out saying:**
 A ***This one was***
him whom I said
 after me before me
 a ***the one...coming...exists,***
 /-----|
 because first over me He was.

1.16 Because
 out of His fullness
 26 **we all have received** _
 even |
 grace
 upon grace;
 1.17 because
 through Moses
 27 **the Law...was given,**
 through Jesus Christ
 28 **grace and truth...came.**
 29 1.18 **God no one has seen**
 ever;
 the only begotten God
 | who was
 | in the lap of the Father
 30 **That One has narrated (Him).**

SUMMARY OF RHETORICAL STRUCTURE

When one carefully considers both the surface level arrangement of ideas along with the signals of a subsurface level thought pattern in the form of a informal Jewish step parallelism, the layout of the passage becomes very clear. The connection of the divine Lo-

gos with creation is the focus of statements 1-20. This is advanced to the connection of the divine Logos with the believing community in statements 21 - 30.

Clearly the λόγος is the header statement for both sections in states 1 and 21. In each of the two basic

sections a three fold subdivision appears clearly. First is the existence of the λόγος in connection first to creation (#s 1-10) and then in connection to the church (#s 21-23). Second the witnessing role of John first to the general public (#s. 11-13) and then to the believing community (#s. 24-25). The third and final the general reception the Logos received first to the world (#s. 14-20) and then in the church (#s 26-30).

The lengthy 'reception' statement # 20 both puts in stark contrast the church's reception to both the world (#18) and the Jewish people (# 19). It is out of this positive reception that the believing community comes into existence. How Christ as the λόγος responds to this reception is the point of the second section. This is climaxed in the third sub section of part two in #s 26-30 is the reception of marvelous levels of divine grace that brings deeper understanding of God.

Never could either the Greek and Roman writers about λόγος nor the Jewish writers have imagined such a marvelous blessing from Heaven as comes through Christ as the divine λόγος. Once a person grasps what John as put on the table here, a insatiable appetite to learn the story of this man Jesus of Nazareth would be created.

EXEGESIS OF THE TEXT

The above structural understanding will form the outline structure for our exegeting of the text.

A. LOGOS AND CREATION, vv. 1-13.

John alludes to the creation of the material world in several ways: Ἐν ἀρχῇ, *in the beginning*; πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, *all things through Him were made*; ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ, *in the world*; ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, *the world through Him was made*. Always the λόγος stands separate and apart from the world as its Creator. His existence transcends that of the world into eternity past and equates with that of God the Father.

John develops his understanding of λόγος here in ways that challenged the surrounding cultural perspectives and denied the proto-gnostic denial of Christ as divine λόγος having any connection to a material world.

1) The divine Logos, vv. 1-5

1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. 3 πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into

being through him, and without him not one thing came into being. What has come into being 4 in him was life,^a and the life was the light of all people. 5 The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

The first two sentences hang together as a literary unit, as the block diagram illustrates:

```

1.1      Ἐν ἀρχῇ
1      ἦν ὁ λόγος,
           καὶ
2      ὁ λόγος ἦν
           πρὸς τὸν θεόν,
           καὶ
3      θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

1.2      οὗτος ἦν
           ἐν ἀρχῇ
           πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

```

```

1.1      In the beginning
1      was the Word,
           and
2      the Word was
           with God,
           and
3      divine was the Word.

1.2      This one was
           in the beginning
           with God.

```

Notice how λόγος is placed in the first three main clauses: last; first; last. And then how it is summarized in the fourth clause by repeating the two prepositional modifies from #s 1 and 2. Additionally it is not accident that the first prepositional phrase Ἐν ἀρχῇ is in front of the verb and the second one πρὸς τὸν θεόν is after the verb. Although this moves toward an ancient Greek poetic pattern, it doesn't quite arrive at ancient poetic structure but a rhythmic pattern is heard in the oral reading of the text.

Two central spiritual truths are asserted by John here concerning the λόγος. First, in statement 1, the claim is made that in the beginning of creation the λόγος ἦν, *was*, not ἐγένετο, *came into being*. Unquestionably John use of the peculiar form Ἐν ἀρχῇ goes directly back to Genesis 1:1 in the LXX: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἐποίησεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν οὐρανὸν καὶ τὴν γῆν. *In the beginning God made the heaven and the earth.*⁴⁵ When the creation of the world

⁴⁵As Haenchen pointed out (116) the subject is surprising: one expects to read, 'In the beginning ... God,' but it is 'the Word'; yet it would be impossible to read in its place any other title that has been appropriated for Jesus, e.g., 'In the beginning was the Christ,' or 'the Son,' or 'the Son of Man.' Not even the lofty title 'the Lord' or the more ancient 'the Wisdom' could adequately convey the associations of the following utterances, for the connotation of 'the

took place the λόγος already 'was.'

In the birth narratives of Matthew and Luke, the story of the physical birth of the baby Jesus is told with eloquence. But it must not ever be forgotten that these stories only define the earthly beginning of Jesus of Nazareth. John reminds us that Jesus as λόγος has no definable beginning since it is linked to the existence of God in eternity past. The synoptic gospels seek to affirm the compassion and concern of God in the coming of His Son in human form to live on earth for a few short years. The 'baby Jesus' is nothing but a symbol of God's compassion, and never ever should be worshiped. John, however, asserts the prior eternal existence of Jesus as the divine λόγος, which will equate Him with God. He should then become the object of our worship, as Paul encourages the Philippians in Phil. 2:5-11.

How can one possibly explain the eternal λόγος becoming a human being? Paul uses elements of an ancient Christian poem in Phil. 2:6-8 to attempt such an explanation:

- 6 ὃς ἐν μορφῇ θεοῦ ὑπάρχων
οὐχ ἄρπαγμὸν ἠγήσατο
τὸ εἶναι ἴσα θεῷ,
7 **ἀλλ' ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν**
μορφὴν δούλου λαβών,
ἐν ὁμοιώματι ἀνθρώπων γενόμενος·
καὶ σχήματι εὐρεθεὶς ὡς ἄνθρωπος
8 ἔταπείνωσεν ἑαυτὸν
γενόμενος ὑπήκοος μέχρι θανάτου,
θανάτου δὲ σταυροῦ.
6 *who, though he was in the form of God,
did not regard equality with God
as something to be exploited,*
7 ***but emptied himself,***
*taking the form of a slave,
being born in human likeness.*
And being found in human form,
8 *he humbled himself
and became obedient to the point of death—
even death on a cross.*

This affirmation of praise to Christ goes on to affirm the Father's acknowledgement of this self sacrifice of Jesus in vv. 9-11. The eternal λόγος becomes a human being in the Incarnation as we have come to label this event. Biblical commentators ever since have been attempting to explain how this could happen especially in terms of the self emptying asserted in v. 7a, and in the process have lost sight of how early Christianity approached it. Simply they celebrated it in recounting the earthly life of this man Jesus was at the same time was the eternal λόγος,

Word' is unique; and is without parallel in the languages of modern culture." P George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 10.]

The powerful assertion of Jesus' divine nature as λόγος comes in statements 2 and 3, ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος, *the Logos was with God and God was the Logos*. The first statement elevates the λόγος to a level πρὸς τὸν θεόν, which carries with it the sense of equality with.⁴⁶ But the subsequent declaration θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος takes this affirmation a step further with the affirmation that the Logos is God.⁴⁷

Note the continued use of the imperfect tense verb ἦν consistently through this section. All of the affirmed qualities about the λόγος are linked back to the moment of creation described in Gen. 1:1. This is the time-frame used by John here. At that point in time, all these qualities 'were' already in place. None of them came into existence either at creation nor at any point subsequent to creation. They are eternal qualities of the λόγος.

Statement 4, οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν, sums up the preceding three statements through repetition. Notice how 'at the beginning' is placed directly with 'equal with God' after the verb 'was.'⁴⁸

⁴⁶Its richness has to be searched out and conveyed by explanation (see above, pp. 6–10). πρὸς τὸν θεόν = 'with God,' in the sense, of "in the presence of God" (cf. Mark 6:3), or 'in the fellowship of God' (1 John 1:2–3), or even (as the next clause suggests) 'in union with God.' καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος; θεός without the article signifies less than ὁ θεός; but it cannot be understood as 'a god,' as though the Logos were a lesser god alongside the supreme God; nor as simply 'divine,' for which the term θεῖος was well known (in 2 Pet 1:4 believers are said to be θείας κοινωνοὶ φύσεως, 'sharers of the divine nature'); nor as indicating the exercise of divine functions without possessing the divine nature; rather it denotes God in his nature, as truly God as he with whom he 'was,' yet without exhausting the being of God (observe that the Evangelist did not write καὶ λόγος ἦν ὁ θεός ('and God was the Word'). The divine nature of the Logos is seen in his activity in creation (1–5), revelation (5, 9–12, 18) and redemption (12–14, 16–17); in all these God expresses himself through the Word, hence the dictum of Bultmann, 'From the outset God must be understood as the 'one who speaks,' the God who reveals himself' (35)." [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 10–11.]

⁴⁷The modern Jehovah Witness' nonsense that reads this to mean the Logos is a god, and thus on an inferior level to the Heavenly Father, is not only contradicted by the larger context here of vv. 1-13, but represents an ancient gnostic heresy advocated in the late second century. This led to an Adoptionistic Christology repeatedly condemned as heresy in orthodox Christianity down through the centuries.

⁴⁸Verse 2 repeats substantially what has already been said, but 'the Word' (v. 1) is indicated by a personal pronoun, 'this man' (houtos). The pronoun looks both backward to the masculine word logos and forward to a figure with a human story. Who might 'this man' be? Much has been claimed in these first verses: the preexistence of the Word, its intimate relationship to God, and the first hints of an eventual revelation that will take place in the human story by means of the story told by the Word. The Word has been described. What Barrett said of v. 1 can be applied to vv. 1–2: 'John

Once John has asserted the divine nature of the λόγος in verses 1-2, he moves on to develop the relation of the λόγος to the material world in vv. 3-5.

δι' αὐτοῦ

5 ^{1.3} πάντα . . . ἐγένετο,
καὶ
χωρὶς αὐτοῦ

6 ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν.

7 ὃ γέγονεν
^{1.4} ἐν αὐτῷ
ζωῇ ἦν,
καὶ

8 ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
^{1.5} καὶ

ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ

9 τὸ φῶς . . . φαίνει,
καὶ

10 ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

through Him

5 ^{1.3} **all things** . . . **came into being**,
and
apart from Him

6 **came into being not one thing**.

7 **What exists** | in Him
life was,
and

8 **this life was the light of men**;
^{1.5} and

in the darkness

9 **the light** . . . **shines**,
and

10 **the darkness does not comprehend /
overpower it**.

Three declarations of this connection of the λόγος to creation are made in doublet expressions: 5-6; 7-8; 9-10.

First in v. 3, that relation is simply that the λόγος is the world's Creator. The two declarations, #s 5-6, are antithetical parallels to one another. Statement 5 claims that everything in existence came into being through the λόγος. This is followed by the reverse perspective that not one thing having existence possesses it apart from the λόγος. He goes for the inclusive πάντα to the emphatically individual οὐδὲ ἓν: all ==> not one thing.

Now John shifts to the repeated aorist verb ἐγένετο which affirms a divine creative moment affirmed in Genesis one. This action of creation in Genesis is summed

intends that the whole of his gospel shall be read in the light of this verse. The deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of God; if this be not true the book is blasphemous' (Barrett, Gospel 156)." [Harrington Daniel J., *The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 4, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 35.]

up as a single action. This picks up on one of the verbs used in the LXX in this Genesis narrative, ἐγένετο, that surfaces in the seven summary statements (1:3, 5; 6, 8; 9, 11, 13; 15, 19; 20, 23; 24, 31). Thus in contrast to the λόγος, creation has a definable starting point in time.

Important in this depiction is the δι' αὐτοῦ, **through Him**, prepositional phrase. The preposition διά when expressing agency denotes indirect agency, whereas ὑπό that of direct agency. Very close to the direct agency idea is that of source expressed by ἐκ. These are not distinctions typically made in modern western languages. The importance of this distinction here in 1:3 with δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο is that the Logos stands as the mediating agency through which God created the world. God stands as the ultimate source of creation, and He worked through the λόγος to make it happen. It is no accident that, in Genesis, creation occurred when God spoke. The connection between God speaking the world into being and the λόγος as word is central here.⁴⁹

Second, the Logos as the means of divine creation becomes the location of ζωὴ, **life**. This theme of ζωὴ in the fourth gospel is a major theme with 36 uses of the term. Although ζωὴ generally means spiritual life in the Johannine part of the NT, here a broader, more inclusive perspective is designated. The principle of ζωὴ at creation (ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν) was located in the λόγος. Connect this in part to ψυχὴν ζῶσαν, **living creatures** (Gen. 1:24, 30). This is a similar emphasis to Paul in Col. 1:17, τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ συνέστηκεν, **all things in Him are held together**. That is, our existence as a living being is due to the presence of the λόγος at creation.

Third, this λόγος as the location of ζωὴ becomes then τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, **the light of men** (1:4b). τὸ φῶς is another major theme in the gospel with 23 uses. Out of the ζωὴ provided by the λόγος then comes φῶς, **light**. We move now to illumination of the ways of God in the φῶς provided by the λόγος. Thus the λόγος becomes the path to salvation for human kind: τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. This path has existed since creation as signaled by the imperfect verb ἦν.

But also the τὸ φῶς... φαίνει, **the light...is shining**. The use of the present tense verb φαίνει stresses the on-going action of this τὸ φῶς. But what has happened is that the world has fallen ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, **in darkness**. This is a spiritual and moral ignorance of the ways of God. But the λόγος as φῶς is shining to provide understanding of the ways of God and how to reach Him.

How has the darkened world responded? καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. The response indicated by

⁴⁹Neither should one overlook the connection of breath, to λόγος. In Hebrew breath is נַחַח rūwach and also Spirit. The same double meaning happens in Greek with πνεῦμα.

John contains a double meaning that is impossible to preserve in translation. At the literal level of meaning οὐ κατέλαβεν means ‘did not take it down.’ σκοτία is perceived as an aggressive force in opposition to φῶς and sought to put out the φῶς. But at the figurative level οὐ κατέλαβεν means ‘did not understand it.’ σκοτία is now perceived as ignorance that could not comprehend φῶς as ζῶη and their connection to λόγος. John will develop this second motif in 1:9-10. In the gospel document both these themes will surface repeatedly in the story of Jesus. See later amplification such as [3:19-21](#) for how John develops this motif here.

What we discover from this first unit is the dependence of the world, even in its darkness, upon the λόγος as its creator and source of understanding the way to God. Yet in its darkened ignorance it has sought to extinguish this light in no ability to understand the λόγος.

2) John’s role as witness, vv. 6-8

6 Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· 7 οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι’ αὐτοῦ. 8 οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ’ ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. 7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light.

In this second sub-unit, the apostle moves to the role of John the Baptizer in shining light onto a darkened world. In the synoptic gospels a historical account is presented with samples of his preaching. Here in vv. 6-8 and 15 that ministry is presented religiously as μαρτυρία, *witness* both to the world and to the church.

After an introduction of John (v. 6a), the remainder of the sentence centers on John’s role to give witness to the Light. The second brief sentence in v. 8 reinforces this point by distinguishing John from the Light. The block diagram below illustrates how this is put together:

```

=====
11  1.6  Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος,
           ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ,
           ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης·

12  1.7  οὗτος ἦλθεν
           εἰς μαρτυρίαν
           ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ
           περὶ τοῦ φωτός,
           ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν
           δι’ αὐτοῦ.

13  1.8  οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς,
           ἀλλ’

13      (ἦλθεν)
           ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.
=====

```

```

=====
11  1.6  There was a man,
           sent from God,
           the name to him John;

12  1.7  this one came
           for a witness
           so that he might wit-
           ness
           about the light,
           so that all might be-
           lieve
           through Him.

13  1.8  He was not that light,
           but

13      (he came)
           so that he might witness
           about the light.
=====

```

Notice some important affirmations. Perhaps the least important thing is John’s name. Everything else centers on John’s mission to give witness. Even John’s ‘appearing’ is described in terms beyond the regular for the coming of an individual: In the NT adoption of this idiom from the LXX way of describing an appearance of God or an angel to people, John simply ‘showed up.’ The manner of this is made clear from the participle phrase modifier ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ. He was commissioned like an angel from the side of God with a mission in life on earth. Luke’s narrative ‘fleshes’ this out with the greatest detail in terms of his parents, the unusual nature of his birth, his ministry (1:5-25; 1:57-80; 3:1-22).

The first event in the gospel story of Jesus in 1:19-34 will center on an elaboration of this motif about John and shapes the more historical narrative. John 1:15 then shapes the continuation of that story in 1:35-42.

In 1:6-8, John’s mission from God is to give testimony to Jesus as the Light and Logos. What is a μαρτυρία?⁵⁰ The person is a μάρτυς who witnesses, and what he gives is a μαρτυρία. This set of terms has a legal background both in Jewish life and in Greco-Roman terms. But it would be mistaken to define the terms simply from this legal background. The root etymology comes from a person remembering after careful deliberation and reflection.⁵¹ One important dis-

⁵⁰This Greek noun is a part of an important word group inside the NT: μάρτυς, μαρτυρέω, μαρτυρία, μαρτύριον, ἐπιμαρτυρέω, συμμαρτυρέω, συνεπιμαρτυρέω, καταμαρτυρέω, μαρτύρομαι, διαμαρτύρομαι, προμαρτύρομαι, ψευδόμαρτυς, ψευδομαρτυρέω, ψευδομαρτυρία* [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:474].

⁵¹“*Etymology and Formation.*” μάρτυς would seem to come from the root *smr*, ‘to bear in mind,’ ‘to remember,’ ‘to be careful,’ cf. the Gk. μέμερος, ‘that which demands much care or de-

inction need to be remembered. μαρτυρία centers on careful remembering that is then verbally shared, while μαρτύριον is the telling of something as evidence of its validity. This second Greek noun often translated as witness or testimony has the closer connection to the legal background. It is not used of John in the fourth gospel. The noun μαρτυρία and the verb μαρτυρέω are the terms used to describe John's mission from God, and especially the verb. Thus an active talking about the Light is the point made in this text.

The apostle takes care to underscore the divine purpose for John in the commission. John's coming on the scene (οὗτος ἦλθεν) was εἰς μαρτυρίαν, for a witness. John did not come as a witness εἰς μάρτυν. The emphasis is not upon the individual but upon what he talked about. This beginning purpose prepositional phrase is immediately further defined in specific action terms by the purpose dependent conjunctory clause: ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, so that he might witness about the Light. What John was to talk about is defined as περὶ τοῦ φωτός, about the Light. Jesus as the λόγος who is τὸ φῶς specifies the content here.

The synoptic gospels defines John ministry in terms of a preaching of repentance to the Jewish people. John reaches beyond this with a universal scope for the Baptizer's ministry. This is made explicit in the second purpose conjunctory clause ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ, so that all might believe through Him. The ultimate intention of John's coming on the scene is point all humanity to Jesus as the Light which τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων, the Light illuminating humanity to discovering Jesus as Life (v. 4). With humanity as a part of the divinely created order of things, true existence comes only when the created is in harmony with its Creator.

liberation; he who considers or deliberates much,' then μερμαίρω, μερμηρίζω, 'consider, deliberate, hesitate,' μερμινάω, μέριμνα, the Lat. memor, memoria, Gothic maúrnan, Anglo-Saxon murnan, Old High German morneμn, 'to be anxiously concerned.' Hence μάρτυς was probably 'one who remembers, who has knowledge of something by recollection, and who can thus tell about it,' i.e., the witness. To the verb μαρτυρεῖν applies something which is true of verbs in -έω formed from nouns and adj. of all declensions, namely, that they denote a state or habitual activity, but can often take on trans, significance.⁶ μαρτυρεῖν thus means 'to be a witness,' 'to come forward as a witness,' 'to bear witness to something.' The secondary noun μαρτυρία, whether referred to μάρτυς or μαρτυρεῖν,⁷ has in the first instance, like most such nouns, an abstract significance: the bearing of witness. But it can then mean the witness thus borne. On the other hand, μαρτύριον, like other nouns in -ιον, is more concrete and denotes witness from the more objective standpoint as the proof of something. Any μαρτυρία can become a μαρτύριον, but not conversely. μαρτυρία and μαρτύριον are related like ναυαγία ('shipwreck') and τὰ ναυάγια ('the remains of the ship') and γυμνασία ('bodily exercise') and γυμνάσιον ('the place of exercise').⁸⁷ [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-), 475.]

Jesus as the λόγος is the only one who can point humanity to that path of harmony with God and He does so as τὸ φῶς, the Light.

Evidently the confusion about Jesus and John that existed in Ephesus from the mid century in connection to Apollos that Priscilla and Aquila helped clear up (Acts 18:24-28) still lingered in some segments of the Christian community. When Paul arrived in the city he felt the need to re-baptize about a dozen 'disciples of John' τινὰς μαθητὰς (Acts 19:1; οἱ πάντες ἄνδρες ὡσεὶ δῶδεκα, v. 7). Some three decades later John feels the need to re-emphasize this distinction. And thus in a pointed elliptical sentence the apostle makes that point as a signal of a larger narrative pericope later first in 1:30-34.

οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. Literally, not was that one the Light but (came) in order to witness about the Light (v. 8). Here this point of distinction is made sharply by a denial (οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς). Then John's mission is emphasized by repeating the first purpose clause: ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. John's role was secondary to that of Jesus as λόγος and φῶς. The tendency in the first century for individuals to cluster around a well respected teacher came naturally out of the education philosophy both the Greco-Roman and the Jewish societies. Usually the teacher encouraged this and used it for propagating his philosophy of life. In John the Baptizer's case he repeatedly sought to discourage this kind of loyalty⁵² and instead sought to put the spotlight on Jesus. This point will shape the narrative in 1:35-42 where Andrew and another follower of John will shift their loyalty to Jesus at John's encouragement.⁵³

When understood in the above manner, this inclusion of John's mission in 1:6-8 stands as a perfectly sensible strategy of the apostle. The idea that this is a clumsy later insertion either by the apostle or later editors of the gospel is pure nonsense!⁵⁴ What their com-

⁵²The phrase ἐκ τῶν μαθητῶν αὐτοῦ δύο, from two of his disciples, in 1:35 somewhat modifies this pattern. But even here the narrative of 1:35-42 stresses the re-focusing of loyalty away from John and onto Jesus.

⁵³This prior encounter of Peter with Jesus in 1:35-42 stands behind the dramatic summons by Jesus of Peter and Andrew to follow Him in the synoptics: Mk. 1:16-20 // Mt. 4:18-22 // Lk. 5:1-11.

⁵⁴It has often been pointed out that the sections of the Prologue dedicated to the Baptist are clumsy. Despite widespread disagreement on other details, all scholars who attempt to reconstruct a pre-Johannine hymn omit vv. 6-8 and v. 15 as clumsy Johannine additions. Many believe that these additions were an attempt on the part of the Johannine author to assert the superiority of Jesus over the Baptist in a Christian community that may have had a strong Baptist cult (cf. v. 8). For a survey of this discussion see M. Theobald, *Die Fleischwerdung des Logos* 67-119." [Harrington Daniel J., *The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 4, Sacra Pa-

ments say is an affirmation of their inadequate understanding of the Johannine text that they're supposedly writing a commentary on.

3) Reception of the Logos in the world, vv. 9-13

9 Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. 10 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. 11 εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. 12 ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, 13 οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

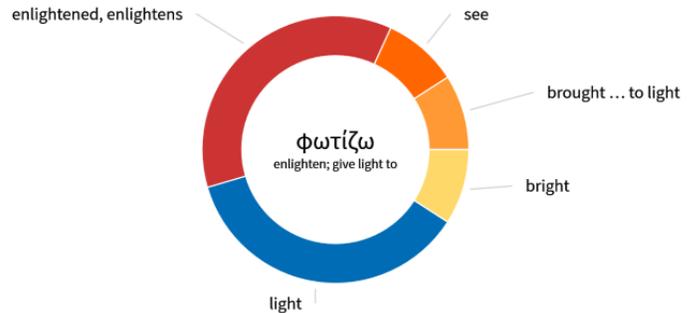
9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 10 He was in the world, and the world came into being through him; yet the world did not know him. 11 He came to what was his own, and his own people did not accept him. 12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

Did John's mission to talk about the Light awaken widespread awareness about Jesus? No it didn't, but then John's mission was to talk about Jesus as the Light. The decision to accept or reject lay on the shoulders of those facing a decision about Jesus. As verses 9-13 affirm, a three fold response typifies the response of the creation to its Creator: ignorance, rejection, and reception.

Response of creation, vv. 9-10. The block diagram highlights visually how the is presented.

14	1.9	Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.
15	1.10	ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ δι' αὐτοῦ
16		ὁ κόσμος. . . ἐγένετο, καὶ
17		ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω.
=====		
14	1.9	He was the true light, which enlightens every man, coming into the world.
15	1.10	in the world He was, and through Him
16		the world. . . came into being, and
17		the world Him did not recognize.

John begins with a re-affirmation of the nature of the λόγος as the τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, the authentic Light. The addition of the adjective modifier τὸ ἀληθινόν distinguishes Jesus from false teachers as the exclusively genuine Light who will reflect the very presence of God Himself.



The second modifier as a relative clause ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, which illumines every person, restates the principle of the Light shining in v. 5 but with a different thrust. The present tense verb φωτίζει stresses bringing to every person an awareness of the possibility of salvation. Even though John only uses this verb here, the concept is amplified in texts such as 3:19-21. This powerful declaration affirms the potential of every person being able to accept this salvational enlightenment. The universal thrust (πάντα ἄνθρωπον) of this stresses the ultimate role of Jesus as Savior of the world. The Gospel is not just for a select few Jewish people. To John's Christian readers in Ephesus in the late first century, this was a critically important principle. The Jewish synagogue adamantly insisted that salvation belonged only to the Jews. Many of the surrounding pagan religions located some kind of understanding of a salvation in devotion to one or more of the pagan deities, especially those religions inside the mystery religion traditions. That Jesus cared for all people will be affirmed in numerous pericopes of the gospel account in development of this principle here.

The third modifier as a participle phrase ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον underscores the making of that Light available in the coming of the Logos into the world.

Some translations beginning with the KJV leave the impression that this coming into the world qualifies πάντα ἄνθρωπον, every person. Technically the participle ending -ov could be taken as a masculine accusative case spelling and thus linked to ἄνθρωπον. The problem with this is theologically huge, since it was make the

text say that every person is ‘salvationally’ illumined at his birth. Clearly John does not intend to be saying this as the rest of the document makes abundantly clear (e.g., John 1:9, 28; 2:6; 3:23; 10:40; 11:1; 13:23; 18:18, 25), along with the closer context of v. 10. Thus contextually, grammatically etc. the -ov ending is more correctly understood as neuter nominative singular and attaches the participle either to φωτίζει, *illuminates*, or to ἦν, *was*. In either understanding the ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον pertains to Jesus as the Light.

Now ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ, *in the darkness* (v. 5) becomes εἰς τὸν κόσμον, *into the world* (v. 9). John’s use of κόσμος is extensive (78 of 185 NT uses; only chapters 5 and 22 do not contain the word) and contains multiple meanings. In some places it designates all of creation; in others the realm of darkness; and mostly the people world.⁵⁵ His use of it here signals the expanded understanding of the term that will be typical throughout the remainder of the gospel document. This variation is illustrated here in vv. 9-10: it is what the λόγος created but the human κόσμος did not recognize Jesus as the κόσμος.

The failure of the κόσμος is set in strong contrast to its opportunity (v. 10): ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω, *in the world He was and the world through Him was made, and the world Him⁵⁶ did not recognize*. The Creator both stood above the world as Creator and in the world as a Resident. And in spite of such opportunity, the κόσμος failed to recognize its Creator.⁵⁷ And this in the context of the λόγος functioning in this world as φωτίζοντο φῶς, *illumi-*

⁵⁵“The Johannine use of ‘the world’ (*ho kosmos*) is open to at least three interpretations, all present in this sentence: v. 10a: created reality (cf. 11:9; 17:5, 24; 21:25); v. 10b: the arena where the saving revelation of God in and through Jesus Christ takes place (cf. 1:29; 3:16; 4:42; 6:51; 8:12; 9:5); v. 10c: a place where the power of darkness reigns as the prince of this world (cf. 7:7; 12:31; 14:17, 22, 27, 30; 15:18–19; 16:8, 11, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14–16). Cf. N. H. Cassem, “A Grammatical and Contextual Inventory” 81–91.” [Harrington Daniel J., *The Gospel of John*, ed. Daniel J. Harrington, vol. 4, Sacra Pagina Series (Collegeville, MN: The Liturgical Press, 1998), 44.]

⁵⁶Throughout the prologue the third person personal pronoun is translated as He / Him. In the genitive / ablative case instances, αὐτοῦ (v. 3, 7, 10, 12, 14, 16) and dative case αὐτῷ (vv. 4, 6) the spelling used could function as either masculine or neuter gender. Only in one instance, however, is the distinctly neuter gender accusative spelling αὐτὸ used (v. 5). But the distinctly masculine accusative spelling αὐτὸν is uniformly used through the passage (vv. 10, 11, 12). This along with the distinctive masculine spelling of the demonstrative pronouns οὗτος (vv. 2, 15) and ἐκεῖνος (vv. 8, 18) set the context uniformly as a pronominal reference back to Jesus as the Logos. Yet, the noun ζῶη is feminine and φῶς is neuter. When John’s opponents heard this passage read, this subtle play on pronoun gender had to have been bothersome to them with the growing signals that the human Jesus is fact the eternal Logos.

⁵⁷αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω reflects the inceptive Aorist tense verb usage which is best expressed in English as did not recognize Him.

nating Light, even as τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, *the true Light*.

Response of Jewish people, v. 11. The circle of opportunity narrows from the world to τὰ ἴδια / οἱ ἴδιοι, *His own*. Immediately the different spellings are noticed with the first τὰ ἴδια being neuter plural and οἱ ἴδιοι being masculine. Several different interpretations thus have emerged, as one might guess.

What causes the interpretive uncertainty is the use of the possessive adjective ἴδιος, -α, -ov with the meaning of ‘one’s own’ in an intensive expression. Its use substantively, i.e., as a noun rather than as a pure modifier, leaves the reader at a loss concerning one’s own what. This is further complicated by the sudden shift from the neuter plural form to the masculine plural form with not clear signal as to why the shift was made. The uniform plural use further complicates the understanding somewhat. Had the masculine singular form been used the antecedent clearly would have been κόσμος in the precedent statement. But this is not the case. So what is the pronoun referring to?

In such dilemmas as this, the first step is to turn to the larger context of the pronoun’s use elsewhere in the fourth gospel. In 4:44, ἐν τῇ ἰδίᾳ πατρίδι, *in one’s own homeland*, shows up where a place reference is implied as is the case here. In 16:32 and 19:27, εἰς τὰ ἴδια, *to his own home*, shows up. But these are the only places out of the 15 uses of ἴδιος, -α, -ov in the four gospel that can provide insight into 1:11. All of these three texts for the neuter gender form point clearly to Jesus’ Jewish homeland. And then the masculine form would point to “His own people.”⁵⁸ The place designation εἰς τὰ ἴδια is very appropriate with the verb ἦλθεν, *came*, and the people designation οἱ ἴδιοι is more appropriate to the verb οὐ παρέλαβον, *did not welcome*. This understanding finds further confirmation in the very limited LXX use of οἱ ἴδιοι in Sir 11:34; 2 Macc 10:14 v.l. in A†; 12:22. Both of which are late first century Jewish writings. The Latin Vulgate in 1:11 points this same direction: *in propria venit et sui eum non receperunt*.

Thus Jesus as the λόγος and φῶς came to His own Jewish nation. Notice this is a ‘coming’ ἦλθεν, whereas He ‘was’ in the world, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν. This is another signal of a shift in target reference. And εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν is John’s depiction of the Incarnation of Jesus.

The response of the Jewish people to His coming is defined simply as καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον, *and His own people did not welcome Him*. It is important to note the three response verbs used in vv. 9-13. First the created people world αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω, *did not recog-*

⁵⁸This simple application of a basic principle of interpretation points undeniably away from εἰς τὰ ἴδια pointing to Jesus’ coming into the world. The older commentators adopting this reflect an anti-Jewish bias here, which is clear upon a study of the biographical background of most all of these commentators.

nize Him (v. 10). Second, the Jewish people **αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον**, **did not welcome Him** (v. 11). Third, these two negative responses are then set in stark contrast to ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, **but as many as received Him** (v. 12). John signals with παρέλαβον (v. 11) something different from ἔλαβον (v. 12).⁵⁹ The verb παρέλαβον from παραλαμβάνω literally means to **take along side of** in the sense of a genuine welcoming of someone. Of course, a major theme of the fourth gospel is the general rejection of Jesus by the Jewish people.

Response of reception, vv. 12-13. The opposite positive reception of Jesus is crafted by John in one of the most beautiful sentences found in the entire NT. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, 13 οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ’ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. **12 But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.**

The block diagram reveals the marvelous structuring of the idea of reception. It is one long sentence built around one core main clause ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν, **He gave them authorization**. The definition of ‘them’ is set up by two relative clauses and a participle phrase. If one desires to know what believing in Jesus means in the fourth gospel, it is beautifully defined here. Given the role of the Prologue to the rest of the gospel, every subsequent passage about proper response to Christ

⁵⁹“Receive has been the classic English rendering for centuries, no doubt because of the Latin *recepturunt*; but JB, NRSV, NAB and REB choose accept, which conveys better the idea of an open-hearted welcome. The rendering preferred here, with Knox and Kleist, is *welcome*. παραλαμβάνω is in Classical Greek a regular term for learning from a teacher,³⁹ and is especially frequent for the receiving of religious truth or heritage by living tradition (e.g. 1 Cor 15:13; Gal 1:9; 1 Th 2:13; 2 Th 3:6).⁴⁰ In Aramaic, ܠܩܪܝܢܐ represents the same idea of teaching accepted by tradition (e.g. Pirke Aboth 1:1).⁴¹ Thus the negated οὐ παρέλαβον is somewhat stronger than οὐκ ἔγνω in 10c. In itself, the phrase signifies only a failure positively to accept, the absence of a true welcome; it does not necessarily imply a fully deliberate rejection.⁴² Nevertheless, in the present context, if these words are taken to refer to Israel under the Old Covenant, there are many OT texts which stress that God’s people has from time to time knowingly rejected him (e.g. Jer 3:25; 7:28; 9:12; 32:23; 40:3; 42:21; 44:23; Bar 1:18–2:10).” [John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 41–42.]

should be interpreted from the framework depiction set forth here.

1.12	δὲ	
	ὅσοι	ἔλαβον αὐτόν,
20	ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν	
		τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι,
		τοῖς πιστεύουσιν
		εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,
1.13	οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων	
	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς	
	οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς	
	ἀλλ’ ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.	
=====		
1.12	But	
		as many as received Him,
20	He gave to them authority	
		children of God to become,
		to those believing
		in His name,
1.13		who not out of bloods
		neither out of the will of the flesh
		nor out of the will of a man
		but out of God were birthed.
=====		

What does it mean to ‘receive Christ’? No better definition than here exists in the Bible! The core declaration is simply ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν, **He gave to them authorization**. The aorist tense ἔδωκεν specifies a specific action conditioned upon proper receiving of Him (ἔλαβον). This is the significance of the quantitative relative clause introduced by ὅσοι.

The direct object ἐξουσίαν is often translated as ‘authority’ with the subtle implication that something from the Logos was transferred to the individual. But this is false. Nothing is transferred, because ἐξουσίαν is much closer to the English word ‘authorization.’

Authorization for what? The infinitive modifying phrase τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι spells it out as ‘**to become God’s children**.’ The aorist form of the infinitive γενέσθαι, **to become**, sets up this punctiliar action in synchronization with ἔδωκεν, **He gave**, and ὅσοι ἔλαβον, **as many as received**. It all comes in one packaged event: receive--give--become. Interestingly, in 11:51-52 the high priest Caiaphas, the Jewish high priest who advised Jesus’ execution, also affirmed the statement here with his words, 51 τοῦτο δὲ ἀφ’ ἑαυτοῦ οὐκ εἶπεν, ἀλλ’ ἀρχιερεὺς ὢν τοῦ ἐνιαυτοῦ ἐκείνου ἐπροφήτευσεν ὅτι ἐμελλεν Ἰησοῦς ἀποθνήσκειν ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους, 52 καὶ οὐχ ὑπὲρ τοῦ ἔθνους μόνον ἀλλ’ ἵνα καὶ **τὰ τέκνα τοῦ θεοῦ τὰ διεσκορπισμένα συναγάγῃ** εἰς ἓν. **51 He did not say this on his own, but being high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus was about to die for the nation, 52 and not for the nation on-**

ly, but to gather into one *the dispersed children of God*. Caiaphas spoke of this Jesus gathering together into one people individuals from all nations scattered around the world. Such was horrifying to these Jewish leaders who felt they had a monopoly on God as religious Jews. John from the outset in the Prologue asserted that becoming one of God's people in this world was conditioned exclusively upon one thing: receiving Jesus as the divine λόγος.⁶⁰ Race played no role in this experience whatsoever.

Absolutely fascinating is what John does next. The relative clause ὅσοι ἔλαβον αὐτόν in front of ἔδωκεν defines from a primary perspective who the *them*, αὐτοῖς, are. But further amplification of αὐτοῖς comes after the verb. First, the present participle phrase τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, *to those believing in His name*, comes as the expansion of αὐτοῖς. Accepting Jesus into one's life in a moment of commitment, ἔλαβον αὐτόν, is to begin an ongoing life of commitment to Christ. Without this pattern of faith surrender to Christ no genuine acceptance of Him has taken place.

This participle phrase repeats the earlier emphasis in v. 7 about John's mission goal: ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ, *so that all might become believers through Him*. The theme of believing in Jesus is a major emphasis with 98 uses for the verb πιστεύω, and 138 uses of the noun equivalent πίστις, *faith*, in the fourth gospel. John 3:16 is probably the best known amplification built off this participle phrase here in 1:11.

The third expansion of αὐτοῖς is the relative clause in v. 13: οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν, *who not out of bloods neither out of fleshly desire nor out a man's desire but out of God have been born*. One should notice for sure the pattern set up by John. The first two amplifications of αὐτοῖς are human responses: ἔλαβον αὐτόν, *received Him*, and πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, *believing in His name*. But this third amplification shifts to the divine perspective: birthing comes only from God and not through any human action. Here the most extensive amplification of this phrase is 3:1-21 with Nicodemus.

Note the balance from the above diagram:

οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων
 οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς
 οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς
 ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

On the human 'producing' side stands a three fold denial of human involvement. Endless speculation about the meaning of each of these three 'human' sources of 'birthing.' But notice the nature of each beginning with the broadest first, then narrowed down a

⁶⁰Although John labels Christians as τέκνα θεοῦ, *children of God*, both in the fourth gospel and Revelation, the apostle Paul never uses τέκνα θεοῦ. Instead his similar phrase is υἱοὶ θεοῦ, *sons of God*, a phrase that John never uses for Christians.

notch, and final focused upon an individual male's desire. Such repetition typically stands in Jewish thinking as the most emphatic denial possible to express.⁶¹

On the divine 'producing' side stands the positive affirmation that is the point of the relative clause: οἱ . . . ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν: *who . . . were born of God*. The framing of this lengthy relative clause follows a standard οὐ . . . ἀλλὰ, *not (this) . . . but (that)* pattern. The positive affirmation then comes in the fourth declaration placed in strong contrast (ἀλλ') to the negative assertions. The uniform use of the preposition ἐκ underscores the idea of *source of*. This underscores a common but usually ignored reality in biblical language of God as the source in birthing of an individual. The verb γεννάω is mostly translated from the female perspective of giving birth. But the male side of γεννάω in the sense of 'siring' a child as its father is an important part of the use of γεννάω inside the NT. That is exactly the point here. The believer comes out of God through the new birth experience.

This affirms the point of the infinitive phrase τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, *to become God's children*, in v. 12. Christians experience new birth by receiving God's action of spiritual transformation in their reception of Christ as λόγος (ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν). The aorist passive voice verb ἐγεννήθησαν, *have been born*, high lights this reception of the work of God in the individual's life.

With this affirmation of those who received the λόγος in spite of the ignorance of Him by the human creation and the rejection of Him by the Jewish people, what then comes next? What many commentators often overlook is the transitional nature of vv. 12-13. It brings to a positive climax the relation of the λόγος to the created order and thus lays the foundation for His relation to the believing community that is produced by its reception of Christ. Christ indeed has a positive connection to the created human world, but that connection is exclusively based upon the birthing action of God to generate a community of people that He can relate to. And boy, how he does relate!

B. LOGOS AND CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY, vv. 14-18

The 'step forward' in the thought structure of John

⁶¹"The successive phrases contrast birth from God with human begetting, and emphasize the inability of men and women to reproduce it. The plural αἵματα (commonly = 'drops of blood') alludes to the blood of the parents who beget and give birth; the 'will of the flesh' denotes sexual desire; the will of 'a male' (ἀνδρὸς) has in view the initiative generally ascribed to the male in sexual intercourse; here it extends to human initiative as such." [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 13.]

is to now focus upon the connection of the λόγος with the believing community. And vv. 14-18 constitute the most beautiful depiction of that connection found anywhere in scripture! The only text that comes close is the Prologue of First John 1:1-4 where κοινωνία, fellowship, becomes the central theme of this entire letter:

4b ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ’ ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ.

4b so that we also might have fellowship with you. And our special fellowship is with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ.

How John develops this motif of κοινωνία as an image of salvation throughout the rest of First John is a master piece of literary and theological expression.⁶²

Here, in parallel to the first section, a threefold depiction is presented in terms of the identity of the λόγος with the believing community (v. 14); John’s mission to the believing community (v. 15); and the blessings of that relationship with the believing community (vv. 16-18). Just as φῶς, light, serves as the connecting links between the three sub units in part one, in part two χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, grace and truth, function in the same way in vv. 14-18.

1) The divine Logos in the community, v. 14

14 Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἑθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.

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.

Note the pattern of the λόγος actions (#s 21-22) followed by the community impact (#23). The λόγος came into the world via incarnation (#21) and then set up His tent (#22). The Christian community then could gaze upon the Shekinah glory of God in the λόγος (#23).

If you want to know the very heart of the idea of the incarnation of Jesus, this verse is the best depiction of it found in the Bible. This is the spiritual reality behind

⁶²For a brief study of this, see Interlaken 2014 studies under [volume 28](#) in the *Biblical Insights Commentary* at cranfordville.com.

	1.14	Καὶ	
21		ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο	
		καὶ	
22		ἐσκήνωσεν	
		ἐν ἡμῖν,	
		καὶ	
23		ἑθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,	
		δόξαν	
		ὡς μονογενοῦς	
		παρὰ πατρός,	
		πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.	

	1.14	And	
21		the Word flesh became	
		and	
22		set up His tabernacle	
		among us,	
		and	
23		we gazed upon His glory,	
		glory	
		like an only begotten One	
		from the Father,	
		full of grace and truth.	



Christian artistic depiction: “The Shekinah Glory Enters the Tabernacle”; illustration from *The Bible and Its Story Taught by One Thousand Picture Lessons*; Charles F. Horne and Julius A. Bewer (Ed.), 1908

the birth of Jesus in the Infancy Narratives of Matthew and Luke. But it is more because it centers on the continuing presence of the λόγος in the midst of the community of believers.

John begins with the coming of the λόγος with the marvelous declaration Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, and the Logos became flesh. Note the contrast here to v. 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, in the beginning was the Word. At the moment of creation in Genesis 1-2, the Logos already existed. But this heavenly existence needed to transfer to the created world in a form visible to human kind. Thus ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο, the Logos became flesh (v. 14).

Now this doesn't imply that the Logos was not already present in creation since John declares in v.5, τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, *the Light is shining in the darkness*, and in v. 10, ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, *He was in the world*. God and the λόγος have remained closely connected to their creation with a divine presence since the beginning. But that presence, especially since the fall, has not been visible to human kind apart from a few isolated theophanies to individuals such as to Moses in the burning bush episode.

What this implies is then stated in the second declaration (#22) in a manner that had to have been absolutely shocking to John's Jewish readers: καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, *and He set up His tabernacle in our midst*. This becoming flesh of the λόγος was nothing less than the coming of the Shekinah presence of the Almighty comparable to the initial coming of God to the Israelites in exodus when the first tabernacle was constructed in the desert (Exod. 40:34-35):

34 Καὶ ἐκάλυψεν ἡ νεφέλη τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, καὶ **δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή**.† 35 καὶ οὐκ ἠδύνασθη Μωυσῆς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, ὅτι ἐπεσκίαζεν ἐπ' αὐτὴν ἡ νεφέλη καὶ **δόξης κυρίου ἐπλήσθη ἡ σκηνή**.†

34 Then the cloud covered the tent of meeting, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**. 35 Moses was not able to enter the tent of meeting because the cloud settled upon it, and **the glory of the Lord filled the tabernacle**.

The next experience for ancient Israel was at Solomon's dedication of the temple in Jerusalem (2 Chron. 7:1-3):

7.1 Καὶ ὡς συνετέλεσεν Σαλωμων προσευχόμενος, καὶ τὸ πῦρ κατέβη ἐκ τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ κατέφαγεν τὰ ὀλοκαυτώματα καὶ τὰς θυσίας, καὶ **δόξα κυρίου ἔπλησεν τὸν οἶκον**.† 2 καὶ οὐκ ἠδύναντο οἱ ἱερεῖς εἰσελθεῖν εἰς τὸν οἶκον κυρίου ἐν τῷ καιρῷ ἐκείνῳ, ὅτι **ἔπλησεν δόξα κυρίου τὸν οἶκον**.† 3 καὶ πάντες οἱ υἱοὶ Ἰσραὴλ ἐώρων καταβαῖνον τὸ πῦρ, καὶ **ἡ δόξα κυρίου ἐπὶ τὸν οἶκον**, καὶ ἔπεσον ἐπὶ πρόσωπον ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν ἐπὶ τὸ λιθόστρωτον καὶ προσεκύνησαν καὶ ἤνουν τῷ κυρίῳ, ὅτι ἀγαθόν, ὅτι εἰς τὸν αἰῶνα τὸ ἔλεος αὐτοῦ.†

7 When Solomon had ended his prayer, fire came down from heaven and consumed the burnt offering and the sacrifices; and **the glory of the Lord filled the temple**. 2 The priests could not enter the house of the Lord, because **the glory of the Lord filled the Lord's house**. 3 When all the people of Israel saw the fire come down and **the glory of the Lord on the temple**, they bowed down on the pavement with their faces to the ground, and worshiped and gave thanks to the Lord, saying, "For he is good, for his steadfast love endures forever."

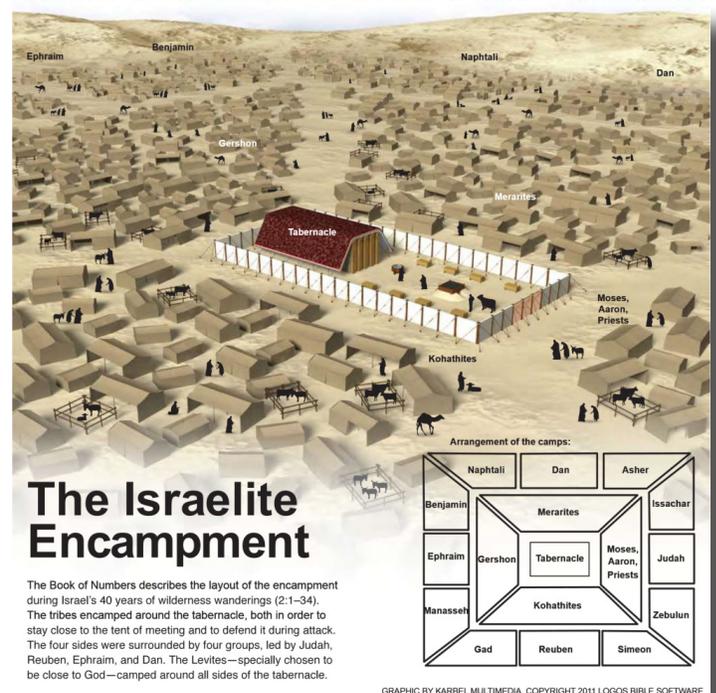
In both of the experiences the ancient Israelites experienced the full presence of God in very noticeable manner acknowledging both the tabernacle and then

the temple as the dwelling place of God and the place where the worship of God was to occur.

John uses the tabernacle event in Exod 40 as the framework for his statement #22. The divine λόγος in becoming flesh was setting up His tabernacle in the community of believers. Notice in Exod. 40:34 that the tabernacle is called τὴν σκηνὴν τοῦ μαρτυρίου, *the tent of witness*. Although this is usually translated 'tent of meeting' in English translations, the literal meaning of the LXX is 'tent of witness,' while the Hebrew text does read *תּוֹכַח מִלְּפָנָיו*, *tent of meeting*. The LXX translators gave an interpretative rendering of the Hebrew phrase emphasizing the tabernacle as a place where God met His people with the tent giving witness to this. Both these ideas provide a foundation for John's image in statement #22.

Note that both verbs, ἐγένετο and ἐσκήνωσεν, are aorist tense verbs that point to the same singular event of Christ's coming into the world as a human. This parallelism is further sharpened by placing both verbs back to back in the parallelism: ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν, *became and set up a tabernacle*.

The distributive function of the preposition ἐν with a plural object highlights the "in our midst" concept following the pattern of the tabernacle arrangement in the camp of Israel. But now it is not the Israelites' camp where God is manifesting His glorious Presence. Rather it is the community of believers. In their gathering together as the people of God to worship Him through



the λόγος He is gloriously present among His people. Such an astounding claim would have shaken the Jews where John's readers lived in Asia. It stood square in

the face of the proto-gnostic tendency to de-emphasize the Jewishness of both Jesus and Christianity.

The response to such a manifestation is set forth in statement #23: καὶ ἔθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, and we have gazed upon His glory. The glory of the λόγος produces astonishment in protracted gazing. The verb ἔθεασάμεθα is one of many verbs inside the NT having to do with sight and seeing.⁶³ The verb θεάομαι denotes an intense look at something or someone.⁶⁴ Here John does something interesting with the first person plural “we” form of the verb. At one level ‘we’ signals ‘we apostles’ who lived and sat at Jesus’ feet during His earthly journey. The eye witnesses to Jesus’ miracles in Galilee and Judea had first hand observation of this divine presence in Jesus.⁶⁵ But at another level ‘we’ means ‘we believers in Christ’ who have experienced His presence in our gatherings as the very presence of God Himself.⁶⁶

But in the realizing of the divine Presence in the λόγος, what can be seen? Here John amplifies the distinctive Christian perspective on the divine presence with two extensions: δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, *glory as the Only Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

a) δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός. The use of δόξα here plays off the LXX use of δόξα for the Shekinah presence of God throughout the OT with the anchor text in Exod. 40 in connection to God filling the tabernacle with His presence symbolized as smoke. The idea is not always a visible presence so much as it is an overpowering awareness of the presence of God.⁶⁷

⁶³For a detailed listing of these, see topics 24.1 through 24.51 in Louw, Johannes P., and Eugene Albert Nida. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*. New York: United Bible Societies, 1996..

⁶⁴“1. to have an intent look at someth., to take someth. in with one’s eyes, with implication that one is esp. impressed, see, look at, behold.” [William Arndt, Frederick W. Danker, and Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000), 445.]

⁶⁵“ἔθεασάμεθα, ‘we gazed on,’ represents the taking up by the Church into its confession the testimony of the eyewitnesses of the ministry of the Christ. It connotes more than contemporary spiritual insight of faith, though it doubtless includes it. The Evangelist will have had in mind the glory of the Christ which the witnesses saw in the signs he performed (e.g., 2:11), in his being lifted up on the cross (19:35), and in the Easter resurrection (20:24–29). It was a revelation of glory such as could proceed alone from the ‘μονογενής from the Father,’ i.e., God’s only Son (not ‘as of an only son of his father’ in a generic sense).” [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, Word Biblical Commentary (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 14.]

⁶⁶This type of ‘double meaning’ expressions is one of the trademarks of John’s gospel and his letters.

⁶⁷Medieval Catholic art sought to depict this in the form of a halo. Although meant in the beginning as a symbol of God’s pres-

This glory is comparable to a unique trait of Jesus: ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός. The adjective μονογενής is only used 9 times inside the NT, and exclusively by John in reference to Jesus: Jhn. 1:14, 18; 3:16, 18; 1 Jhn. 4:9. The other 4 uses in Luke and Hebrews specify an ‘only child.’⁶⁸ Etymologically the adjective denotes a unique derivation from a source, here specified as παρὰ πατρός, *from the Father*.⁶⁹ Thus the λόγος become

ence, over time the halo came to be thought of as something seen with the human eye. This completely misses the artistic intention.

⁶⁸“It means ‘only-begotten.’ Thus in Hb. Isaac is the μονογενής of Abraham (11:17), in Lk. the dead man raised up again at Nain is the only son of his mother (7:12), the daughter of Jairus is the only child (8:42), and the demoniac boy is the only son of his father (8:42).¹¹” [Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 739.]

⁶⁹“The word does not occur in Homer but is attested from the time of Hesiod. In compounds like διο-γενής, γη-γενής, εὐ-γενής, συγ-γενής the -γενής suggests derivation (γένος) rather than birth. Nouns as the first part of the compound give the source, e.g., from Zeus, the earth. Adverbs describe the nature of the derivation, e.g., noble or common. μονο-γενής is to be explained along the lines of εὐγενής rather than διο-γενής. The μονο- does not denote the source² but the nature of derivation. Hence μονογενής means ‘of sole descent,’ i.e., without brothers or sisters. This gives us the sense of only-begotten.³ The ref. is to the only child of one’s parents, primarily in relation to them. μονογενής is stronger than μόνος, for it denotes that they have never had more than this child.⁴ But the word can also be used more generally without ref. to derivation in the sense of ‘unique,’ ‘unparalleled,’ ‘incomparable,’ though one should not confuse the refs. to class or species⁵ and to manner.⁶

“The LXX uses μονογενής for ἄγαπητος, e.g., Ju. 11:34, where it means the only child; cf. also Tob. 3:15; 6:11 (BA), 15 (S); 8:17; Bar. 4:16 vl. This rendering is also found in ψ 21:20; 34:17, where ἄγαπητος par. to ἄγαπητος and the ref. is to the uniqueness of the soul. The transl. is possible on the basis of the general use of μονογενής for ‘unique,’ ‘unparalleled,’ ‘incomparable.’⁷

“The LXX also renders ἄγαπητος by ἀγαπητός, Gn. 22:2, 12, 16; Jer. 6:26; Am. 8:10; Zech. 12:10. Hence the question arises how far μονογενής has the sense of ‘beloved’? Undoubtedly an only child is particularly dear to his parents.⁸ One might also say that the ὁ υἱός μου ὁ ἀγαπητός of Mk. 1:11; Mt. 3:17; Lk. 3:22 and Mk. 9:7; Mt. 17:5 is materially close to the ὁ μονογενής υἱός of Jn., esp. as the Messianic Son of God is unique and without par. as such. But there is a distinction between ἀγαπητός and μονογενής. It is a mistake to subsume the meaning of the latter under that of the former. μονογενής is not just a predicate of value. If the LXX has different terms for ἄγαπητος, this is perhaps because different translators were at work. Philo calls the λόγος, not μονογενής, but πρωτόγονος, Conf. Ling., 146 etc. μονογενής is not a significant word for him.⁹ Joseph. has μονογενής in the usual sense of ‘only born.’¹⁰ There is a striking use of μονογενής in Ps. Sol. 18:4: ‘Thy chastisement comes upon us (in love) as the first born and only begotten son.’ With this may be compared 4 Esr. 6:58: ‘But we, thy people, whom thou hast called the first born, the only begotten, the dearest friend, are given up into their hands.’ After πρωτότοκος (Ex. 4:22) μονογενής denotes an intensifying. It is most unlikely that the sense here is simply that of ἀγαπητός.”

flesh is a unique situation produced solely by the Heavenly Father. The image painted by μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός is that the λόγος left the side of the Father in Heaven to take on human form on earth. Clearly the divine nature of the λόγος was not lost in this transition.⁷⁰ Clearly that is unique!

b) πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. This adjective modifying phrase best qualifies the first instance of δόξαν, as is illustrated by the block diagram:

```

ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ,
      δόξαν
      | ὡς μονογενοῦς
      | παρὰ πατρός,
      πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.
  
```

Even though this spelling of the 3rd declension Greek adjective πλήρης can be either masculine or feminine, it is best taken here as feminine in modification of the feminine noun δόξαν. It denotes the idea of “containing all that it can hold” that is then defined as χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, of grace and truth.

What does the δόξα of the λόγος who has tabernacled in our midst mean? This unique relationship to the Heavenly Father defined in the first modifier turns into the fullest possible expression of God’s χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας made available to His people.

This duel phrase reflects the OT *שמעו* often

[Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 4:737–739.]

⁷⁰The absence of the article with πατρός in the prepositional phrase παρὰ πατρός only heightens the qualitative tone of the expression.

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24  1.15  Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ
      περὶ αὐτοῦ
      καὶ
25  κέκραγεν λέγων·
A      οὗτος ἦν
      ὃν εἶπον·
  
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      ὀπίσω μου ἔμπροσθέν μου
a      ὁ...ἐρχόμενος...γέγονεν,
      ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.
  
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24  1.15  John witnesses
      about Him
      and
25  he cried out saying:
A      This one was
      him whom I said·
  
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      after me before me
a      the one...coming...exists,
      /-----|
      because first over me He was.
  
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Note several distinctives about this sub unit in comparison to the parallel unit in 1:6-8. The theme of John giving a witness remains the same here. But the narrative perspective has shifted. In 1:7 to the world,

translated by the LXX as ἔλεος καὶ ἀλήθεια, mercy and truth. The graciousness of God to His people comes out of who He is, i.e., ἀλήθεια. Truth is the essence of God’s being and thus He consistently expresses merciful grace to His people. It is exclusively in Jesus as the divine λόγος that this can be experienced by the believing community. The Jewish background of *שמעו* denoting God’s covenant mercy to Israel, now applied to the community of believers, had a special sting to it for Jewish readers of this gospel. How Jesus would time and time again demonstrate this divine quality to people in His ministry plays off the theological assertion made here, even though χάρις is only used 4 times in this phrase here in 1:14-17. But ἀλήθεια is a major theme in the gospel with 25 uses.

2) John’s role as witness, v. 15

15 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν.

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.’”

With this second sub unit we return to John’s mission in parallel to 1:6-8 in part one. But now this mission is focused upon his witness to the believing community rather than to the general public. It centers on the humility of John in self comparison to Jesus as the proper attitude of believers toward Christ. The block diagram visually illustrates this point:

John ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, came for a witness, so that he might witness concerning the Light. John came but, now in 1:15 to the church, he

μαρτυρεῖ, *is witnessing*. John's continuing legacy of witness still blesses the community of believers long after his death. To the world, the focus was on Jesus as τὸ φῶς, *the Light*. But his continuing witness to the church is upon Jesus as ὁ λόγος, *the Logos*. The point of Jesus as the divine λόγος high lights His exalted position.

Exactly what this means is laid out in a summary quote from John's preaching ministry: καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον, *and he cried out saying, "This was him about whom I spoke."* The perfect tense verb κέκραγεν, *cried out*, points to his preaching ministry but a proclamation with lasting impact. The attachment of the circumstantial participle λέγων, *saying*, is very Hebraic in pattern and sets up the quote from John's ministry.

The quote is somewhat challenging at first reading, until it is sorted out: ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν, *The One coming behind me stands before me because He was first over me*.

This saying compares to those in Mark 1:7 and Matthew 3:11.

Mk. 1:7. Καὶ ἐκήρυσσεν λέγων· ἔρχεται ὁ ἰσχυρότερός μου ὀπίσω μου, οὗ οὐκ εἰμί ἱκανὸς κύψας λῦσαι τὸν ἱμάντα τῶν ὑποδημάτων αὐτοῦ.

7 He proclaimed, "The one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to stoop down and untie the thong of his sandals."

Mt. 3:11b. ὁ δὲ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἰσχυρότερός μου ἐστίν, οὗ οὐκ εἰμί ἱκανὸς τὰ ὑποδήματα βαστάσαι *but one who is more powerful than I is coming after me; I am not worthy to carry his sandals.*

John's summary quote in 1:15 is then amplified in 1:19-34, where this same quote is used again in v. 30b, ὀπίσω μου ἔρχεται ἀνὴρ ὃς ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν, *'After me comes a man who ranks ahead of me because he was before me.'* When 1:15 is seen as a part of these several quotes from John's preaching ministry, the meaning hopefully becomes clearer. Let's break it down part by part:

ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, *the one coming behind me*. This means that Jesus was born after John was born and thus John is older than Jesus. How much older is never stated. Luke who gives the most detailed account of both births simply indicates that Mary remained with her cousin Elizabeth in Bethlehem for three months after the angelic announcement (Lk. 1:56). Sometime after she returned to Nazareth, John was born to Elizabeth (ἐπλήσθη ὁ χρόνος τοῦ τεκεῖν αὐτήν, *the time for her to give birth came full*, Lk. 1:57). When Mary arrived in Bethlehem to visit Elizabeth, the baby in Elizabeth was far enough along to respond to Mary's arrival (1:39-40). Mary stayed three months and then John was born sometime after Mary left Bethlehem. It could not have been many months after Mary's departure that John

was born, and Mary went home three months pregnant herself, so not too long after John was born then Jesus was born. They could not have been many months apart in the time of their births.

ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, *stands ahead of me*. This is but another way of John saying that Jesus is more important than me. The Greek phrase has the literal sense of saying that Jesus has come into a higher priority status than John.

ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν, *because He was first ahead of me*. This causal statement provides the basis for the main clause statement ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν. Jesus was born (γέγονεν) into a higher status than John (ἔμπροσθέν μου) because as the divine λόγος He has existed in first place above that of John.

Although more complex a statement than either Mark or Matthew and the apostle's later amplification in 1:19-34, this Prologue declaration sets forth the spiritual principle of the priority of Jesus over John in spite of John's slightly older age. It is because of who Jesus is as the divine λόγος. Just how much higher Jesus stands than John is made clearer in 1:27 where John says that he is not even worthy to do a slave's duty of taking off Jesus' sandals.

The witness of John about Jesus to the church is one of humility by example. No believer ever rises to a level of importance that matches that of Jesus. All, including preachers and priests, must function as lowly servants of the magnificent Lord that we have in Jesus. Once we come to see in Him the glorious Presence of God Almighty, we can get this priority straight.

3) Reception of the Logos in the community, vv. 16-18.

16 ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· 17 ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. 18 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

16 From his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace. 17 The law indeed was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18 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.

The impact of Jesus as the divine λόγος is enormous. In responding positively to His Presence so much is opened up to the community of believers. John summarizes this in terms of a contrast between what Moses gave the Israelites in the Law to what Jesus provides the church as the divine Presence of God Himself. How John summarizes this impact as foundational

to his story of Jesus is fascinating. The block diagram visually presents this.

First causal declaration, v. 16. Statement #26 sets the tone with the declaration of the blessing

1.16	ὅτι	ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ
26	ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν	καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.
1.17	ὅτι	διὰ Μωϋσέως
27	ὁ νόμος... ἐδόθη,	διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ
28	ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια... ἐγένετο.	
29	1.18 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν	πώποτε·
	μονογενῆς θεός	ὁ ὢν
		εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς
30	ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.	
=====		
1.16	For	out of His fullness
26	we all have received	indeed grace upon grace;
1.17	for	through Moses
27	the Law... was given,	through Jesus Christ
28	grace and truth... came.	
29	1.18 God no one has seen	ever;
	the only begotten God	who was
		in the lap of the Father
30	That One has narrated (Him).	

to all believers in community: ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, for out of His fullness we all have received even grace upon grace. John reached back to the verb ἔλαβον, **have received**, in v. 12 to identify the human response to the λόγος. But now the subject of the verb ἐλάβομεν is ἡμεῖς πάντες, **we all**. Also he reaches back to the adjective phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας, **full of grace and truth**, in v. 14 to pick up the source of this reception as ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ, **out of His fullness**. In beautifully eloquent expression, what we have received from the λόγος is καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος, indeed grace upon grace.

This use of καὶ in an exegetical role serves to put increased emphasis upon the verb action in connection to the direct object χάριν. Thus the idea becomes **we have indeed received**.

The direct object χάριν, grace, picks up from the earlier phrase χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας in v. 14. With the action verb ἐλάβομεν, **we have received**, only χάριν is appropriate. ἀληθείας as the very essence of God's being is not something He gives, but rather demonstrates, as the phrase in v. 17 highlights (cf. also 14:6). Divine grace, χάρις, as set forth elsewhere in the NT, especially in Paul, is a spiritually life transforming dynamic expressing God's mercy. John does not use χάρις outside of here in the Prologue, but gives numerous examples of this life changing dynamic in the ministry of Jesus showing divine mercy to people in need.

John has a most fascinating way of arranging these ideas. Two causal clauses introduced by ὅτι rather than the expected γάρ set forth the structure of the pericope (#s 26, 27-30). To be sure ὅτι, normally introducing a dependent causal clause, can be used to introduce an independent causal clause which normally γάρ introduces.⁷¹

⁷¹Note the distinction in English grammar, which is often violated in actual usage. 'Because' introduces a dependent causal clause, while 'for' does the same for an independent causal clause.

A part of the dilemma with ὅτι and γάρ is that the causal function represents an secondary expansion beyond the primary role that each of these two conjunctions possessed in Koine Greek. Consequently ancient Greek writers outside the highly educated and skilled classical writers sometimes confused the distinctive nature of these two conjunctions as for dependent and independent clauses. Both John and Paul fall into that category of confused usage of these two conjunctions, although fortunately not overly

Interestingly, the secular background of χάρις and related words specified that which brought well being to people, but inside the OT the defining LXX background for the NT use is חַן (grace; favor, 59x); נַחַד (favor; acceptance; pleasure, 3x); and רַחֲמֵיךָ (compassion, 2x).⁷² These stress God's actions in showing mercy that then produces well being. The λόγος has genuinely often.

"Thus there is very little difference between ὅτι (begins the sentence with W. H.) in 1 Cor. 1:25 and γάρ in 1:26. Cf. also ἐπειδὴ in 1:22. See further ὅτι in 2 Cor. 4:6; 7:8, 14, and διότι in Ro. 3:20; 8:7." [A. T. Robertson, *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Logos Bible Software, 1919), 962.]

⁷²The *Lexham Analytical Lexicon to the Septuagint*. Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2012. S.v., χάρις.

brought God into the life of the Christian community that results in the life abundant (cf. 10:10, ἐγὼ ἦλθον ἵνα ζωὴν ἔχωσιν καὶ περισσὸν ἔχωσιν, *I came so that they might have life and have it in abundance.*)

The prepositional phrase ἀντὶ χάριτος, *upon grace*, is distinctive. Although the preposition ἀντὶ possesses a wide range of possible meanings, the context here dictates the idea of ‘accumulation of quantity.’⁷³ Thus the image of the piling up of grace into large quantities is created by John.⁷⁴ Perhaps the image is more precisely pictured as one expression of grace after another.⁷⁵ The contextual setting that follows with a declaration regarding what Moses brought to Israel with the Law is important to the understanding of the picture here.

Second causal declaration, v. 17. This reason statement (ὅτι) grows out of the first one by asserting a major contrast between Moses and Jesus. Very critical to John’s statement are the distinctive verbs used. ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως *ἔδόθη*, *the Law through Moses was given*. But in Christ, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ *ἐγένετο*, *grace and truth through Jesus Christ appeared*. The Law came from God mediated through Moses. But grace and truth (cf. above details in v. 14) simply showed up in the person of Jesus Christ.

Comparing the two ‘mediators’ -- διὰ Μωϋσέως and διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ -- was most likely a common practice in discussions between Jews and Christians in Ephesus. Clearly it was an issue that Jewish Christians in the churches had to deal with. Which one produced the greatest blessing? Unquestionably for John the answer was quite clear. Through Moses came the Torah to covenant Israel. This was not a small mat-

⁷³John only uses the preposition one time in his gospel out of the 22 total NT uses.

⁷⁴“The majority of modern commentators, however, interpret χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος as denoting not substitution, but accumulation by succession, ‘the ceaseless stream of graces which succeed one another’ (Schnackenburg), i.e. grace upon grace or grace after grace.⁴⁸ The parallel always cited is in Philo, *De post. Cain* 145: ... ἐτέρας [sc. χάριτας] ἀντ’ ἐκείνων [sc. τῶν πρώτων χαρίτων] καὶ τρίτας ἀντὶ τῶν δευτέρων καὶ αἰεὶ νέας ἀντὶ παλαιότερος ... ἐπιδίδωσιν. One may point also to a line of Theognis (344), ἀντ’ ἀνιῶν ἀνίαι (‘grief upon grief’), to Aeschylus (*Agamemnon* 1560), ὄνειδος ἦκει τὸδ’ ἀντ’ ὄνειδους, and to Chrysostom (*De Sacerdotio* VI 13: Ben. ed.535D): σὺ δὲ με ἐκπέμπεις ἐτέραν ἀνθ’ ἐτέρας φροντίδα ἐνθείς (‘you are sending me away after giving me one head-ache on top of another’). On this view, χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος records the continuity of the divine gift under the Old and the New Covenant.⁴⁹” [John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, *International Critical Commentary* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 66.

⁷⁵“ἀντὶ appears to indicate that fresh grace replaces grace received, and will do so perpetually, the salvation brought by the Word thus is defined in terms of inexhaustible grace, a significant feature in view of the absence of further mention of χάρις in the Gospel.” [George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36, *Word Biblical Commentary* (Dallas: Word, Incorporated, 2002), 15.]

ter. But through Jesus Christ came grace and truth for all humanity. Clearly this was the superior outcome. Throughout *his gospel*, John will illustrate this point by high lighting the superiority of Christ and His teachings to Moses and his teachings.

Now what does this mean regarding Jesus Christ? Verse 18 proceeds to amplify the statement in v. 17b. Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἐώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. *No one has ever seen God. It is God the only begotten God who is close to the Father’s heart, who has made him known*. The superiority of Christ to Moses is made crystal clear by this explanation. In this compound sentence two points are made.

Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἐώρακεν πώποτε, *God no one has seen ever*.⁷⁶ Placing the direct object Θεὸν at the very front of the sentence heightens the emphasis dramatically, as the above English translation emphasizes. The Greek perfect tense verb ἐώρακεν stresses the face to face with lasting impact idea. The negative temporal adverb πώποτε rejects every claim at any single point in the past to have seen God. It’s interesting to note that later in First John 3:2, John will declare to most of this same reading audience that οἶδαμεν ὅτι ἐὰν φανερωθῇ, ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστίν, *we know that when He is manifested, we shall be like Him because we will see Him just as He is*. Heaven will lift all barriers to knowing God intimately.

But for now our understanding of God depends solely upon Christ. John frames this is a somewhat unusual manner that has caused copyists and interpreters fits down through the centuries.⁷⁷ A wide array of text

⁷⁶“Four words, which could stand in any sequence, are here skilfully ordered, closing the Prologue with supreme economy. As in 18b, any conjunction would have weakened, probably destroyed, the strength of this verse. The absence of the article before θεόν implies that no one had ever (previously) seen God *qua* God,⁵⁵ though they might have ‘seen’ him under shadows and figures at Mamre, at the burning bush, or in a vision (*Gen* 18; *Exod* 3; *Isa* 6). That is, no one had ever seen and known God in the way one knows oneself or another human being (cf. *Exod* 33:18–20). Contrast the past tense in 1 Jn 4:12 (θεὸν οὐδεὶς πώποτε τεθέαται) with the future tense in 1 Jn 3:2 (ὅμοιοι αὐτῷ ἐσόμεθα, ὅτι ὁψόμεθα αὐτὸν καθὼς ἐστίν) and with 1 Cor 13:12. J. H. Moulton calls the perfect with πώποτε (1:18; 5:37; 8:33) ‘an aoristic perfect of unbroken continuity’ (MHT I 144; see also III 68f. 84). The sense is therefore that no one has ever, here on earth, seen God directly, face to face, in his divinity, though Christians see God’s glory indirectly, in the humanity of the Word made flesh. See above on 14cd and compare 2 Cor 4:6 on the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Christ.” [John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, *International Critical Commentary* (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 69.]

⁷⁷“The evidence for the text of 18b is very finely balanced between μονογενὴς θεός UBS3 and NA27, and ὁ μονογενὴς υἱός (Tischendorf and von Soden). The former is preferred by the ed-

variants surface with μονογενής θεός.⁷⁸ The evidence thinly favors μονογενής θεός with the reference to the λόγος and thus meaning **the only begotten divine One**. The divine nature of the λόγος has repeatedly been affirmed in the Prologue along with the eternal existence of the λόγος. Here John captures all of this in a dramatic, eye catching phrase μονογενής θεός. Its coming at the end of the Prologue embeds an image of Jesus as λόγος that will stay planted in his mind all through reading or hearing read the entire gospel account.

μονογενής θεός ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο, **the only begotten God who exists in the lap of the Father, that One has narrated (Him)**. The participle phrase, ὁ ὢν εἰς⁷⁹ τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς, **who exists in the lap of the Father**, affirms the second qualification

itors of the UBS3 and NA27 on the ground that it has earlier and better support among the Greek MSS of the Gospel, although ο μ. θ., with the article, is much better attested among the early Fathers. The latter, ὁ μονογενής υἱός, is the reading most widely attested among the totality of the MSS, the versions and the Fathers. Schnackenburg and Barrett rightly comment that the sense is substantially unaltered whether one reads ὁ μονογενής θεός or ὁ μονογενής υἱός (both prefer the former, not least because of P^{66,75}). The shortest reading (ὁ μονογενής), though not accepted by any of the major modern editions of the Greek NT, has much to commend it (see UBS). For the detail, see Excursus IV, ‘Longer Notes on Textual Criticism 3’, and the comment on μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός under 1:14d.’ [John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 69–70.]

⁷⁸ο μονογενής θεός P⁷⁵ κ¹ 33; C¹pt C¹exThd pt Or^{pt}
 | ο μονογενής υἱός A C³ K G Δ Θ Ψ f1.13 565. 579. 700. 892. 1421. 1424 M lat sy^{e,h}; C¹pt C¹exThd pt
 | εἰ μὴ ο μονογενής υἱός W^s it; I^{lat}pt (+ θεου I^{lat}pt)
 | txt P⁶⁶ κ* B C* L sy^{p,hmg}; Or^{pt} Did

[Eberhard Nestle and Erwin Nestle, *Nestle-Aland: NTG Apparatus Criticus*, ed. Barbara Aland et al., 28. revidierte Auflage. (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012), 293.]

⁷⁹“ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς. Though it is often said that ‘in the Koine εἰς and ἐν are freely interchanged’, this does not apply to all NT books: in Matthew, in the Pauline and Johannine epistles, and in Revelation, the old classical distinction between εἰς and ἐν is still very much alive (MHT III 254–57; BDF 205–206). Also, we may add, in John, and the distinction is particularly significant in this text.

“In the major modern English versions the lemma is rendered: (i) ‘which/who is in the bosom of the Father’ (AV = KJV RV RSV); (ii) ‘who is at the Father’s side’ (NIV NAB); (iii) ‘who is nearest to the Father’s heart’ (NEB REB JB); (iv) ‘who is close to the Father’s heart’ (NJB NRSV). Option (i) is clearly based on the assumption that in this verse εἰς is equivalent to ἐν, which is how the Latin versions understood it (in sinu patris). The other renderings, made after 1950, when NT scholarship had become more sensitive to the distinction between the two prepositions, avoid ‘in’. Indeed, (iii) and (iv) gently hint that εἰς here connotes more than close physical presence together, which is the sense of ἐν τῷ κόλπῳ in 13:23.⁵⁶⁷”

[John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 70.]

of the λόγος. Not only is He divine but His connection to the Heavenly Father is intimate. The image of one sitting in another’s lap and leaning against their chest is an ancient image of intimate relationship, whether in marriage, parenting etc.⁸⁰

Both these references stand as the antecedent to the demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνος, **That One**. This clearly goes back to Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ in v. 17.

The verb ἐξηγήσατο, **That One narrated**, is the rich-

⁸⁰“The metaphor is frequent in the OT to describe the most intimate of human relationships: it is used of marriage (Deut 13:7 [6]; 28:54, 56 etc.), of mother and child (1 Kgs 3:20; 17:19), and of God’s care for Israel (Num 11:12: for further detail see Schnackenburg). Here in Jn 1:18 the phrase is probably intended to answer to the words ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος πρὸς τὸν θεόν: just as the pre-Incarnate Logos was, in the beginning, very close to God (see on 1b), so the utterly unique human individual, Jesus Christ, is at the end described as being permanently (ὁ ὢν) εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς. What exactly does this phrase mean?

“The Greek Fathers (Chrysostom, Theophylactus, Theodore of Mopsuestia) and several Latin writers (Marius Victorinus, Thomas Aquinas, Maldonatus) interpret the phrase as referring to the consubstantiality of the Father and the Son. Augustine gives a psychologizing interpretation, which was to become common in the Middle Ages: the Son knows the secrets of the Father, and can therefore reveal them.⁵⁷ Both types of interpretation assume that the verse refers to intra-trinitarian relationships, and that the preposition εἰς means in. De la Potterie, with a number of (mostly French) writers, has argued for the translation, *qui est tourné vers le sein du Père*, meaning that Jesus during his earthly life was ever attentive to, and responsive to, the love of the Father.⁵⁸ In the second edition of the French Bible de Jérusalem (1973) this translation replaces *dans le sein du Père* of the 1956 edition.

“The most satisfactory interpretation, however, is to take ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς as referring to the return of Jesus Christ into the bosom of the Father. This interpretation, formerly upheld by B. Weiss, H. J. Holtzmann, Zahn, Tillmann, Thüsing etc., has been newly presented by René Robert.⁵⁹ Robert reasons that Greek provides many examples of a verb followed by εἰς which express situation in a place and thereby imply a preceding movement to that place. The construction is both classical, and common.⁶⁰ There is a fine example in Xenophon (Anabasis I ii 2), παρήσαν εἰς Σάρδεις, which is neatly rendered they presented themselves at Sardis.⁶¹ Compare Jn 21:4 (‘Jesus stood on [εἰς] the shore’).⁶² No one denies that one of the central themes of John is that Jesus, when his earthly mission is accomplished, will return to heaven, whence he came (3:13; 6:62; 8:21), to the Father who sent him (7:33; 13:1, 3; 16:5; 17:11, 13), there to be glorified with the glory which he had before the world was, with the Father (17:5). Indeed, in John, this is the only message which the risen Jesus gives to Mary Magdalen (20:7). It makes excellent sense therefore to translate ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς as who is now returned into the bosom of the Father, thus not only giving an inclusio with πρὸς τὸν θεόν in 1:1b, but also, perhaps, recalling to the reader the prophetic word of Isa 55:10–11.”

[John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 70–72.]

est part of this statement.⁸¹ Although many have found

^{81c} **ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο**. The English versions cited above under 18b render these words as (i) ‘hath declared him’ (AV = KJV RV); (ii) ‘has made him known’ (RSV NRSV NEB REB NIV JB NJB); (iii) ‘has revealed him’ (NAB). The second version has a clear over-all majority, and the third is apparently a rank outsider.

“The original, and etymologically self-evident, meaning of ἐξηγεῖσθαι is to lead, but this sense, though frequent in Classical Greek (LSJ), is, according to the lexicons, found nowhere in the LXX, the NT or cognate literature (BDAG). This last statement has recently been challenged.

“In the NT, the verb occurs six times, five in the Lukan writings (at Lk 24:35; Acts 10:8; 15:11, 14; 21:19), and once here, in Jn 1:18. It is generally agreed that in the Greek of NT times, the verb ἐξηγεῖσθαι is used in three senses. It can mean to recount, relate, report, describe, explain, and this is the sense usually assigned to it in the five Lukan texts just mentioned. It is frequently used, as in Classical Greek, as a technical term meaning to reveal, to impart to initiates officially the secrets of the mystery-religions.⁶⁹ In Josephus, it is used with the sense to interpret the Law (War I 649; 2.162; Ant. XVIII 81). See LSJ and BDAG. All three usages would sit well with the preaching activity of the historical Jesus as described in our extant sources.

“In 1977 de la Potterie challenged the accuracy of these common interpretations of the verb when they are applied to Jn 1:18.⁷⁰ The first sense, correct for Luke, he judges inadequate for John. The second and the third he finds oversimplified, alleging that they are uncritically reliant on a number of classical texts which have been regularly repeated since Wettstein (1751).⁷¹ His criticism is that neither the noun ἐξηγητής, nor the verb ἐξηγεῖσθαι is ever found in Classical Greek with the meaning to reveal. In the classical texts quoted, wherever ἐξηγεῖσθαι is used of the gods, it means to issue laws, to make edicts; wherever it is used of ‘exegetes’ or diviners at sanctuaries like Delphi, it means that they interpret oracles or explain the meaning of laws.⁷² There is no example of its ever being used to denote revealing new truths.⁷³ The translation to reveal cannot therefore be justified in terms of, or by references to, Greek or Hellenistic religion.

“But, de la Potterie continued, that does not imply that ἐξηγεῖσθαι may not in fact, bear, at Jn 1:18, the sense to reveal, provided that this is interpreted against a Hebrew background. That would be a quite acceptable rendering of Job 28:27, at the end of the passage in which the writer asks, ‘Where shall wisdom be found?’ (vv. 12–28).⁷⁴ In τότε εἶδεν αὐτὴν καὶ ἐξηγήσατο αὐτὴν, ἐξηγήσατο could well be translated as revealed or — with a weaker sense — made known. One may compare also the cognate verb ἐκδιηγέσθαι in Sir 18:5 (τίς προσθήσει ἐκδιηγήσασθαι τὰ ἐλέη αὐτοῦ); Barrett calls attention also, and particularly, to Sir 43:31, τίς ἑώρακεν αὐτὸν καὶ ἐκδιηγήσεται, ‘Who has seen him and can describe him?’, to which Jn 1:18 might seem a direct answer. ἐκεῖνος—‘that one’, the utterly unique One (ἐκεῖνος, particularly the resumptive ἐκεῖνος, being frequent in John).

“One problem remains. The verb ἐξηγήσατο has no direct object. Nearly all translations supply one, usually ‘him’, that is, the Father, and it can rightly be argued that this must imply and include the Son (cf. Jn 14:5–11). Indeed, de la Potterie, in *La Vérité* (228) went so far as to translate 1:18b as ‘*Le Fils unique, tourné vers le sein du Père, il fut, lui, la révélation*’. Later, however, in response to an article by R. Robert,⁷⁵ he abandoned this interpretation, pleading instead for the meaning to walk in front, and therefore for the translation he is the one who has opened the way.⁷⁶ Robert countered with a vigorous defence of what he had originally pro-

posed: ἐξηγήσατο in 1:18 is intended to carry a double meaning, and to imply both to guide and to explain, just as both senses are implicit in Jn 14:6 (‘I am the way ... no one comes to the Father except through me’), particularly when this verse is taken in conjunction with 14:2 (‘I am going, to prepare a place for you’). As a translation, Robert suggested it is he who was the guide—it is he who was the way, and even declared a preference (if a language cannot sustain the double meaning) for the latter.⁷⁷ The double meaning would, of course, dovetail with his version of 18b (‘now returned into the bosom of the Father’). Indeed, his interpretation of the whole sentence from ὁ ὢν to ἐξηγήσατο has everything to commend it.⁷⁸ In an endeavour to capture all these nuances, the translation given above renders ἐξηγήσατο by three verbs: ... has been our guide, and shown and led the way.

CONCLUSION

What shall we say in application?

This passage is rich spiritually beyond words! During this Christmas season, John’s words are particularly relevant. The next time you see one of the traditional Christmas images of Mary holding the baby

posed: ἐξηγήσατο in 1:18 is intended to carry a double meaning, and to imply both to guide and to explain, just as both senses are implicit in Jn 14:6 (‘I am the way ... no one comes to the Father except through me’), particularly when this verse is taken in conjunction with 14:2 (‘I am going, to prepare a place for you’). As a translation, Robert suggested it is he who was the guide—it is he who was the way, and even declared a preference (if a language cannot sustain the double meaning) for the latter.⁷⁷ The double meaning would, of course, dovetail with his version of 18b (‘now returned into the bosom of the Father’). Indeed, his interpretation of the whole sentence from ὁ ὢν to ἐξηγήσατο has everything to commend it.⁷⁸ In an endeavour to capture all these nuances, the translation given above renders ἐξηγήσατο by three verbs: ... has been our guide, and shown and led the way.

“If further evidence be needed to discern the evangelist’s mind, there remain the Targums. In Neofiti I, at Exod 3:14, we read: ‘And the Lord said to Moses: I am who I am. And he said: Thus shall you say to the children of Israel: He who said and the world was from the beginning, and is to say again to it: Be!, and it will be, has sent me to you.’⁷⁹ The echoes of Jn 1:1–3 are unmistakable, and the thought certainly matches Boismard’s vision of the return of humanity to be once more in the bosom of the Father (see Excursus I). These ideas are even more prominently marked in the same Targum at Exod 33:14: ‘The Glory of my Shekinah will accompany amongst you and will prepare a resting place for you’ (cf. Jn 14:2–3).⁸⁰ The idea of the Lord’s going before Israel to prepare a resting-place for the people recurs in this Targum at Num 10:33 and Deut 1:33, where the Hebrew infinitive לָתוּר (*latur*), eaning literally to seek out by exploring, to scout out, is rendered in the Aramaic by the verb לְמִתְקַנָּה (*lēmīṭqānāh*), the literal meaning of which is to acquire, to take possession of, and therefore to prepare a place. The phrasing is particularly poignant at Deut 1:32–33, which read: ‘You did not believe in the name of the Word of the Lord your God, who led before you on the way to prepare for you a place for your encampment’.⁸¹”

[John F. McHugh, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1–4*, ed. Graham N. Stanton and G. I. Davies, International Critical Commentary (London; New York: T&T Clark, 2009), 73–76.

Jesus, remind yourself that this picture doesn't begin to tell the story of Christmas. The real Christmas story lies much, much deeper.

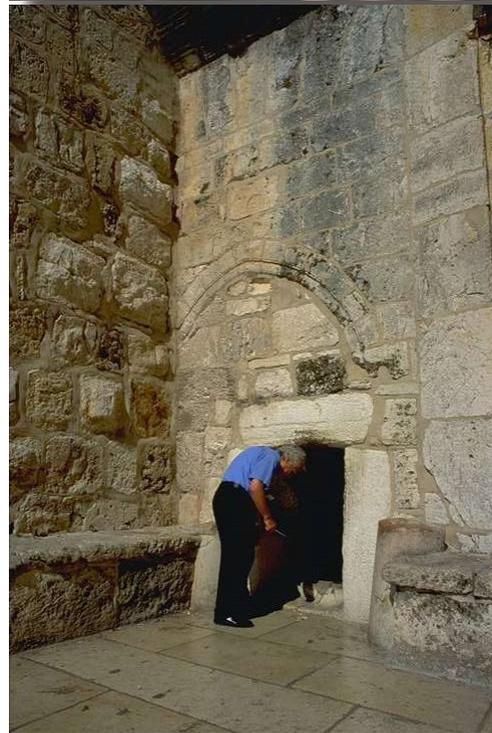
God Almighty took upon Himself human form as the divine λόγος not just to be a human. A thousand times no to such limited thinking! He came as the world's Creator and the church's Leader to God. If all we can see in such a picture of the baby Jesus is a cute infant, we make the same disastrous mistake as the human world He created who αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω, **did not recognize Him** (1:10c). If all you can see in this picture is a sweet religious scene, you are making the same fatal mistake as the Jewish people who αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον, **did not accept Him** (1:11b).

Quickly my friend, move on to accepting Him as the divine λόγος, not the baby in a animal stable, who will shine the Light of salvation into your life with the greatest Christmas gift of all: ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, **authorization to become children of God** (1:12). This means making a life changing surrender to Him for the rest of your life (τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, **to those continuing to believe in His name** 1:13).

In such a shared commitment in the community of God's people, your astounding discovery will be that the very Shekinah glory of God rests with these people whom you now belong to as one of the τέκνα θεοῦ (1:14). Jesus Christ as that divine δόξα becomes the exclusive path to God, the only source of true comprehension of who God is, and the sole Guide through life, ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο (1:17-18).

This is the spiritual side of Christmas. The angels affirmed this to the shepherds; the wise men sensed something of this profound spiritual reality in making their journey to Bethlehem. All Herod saw was a tiny baby born to Jewish peasants who threatened his power and rule over Judea. What a tragedy!

WHEN YOU SEE THE BABY JESUS IN THE ARMS OF HIS MOTHER MARY, WHOM DO YOU REALLY SEE?



Bethlehem: Church of the Nativity - Entrance.

A person of average height has to stoop to enter the Church of the Nativity from the paved courtyard that is part of the Byzantine atrium. This entrance, called the "door of humility", was lowered around the year 1500 to prevent the Moslems riding their horses into the church. Two other entrances at either side of the present door were also

blocked up. The Basilica of the Nativity was built in 326 A.D. by the Emperor Constantine the Great and his mother, St. Helena, over the cave where Jesus was born according to tradition. The Basilica, which was burnt in a Samaritan revolt in the 6th century, was repaired and extended by the Emperor Justinian, who had his architect put to death because he didn't like his work. Since then it has remained almost intact, enabling us to study the local versions of early Christian Basilica architecture.