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THE MEANING OF THE LOGOS IN JOHN 1:1-18

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CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS -----	iii
INTRODUCTION -----	1
Chapter	
1. THE BACKGROUND OF ΛΟΓΟΣ -----	3
The etymology of Logos	
The concept of Logos in the Greek	
Heraclitus' concept of Logos	
2. Sophists' concept of Logos	
Plato's concept of Logos	
Aristotle's concept of Logos	
The concept of Logos in Hellenism	
Stoicism's concept of Logos	
Neo-Platonism's concept of Logos	
Hermeticism's concept of Logos	
Philo's concept of Logos in Hellenistic Judaism	
The concept of Logos in Hebrew Thought	
The terms for "word" in Hebrew	
The Word of God: "Dabar"	
The word of God as the word of the creator	
The word of God as the revelator	

3. BACKGROUND OF JOHN’S GOSPEL -----	24
Authorship	
Date	
4. EXEGESIS OF JOHN 1:1-18 -----	51
5. CHRISTOLOGY AND ΛΟΓΟΣ -----	76
Christological Controversies and λογος	
Modern Christology issues and λογος	
6. CONCLUSION -----	92
BIBLIOGRAPHY -----	97

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INTRODUCTION

The term λόγος in the New Testament is a very important word in the Bible, because it indicates the Messiah, Jesus Christ, who was predicted in the Old Testament (OT). Nevertheless, many people still do not know the meaning of the term λόγος. One cannot successfully study ancient philosophy or literature without understanding the term λόγος. The term has been used with various meanings by ancient philosophers since 500BC.¹ Thus, this study will start with an examination of the meaning the term λόγος held for OT prophets, philosophers from ancient Greece, Hellenistic Jews, Church fathers, and finally, modern theologians.

In the second chapter, this study carefully considers the background of John's Gospel, the issues of authorship, and date. The prolegomena of John's Gospel includes issues such as audience, place, narrative, etc. Only the authorship and date are looked at in this study, because they are the most important issues. Many books in the Bible do not name their author; the Fourth Gospel is one of them. All documents have a writer or writers, however, as did the Fourth Gospel, a writer who was inspired by God (II Tim 3:16). Further, all things created or made have a date of origin. The Bible is included in that category, and the Fourth Gospel is as well. The date tells us about the culture, politics, economy, society, and the major issues of that time. Therefore, both the authorship and date are considered in the second chapter.

The third chapter is an exegetical study of John 1:1-18. John's Gospel wanted to introduce non-Christians to the true God, to know, believe in, and accept Him (20:31). Whoever would know Jesus Christ should know the true meaning of λόγος in John's

¹ Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, and I. Howard Marshall, *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospel* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1992), 481.

Gospel, because it explains the character and nature of Jesus Christ. For these reasons, the third chapter will examine the meaning of λόγος in 1:1-18, i.e. the Greek text.

The final chapter is focused on the christology of λόγος. Christological controversies and many heresies have existed from early times, in spite of the fact that John's Gospel explained adequately the concept of λόγος. Many modern theologians also developed their christology using the term λόγος, but deviating from the true truth found in John's Gospel. Chapter four will consider their christology, and interpretation of λόγος.

When the concept of λόγος in John 1:1-18 is misunderstood, a pillar of Christianity is shaken. Orthodox Christianity rests upon this christological pillar; indeed it is arguably the cornerstone of the entire edifice. Therefore, a correct understanding of λόγος is vital for the faith.

This study looks at some early and modern heresies that have resulted from a misunderstanding of the term λόγος, comparing them against the truth found in John's Gospel, and other books in the Bible. This study offers a surer way to understand the meaning of λόγος, and with it, a surer way of understanding who Jesus Christ is.

THE BACKGROUND OF ΛΟΓΟΣ

The Etymology of λόγος

The term λόγος has a multiplicity of meanings. It can mean “word,” “speech,” “matter,” “thing,” “command,” “message,” “account,” “reckoning,” “settlement,” “respect,” “reason,” and so on.² It appears “331 times in the New Testament except Jude and Philemon”³ and was used “for God’s word in all its senses, for Christ’s words, for ordinary human words, and with other non-theological meanings.”⁴ In its philosophical meaning, the term is close to the concept of “word” because this represents “the causing of something to be seen for what it is, and the possibility of being orientated thereby,”⁵ rather than an address or word of creative power (as for example לֵבָבָה, in the OT).⁶

The Concept of λόγος in Greek Philosophy

The term λόγος is a very important word in almost all philosophical schools in ancient Greece because “around 500 B.C. [they] began to adopt the word and use it to signify that which gives shape, form, or life to the material universe.”⁷ This is what logos meant to Heraclitus, Sophists, Plato, and Aristotle.

² William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and other Early Christian Literature* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), 478-80.

³ G. W. Bromiley, *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia*, vol. 4 (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1979), 1102.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, s.v. “λέγω, et. al.,” ed. H. Kleinknecht and O. Procksch, IV: 80.

⁶ Daniel R. Mitchell, *The Person of Christ in John’s Gospel and Epistle* (Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 2006), 25.

Heraclitus' Concept of λόγος

Heraclitus, an Ephesian noble⁸ and scholar, uses λόγος to mean “didactic discourse,” “word,” and even “reputation” as well as “proportion,” “meaning,” “universal law,” and “truth.”⁹ Heraclitus’ core thought was that the universe is made up of fire, because everything in the universe is endlessly moving and changing.¹⁰ Heraclitus also said that “all things are in a state of flux,”¹¹ so that “they are never, they are always becoming.”¹² Thus, “Heraclitus was concerned with getting hold of the unity of the One and the All through the existence of the universal law of proportion that underlies continuous change.”¹³ Heraclitus, however, also believed that “Reality is One,”¹⁴ unity in diversity and, difference in unity.¹⁵ Here, “Reality” means “all things,” and Heraclitus also considered the reality to be One, saying, “It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word, and to confess that all things are one.”¹⁶ Heraclitus also explained that “λόγος was the instrument of thought, expressing both the thought-process and its conclusion,

⁷ Green, Joel B., Scot Mcknight, and I. Howard Marshall, 481.

⁸ Frederick Copleston, *A History of Philosophy*, vol. 1 (Doubleday, NY: Image Books, 1993), 38.

⁹ Verlyn D. Verbrugge, *The NTV Theological Dictionary of New Testament Words*, An Abridgment of New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Publishing House, 2000), 759.

¹⁰ Gordon H. Clark, *The Johannine Logos* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1972), 16.

¹¹ Copleston, 39.

¹² *Ibid.*, 144.

¹³ Colin Brown, *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1975), 1081.

¹⁴ Copleston, 40.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 39-40.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 40.

and its consequences for the thinker,”¹⁷ because he thought of λόγος as the universal Reason and universal law immanent in all things.¹⁸ Heraclitus also thought that “everything one sees is explored with the mind and is related together.”¹⁹ Consequently, “the relationship is the λόγος of individual objects, contained in the objects themselves, and exhibits a law common to all existents.”²⁰ Therefore, Heraclitus was able to say “the One is All.”²¹ In fact, Heraclitus spoke of the One as God who has the characters of the universal Reason and the universal law immanent in all things.²² However, the universal Reason and law were unchangeable principles. Heraclitus called them λόγος.²³ It also appears that Heraclitus thought of God as pantheistic,²⁴ because God, he said, points to all things which exist in the world.

Sophists' Concept of λόγος

The Sophists liked to collect a variety of data in order to draw conclusions, which are partly theoretical and partly practical.²⁵ They taught their followers, whom they met while traveling from city to city in Greece, and they received fees for teaching.²⁶ For the sophists, the term λόγος plays a very important part as a means of persuasion and

¹⁷ Brown, 1081.

¹⁸ Copleston, 43.

¹⁹ Verbrugge, 759.

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Brown, 1082.

²² Copleston, 43.

²³ Clark, 16.

²⁴ Copleston, 38.

²⁵ Ibid., 82.

direction and thus, it means “the rational power set in man, the power of speech and thought.”²⁷

“Gorgias in particular stressed the power of the *lógos*, describing it in quasi-personal terms as a great ruler (*dynástēs mégas*), capable of effecting the most divine deeds in the smallest body.”²⁸

W. T. Jones believes that the Sophists are educators rather than philosophers.²⁹

But it is right to consider the Sophists philosophers because they made and collected data, and defined the theoretical and practical things in terms of Sophist thinking. The Sophists taught their followers about “virtue,” a skill for success.³⁰ In order to make their lives successful, their followers needed debates and oratorical techniques to defend their own opinions, and thus the Sophists taught them, and these skills were used to defend political democracy.³¹ With this background, they are three viewpoints regarding the concept of *λόγος*. One viewpoint claimed that “the philosophical reflection of the Sophists is directed toward man and toward the relationship between the individual and society,”³² because the Sophists were not interested in the One. Another viewpoint assumes that, “through the *λόγος*, discourse, people are able to play a sensible part in political life.”³³ Finally, “the *λόγος* takes on the meaning of the individual method of

²⁶ W. T. Jones, *The Classical Mind: A History of Western Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (Harcourt, NY: Brace & World, 1969), 63-4.

²⁷ Gerhard Kittel, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. IV, Ed. and Trans. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids, MI: WM. B. Eerdmans, 1967), 82.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Jones, 63.

³⁰ Ibid., 64.

³¹ Ibid., 64-65.

³² Verbrugge, 759.

argument to defend one's own proposition."³⁴ The λόγος by the Sophists, however, is treated "apart from any norm or connection with given interests or situations."³⁵ After all, one can understand that "it was used of particular cases rather than of any universal single principle."³⁶

Plato's Concept of λόγος

Plato, one of the greatest philosophers in history, was born of a famed Athenian family in 428/7 B.C.³⁷ Plato's representative philosophical thought on the objective essences is the concept of Idea or Form. Plato thought ideas exist in their own sphere.³⁸ Plato also believed that "the soul existed before its union with the body in a transcendental realm."³⁹ Frederick Copleston, however, thought that the soul Plato referred to seems to be composed of a plurality of "detached" essences.⁴⁰ As Plato thought that all things of this world which have the model of the Forms are formed by God or the 'Demiurge,'⁴¹ he believes that the Ideas or Forms exist apart from the sensible things that are modeled on them as well as from God who takes them as his model.⁴² The Ideas and Forms are the entities that we cannot see with our eyes in this world, yet they

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Kittel, 82.

³⁶ Paul Edwards, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, vol. 5 and 6 (Broadway, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1972), 83.

³⁷ Copleston, 127.

³⁸ Ibid., 166.

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹ The 'Demiurge' means a Creator used by Plato's philosophical thought.

really exist. Plato, thus, considered λόγος as the basic fact in all life, because he believed there was a pre-existent something between the λόγος of the thinking soul and the λόγος of things.⁴³

Plato wanted to organize the universe on rational principles, but the organization was produced by an entity called Nous, not λόγος.⁴⁴ Nous includes λόγος. Plato used λόγος in his *Dialogue*, which he associated with discourse or rational explanation.⁴⁵ He insisted λόγος is a rational account (discourse or explanation), because it could lead the higher levels of being or idea of things to real knowledge.⁴⁶ He thus considered λόγος as Man alone, because only Man can determine human actions with the word, i.e. speech and understanding⁴⁷ in rational explanation.

Aristotle's Concept of λόγος

Aristotle was born in 384/3 B.C. at Stageira in Thrace as the son of Nicomachus, a physician of the Macedonian king, Amyntas II.⁴⁸ Most of his writings were in dialogue form, but many other writings no longer exist, because he did not publish his teaching.⁴⁹ Aristotle's writings may be divided into four major groups: the logical treatise, writings on natural philosophy and science, a collection of works known as the *Metaphysics*, and

⁴² Copleston, 167.

⁴³ Kittel, 83.

⁴⁴ Edwards, 83.

⁴⁵ D. N. Freedman, *The Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 4 (NY: Doubleday, 1992), 348.

⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁷ Verbrugge, 759; Brown, 1083.

⁴⁸ Copleston, 266.

⁴⁹ Walter A. Elwell, *Evangelical Dictionary of Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1984), 75.

works on ethics and politics.⁵⁰ However, Aristotle also explained that there is the word (λόγος), as Man, having two meanings: “Man has the word (λόγος) in the twofold sense that what he does and does not do are determined by the word or understanding, and that he himself speaks the word, achieving understanding and speech.”⁵¹

Aristotle’s philosophy contained four different usages for the term λόγος. First, the term λόγος means “definition” for the word which does not have an obvious meaning in the context.⁵² Second, the term λόγος means “a conclusion,” like the final proposition of a line of syllogism.⁵³ Third, the λόγος means the proof itself.⁵⁴ Finally, the term λόγος means rational speech and rationality, like Plato.⁵⁵ Therefore, Verbrugge said the λόγος became “the stylistic form of orators.”⁵⁶ Aristotle also said that “what distinguished human beings from lower animals was speech. However, as Aristotle thinks that all of these are realized through reason, he insisted that it is λόγος.⁵⁷ Because one’s reason is concerned with ethics, one has to live ethically according to their reason.⁵⁸

⁵⁰ Ibid., 76.

⁵¹ Ibid., 84.

⁵² Verbrugge, 760; Brown, 1086.

⁵³ Ibid.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ Freedman, 348.

⁵⁶ Verbrugge, 760.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

The Concept of λόγος in Hellenism

Stoicism's concept of λόγος

The Stoic School was founded by Zeno, born about 336/5 B.C. at Citium in Cyprus, and died about 264/3 in Athens.⁵⁹ The Stoics did not accept the transcendental universal idea of Plato as well as the concrete universal ideas of Aristotle, because they thought “only the individual exists and our knowledge is knowledge of particular objects.”⁶⁰ The Stoics believed, “these particulars make an impression on the soul, and knowledge is primarily knowledge of this impression.”⁶¹

The Stoics believed that “λόγος played a cosmological role.”⁶² They used Heraclitus' philosophy, that is to say, “the doctrine of the λόγος and of Fire as the world-substance”⁶³ and developed it: “λόγος was identified by Zeno of Citium (335-263 B.C.E.), the founder of Stoicism, with fire and by Stoics from Chrysipus (ca. 280-207 B.C.E.) with a blend of fire and air, which they referred to as breath or spirit.”⁶⁴ The Stoics thought that “God is the active Fire, which is immanent in the universe, but He is at the same time primal Source from which the crasser elements, that make the corporeal world, come forth.”⁶⁵ The Stoics believed that “λόγος is the active element of reality.”⁶⁶

⁵⁸ Ibid.

⁵⁹ Copleston, 385.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 386.

⁶¹ Ibid.

⁶² Freedman, 348.

⁶³ Copleston, 387.

⁶⁴ Freedman, 349.

⁶⁵ Copleston, 388.

They also believed the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is identified with God, because “the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is a term for the ordered and teleological orientated nature of the world.”⁶⁷ Nevertheless, they thought that “God, like the substrate on which He works, is material.”⁶⁸ They assume moreover that $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is nature, because “natural beauty or finality in Nature points to the existence of a principle of thought in the universe.”⁶⁹ The Stoics concluded that $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ points to God and nature, which are in reality one.⁷⁰ Based on these principles, the Stoics insisted that “ $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was the principle of all rationality in the universe, and it was identified with God and with the source of all activity.”⁷¹

For the Stoics, $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is revealed only in human beings, as part of their nature, i.e. “only human being is rational.”⁷² Thus, while both Plato and Aristotle think that “human rationality was beyond the realm of the material,”⁷³ the Stoics believed that “human rationality was material in character.”⁷⁴

Neo-Platonism’s Concept of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$

The term “Neo-Platonism” is a modern term. It began as a result of the new impetus provided by the philosophy of Plotinus (24-269 C.E.), during the period of

⁶⁶ Freedman, 349.

⁶⁷ Kittel, 84.

⁶⁸ Copleston, 388.

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Freedman, 349.

⁷¹ Edwards, 83.

⁷² Freedman, 349.

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Ibid.

Platonism.⁷⁵ Neo-Platonism tries to describe a comprehensive philosophy that can satisfy all the spiritual aspirations of man through an image of the universe, and through the explanation of how man can get salvation, which is to be restored to his original condition.⁷⁶

Neo-Platonism emphasized the primary reality of the immaterial, intelligible realm.⁷⁷ Neo-Platonism suggested that a principle (the One) is superior to intellect and being.⁷⁸ This principle is the foundation (source) out of which everything flows, so that it is to be immanent, i.e. in everything.⁷⁹ This “flow” is not a temporal process, that is to say, it is timeless.⁸⁰ Therefore, J. O. Urmson and Jonathan Ree refer to the principle as “goodness” in the sense that it is the ultimate “why” of everything because it is the source of all beings.⁸¹

As Neo-Platonism describes a gradual “dispersion” of the original unity with the timeless process of effulgence, Neo-platonism explains two realms of the ordered reality; the supra-sensible reality (first: mind, or thought thinking itself, or spirit; next: the soul) and sensible reality (in time and space).⁸² J. O. Urmson and Jonathan Ree explain that

⁷⁵ Donald J. Zeyl, *Encyclopedia of Classical Philosophy* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1997), 417.

⁷⁶ J. O. Urmson and Jonathan Ree, *The Concise Encyclopedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers* (New York: Routledge, 1995), 219.

⁷⁷ Freedman, 349.

⁷⁸ Zeyl, 418.

⁷⁹ J. O. Urmson and Jonathan Ree, 219.

⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁸¹ Ibid.

⁸² Ibid.

“matter was evil, or not-goodness,”⁸³ because Neo-Platonism considered the source of all being (the principle or the One) is reality and matter is nothing. Here Neo-Platonism seems to understand the principle (the One) as the *λόγος*, because it has the power to control with intellect the sensible world.⁸⁴ Therefore, “the *λόγος* is a shaping power which lends form and life to things.”⁸⁵

Hermeticism's Concept of λόγος

According to legend, Hermes was born in a cave on Mount Cyllene in Arcadia, and Hermes was the messenger of the gods such as the god of shepherds, land travel, merchants, weights and measures, oratory, literature, athletics and thieves, as a son of Zeus and the nymph Maia, daughter of Atlas and one of the Pleiades.⁸⁶

The Hermetic writings, a collection of works from the Second, Third, and Fourth centuries AD, are very important, because they play a role of noticeable juncture of two philosophies, the Platonic and the Stoic.⁸⁷ Specifically, Hermes considered that *λόγος* means “salvation,” because he believed that it was his role as a mediator to reveal the will of the gods.⁸⁸ Hermes also insisted that *λόγος* means the son of Zeus, the supreme deity, because “the idea of an intermediate *λόγος* is further developed in the concept of the father-son relation.”⁸⁹ Hermes claimed represented that the *λόγος* is an image of God

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ Robert Audi, *The Cambridge Dictionary of Philosophy* (Cambridge, NY: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 448.

⁸⁵ Kittel, 85.

⁸⁶ Ellie Crystal, “Hermes.” <http://www.crystalinks.com/hermes.html>, (accessed 9 August, 2008)

⁸⁷ John Marsh, *Saint John* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1968), 32-3.

⁸⁸ Kittel, 87.

⁸⁹ Ibid., 88.

and man is an image of the λόγος, because the Hermetic conception of a world being is depicted in the thought of the image.⁹⁰

Philo's concept of λόγος in Hellenistic Judaism

Philo, the great Jewish philosopher, lived in Alexandria, Egypt, at the time of Christ, and produced a wealth of literature. He used the term λόγος often in his philosophical thought. The concept of λόγος is very significant in Philo's writing, appearing over 1300 times.⁹¹ Thus the most important usage of λόγος for this study is found in Hellenistic Jewish literature. Philo tried to interpret the Mosaic Law in the light of Greek philosophy.⁹² He thought that "the λόγος was the intermediate reality between God, who was essentially transcendent, and the universe."⁹³ However, these thoughts, in fact, were influenced by two philosophical schools, Plato's, and the Stoic's.⁹⁴

"While Philo could use the Stoic concept of the λόγος as the principle of rationality that pervades the universe, Philo's λόγος primarily fits into the pattern of the intermediate figure found in most Middle Platonic system. Philo depicted the λόγος in a variety of ways, and the figure had a number of different functions."⁹⁵

According to Plato's thought,⁹⁶ the term λόγος means "the word by which God created the world."⁹⁷ However, Philo also used λόγος as the concept of a mediator between the

⁹⁰ Ibid.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Freedman, 350.

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, and I. Howard Marshall, 482.

⁹⁵ Freedman, 350.

⁹⁶ Plato insisted the world of Ideas, which is in a world above the visible world. The world of Ideas is superior to the Emiurge, the creator of heaven and earth. So Plato thought that it is the true reality. (Clark, 17)

transcendent God and universe, but not an individual personality,⁹⁸ like the Stoic's. In short, "λόγος was the principle of all rationality in the universe, and it was identified with God and with the source of all activity."⁹⁹

Because Philo's concept of the λόγος was used in many ways, and especially because the term had many different functions, it is necessary to examine three functions more closely: cosmology, anthropology, and anagogic. The cosmological function of λόγος had two aspects:

"Philo called these two aspects of the λόγος the Creative Power and the Ruling Power, and he connected the first with the name Elohim (God) and the second with Lord, the Greek word used to translate Yahweh in the LXX. Other terms used by Philo to refer to the λόγος are the First-Begotten Son of the Uncreated Father, the Chief of the Angels, the High Priest of the Cosmos, and the Man of God."¹⁰⁰

The second function of the λόγος was anthropological. As Philo thought that man was created *according to* the image of God, but not *as* the image of God, the λόγος was the paradigm by which God made the human mind, but not the human being as a whole.¹⁰¹

Then, Philo thought that "man was an expression at third hand (God-- λόγος--human mind) of the Maker."¹⁰² The final function of the λόγος was anagogic, which means that "the λόγος was meant to guide the human soul to the realm of the divine."¹⁰³ Philo thought that the human soul instinctively seeks to become like God (God's knowledge or

⁹⁷ Joel B. Green, Scot Mcknight, and I. Howard Marshall, 482.

⁹⁸ W. F. Howard, *Christianity According to St. John* (London: Duckworth, 1952), 38.

⁹⁹ Edwards, 83.

¹⁰⁰ Freedman, 350-351.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., 351.

¹⁰² Ibid.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

vision). However, it is impossible because the human soul is nothingness in relationship to the divine, and the divine is the creator of all things.¹⁰⁴

The concept of λόγος in Hebrew Thought

The terms for “word” in Hebrew

In Hebrew, there are several terms that have the meaning “word” such as *dābār*, *’ēmer*, *’imrâh*, and *millâr*;¹⁰⁵ here only *dābār* will be studied, as this Hebrew term is semantically closest to λόγος in John’s Gospel. The major Hebrew equivalents of λόγος are based on the roots אמר and דבר, but אָמַר (“saying” [Ps. 19:2f.; 68:11; 77:8; Job 22:28]) is used only poetically.¹⁰⁶ On the other hand, “the basic classical word for λόγος in history and law, prophecy and poetry, is דָּבָר (*dābār*).”¹⁰⁷ What one should know here, however, is that “דָּבָר is to be regarded as the definite content or meaning of a word which has its conceptual background, because it is to seek the ‘back’ or ‘background’ of a matter.”¹⁰⁸ It, thus, means that “nothing is דָּבָר in itself, but all things have a דָּבָר, a ‘background’ or ‘meaning.’”¹⁰⁹

The term דָּבָר has two main elements—the dianoetic and the dynamic elements. The dianoetic element means that דָּבָר always belongs to the field of knowledge, because it includes a thought.¹¹⁰ However, when the dynamic is combined with the dianoetic element, the term דָּבָר indicates strong power, which can be manifested in the

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ Brown, 1087.

¹⁰⁶ Kittel, 91.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., 92

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

most diverse energies.¹¹¹ Guided by these influences, the writers of the OT wrote the Word of God.

The Word of God/Yahweh: “דָּבָר” (Dabar)

Judging from the OT witnesses as well as the literature of Israel’s ancient Near Eastern neighbors, the term “דָּבָר” in the OT is very important, because it has the characters of both power and activity.¹¹² The term “דָּבָר” means ‘the Word of God,’ which is used to depict communication from God to humanity (God’s people),¹¹³ and is Trans. as λόγος in the Septuagint.¹¹⁴ In the OT, the term “word of Yahweh” (דָּבָר) is found 241 times.¹¹⁵ The expression “word of Yahweh” was used most often in the prophetic period; 221 of 241 usages are in a prophetic context.¹¹⁶ The term “word of God” may be divided into two main groups of passages that describe the creator’s activity, and the prophet’s message.

In the former the [term] word of God is creative; cf. Gen. I.3,6,9, etc., the creating words of command, summarized in Ps. 33.6, By the word of the Lord (יהוה בדבר) were the heavens made (32.6, τω λόγῳ τοῦ κυρίου οἱ οὐρανοὶ ἐστρεψέθησαν). In the latter, the word of the Lord is the prophet’s message, that is, the means by which God communicates his purpose to his people; see e.g. Jer. I.4, Now the word of the Lord came unto me (וַיְהִי דְבַר יְהוָה אֵלַי, καὶ ἐγένετο λόγος κυρίου πρὸς αὐτόν); Ezek. I.3; Amos 3.1.¹¹⁷

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² H. D. Preuss, *OT Theology*, vol.1 (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995), 195.

¹¹³ Bill T. Arnold & H. G. M. Williamson, *Dictionary of the OT Historical Books* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 2005), 999.

¹¹⁴ Edwards, 84.

¹¹⁵ Brown, 1087.

¹¹⁶ Ibid.

¹¹⁷ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St John*, An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text (Marylebone Road, London: S.P.C.K., 1958), 127.

These scriptures demonstrate “the word is not abstract but spoken and active.”¹¹⁸ Moreover, Edwards says that “the word of God’ undergoes considerable personification,”¹¹⁹ because λόγος has these two meanings.

The word of God (“דָּבָר,” Dabar) as the word of the Creator

Colin Brown envisions the word of the Creator as having two aspects: the word of the Creator includes God’s word of salvation (Pss. 33:6, 9; 148:5, 8) and his Law (Ps. 147: 15ff.).¹²⁰ Firstly, the original word of the Creator (Ps. 33:6) has “the function of serving as the soteriological word of salvation (Ps. 33:4).”¹²¹ Secondly, the first creation account demonstrates “God’s power [over] all things [has] come into existence (Gen.1) and the opening chapter of the history of the covenant.”¹²² The reason that the word of the creation also includes the meaning of the law is because Ps. 147:15 - 19 implies that Yahweh lays claim to Israel with the law by his word:¹²³ “He declares his word to Jacob, his statutes, and his judgments to Israel” (v.19). Within this context, H. J. Kraus explains the meaning of the “word” as “the word of law and rule which was revealed to the chosen people (on this, cf. especially Ps. 33:4ff.).”¹²⁴ Kraus also explains that “having had the word of law and lordship imparted to them, the chosen people came to know and

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Edwards, 84.

¹²⁰ Brown, 1105; Hans - Joachim, Kraus, *Psalms 60-150: A Continental Commentary*, trans. Hiron C. Oswald (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1993), 559.

¹²¹ Brown. 1105.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Ibid., 1106.

¹²⁴ Kraus, 559.

understand the God who rules nature by his word, and who bears and sustains all creation.”¹²⁵

“דְּבַר רַ” (*Dabar*) is the means of creator, and is additionally understood as the word of salvation that will achieve the promise. It is also understood as the word of law, the covenant commandment.¹²⁶ This is how the Israelites understood דְּבַר רַ (“the word of God”). The word of God (“דְּבַר רַ”) as used in Ezekiel indicates the creator’s power—the vision of the raising of the bones of the dead (Eze. 37:1-14).¹²⁷ The term is also intended to proclaim that Israel will be blessed by God.

The word of God (“דְּבַר רַ” Dabar) as the Revelator

In the OT the plural דְּבַר יְיָ (“words of YHWH”) appears a mere seventeen times, and דְּבַר אֱלֹהִים (“words of God”) only three times (Jer. 23:36; Ezra 9:4; 1 Chron. 25:5).¹²⁸ Prophetic revelations from God are written using the plural expression.¹²⁹

The word of God (“דְּבַר רַ”) denoting prophetic revelation is seen in both the early prophets (Samuel, Elijah, Elisha) and the later ones (Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Deutero-Isaiah).¹³⁰ The words of God (“דְּבַר יְיָ”) include individual sayings of God from the mouth of the prophets, and the prophecy given through the writings of the prophets as a whole.¹³¹

¹²⁵ Brown, 1106.

¹²⁶ Ibid.

¹²⁷ Ibid., 1100.

¹²⁸ Preuss, 196.

¹²⁹ Ibid.

¹³⁰ Brown., 1091-1101.

¹³¹ Preuss., 197.

Prophets such as Samuel, Elijah, and Elisha, quoted the exact words of God. Their messages of judgment or warning were conveyed orally by God, through the prophets (1 Sam. 15:23, 26; 1 Ki. 17:1; 18:36; 21:17-19; 2 Ki. 1:3).¹³² Brown thus explains that “Elijah and Elisha are bearers of the Spirit at the same time as they are proclaimers of the word of God.”¹³³

In Amos, one can find that the word of God (“דְּבַר יְהוָה”) connotes revelation, because Amos proclaims the word to the Israelites according to Yahweh’s order. In fact, when one reads Hosea, one cannot find the phrase ‘the word of God.’ Instead of that, sees the phrases, “the words of Hosea (1:1),” or “the word of Jeremiah (Jer. 1:1).”¹³⁴ Thus, citing H. W. Wolff in “*Dodekapropheton*,” Brown says that “at the time of the recording of the sayings of Amos there is still no tradition of literary collections of words of the prophets.”¹³⁵ However, Brown is inaccurate. One can discern whether or not “the word of God” (דְּבַר יְהוָה) has the meaning of the Revelator through the context even though the phrase “the word of God” (דְּבַר יְהוָה) is not included. For example, the high priest Amaziah advises the king of Israel, Jeroboam, that “the land is no longer able to bear all his words” (Amos 7:10) and “You [Amos] must not preach any longer” (Amos 7:13)¹³⁶ without mentioning the phrase “the word of God.” Moreover, one can discern that Hosea proclaims the word of God as a Revelator or Messenger with the messenger-formula: “Thus says Yahweh,” 11 times (Amos 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 13; 2:1, 4, 6; 3:12; 5:3 f.) and the

¹³² Brown, 1091.

¹³³ Ibid.

¹³⁴ Ibid., 1092.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid.

concluding formula, “Yahweh says,” (Amos 1:5, 8, 14; 2:3, 11, 16; 3:15; 4:3, 5 f., 8-11; 5:17; 7:3; 9:15).¹³⁷

The book of Hosea begins with the heading, “the word of Yahweh that came to Hosea” (Hos. 1:1). Through the account of the harlot wife, Gomer, the book reveals the guilt of Israel during that time (Hos. 1:2 ff.). However, because God does not want to judge the Israelites, he also proclaims the word of salvation to them (Hos. 6:5).¹³⁸ “The goal of Yahweh’s word of judgment is the restoration of a new order of life (Hos. 6:5b).”¹³⁹ Therefore, it is clear that “the word of God” (דְּבַר יְהוָה) in Hosea is understood to mean God’s word of judgment, and his word of salvation.¹⁴⁰

In Isaiah, “the word of Yahweh” (דְּבַר יְהוָה), as used by the prophet, expresses the power which judges the disobedient nation in a cumulative series of acts of divine punishment (Isa. 5:25-30; 9:7-20), because the word was sent by the Lord (Isa. 9:8).¹⁴¹ According to Isa. 6:9, specifically, Isaiah is commissioned to point out the nation’s pride and arrogant heart by means of this very “word of God.” Von Rad says that “this word effects judgment not only in the external world of history, but in human beings, in the most hidden recesses of their own hearts, namely, their refusal of the appeal by which Yahweh would save them.”¹⁴² When one read Isa. 6:9, the word of God to be proclaimed

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ Ibid., 1093.

¹³⁹ Ibid.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 1094.

¹⁴² Gerhard Von Rad, *OT Theology*, trans. D. M. G. Stalker, vol. II (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2001), 154.

by Isaiah seems to be rejected by men.¹⁴³ Von Rad says that “the fact that a prophet’s word is not heard is far from meaning that this is the end of it.”¹⁴⁴ It is for a future generation: “go now, write on a table for them, and inscribe it in a scroll, that for the days to come it may be an everlasting witness ... Because you have rejected this message” (Isa. 30:8, 12).¹⁴⁵ Therefore, “the word of God” (דְּבַר יְהוָה) in Isaiah may also refer to the future, beyond its present rejection, for “he does not take back his words” (Isa. 31:2; 55:11). Moreover, the word of God in Isa. 2:2-5 is already alluded to as the expression of the future.¹⁴⁶

Isaiah became a prophet who proclaimed the word of God voluntarily (Isa. 6:8). Jeremiah, on the contrary, was a prophet in whose mouth was put God’s word, purely by God’s Will: “Behold, I have put my words in your mouth” (Jer. 1:9). The term “word of Yahweh” (דְּבַר יְהוָה) in Jeremiah accounts for 52 of its 241 occurrences in the OT.¹⁴⁷ What then is Jeremiah’s mandate concerning the word of God? It is to proclaim to those who live in Israel and Judah both negative and positive things through the word of God: “to pluck up and break down, to destroy and to overthrow, to build and to plant” (Jer. 1:10).¹⁴⁸ Having these mandates, Jeremiah, as a prophet, i.e. a revelator of the word of God, proclaimed messages of warning and judgment to those who were not obedient to God, as well as prophesied some messages of hope (Jer. 30:1-33:26) to the people of

¹⁴³ Brown, 1094.

¹⁴⁴ Von Rad, 155.

¹⁴⁵ Brown, 1094.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid., 1095.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid.

Israel and Judah. Moreover, Jeremiah prophesied about the time of national crisis, that is to say, the siege and fall of Jerusalem (Jer. 37:1-45:5).¹⁴⁹ These dire warnings were proclaimed by the word of God through Jeremiah.

Unlike Jeremiah, the book of Ezekiel is characterized as having long chapters.

The frequent appearance of the messenger formula, the appearance 60 times out of 241 OT occurrences of the phrase ‘word of Yahweh,’ the appearance 50 times out of a total of 113 occurrences of the word-event formula, which respectively mark the beginning of new units of speech, and finally the ‘oracle of God’ formula ... occurring 83 times in Ezek., and the concluding formula of the word of God – ‘I Yahweh, have spoken it; – appearing 11 times.¹⁵⁰

Specifically, the role of Ezekiel as a prophet and a revelator was started after he ate the scroll of the word of God (Ezek. 2:9-3:3). Ezekiel also proclaimed messages of coming judgment (Ezek. 4:1-24:27), Israel’s past judgment (Ezek. 25:1-33:20), and the future blessing of Judah (Ezek. 33:21-48:35).¹⁵¹ Therefore, these scriptures reveal that the prophets – Amos, Hosea, Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and Isaiah– recorded and understood דָּבָר (‘Dabar’) to mean a revelaton from God.

¹⁴⁹ F. B. Huey, *Jeremiah: Bible Study Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1981), 5.

¹⁵⁰ Brown, 1098.

¹⁵¹ Iain M. Duguid, *Ezekiel; The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1999), 40-41.

BACKGROUND JOHN'S GOSPEL

Authorship

Like the Synoptic Gospels, the author's name in the Gospel of John does not appear. However, one feels the necessity to look for it, because the Fourth Gospel was, like other books, written by someone.

Until the Nineteenth century, the author of the Fourth Gospel generally had been acknowledged as the apostle John, the son of Zebedee.¹⁵² Church Fathers also unanimously regard the Fourth Gospel's author as the apostle John, the son of Zebedee.¹⁵³ Some scholars think the title, *The Gospel According to John* proves John was the author.¹⁵⁴ However, even though the titles of the four Gospels were used to distinguish each Gospel from the others when the New Testament Canon started forming at the middle of the Second century, this does not prove that John the son of Zebedee was the author of the Fourth Gospel.¹⁵⁵ However, a minority of contemporary scholars do not share the opinions that the Fourth Gospel's author is the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. The question of authorship pivots on both external and internal evidence.

The External Evidence

There are some external evidences that the Fourth Gospel was authored by the apostle John, the son of Zebedee. Specifically, Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History*, which quotes Irenaeus: "And all the elders that associated with John the disciple of the Lord in

¹⁵² C. J. Wright, *Jesus the Revelation of God: His Mission and Message According to St. John* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1950), 31.

¹⁵³ D. A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 68.

¹⁵⁴ Floyd V. Filson, *The Gospel According to John* (Richmond, VA: John Knox, 1972), 19.

¹⁵⁵ Ibid.

Asia bear witness that John delivered it [the gospel] to them, for he remained among them until the time of Trajan.”¹⁵⁶

Here the “disciple” is obviously the apostle John, who is also identified as the “beloved disciple” of the Gospel.¹⁵⁷ Eusebius defends John as the author of the Fourth Gospel. He says “and there are those who heard him [Polycarp] tell that John the disciple of the Lord went in Ephesus...”¹⁵⁸ Irenaeus had had a relationship with Polycarp, who was martyred in his old age in A.D. 155. Scholars know this from a letter that Irenaeus had sent to his friend Florinus, and this letter attested to the fact that what Polycarp had witnessed was real, and that Polycarp had a relationship with John:

so that I can describe the very place in which the blessed Polycarp used to sit when he discoursed, and his goings out and his comings in, and his manner of life and his personal appearance, and the discourses which he held before the people, and how he would describe his intercourse with John and with the rest who had seen the Lord, and how he would relate their works.¹⁵⁹

Moreover, external evidence that John the son of Zebedee was the “beloved disciple” is also found in a letter written by Polycrates (A.D. 189-198), Bishop of Ephesus, to Victor, Bishop of Rome.¹⁶⁰

In Asia also great lights have fallen asleep, which shall rise again on the last day, at the coming of the Lord, when he shall come with glory from heaven and shall seek out all the saints. Among these are Philip, one of the twelve apostles, who sleeps in Hierapolis, and his two aged virgin daughters, and another daughter who lived in the Holy Spirit and now rests at Ephesus; and moreover John, who was

¹⁵⁶ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.28.3. Loeb Classical Library edition of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. Kirsopp Lake. vol. 1 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1926). 243.

¹⁵⁷ George R. Beasley-Murray, *John*, vol. 36 (Waco, Texas: Word books, 1987), lxvi.

¹⁵⁸ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 4.14.3-8.

¹⁵⁹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 5.20.4-8.

¹⁶⁰ C. K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to St. John: An Introduction with Commentary and Notes on the Greek Text* (London: SPCK, 1962), 84.

both a witness and a teacher, who reclined upon the bosom of the Lord, and being a priest wore the sacerdotal plate. He also sleeps at Ephesus.¹⁶¹

Both Irenaeus and Polycrates claimed that John was not only the beloved disciple, but also a resident of Ephesus. In addition, Clement of Alexandria also agrees with Irenaeus and Polycrates.¹⁶²

However, the Muratorian Canon (A.D. 180-200), an early but incomplete New Testament written in barbarous Latin discovered in 1740 by L. A. Muratori, showed that the Fourth Gospel was written not by John alone but by John's friends.¹⁶³

Thus, Barrett thinks that the tradition handed down by Irenaeus and Polycrates is not strengthened by the Muratorian Canon.¹⁶⁴ In addition, the content referred to by Clement of Alexandria in Eusebius (*H.E.* 6.14.7)¹⁶⁵ notes that, "Clement, like the writer of the Muratorian Canon, allowed some scope to colleagues of John in the inception of the gospel."¹⁶⁶ Even so, Barrett thinks that it is hard to prove that the Gospel was not written by the Apostle because he believes the Muratorian fragment is not real.¹⁶⁷ Thus,

¹⁶¹ Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3.31.3.

¹⁶² Eusebius, *H.E.* 3.23.6-19; 'He (Clement) reported that the Apostle John went to Ephesus after Domitian's death, and went about the surrounding country appointing bishops and consolidating the churches.' (Clement, *Clement of Alexandria: Quis Dives Salvetur*, 42:1f (Cambridge: University Press, 1897; George, lxvii.).

¹⁶³ Barrett, 96.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 85.

¹⁶⁵ "But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the gospel, was urged on by his disciples, and divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel." (Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 6.14.7. Loeb Classical Library edition of Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, ed. and trans. J. E. L. Oulton. vol. 2 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1932). 49.)

¹⁶⁶ Barrett, 97.

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*

Barrett concludes that “it is not hereby proved that the Gospel was not written by an apostle; but it is hard to see why, if it was, it was not published under his name.”¹⁶⁸

However, in Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History*, there were two Johns; the evangelist and elder. In Eusebius Papias writes, “... I would enquire as to the discourses of the elders, what Andrew or what Peter said, or what Philip, or what Thomas or James, or what John or Matthew or any other of the Lord’s disciples; and things which Aristion and John the elder, disciples of the Lord, say.”¹⁶⁹ Eusebius in his enumeration mentions two names of John – “the evangelist” like Peter, James, Matthew, and another apostle as well, “the elder.”¹⁷⁰

This external evidence leaves one confused about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel. Carson also considers the account of Papias as precarious.¹⁷¹ However, because Papias wrote “... and John the elder, disciples of the Lord, say,” Beasley-Murray seems to believe that the elder John is a personal disciple of Jesus, although Beasley-Murray believed this shows the confusion of Irenaeus concerning the John who had seen the Lord.

172

Carson presents several reasons why the discourse of Papias is suspect: First, Carson believes the content is not Papias’ because while Eusebius makes a distinction between “apostle” and “elders,” Papias makes no such distinction.¹⁷³ Second, “it is John

¹⁶⁸ Ibid.

¹⁶⁹ Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.4.

¹⁷⁰ Eusebius. *Ecclesiastical History* 3.39.5.

¹⁷¹ Carson, 70.

¹⁷² Beasley-Murray, lxviii.

¹⁷³ Carson, 70.

and not Ariston who is designated ‘the elder’ in *H. E.* 3.39.14.”¹⁷⁴ “Ariston” and “*John the elder*” by Papias means “Ariston and *the aforementioned elder John*.”¹⁷⁵ Third, Carson believes the distinction is not between apostle and elders of different generations, but between first-generation witnesses who have died (what they *said*), and first-generation witnesses who are still alive (what they *say*).¹⁷⁶ Also, Carson believes that Papias, a hearer of John, wanted to explain the reason why Ariston is linked with John. Both John and Ariston were first-generation disciples of the Lord, even though neither was an apostle.¹⁷⁷ Finally, Eusebius disliked apocalyptic language. He believed that the Fourth Gospel’s author is the elder John as he has received the “elder John” from Papias.¹⁷⁸

These several external evidences, especially, the sources of Eusebius, do not give a certain answer concerning whether the author of the Fourth Gospel is the elder John, or the disciple John. Thus, Carson guesses that “the modern misinterpretation of Eusebius was anticipated by a scholar working a millennium earlier.”¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Ibid.

¹⁷⁵ C. S. Petrie, “The Authorship of ‘the Gospel According to Matthew’: A Reconsideration of the External Evidence” *NTS* 14, (1967-68): 21.

¹⁷⁶ Carson, 70.

¹⁷⁷ Ibid.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

The Internal Evidence

As noted above, the debate about the authorship of the Fourth Gospel continues, despite the external evidence. However, the majority of contemporary biblical scholars attach more weight to the internal evidence than the external evidence.¹⁸⁰

Westcott's explanation of the internal evidence concerning the authorship of the Fourth Gospel is the most valuable. Westcott concluded the author was (1) a Jew, (2) a Jew of Palestine, (3) an eyewitness of the event he describes, (4) an apostle of the twelve, and (5) the apostle John.¹⁸¹ However, Carson insists that the first two points are less important than the others, because the first two points are today seldom disputed.¹⁸² Therefore, this paper will focus on Westcott's final three observations.

Westcott insists that the author of the Fourth Gospel is an eyewitness of the event he describes, because the Gospel of John contains minute details about persons, time, numbers, places, manners, etc., which could only have come from direct experience.¹⁸³

However, C. K. Barrett doubts that the Fourth Gospel's author had to be an eyewitness.¹⁸⁴ Barrett offers three objections. First, "the apocryphal Gospel contains yet more names, but we do not accept them as eye-witness authorities"¹⁸⁵ Barrett's second

¹⁷⁹ Ibid.

¹⁸⁰ Ibid., 69.

¹⁸¹ Brian Cramps, "John Appendix: Westcott's Concentric Proof." <http://braincrampsforgod.blogspot.com/search?q=westcott> (accessed 25 October, 2007); Leon Morris, *Studies in the Fourth Gospel* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 1969), 218-246; Carson, 71; George R, lxx.

¹⁸² Carson, 71.

¹⁸³ Cramps, "John Appendix: Westcott's Concentric Proof."

¹⁸⁴ Barrett, 104.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

point is that the exact records of time (1:29, 35, 43; 2:2) do not offer sufficient proof that the author is an eyewitness.¹⁸⁶ His third point is details such as numbers, e.g. “at Cana there were six water-pots (2:6),” “the disciples had rowed twenty-five or thirty furlongs (6:19),” and “Jesus’ tunic was without seam, woven from the top throughout (19:23)”¹⁸⁷ do not prove the author is an eyewitness. Barrett thinks that these details might have come from sources, and adds such features are precisely what a writer adds to his work in order to give it verisimilitude.¹⁸⁸ Barrett considers that these striking details are drawn from the source, and others are elaborating additions to it.¹⁸⁹ In fact, Barrett admits that the Johannine narrative has eye-witness material here and there, but he does not believe that “the gospel as a whole is the work of an eye-witness.”¹⁹⁰ Further, Barrett suggests the evidence of a Hellenistic side to John’s thought does not agree that “the final editor of the gospel was an eye-witness.”¹⁹¹ Therefore, Barrett concludes “the elimination of the possibility of an eyewitness behind the Gospel seems inevitable.”¹⁹²

C. H. Dodd also rejects the claim that the author of the Fourth Gospel is an eyewitness. He points to two powerful passages – the conversation with the Samaritan woman and the examination before Pilate – which clearly did not have eye witnesses

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid.

¹⁹¹ Ibid.

¹⁹² Morris, 238.

present.¹⁹³ So then, how could these stories be written? Three possibilities for the conversation with the Samaritan women are summarized by Morris:

(a) A disciple may have been present but not taking part in the conversation; (b) Jesus may have told the disciples what had happened: it would have been excellent instruction for them in the way of dealing with souls and He must have said something about how the woman was converted; (c) the woman may have been the evangelist's informant. The narrative gives the impression that she was not averse to a little talking (John 4:28, 39, 42; cf. the use of *λαλία* in the latter verse).¹⁹⁴

In the case of the story of the examination before Pilate, it seems that there are only two people present, Jesus and Pilate. According to Morris, in effect, the author supposed that there would be Roman officials, and at least one Jew.¹⁹⁵ However, Morris thought that these difficulties were not persuasive. Rather, Morris emphasized that “they do nothing to shake our conviction that an eyewitness is behind this Gospel as a whole.”¹⁹⁶

As for the author of the Fourth Gospel being an apostle, Westcott offers several proofs: (a) the evidence is found in the character of the scenes the writer describes, that is to say, the call of the disciples (1:19-34), the journey through Samaria (ch. 4), the feeding of the five thousand (ch. 6), the successive visits to Jerusalem (chs. 7, 9, 11), the passion, and the resurrection appearances;¹⁹⁷ (b) the evidence is found in the Evangelist's “intimate acquaintance” with the feelings of the disciples, for example, what he knows their thoughts at critical moments (2:11, 17, 22; 4:27; 6:19, 60f.; 12:16; 13:22, 28; 21:12;

¹⁹³ C. H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1960), 449.

¹⁹⁴ Morris, 244.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Ibid.

cf. Luke 24:8; Matt. 26:75), what he remembers words spoken among themselves (4:33; 16:17; 20:25; 21:3, 5) and to the Lord (4:31; 9:2; 11:8, 12; 16:29), what he knows “their places of resort” (11:54; 18:2; 20:19), what he knows of “imperfect or erroneous impressions received by them at one time, and afterwards corrected” (2:21f.; 11:13; 12:16; 13:28; 20:9; 21:4);¹⁹⁸ (c) the evidence is that the writer evidently stood very near to the Lord, that is to say, the fact that he knew his emotions (11:33; 13:21) and the grounds of his action (2:24f.; 4:1; 5:6; 6:15; 7:1; 16:19);¹⁹⁹ (d) finally, there is the strong suggestion of Westcott that “he speaks as one to whom the mind of the Lord was laid open” (6:6, 61, 64; 13:1, 3, 11; 18:4; 19:28).²⁰⁰ However, because modern scholars think that these evidences are nothing more than “Westcott’s own fertile brain as he filled in the gaps in his story,” scholars do not discuss them this at all.²⁰¹ Morris thinks that if other evidences to support Westcott’s opinion, the fact that the author of the Fourth Gospel is an apostle can have some weight.²⁰² On the other hand, Morris says that “the beloved disciple appears to have been one of the Twelve, because, according to Mark 14:17, it was the Twelve who were with Jesus then.”²⁰³

Lastly, Westcott claims that the author of the Fourth Gospel was obviously the apostle John. However, there is no direct reference to authorship in this Gospel. Westcott believed the proof was the expression, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23; 19:26;

¹⁹⁷ Ibid. Cramps, “John Appendix: Westcott’s Concentric Proof.”

¹⁹⁸ Morris, 244-245; Cramps, “John Appendix: Westcott’s Concentric Proof.”

¹⁹⁹ Morris, 245; Cramps, “John Appendix: Westcott’s Concentric Proof.”

²⁰⁰ Ibid; Cramps, “John Appendix: Westcott’s Concentric Proof.”

²⁰¹ Ibid.

²⁰² Ibid., 245-246.

21:7, 20; 20:2).²⁰⁴ John 13:23 makes clear that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” was at the last supper with Jesus. The disciple whom Jesus loved was surely John the son of Zebedee. According to Mark 14:17, “the disciple whom Jesus loved” could be one of the Twelve, Jesus’ disciples. However, one can doubt who he was. He probably is one of the sons of Zebedee, or one of the two unnamed disciples (21:2).²⁰⁵ That is why “he is repeatedly distinguished from Peter (13:23-24; 20:2-9; 21:20), and by the same token should not be confused with any of the other apostles named in John 13-16.”²⁰⁶ In the Synoptists, “Peter, James, and John were especially close to Jesus.”²⁰⁷ Some regard James as one of the sons of Zebedee, but that is improbable because James was martyred early (Acts 12:1-2).²⁰⁸ The Synoptics indicate that Peter and John were friends (Mk. 5:37; 9:2; 14:33; par.) and Acts (3:1-4:23).²⁰⁹ Westcott explains that the important characters’ names were used with full expressions; that is, Simon Peter, Thomas Didymus (11:16; 20:24; 21:2), Judas son of Simon Iscariot (6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26), Caiaphas the high priest that year (11:49; 18:13).²¹⁰ However, the writer of the Fourth Gospel expressed John not as John the Baptist (Mk 1:4) but as John, only (1:6).

Nevertheless, there are other options as to the Gospel’s author. Specifically, F. V. Filson is not convinced that “the disciple whom Jesus loved” wrote the Fourth Gospel,

²⁰³ Ibid., 247.

²⁰⁴ Cramps, “John Appendix: Westcott’s Concentric Proof.”

²⁰⁵ Carson, 72; Morris, 246.

²⁰⁶ Carson, 71-72.

²⁰⁷ Morris, 246.

²⁰⁸ Ibid.

²⁰⁹ Carson, 72.

mainly because Filson believes the book was complete with 20:31, and chapter 21 was added soon after the twenty chapters were written.²¹¹ Filson insists the author is Lazarus. In chapter 11 Lazarus is referred to as the one whom Jesus loved four times: “‘Lord, the one you love is sick’ (11:3); ‘Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus’ (11:5); ‘Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep’ (11:11; the Greek word for ‘friend’ has the same root as one Greek word for ‘love,’ and it means here ‘our beloved friend Lazarus’); ‘See how he loved him!’ (11:36).”²¹² Therefore, Filson believes these passages support Lazarus as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” (13:23). Furthermore, Filson argues his case in the light of 21:24,²¹³ and explains in three ways. First, “Lazarus wrote chapters 1-20 and his friends (‘we’ in 21:24) added chapter 21 after his death.”²¹⁴ Second, Filson believes chapters 1-20 were written during the existence of Lazarus, and then the last chapter 21 was recorded after his death.²¹⁵ Third, on the basis of 12:10, Lazarus became a martyr for Christ. After Lazarus’s martyrdom, “some faithful Jerusalem-centered friend of the beloved disciple Lazarus wrote chapters 1-20, while chapter 21 was added still later by someone else.”²¹⁶

²¹⁰ Morris, 247; Carson 72.

²¹¹ Filson, 21-22.

²¹² Ibid., 22.

²¹³ Filson interpreted “we” in 21:24 to “his friends.”

²¹⁴ Filson, 24.

²¹⁵ Ibid.

²¹⁶ Ibid.

P. Parker maintains the Gospel's author was John Mark,²¹⁷ and J. Marsh, Parker's colleague agrees.²¹⁸ Parker offers several reasons for his view, but only four of them will be mentioned here.²¹⁹

First, Parker observes that John the son of Zebedee was a Galilean in the Synoptic gospels (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10; cf. Matt 10:2; 17:1; Mark 1:29; 3:17; 5:37; Luke 8:51), yet the accounts of the Fourth Gospel take place in Judea. Second, as John the son of Zebedee was a fisherman (Matt 4:21; Mark 1:19; Luke 5:10), he probably would not be capable of authoring a book. Third, while Jesus called John and James "sons of thunder" (Mark 3:17), the Fourth Gospel depicts John as tranquil and mystical. Finally, John the son of Zebedee was vengeful toward the Samaritans (Luke 9:54); in the Fourth Gospel the disciples accept the Samaritans.

However, D. A. Carson refutes P. Parker. Carson says that "to restrict John's focus of interest to the place of his origin, when at the time of writing he had not lived there for decades, seems a bit harsh."²²⁰ Secondly, Carson insists that John might well have had an excellent education since his parents were rich possessing their own boats (Lk 5:3), and employing others (Mk 1:20).²²¹ In addition, Carson thinks John's impetuous character--a son of thunder--and his racial bias against the Samaritans was changed by the power of the Gospel.²²² Finally, Carson doubts the author is John Mark because "there is no patristic evidence that John the son of Zebedee and John Mark were ever

²¹⁷ Carson, 72-73.

²¹⁸ J. Marsh, *The Gospel of St. John* (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1978), 24.

²¹⁹ P. Parker, "John the Son of Zebedee and the Fourth Gospel" *JBL* 81 (1962): 35-43.

²²⁰ Carson 73.

²²¹ *Ibid.*, 74.

confused.”²²³ Therefore, Carson insists “the beloved disciple is John the apostle, the son of Zebedee.”²²⁴

Meanwhile, H. B. Swete believes the author might be the “rich man” (Mark 10:21).²²⁵ However, Filson, Parker, and Swete, do not offer sufficient evidence, and evade the difficulty of only the Twelve being present at the last supper with Jesus.

R. E. Brown originally thought the beloved disciple is John the son of Zebedee, one of the twelve. However, Brown changed his mind because “the external and internal evidence are probably not to be harmonized.”²²⁶ Brown concluded the beloved disciple was “an outsider of the group of best-known disciples, a group that would have included John son of Zebedee.”²²⁷ For Brown, ‘an outsider’ may be a person in Judea, because “the beloved disciple began to follow Jesus in Judaea when Jesus himself was in close proximity to the Baptist and shared the life of his master during Jesus’ last stay in Jerusalem.”²²⁸ However, Carson disagrees with Brown’ mind.

Because the evidence, internal and external, is inconclusive, the debate concerning authorship rages on. However, the weight of the data argues forcefully for the Fourth Gospel’s author being John, the son of Zebedee. This study will proceed using that tentative conclusion.

²²² Ibid.

²²³ Ibid., 73.

²²⁴ Ibid., 75.

²²⁵ H. B. Swete, “John of Ephesus” *JTS* 17 (1916): 374.

²²⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (Broadway, NY: Paulist Press, 1979), 33-34.

²²⁷ Ibid., 34.

²²⁸ Ibid.

Date

Like the Synoptic Gospels, it is conclusive difficult to name an exact date when the Gospel of John was written, because there is no conclusive evidence in the contents of the Gospel of John. But as all documents in the world have the date written, the book of the Fourth Gospel is not an exception. Scholars continue to attach great importance to the date of John's Gospel.

Gary M. Burge observes that New Testament scholars generally assign two dates to the Fourth Gospel. The first is AD 125.²²⁹ Reasons include: patristic references; allusions in the apocryphal gospel, *Gospel of Peter*; the record written in *Nag Hammadi*,²³⁰ and two papyrus fragments of John, Ryland Papyrus 457 (P⁵²)²³¹ and "Papyrus Egerton 2,"²³² dated to the first half of the Second century.²³³ The alternative

²²⁹ Gary M. Burge, *John: The NIV Application Commentary* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2000), 28.

²³⁰ "Nag Hammadi is best known for being the site where local peasants found a sealed glass jar containing thirteen leather-bound papyrus codices, together with pages torn from another book, in December of 1945. The peasants burned one of the books and parts of a second (including its cover). Thus twelve of these books (one missing its cover) and the loose pages survive. The writings in these codices, dating back to the 2nd century AD, comprised 52 mostly Gnostic tractates (treatises), believed to be a library hidden by monks from the nearby monastery of St. Pachomius when the possession of such banned writings, denounced as heresy, was made an offence. The contents of the Coptic-bound codices were written in Coptic, though the works were probably all translations from Greek. Most famous of these works must be the *Gospel of Thomas*, of which the Nag Hammadi codices contain the only complete copy." (Wikipedia: The Free Encyclopedia, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Nag_Hammadi, (accessed 31 December, 2007))

²³¹ It is dated to the early second century and is in the John Rylands Library at Manchester (cited by F. G. Kenyon, *The Text of the Greek Bible*, 3rd ed., Rev. and Augmented by A. W. Adams (London: Duckworth, 1975), 72.

²³² "PEg 2 is a group of five fragments from one the oldest known sayings collections of Jesus which are not from one of the canonical gospels. Four fragments are in the British Museum (frags. 1-4), and one is in Köln, Germany (frag. 5). Fragment 4 is only a scrap with one letter." (K. C. Hanson, "Papyrus Egerton 2: Fragments from a Gospel Codex," <http://www.kchanson.com/ANCDOCS/greek/egerton.html>, (accessed 31 December, 2007)). Beasley-Murray (lxxv) explains that Peg 2 was published under the title *Fragment of an Unknown Gospel and other Early Christian Papri* (H. I. Bell and T. C. Skeat, London: British Museum, 1935), which was used the Fourth Gospel along with other Gospel traditions.

date for the Fourth Gospel is between AD 80 and 100.²³⁴ Reasons include John knew and employed the Synoptic Gospels;²³⁵ Jewish believers who were excommunicated from the Synagogue (9:22; 12:42; 16:2); the rabbis of Palestine instituted such dismissal for Christians in AD 85.²³⁶ In addition, Irenaeus said that the apostle, John the son of Zebedee, lived to a great age, i.e. until the reign of Trajan (AD 98-117). Finally about AD 98 Jerome wrote that the apostle John died ‘in the 68th year’ after Jesus’ death.²³⁷

Burge himself does not accept the dates referred to above. He insists there is no possibility that the Gospel of John can be dated to after AD 70, when Jerusalem was destroyed by Rome. The Gospel of John describes a Judaism before this war. Also, the story of this catastrophic event is not in the Gospel, even though John was critical highly toward the temple (2:13ff; 4:21ff) and had severe conflicts with the Jewish leadership (cf. chs. 5, 8, 10).²³⁸ Burge, therefore, concludes the Gospel of John was published between after AD 60-65 i.e., before AD 70.²³⁹

John C. Fenton insists that the Gospel of John is to be dated sometime during the long period AD 90-140, citing the expression, “the expulsion from the synagogue” (9:22; 12:42; 16:2), which may reflect on events which happened between AD 85-90. Also, two papyrus fragments of John, Ryland Papyrus 457 (P⁵²) and Papyrus Egerton 2, offer

²³³ Burge, 28; Georg Maldfeld and Bruce M. Metzger, “Detailed List of the Greek Papyri of the New Testament” *JBL*, vol. 68, no. 4 (Dec., 1949): 361.

²³⁴ Burge, 28.

²³⁵ *Ibid.*

²³⁶ *Ibid.*

²³⁷ *Ibid.*

²³⁸ *Ibid.*

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 29.

evidence that the Gospel of John was written before AD 140, i.e. not later than the middle of the Second century.²⁴⁰ Gordon H. Clark disagrees with Fenton, and allows until A.D. 150.²⁴¹

According to J. Ramsey Michaels, John's Gospel is to be dated any time in the latter half of the first century. He thinks the rumor "the disciple would not die" (21:23) has the meaning that "it was probably nearer the end of that period than the beginning."²⁴² However, these hypotheses are not persuasive.

George R. Beasley-Murray discusses two views concerning the date of the Fourth Gospel. First, traditionally, the majority of New Testament scholars date the Gospel between AD 100 and AD 170,²⁴³ for two reasons: the earliest Christian writings lack knowledge of this Gospel; the theology appears too advanced for the First century.²⁴⁴ However, the above mentioned papyrus fragments contradict this theory.

Second, Beasley-Murray also observes some New Testament scholars²⁴⁵ date John's Gospel with the synoptic Gospels, or an even earlier time than them, but in any

²⁴⁰ John C. Fenton, *The Gospel According to John* (Ely House, London: Oxford University Press, 1970), 16.

²⁴¹ Clark, 10.

²⁴² J. Ramsey Michaels, *John* (San Francisco, Cambridge: Harper & Row, 1983), xxix.

²⁴³ Beasley-Murray, lxxv; Especially he suggested the date with J. Moffatt's introduction: O. Holtzman and A. Julicher dated to A.D. 100-125, T. Keim and P. W. Schmiedel to A.D. 130-140, G. Volkmar and E. Schwartz to A.D. 140-155, and F. C. Bauer and Bruno Bauer to A.D. 160-170 (J. Moffatt, *An Introduction to the New Testament*, (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1918), 580-81.)

²⁴⁴ Beasley-Murray, lxxv.

²⁴⁵ R. M. Grant, *A Historical Introduction to the NT* (London: Collins, 1963), 152-153, 160; F. L. Cribbs, "A Reassessment of the Date of Origin and the Destination of the Gospel of John," *JBL*, 89 (1970): 38-55; L. Morris, *The Gospel According to John*, NICNT (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1971), 30-35.

case prior to AD 70.²⁴⁶ Those who date John's Gospel this early have cited seven reasons to do so.²⁴⁷ This study will look at five of the most important.

(1) The “confidence as to the independence of the Fourth Gospel of the other three.”²⁴⁸ For example, John never referred to Jesus' miraculous birth in Bethlehem, or to Jesus as either “the Son of David” (Mark 10:47-48, 12:35; Matt 9:27, 12:23, 15:22, 20:30-31, 21:9, 15; 22:42; Luke 18:38-39, 20:41) or “the son of Mary” (Mark 6:3; Matt 2:11-21). The passion narratives (Mark 15:33-38; Matt 27:45-54; Luke 23:44-45), in the Synoptics declare that Jesus had predicted his own resurrection (Mark 8:31, 9:9, 31, 10:33f, etc) The transfiguration of Jesus (Matt 17:1ff.; Mark 9:2ff.; Luke 9:28ff.), and the word “beloved” of Christ (Mark 1:11, 9:7, 12:6; Matt 3:17, 17:5; Luke 3:22, 20:13; Eph 1:6; Col 1:13; II Pet 1:17) do not appear in John.²⁴⁹ However, only John used the word “unique” (*μονογενής*) of Jesus (John 1:14-18, 3:16, 18).²⁵⁰

(2) The “primitive traits in the description of Jesus through the regular use of the name, Jesus, Rabbi, teacher, and emphasis on the role of Jesus as the prophet like Moses.”

²⁵¹For example, according to E. D. Burton, the Pauline usages of *Χριστός* and *ὁ χριστός* differ from the Gospel of John.

... in this gospel, there is an entire absence of the Pauline usages of *Χριστός* and *ὁ χριστός*, and *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* occurs but once (17:3) in narrative or discourse, the personal name Jesus being the one commonly used. Even in

²⁴⁶ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

²⁴⁷ Ibid.

²⁴⁸ Ibid.

²⁴⁹ F. L. Cribbs, 39-41. R. E. Brown also follows some parts of these examples (Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John*, ed. Francis J. Moloney. (Broadway, NY: Doubleday, 2003), 212)

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 41.

²⁵¹ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

editorial passages *Χριστός* never occurs, *ὁ χριστός* but once (20:31), and then not as a title but as a predicate, and *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* but once (1:17). The longer compound titles do not occur at all.²⁵²

Paul in his letters used *Χριστός* and *ὁ χριστός* extensively. John, however, has used “the personal name ‘Jesus’ as his normal designation for Jesus of Nazareth,” and especially the designation of ‘Jesus’ appears 237 times more than in any other two New Testament writings.²⁵³

John and Mark use the titles “rabbi”-“teacher” as a respectful title for Jesus (Mark 4:38, 5:35, 9:5, 38, 10:17, 20, 35, 51, 11:21, 12:14, 19, 32, 13:1, 14:14, 45; John 1:38, 49, 3:2, 26, 4:31, 6:25, 9:2, 11:8, 28, 13:13-14, 20:16). Matthew and Luke seem to modify the expressions that Mark used: the title “Lord” in Matthew was used in place of the title “teacher” in Mark, and Luke used the title “Lord” (Luke 18:41) in place of “rabbi” in Mark and “Master”(Luke 8:23, 9:33, 49) in place of the title, “rabbi-teacher” in Mark.²⁵⁴ However, F. J. Cribbs does not explain how the Fourth Gospel could be written prior to the Gospel of Mark.

Only in the Gospel of John is Moses used as a typology, i.e. the role of Jesus in John (John 5:46, 6:14, 4:19-25 and 7:40, 52).²⁵⁵ R. E. Brown and R. H. Smith found several Mosaic typologies in John:²⁵⁶ the tabernacle (1:14), the giving of the law (1:17),

²⁵² E. D. Burton, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistle to the Galatians* (NY: C. Scribner’s sons, 1920), 397.

²⁵³ F. L. Cribbs, 42. This term ‘Jesus’ occurs 85 times in Mark, 31 times in Acts 1-18, and 17 times in the earlier Pauline letters, but it does not occur at all in Colossians, the Pastoral Epistles, James, I-II Peter, or Jude, and only rarely in Revelation, Ephesians, the later chapters of Acts, and those portions of Matthew and Luke that are unique to these gospels (cited by Cribbs, 42).

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 42-43.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 44.

²⁵⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *Gospel According to John* (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), lx; R. H. Smith, “Exodus Typology in the Fourth Gospel,” *JBL* 81 (1962): 329-42.

the Paschal Lamb (1:29, 36, 19:30-32), the brazen serpent (3:14), the giving of the manna (6:31-58), and the water from the rock (7:38). F. L. Cribbs explains that John describes “Jesus as performing ‘signs’ to confirm his mission to the Jews (2:1, 23, 3:2, 4:48, 54, 6:2, 14, 26, 7:31, 9:16, 10:41, 11:47, 12:18, 37, 20:31), just as the book of Exodus describes Moses as performing ‘signs’ to confirm his mission to the Pharaoh (3:12, 20, 4:8, 9, 17, 28, 30, 7:3, 8:23, 10:1, 2, 12:13, 13:9, 31:7).”²⁵⁷ It is more clear that Jesus’ portrayal in John seems to be largely through the portrait of Moses found in the Pentateuch (John 8:28, 12:50 and Exod 4:12; John 14:31 and Num 17:11; John 12:49, 14:24 and Deut 18:18; and so on), and that Jesus’ portrayal in John has many similarities to Moses’ portrait found in the Psalms and the Wisdom literature of the Jewish people (Wisdom 11:1, Sir 45:6 and John 6:69; Sir 45:4 and John 1:14, 18, 3:16, 18; Sir 45:5 and John 8:40; Sir 45:6 and John 14:6).²⁵⁸

F. Hahn also follows the early tradition for the date of the Fourth Gospel because the traditional materials such as the prophet and king (6:14f), the prophet and the messiah of David (7:40-42), a prophet (4:19; 9:17), Messiah (4:25), and a teacher sent from God (3:2) are used in John’s Gospel.²⁵⁹ Thus, F. Hahn insists that the Fourth Gospel belongs in the category of “sonship” to other gospels:

The early view . . . is still clearly preserved in the Gospel of John. The aftereffect also shows itself here and there elsewhere in the New Testament.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁷ F. L. Cribbs, 45.

²⁵⁸ Ibid., 45-46.

²⁵⁹ F. Hahn, *The Titles of Jesus in Christology: Their History in Early Christianity*, trans. Harold Knight and George Ogg. (NY: World Public Company, 1969), 352.

²⁶⁰ Ibid., 316.

(3) The “presentation of the message of Jesus as a genuine extension of Judaism, reflecting the Christian faith as still contained within Judaism.”²⁶¹ For example, Jesus was described in John as “a devout Jew who worshiped the God of Israel (4:22) and who made regular pilgrimages to Jerusalem to share in the holy feasts of Judaism (2:13, 5:1, 7:10, 10:22, 12:22).”²⁶² John 1:17 also explains that “God’s gift of the Torah through Moses and God’s gift of ‘enduring love’ through Jesus Christ were the two greatest examples of God’s demonstration of covenant love to Israel.”²⁶³ And also John 15:1-6 uses “the very symbol of ‘the vine’ for Jesus and his disciples that the OT often uses for Israel (cf. Ps 80:8-19; Isa 5:1-7; Jer 2:21; Ezek 15:1-6, 19:10-14).”²⁶⁴ Specifically, the “true” in the text “I am the true vine” (15:1) is *ἀληθινός*, in Greek, if means “choice,” having the same meaning like being used in Jer 2:21 (“a choice vine”).²⁶⁵

(4) The “marked influence of the Qumran group, which ceased to exist by AD 70.”²⁶⁶ The Qumran scrolls have a close relationship with the Gospel of John because the Qumran scrolls have contacts in several parts with the Fourth Gospel.²⁶⁷ John, however, is dated pre-AD 70 because the monastery at Qumran was destroyed completely before AD 70.²⁶⁸

²⁶¹ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

²⁶² F. L. Cribbs, 48.

²⁶³ Ibid.

²⁶⁴ Ibid.

²⁶⁵ Ibid.

²⁶⁶ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

²⁶⁷ L. Morris, 33-34.

²⁶⁸ Ibid.

(5) The “reflection of concerns of the Church during the period AD 40-70 rather than a 70-100 dates.”²⁶⁹ Also, the suggestion is that “the individual evangelists and writers were real authors who wrote out of a particular ecclesiological historical situation.”²⁷⁰ For example, John pleads for unity in the church (10:16, 17:9-23), just as Paul did in most of his epistles (I Cor 12:12-27; Gal 3:27-28, 5:13-15; Rom 12:4-14, 14:10-15:9), reflecting the concerns of the pre-70 period. By contrast, the synoptic gospels as well as other Christian writings recorded late in the First century or early in the Second (the Pastoral Epistles, II Peter, I, II, III John, Jude, Revelation, I Clement, Ignatius) do not record similar concerns about the unity of the Church.²⁷¹ John includes the concern of Christians’ persecution from the officials of Judaism (9:22, 34, 12:42, 16:1-2), while other writings of the New Testament, i.e. those written in the latter part of the First century, are concern with the persecution coming from the Roman power.²⁷² These biblical evidences cause F. L. Cribbs to date John in the late 50’s or early 60’s.

Many scholars believe the traditions recorded in the Gospel of John were written at the later date, even though the traditions reflect an earlier date.²⁷³ The evidence is shown in the relationship of both the synagogue and the Christian communities reflected in the Gospel.²⁷⁴ Specially, the term *ἀποσυνάγωγοι* in 9:22; 12:42; 16:2 indicate “not a disciplinary exclusion from the synagogue but ejection from the synagogue, carrying

²⁶⁹ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

²⁷⁰ F. L. Cribbs, 51-52.

²⁷¹ Ibid., 52-53.

²⁷² Ibid., 53.

²⁷³ Beasley-Murray, lxxvi.

²⁷⁴ Ibid.

with its exclusion from the community life of the Jews.”²⁷⁵ W. Schrage agrees that the meaning of the term *ἀποσυνάγωγοί* is total expulsion:

Plain in all three references is the fact that an unbridgeable gulf has now opened up between Church and Synagogue, so that expulsion on the part of the latter is total. To think in terms of the lesser synagogue ban is a trivializing; this is no mere excommunication but total expulsion, a result of the *birkath ha-minim*.²⁷⁶

Evidence for this belief comes from “The Twelfth Benediction” of “The Eighteen Benedictions (=Amidah),”²⁷⁷ written by Samuel the Small in Jamnia. Gamaliel, who was the head of the Jamnia Academy from about 80 C.E. to about 115 C.E., requested a benediction to remove “minim or heretics (the *Birkath ha-Minim*)” from the community life of the Jews to be expressed in a single word.²⁷⁸ Additional evidence for *The Twelfth Benediction* to be written appears in *Berakoth* 28b:²⁷⁹ “The benediction relating to the Minim was instituted in Jamnia.” *The Twelfth Benediction* says:

For the apostates let there be no hope, and let the arrogant government be speedily uprooted in our days. Let the Nazarenes and the heretics be destroyed in a moment, and let them be blotted out of the book of life and not be inscribed together with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the arrogant.²⁸⁰

Citing *the Twelfth Benediction*, probably, Martyn believes the date of the Fourth Gospel as between AD 85 and AD 115, the earlier part of that period.²⁸¹

²⁷⁵ Ibid.

²⁷⁶ G. Kittel and G. Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament*, vol. VII and trans. Geoffrey W. Bromiley. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1975), 852.

²⁷⁷ The liturgical Eighteen Benedictions would be recited by all pious Jews (D. A. Carson, 369).

²⁷⁸ Beasley-Murray, lxxvii; J. Louis Marty, *History and Theology in the Fourth Gospel*, 3rd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2003), 58-60; D. A. Carson, 369-370.

²⁷⁹ Martyn, 61; D. A. Carson, 370.

²⁸⁰ Beasley-Murray, lxxvii.

²⁸¹ Martyn, 61.

John A.T. Robinson does not believe the term *ἀποσυνάγωγος* used in *the Twelfth Benediction* has the same meaning of expulsion in the Gospel of John, with the exceptions of 9:22; 12:42; 16:2, its meaning of exclusion appears here and there. A similar usage is found in Luke 6:22 and John 16:2. Stephen dragged is out in Acts 7:58; Paul is expelled Acts 13:50; and Jews are driven out in 1 Thess. 2:14-16.²⁸²

Kummel insists that the Fourth Gospel was written in the last decade of the First Century. His reason is as follows:

If John was known in Egypt in the first quarter of the second century, the beginning of the second century is a *terminus ad quem*. On the other hand, John's knowledge of Luke is extremely probable, so it could not have been written before ca. 80-90. The assumption that John was written probably in the last decade of the first century is today almost universally accepted.²⁸³

C. K. Barrett similarly thinks the Gospel of John is dated to AD 90.

A terminus post quem many easily be fixed. John knew Mark; he not only knew it but had thoroughly mastered its contents, and expected his readers also to be familiar with them. There is wide agreement that Mark was written either not long before, or soon after, AD 70. We must allow time for Mark to reach the place in which John was written and to be studied and absorbed. This brings us to a date certainly not earlier than AD 80; 90 would perhaps be a safer estimate.²⁸⁴

D. A. Carson, however, disagrees, defending his view that the Gospel of John was written between AD 80 and AD85. He believes possible dates for the Gospel of John are between AD 55 and AD 95.²⁸⁵ The reason the Fourth Gospel is not later than AD 100 is

²⁸² John. A. T. Robinson, *Redating the New Testament* (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1976), 273-74.

²⁸³ W. G. Kummel, *Introduction of the New Testament*, trans. Howard Clark Kee. (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1905), 246. *Terminus ad quem* ("limit to which") may also refer to the latest possible date of a non-punctual event (period, era, etc.) (Wikimedia: The Free Dictionary. "Terminus ad quem." <http://encyclopedia.thefreedictionary.com/terminus+ad+quem>, (accessed 22 January, 2008)).

²⁸⁴ C. K. Barrett, *Introduction of New Testament III*, 335. *Terminus post quem* is used to indicate the earliest point in time when the text may have been written (Wikipedia: The Free encyclopedia, "Terminus post quem." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Terminus_post_quem, (accessed 22 January, 2008)).

²⁸⁵ Carson, 82.

because Carson accepts the opinion of J. R. Michaels: “John 21:33 suggests it was probably nearer the end of that period than the beginning.”²⁸⁶ The hypothesis that John the Gospel appeared before AD 70, “Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool” (John 5:2). This hypothesis is refuted by the fact that “John frequently uses the Greek present tense to refer to something in the past.”²⁸⁷ Possible evidence that the Gospel of John was written pre -70 AD includes its silence about the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem. However, Carson denies that the silence guarantees John was written before 70AD.²⁸⁸ Instead, Carson offers four reasons for dating the Fourth Gospel to between AD 85 and AD 95.

Firstly, Carson cites the patristic evidence, including the strong tradition that “the Gospel was written under the reign of Emperor Domitian (AD 81-96).”²⁸⁹ Early tradition insists the apostle John lived until the times of Emperor Trajan (AD 98-117).²⁹⁰ Other patristic evidence includes “John was the last of the Evangelists to write his book,”²⁹¹ and

²⁸⁶ J. Ramsey Michaels, xxix.

²⁸⁷ Carson, 82.

²⁸⁸ Ibid.

²⁸⁹ Ibid., 83.

²⁹⁰ “And all the presbyters who had been associated in Asia with John, the disciple of the Lord, bear witness to his tradition, for he remained with them until the times of Trajan....Now the church at Ephesus was founded by Paul, but John stayed there until the times of Trajan, and it is a true witness of the tradition of the Apostles ... Clement indicates the same time, and in the treatise to which he gave the title ‘who is the rich man that is saved,’ adds a narrative most acceptable to those who enjoy hearing what is fine and edifying. Take and read here what he wrote. ‘Listen to a story which is not a story but a true tradition of John the Apostle preserved in memory...’” (cited by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III. xxiii. 3-4).

²⁹¹ “Matthew had first preached to Hebrews, and when he was on the point of going to others he transmitted in writing in his native language the Gospel according to himself... and Mark and Luke had already published the Gospel according to them, but John, it is said, used all the time a message which was not written down, and at last took to writing for the following cause” and “But that John, last of all, conscious that the outward facts had been set forth in the Gospel, was urged on by his disciples, and,

Jerome's record that "John passed away in the sixty-eighth year 'after our Lord's passion,' i.e. about AD 98."²⁹²

Secondly, Carson believes that the term "to be put out of the synagogue" (9:22; 12:42; 16:2) used after the Council of Jamnia indicates the Gospel of John is to be dated after AD 85.²⁹³

Thirdly, the Gospel of John may be dated late because the Sadducees hardly appear in this Gospel, despite the fact that they had played very important roles in the religious life of Jerusalem and Judea before AD 70. The scribes' influence increases after AD 70, and the priests' influence is rapidly diminishes after AD 70.²⁹⁴

Finally, the best reason for dating the Fourth Gospel to the end of the First Century is "the implicit reconstruction of the development of Christian doctrine."²⁹⁵ For instance, the theology in John 1:1-18 agrees with Romans 9:5 "... *Christ, who is God over all...*" and Philippians 2:5-11 "... *not consider equality with God... being made in human likeness... became... even death on a cross...*"²⁹⁶ Romans is dated in the mid 50s,²⁹⁷ and Philippians in the early 60s.²⁹⁸ They surely affected the christology of the

divinely moved by the Spirit, composed a spiritual Gospel" (cited by Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History*, III, xxiv. 7 and VI, xiv, 7).

²⁹² Carson, 83; Robinson, 257; Jerome, *De. Vir, ill.* 9.

²⁹³ Carson, 83.

²⁹⁴ Ibid.

²⁹⁵ Ibid., 84.

²⁹⁶ D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, *An Introduction to the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 167.

²⁹⁷ Ibid., 241-42; Douglas J. Moo, *The Epistle to the Romans* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1996), 3; F. F. Bruce, *Paul: Apostle of the Heart Set Free* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1977), 475.

Gospel of John. Therefore, the Gospel of John is better dated to the end of the First Century.

Using this data, D. A. Carson insists John's date is not between AD 85 and AD 95 but between AD 80 and AD 85. Carson gives four reasons.

Firstly, it is safer to place the Fourth Gospel at a later date because the references of the Fathers agree on a late date.²⁹⁹ Secondly, the Gospel of John uses the language that Ignatius employed.³⁰⁰ Thirdly, it is hard to believe that the Gospel of John was written immediately after AD 70, i.e. as soon as the temple in Jerusalem is destroyed.³⁰¹ Finally, Gnostic influence appears in both the Fourth Gospel and *I John*. *I John* is a later document than the Gospel of John because *I John* was written "in part to encourage and establish the faith of Christians in the wake of rising controversy over proto-Gnosticism at the end of the first century."³⁰² The Gospel of John had been used by some of the Gnostic heretics (cf., John 1:14, "the Word became flesh").³⁰³ That is why D. A. Carson with Douglas J. Moo and Leon Morris believe that *I John* should be dated to the early nineties. Therefore, D. A. Carson concludes the Fourth Gospel is best dated to between AD 80 and AD 85.

F. L. Cribbs' dating of John seems best. Cribbs cites the independence of the Gospel of John, its primitive traits, the source of Qumran, among others. However,

²⁹⁸ D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, 321-22; Markus Bockmuehl, *The Epistle to the Philippians* (London: Hendrickson, 1998), 25; F. B. Meyer, *Devotional Commentary on Philippians* (Grand Rapids, MI: Kregel Publications, 1979), 11.

²⁹⁹ D. A. Carson, 85.

³⁰⁰ Ibid.

³⁰¹ Ibid.

³⁰² D. A. Carson, Douglas J. Moo, and Leon Morris, 451.

Cribbs' article, *A Reassessment of the Date of Origin and the Destination of the Gospel of John*, does not rely on the historical data. Cribbs does not refer to "the exclusion from the synagogue" in 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2. This is a very important omission because of the relationship between Christians and Jews. As Beasley-Murray concluded, the meaning of "the exclusion from the synagogue" in 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2 is best interpreted as the completed ejection of Christian from the community life of the Jews. Supporting Beasley-Murray, *The Twelfth Benediction* was made by Samuel the Small in Jamnia, while Gamaliel had been the head of the Jamnia Academy from AD 80 to AD 115. Also the above-mentioned Papyrus fragments, Rylands Papyrus 457 (P⁵²) and the Papyrus Egerton 2, make it possible that the Fourth Gospel was written before AD 115. On the other hand, J. Ramsey Michaels suggests that John the Gospel was written in the latter half of the First Century "the disciple would not die" (21:23). In conclusion, it is likely that the Fourth Gospel was dated between AD 80 and AD 100.

³⁰³ Ibid.

EXEGESIS OF JOHN 1:1-18

Prologue (1:1-18): The Word Became Flesh

Most scholars agree John 1:1-18 is the prologue for the entire Gospel of John because they believe that this passage summarizes the rest of the Fourth Gospel. D. A. Carson envisions the prologue as a foyer of the Gospel:

The Prologue summarizes how the ‘Word’ which was with God in the very beginning came into the sphere of time, history, tangibility – 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 of this theme.³⁰⁴

Beasley-Murray views the prologue as an overture to an opera, an overture alludes to themes that will be developed later.³⁰⁵ In order to make the prologue more easily understood, D. A. Carson constructed the parallels between the prologue and the rest of the Fourth Gospel:³⁰⁶

	<i>Prologue</i>	<i>Gospel</i>
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 of 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
no-one has seen God, except the one who comes from God’s side	1:18	6:46

The prologue of the Gospel of John differs from the Synoptic Gospels, in that the Gospel of John introduces eternity past, namely, a time prior to creation (1:1) without reference

³⁰⁴ D. A. Carson, 111.

³⁰⁵ George R. Beasley-Murray, 5.

to the genealogy or birth of Jesus.³⁰⁷ It is for *John* who testifies that the Logos (1:14), the incarnated One in humanity, is the One who pre-existed with God, before creation, the true Son of God. The Fourth Gospel emphasizes that the sphere of the Logos is superior to created humanity. Therefore, the prologue is crucial for defining the accurately concept of the Logos in the Gospel of John. A verse-by-verse look at the prologue is necessary for understand correctly the rest of the Gospel.

Several scholars think that the prologue was written in poetic style.³⁰⁸ D. A. Carson, however, does not agree, arguing the style of the prologue is merely a “rhythmical prose,” citing two prose insertions (1:6-8, 15).³⁰⁹ Thus, Carson concluded the prologue is prose, as a “poem” more narrows meaning than “prose.”

Before exegeting each verse of the prologue, it is useful to study its overall structure. The scholar who provided the most persuasive analysis of the structure of the prologue is R. Alan Culpepper. He observes the prologue’s chiasmic structure:³¹⁰ [A (vv. 1-2) and A’ (v. 18), B (v. 3) and B’ (v. 17), C (vv. 4-5) and C’ (v. 16), D (vv. 6-8) and D’ (v. 15), E (vv. 9-10) and E’ (v. 14), F (v. 11) and F’ (v. 13), G (v. 12a) and G’ (v. 12c), and F (v. 12b).]

Culpepper’s analysis warrants scrutiny. The correspondence between A (vv. 1-2) and A’ (v. 18) is explained in three ways: (1) at these two points in the prologue the

³⁰⁶ D. A. Carson, 111.

³⁰⁷ Andreas J. Kostenberger, *John: Baker Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2004), 19.

³⁰⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel of John I-XII: ANS Commentary* (Garden, NY: Doubleday & Company, 1995), 22; Beasley-Murray, 3-4.

³⁰⁹ Carson, 112.

³¹⁰ R. Alan Culpepper, “The Pivot of John’s Prologue.” *NTS* 27 (1980-81): 1-31.

Word is ‘with God;’ (2) θεός (God) occurs three times in vs. 1-2, twice in v. 18, and only three times in the remaining fifteen verses (6, 12, and 13); (3) the references to eternal time (ἀρχῆ in vs. 1-2; πῶποτε in v. 18) is found at both the beginning and the end of the prologue.³¹¹ Secondly, correspondence between B (v. 3) and B’ (v. 17) exists because both the phrase δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (v. 3) and διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο (v. 17) are equivalent expressions, emphasizing on “what came to be” through the Word. Verse 3 affirms the role of the Word in creation, and verse 17 affirms the role of Jesus in revelation, i.e. the source of “grace and truth.”³¹² Thirdly, the parallel between C (vs. 4-5) and C’ (v. 16) is not a verbal but a conceptual correspondence. Grace (v. 16) is associated with the life (vs. 4-5).³¹³ Fourthly, correspondence between D (vv. 6-8) and D’ (v. 15) exists because both refer to John the Baptist:³¹⁴ Verses 6-8 explain that John the Baptist was sent by God to testify to the light, and v. 15 summarizes the testimony. Fifthly, correspondence between E (vs. 9-10) and E’ (v. 14) is the incarnation, referred to in vs. 9-10 and v. 14.³¹⁵ However, the first reference (vs. 9-10) relates the incarnation to the previous work of the Word, while the second reference (v. 14) relates the incarnation to the subsequent work of the Word.³¹⁶ Sixthly, the correspondence between F (v. 11) and F’ (v. 13) is “a thematic and grammatical correspondence.”³¹⁷ Thematically, both deal with ‘his own,’ and grammatically, both are in the nominative case, with verse 13

³¹¹ Ibid., 10.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid., 12.

³¹⁴ Ibid., 12-13.

³¹⁵ Ibid., 14.

³¹⁶ Ibid.

conceptually is related antithetically to verse 11.³¹⁸ Seventhly, the correspondence between G (v. 12a) and G' (v. 12c) is both have the meaning of opposition.³¹⁹ Finally, F (v. 12b) is the climax of the prologue, i.e. the pivot of the prologue:³²⁰

The climax of the prologue is, therefore, neither a theological paradox ('the word became flesh') nor the testimony of a privileged few ('and we beheld his glory'), but a proclamation immediately relevant to every reader of the gospel ('he gave authority to become children of God, to those who received him, to those who believe in his name').

Culpepper's views were accepted by D. A. Carson and Andreas J. Kostenberger. Beasley-Murray, however, does not agree, and says Culpepper's demonstration of "the parallels between verse 3 and verse 17, and between verses 4-5 and verse 16 are fragile."³²¹ Beasley-Murray adds "the references to the testimony of John the Baptist owe their position not to the necessities of a chiasmic structure but to the interpretation of the context in which each reference is placed."³²² However, Culpepper's observation is persuasive because, the prologue's focuses on "power to become children of God," is seen in the rest of the Gospel. D. A. Carson said: "The rest of the Gospel is much concerned to spell out who the real children of God are, who truly are the children of Abraham, which people receive the Spirit and are born again."³²³

³¹⁷ Ibid.

³¹⁸ Ibid.

³¹⁹ Ibid., 15.

³²⁰ Ibid.

³²¹ George R. Beasley-Murray, 4.

³²² Ibid.

Exegesis (1:1-18)

This passage can be divided into 5 sections: the Word's activity in creation (1:1-5); John's witness concerning the light (1:6-8); the incarnation of the Word and the privilege of becoming God's children (1:9-14); John's witness concerning the Word's preeminence (1:5); the final revelation brought by Jesus Christ (1:16-18).

The Word's activity in creation, 1:1-5

Verse 1: Ἐν ἀρχῇ (“In the beginning”) is reminiscent of the opening verse of the OT, because the OT also starts with the phrase “In the beginning” (Gen. 1:1). In both verses, the meaning is A) “the beginning of all things;” B) “the beginning of the universe;”³²⁴ C) “in the beginning of history;” or D) “at the root of the universe.”³²⁵

However, if one looks at the meaning of the ἀρχῇ in a lexicon, one finds that there is the additional meaning, “origin.”³²⁶ Accordingly, the text that the Word who already was in the beginning made all things as an agent of God (vv. 3-4) means that the Word is to be considered be the originator of all things.³²⁷ Koine scholars believe that ἀρχῇ means a time before the beginning of the universe.³²⁸ The word indicates that the λόγος (“Word”) existed from the beginning.

³²³ Carson, 113.

³²⁴ Ibid, 114.

³²⁵ Morris, 65.

³²⁶ Walter Bauer, *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*, trans. W. R. Amundt and F. W. Gingrich; fourth ed., rev. and augmented by F. W. Danker (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 1979), 111-12.

³²⁷ Carson, 114.

³²⁸ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel of John I-XII: ANS Commentary*, 4; R. Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St. John*, trans. C. Hastings, et al. 3 vols. (NY: Crossroad, 1980), 232; Beasley-Murray, 10; D. A. Carson, 114.

The word ἦν (“was”) in verse 1 connotes existence, relationship, and predication.³²⁹ As the verb ἦν as used in the first sentence also connotes existence, it can be understood to mean: “in the beginning, the Word was already in existence.”³³⁰ Moreover, in the second sentence, “the Word was with God,” the verb indicates the relationship between “the Word” and “God.” In the third sentence, “the Word was God,” the verb acts as a predicate.³³¹

The appellation ὁ λόγος (“The Word”) means “the notion of divine self-expression or speech (cf. Ps. 19:1-4),”³³² because Jesus Christ is the eternal wisdom and will of God, and He is the tangible image of his purpose.³³³ Thus, the designation ὁ λόγος includes a christological sense, i.e. Jesus Christ is introduced as a real person (cf. 1 John 1:1; Rev. 19:13).³³⁴ A. J. Kostenberger explains that the designation ὁ λόγος encompasses Jesus’ ministry putting display on “all of Jesus’ works and words within the framework of both his eternal being and existence, and God’s self-revelation in salvation history.”³³⁵

In ancient Greece and the Hellenistic ear, the term ὁ λόγος is used as it is in John. However, the meaning of the term ὁ λόγος as used by both the Greek philosophers and John varies, according to the context. Heraclitus most often used the

³²⁹ Kostenberger, 27.

³³⁰ Carson, 114.

³³¹ Ibid.

³³² Kostenberger, 25.

³³³ J. Calvin, *The Gospel According to St. John 1-10*, trans. T. H. L. Parker and ed. D. W. Torrance and T. F. Torrance. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1959), 7.

³³⁴ Kostenberger, 25.

³³⁵ Ibid.

term ὁ λόγος to mean “the One.” However, the One was not the only God, one person, but God who has the characters of the universal reason and the universal law immanent in all things. The Sophists used the term ὁ λόγος to mean “the rational power set in man, the power of speech and thought.”³³⁶ Plato and Aristotle considered the term ὁ λόγος as ‘a rational account (discourse or explanation).’³³⁷ Later, the stoics insisted that “λόγος was the principle of all rationality in the universe, and it was identified with God and with the source of all activity.”³³⁸ However, the God the stoics referred to was “material.” Neo-Platonism used that the term ὁ λόγος to mean the principle that has the power to control with intellect in the sensible world. Hermes defined the term ὁ λόγος as Salvation, because he considered ὁ λόγος as an intermediate between God and man. Hermes considered ὁ λόγος as the son of Hermes, Zeus of the supreme deity. Philo, a Hellenistic Jew, understood λόγος as a particular a mediator between the transcendent God and the created universe, not to a particular personality. The λόγος, rather, was understood to guide the human soul to the realm of the divine. Collectively, these thinkers introduced the true One, Creator, through the term ὁ λόγος. The evangelist John wanted to declare that the true One, Creator, is Jesus Christ. Therefore, the Fourth Gospel was written to make clear who and what the meaning of the λόγος is.

There is a term דְּבָרָא that means “word” in Hebrew, but it was generally Trans. as “the word of God” in the OT. The phrase “word of God” is usually found in two groups of passages that describe the Creator and his prophet’s messages. The writer of the Fourth Gospel believed that Jesus Christ is Creator as well as revelator, and wished to be able to

³³⁶ Kittel, 82.

³³⁷ Freedman, 348.

introduce the character of Jesus Christ as a word from God to the people of that time. Jesus was the *λόγος*. The writer of the Fourth Gospel wished to correct the false concepts of the *λόγος* handed down from Greek philosophy.

The preposition *πρὸς*, generally, has several meanings, including - “for,” “toward,” “so that,” “against,” “to,” and “with.”³³⁹ However, in this verse the preposition *πρὸς* is Trans. “with,” the meaning an association. Examples of this use are seen in the other books of the New Testament (Matt 13:56; 26:18, 55; Mark 6:3; 9:19; 14:49; Luke 9:41; Acts 10:48; 12:20; 18:3; 1 Cor 16:6-7; 2 Cor 5:8; 11:9; Gal 1:18; 2:5; 4:18, 20; 1 Thess 3:4; 2 Thess 2:5; 3:10; Phlm 13; Heb 4:13; 1 John 1:2). In these examples the preposition *πρὸς* is used with the stative verb *εἰμί*.³⁴⁰ That is why D. A. Carson insists “*πρὸς* may mean ‘with’ only when a person is with a person usually in some fairly intimate relationship.”³⁴¹ The preposition *πρὸς*, therefore, means not only that the Word was associated with God, but that both were distinguished from each other.³⁴²

The third statement *θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* (“the Word was God”), causes much confusion because the noun *θεὸς* is not preceded by the article. A. T. Robertson insists that the lack of the article before *θεὸς* was intended by John to distinguish the subject *ὁ λόγος*, from the noun *θεὸς* to describe the personal nature of the Word.³⁴³ Daniel B.

³³⁸ Edwards, 83.

³³⁹ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1996), 380

³⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 359.

³⁴¹ Carson, 116.

³⁴² Brown, 5; Kosternberger, 24.

Wallace explains: “Jesus shared the essence of the Father, though they differed in person.”³⁴⁴ In other words, “everything that can be said about God also can be said about the Word.”³⁴⁵ The phrase implies “unity of nature rather than similarity or likeness.”³⁴⁶

The Jehovah’s Witnesses, however, disagree with the claim that both God (Jehovah) and the Word (Jesus) are “One” in nature, observing that “the definite article is used with θεός in John 1:1c and not with θεός in John 1:1d.”³⁴⁷ The Jehovah’s Witnesses translate the text to be: *In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was as a god.* The Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that “a god” is different from “God.” They insist that “all the doctrine of sacred Scriptures bears out the correctness of this rendering.”³⁴⁸ However, their rendering has several problems: First, John the Evangelist would not have Trans. θεός “a god,” because he was a monotheistic Jew.³⁴⁹ Secondly, if John had used the article in front of θεός, the reader would conclude θεός and ὁ λόγος are one being, not one being separated by two functions.³⁵⁰ Thirdly, in some New Testament passages (Jn 1:49; 8:39; 17:17; Rom. 14:17; Gal. 4:25; Rev. 1:20) the article is not used in front of a definite nominative predicate noun.³⁵¹ Fourthly, these

³⁴³ A. T. Robertson, *A grammar of the Greek New Testament in the Light of Historical Research* (Nashville, TN: Broadman Press, 1934), 767.

³⁴⁴ Wallace, 269.

³⁴⁵ Kostenberger, 28-9.

³⁴⁶ Gaebelein, 28.

³⁴⁷ Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults* (Minneapolis, MN: Bethany House Publishers, 1985), 85; Anthony A. Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1963), 257.

³⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 86.

³⁴⁹ Kostenberger, 28.

³⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, 28; Carson, 117.

³⁵¹ Carson, 117.

passages (Matt 5:9; 6:24; Lk 1:35, 78; 2:40; Jn 1:6, 12, 13, 18; 3:2, 21; 9:16, 33; Rom 1:7, 17, 18; 1 Cor 1:30; 15:10; Phil 2:11, 13; Tit 1:1) do not use the article before God, but the Jehovah's Witnesses still interpret these as not "a god" but "God."³⁵² Therefore, the meaning of θεός in Jn 1:1d renders "God" not "a god."

Verse 2: This verse was summarized more briefly than verse 1, which might imply that the Evangelist wanted to an obvious understanding of ὁ λόγος ("the Word"), i.e. introducing ὁ λόγος ("the Word") briefly again. As the pronoun οὗτος is a personal pronoun, it points to ὁ λόγος ("the Word") in verse 1 and later to a human being.³⁵³

Verse 3: After introducing ὁ λόγος ("the Word"), the Evangelist proclaims the Word as a being of "the divine essence."³⁵⁴ The Word ("Jesus") created all things, as he was the intermediate agency of the ultimate agency, God. Jesus was the secondary agency because "the preposition διὰ conveys secondary agency on the part of the Son."³⁵⁵ Therefore, all things came into being through ὁ λόγος ("the Word").

As the term γέγονεν is the perfect tense of γίνομαι, and the term ἐγένετο is in the aorist, the sentence means that all things created in the past have been made through Jesus, i.e. they exist continually from their created time until now.³⁵⁶ Therefore, this verse explains that the Logos ("Jesus") was the Creator of all things.

Verse 4: The Fourth Gospel uses the word ζωή ("life") in other places (5:40; 10:10, 28; 14:6; 20:31). In addition, in the gospels the word ζωή is used over thirty-five

³⁵² Martin, 86.

³⁵³ Brown, 35.

³⁵⁴ J. Calvin, 9.

³⁵⁵ Wallace, 434.

times, and over fifteen times as “to live” or “to have life.”³⁵⁷ In this verse, however, the evangelist insists that the life is in the Logos (“Jesus”). What then is the meaning of the word ζωή (“life”) in the Logos? It does not mean destruction, condemnation, or death, because Jesus was sent from God to give people eternal life (3:16; 5:24). In this verse, ἐν αὐτῷ ζωή ἐστίν (“in him was life”), means Jesus gives life to people. However, the true giver of life is God, because God planned and allowed life to be sent through Jesus, the Son of God (5:26; 6:27, 40).³⁵⁸ The life through Jesus is given to as many as God has given him (17:2).³⁵⁹

When in the Fourth Gospel Jesus promises to give people life, he uses the expression, “will give eternal life.” Therefore, the life in verse 4 is “eternal life.” The word for eternal is αἰώνιος, an “adjective which is repeatedly used to describe God.”³⁶⁰ In other words, “eternal life is life which knows something of the serenity and power of the life of God himself, because eternal life is to describe the life which God lives.”³⁶¹

In verse 4 the word φῶς (“light”) appears. According to the text, “the life is the light of men.” The life means Jesus: “in him (Jesus) was life.” Therefore, Jesus is the light of men. Jesus said, “I am the light of the world” (8:12; 9:5). If people believe in the light, they can become children of the light (12:36). William Barclay interprets the light using three scriptures: “the light which put chaos to flight (Gen 1:3),” “the revealing

³⁵⁶ Herman N. Ridderbos, *The Gospel According to John: A Theological Commentary*, trans. John Vriend. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997), 37.

³⁵⁷ William Barclay, *The Gospel of John*, vol. 1 (Philadelphia, PA: The Westminster Press, 1956), 43.

³⁵⁸ Ibid.

³⁵⁹ Ibid.

³⁶⁰ Ibid., 44.

light for the condemnation of men that they loved the darkness rather than the light (3:19-20),” and “the guiding light for making people live lives in the true light (12:36, 46).”³⁶²

However, D. A. Carson believes that both ζωή (“life”) and φῶς (“light”) refer to salvation, Carson defines: “the φῶς as a revelation which people may receive in active faith and be saved, and the ζωή is either resurrection life or spiritual life that is its foretaste.”³⁶³

Verse 5: The phrase τὸ φῶς ... φαίνει (“the light shines”) is “the light that came when Christ entered the world and that now shines.”³⁶⁴ It, in other words, means “the eschatological revelation of the incarnate Logos constantly.”³⁶⁵ The word σκοτία (“darkness”) occurs seven times in the gospel,³⁶⁶ and means “the world estranged from God,”³⁶⁷ i.e. spiritual ignorance.³⁶⁸ The verb κατέλαβεν from καταλαμβάνω means: “to apprehend,” “to take,” “to comprehend,” “to perceive,” “to obtain,” “to come upon,” “to overtake,” “to attain,” and, “to find.”³⁶⁹ D. A. Carson renders the verb “to overcome,” i.e. the Evangelist is describing the victory of the light: “*the darkness did not overcome*

³⁶¹ Ibid.

³⁶² Ibid., 45-46.

³⁶³ Carson, 119.

³⁶⁴ Herman N. Ridderbos, 39.

³⁶⁵ Schnakenburg, 245.

³⁶⁶ Barclay, 46.

³⁶⁷ Schnakenburg, 245.

³⁶⁸ Barclay. 48.

³⁶⁹ Peter Coad, “Greek Bible Study.” <http://www.greekbiblestudy.org/gnt/greekWordStudy.do?id=541626&greek=true>, (accessed 6 February, 2008)

it.”³⁷⁰ The darkness crucified Jesus Christ, but it did not destroy him.³⁷¹ William Barclay agrees with like Carson, and adds that the word may also have two more meanings: “*to understand*” and “*to extinguishing a fire or flame.*”³⁷² People in the darkness never understand the demands or will of Christ; they never stopped the fire even though they tried to obscure and extinguish the light of God in Christ.³⁷³

John’s witness concerning the light (1:6-8)

Verses 6: From here the second section of the prologue begins. The aorist ἐγένετο is contrasted with the continuous tense of the verb ἦν in the verses 1-4,³⁷⁴ and the theme is changed. In verse 1:1, the focus is θεὸς (“God”); in verse 6, ἄνθρωπος (man).³⁷⁵ While the Synoptic Gospels portray John the Baptist’s ministry as being multifaceted, the Fourth Gospel depicts him mainly as a witness to the identity of the Messiah. The phrase ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ (“was sent from God”) indicates John was a prophet, as the OT referred to prophet as those who were sent from God (2 Chron 24:19; 25:25; Jer 7:25; 25:4; 28:9; 35:15; 44:4; Ezek 2:3).³⁷⁶ Jewish people therefore would regard John as a prophet (Matt 21:26).

Verse 7: The text describes the role of John. His role was to testify that Jesus Christ was the light, because there were many who had not known the true light, adding ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός (“so that through him all men might believe”).

³⁷⁰ Carson, 119.

³⁷¹ Barclay, 49.

³⁷² Ibid.

³⁷³ Ibid.

³⁷⁴ Kostenberger, 32; Barrett, 132.

³⁷⁵ Kostenberger, 32.

The root of μαρτυρίαν (“witness”) is μαρτυρία. John the Baptist is a witness for Jesus. There are other witnesses of the messiah in the Fourth Gospel. The witness of the Father (5:37; 8:18); of Jesus himself (8:14, 18); of his work (5:36; 10:25; 14:11; 15:24); of the last of the prophets (1:7, 8); of those with whom Jesus came into contact (4:39; 9:25, 38; 12:17); of the disciples and especially of the writer of the Gospel himself (15:27; 19:35; 21:24); of the Holy Spirit (15:26; cf. 1John 5:7); and the witness which the scriptures bear to him (5:39; 46).³⁷⁷

The reason John the Baptist could testify as to who Jesus is was because he already knew Jesus. The Baptist may have heard about God and his son Jesus Christ through his parents, priest Zechariah and his wife Elizabeth, both of whom were upright in the sight of God (Lk 1:5-6).

Verse 8: John the Baptist had been prepared to testify about the light of God, but he himself was not that light. He was merely a lamp (5:35), only a man sent from God to testify as to the true light.

The incarnation of the Word and the privilege of becoming God’s children (1:9-14)

Verse 9: The word φῶς (“light”), introduced in verses 4-5, reappears. It emphasizes that Jesus is the true light. In the OT are similar terms depicting the coming of the Messiah as a light: ‘a star’ (Num 24:17); ‘a light’ (Isa 9:2; 42:6-7); and ‘the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings’ (Mal 4:2; cf., Luke 1:78-79).³⁷⁸ These scriptures predicted the true light, i.e. the Messiah, whom John the Baptist revealed as

³⁷⁶ Ibid.

³⁷⁷ Barclay, 51-53; Compare with D. A. Carson, *John*, 120-21.

³⁷⁸ Clinton E. Arnold, *John and Acts: Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary*, vol. 2 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002), 8.

Jesus Christ. In short, “John [the Baptist] indicates that Jesus, the true light, is the fulfillment of the OT hopes and expectations, and, furthermore, Jesus is here presented as the source of (spiritual) light that give light to every man”³⁷⁹

Further, verse 9 recalls verse 4, because the term φῶς appears with the continuation between verse 4 and verse 9. R. Schnackenburg insists τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον (“the true light that give light to every man” v. 9) clarifies τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων (“the light of men” v. 4), in the same way 3b emphasizes and classifies the creation of all things by the Logos alone (3a).³⁸⁰ In summary, “the power of the Logos to give light and life is universal, and indispensable to every man, because in him, and in him alone, was the divine life for the true spiritual being of men, and he, he alone, was the true divine life for all.”³⁸¹

Why did John use here the adjective ἀληθινόν (not used in vs. 4-5) to modify φῶς? The word ἀληθινόν is the neuter of ἀληθινός, which means “true,” “genuine,” “real,” and “dependable.”³⁸² However, ἀληθινός is sometimes used to mean “veracious” (4:37; 7:28; 8:16; 19:35), applied only to opinions, witness, and statements (6:55).³⁸³ However, in this context ἀληθινόν means “true” or “genuine,” (cf. “worshippers of God” [4:23], “bread from heaven” [6:32], “the vine” [15:1], and even “to God himself” [7:28; 17:3]). The Evangelist declares that the Logos who came into the world is the true light to every man. D. A. Carson adds that the Logos who came into the world is the

³⁷⁹ Kostenberger, 35.

³⁸⁰ Schnackenburg, 253.

³⁸¹ Ibid.

³⁸² Thomas A. Robinson, *Mastering Greek Vocabulary* (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1990), 148; D. A. Carson, *John*, 122; Walter Bauer, 37.

genuine and ultimate self-disclosure of God to man, because ἀληθινόν (“true,” “real,” or “genuine”) may be rendered “ultimate” in some passages.³⁸⁴ Therefore, the reason ἀληθινόν was added here is because John considered the Logos to be the true light and ultimate self-disclosure of God to every man.

This verse is difficult to translate because ἐρχόμενον is either in the (a) neuter nominative, which modifies τὸ φῶς (i.e., the true light, that give light to every man, was coming into the world) or the (b) masculine accusative which modifies ἄνθρωπον (i.e., the true light that gives light to every man who comes into the world).³⁸⁵ However, translation (a) should be preferred because “the entry of the Word into the world (the incarnation) is such a frequent thought for John (1:10; 3:17, 19).”³⁸⁶ Also the expression of πάντα ἄνθρωπον is plural, while ἐρχόμενον is singular.³⁸⁷ Therefore, the NIV translation is adequate: *The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world.*

The word κόσμον is from κόσμος, which means the “world.” As κόσμος appears seventy-eight times in this Gospel alone,³⁸⁸ it is a very important word in John. In general, the word κόσμος (cf. 8:23; 9:39; 11:9; 12:25, 31; 13:1; 16:11; 18:36) points to the world of men and human affairs in rebellion against its Maker (1:10; 7:7; 14:17, 22, 27, 30; 15:18-19; 16:8, 20, 33; 17:6, 9, 14). C. K. Barrett thinks that the world in John 3:16 is split up into components, that is, those who believe in Jesus and those who do not.

³⁸³ Barrett, 133; Carson, 122.

³⁸⁴ Carson, 122.

³⁸⁵ Barrett, 134.

³⁸⁶ Burge, 57.

³⁸⁷ Carson, *John*, 121.

The idea is the world is an incomplete and dark place. That is why the world needs the true light, Jesus, who came down to this world to give the true light. The reason that was possible was because God loved the world (3:16). That God loves the world is “a testimony to the character of God.”³⁸⁹ Therefore, κόσμος (“world”) here indicates “that the Word has invaded the created order he himself made.”³⁹⁰

The verb φωτίζει means “to shed light upon,” “to make visible,” and “to bring to light.”³⁹¹ The text ὁ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον can be Trans. as “that sheds light upon every man.” Most Jews did not believe that Gentiles would be saved by God, and instead believed that “Gentiles were created for no other purpose than to be fuel for the fires of hell in spite of the record that Israel’s destiny was to be a light to Gentile (Isaiah 42:6; 49:6).”³⁹² But Jesus came to be a light for every man, Jews and Greeks.

Verse 10: The word κόσμος appears 3 times, and its meaning is the same as when referred above: The word κόσμος points to the world of men and human affairs in rebellion against its Maker. However, the κόσμος is not the sum total of creation but only the organized and responsible world.³⁹³

The phrase ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν (“He was in the world”) means that the Word came from Heaven to accomplish God’s will (3:16). The reason ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω (“the world did not recognize him”) even though the world was created

³⁸⁸ Burge, 57; Kostenberger, 35.

³⁸⁹ Burge, 57; Carson, 123.

³⁹⁰ Carson, 122.

³⁹¹ Ibid., 123; Barrett, 134.

³⁹² Barclay, 55.

³⁹³ Barrett, 135.

through the Word because the world was estranged from him.³⁹⁴ The phrase αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνων (“did not recognize him”)? It means “a rejection of Jesus’ claim of equality with God and his revelation of the Father through words and signs”³⁹⁵ Jesus himself knows the Father through a relationship of love, obedience, and mutual indwelling (10:15; 17:25; 7:29; 8:55); people know God through Jesus (8:32; 17:8, 2:25; 10:5; 13:17; 15:15); and knowledge of God and Christ confers eternal life (17:3).³⁹⁶ R. E. Brown, therefore, explains that failing to know and believe in Jesus is the basic sin in John’s Gospel.³⁹⁷

Verse 11: This verse seems like a repetition of verse 10. As the term τὰ ἴδια (Greek neuter) means “his own property” or “his own home” (16:32; 19:27), the phrase εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν is Trans. “he came to his own property (home).”³⁹⁸ Further, the aorist ἦλθεν (“came”) indicates Jesus’ incarnation, and the home where Jesus came to is Israel (e.g., 16:32; 19:27).³⁹⁹ However, William Barclay considers the place where Jesus came to as Palestine, called the holy land (Zec 2:12) in Israel.⁴⁰⁰ The term οἱ ἴδιοι (Greek masculine) means “his own (people),”⁴⁰¹ and the phrase οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον is Trans. as “his own did not receive him.” This text indicates that “not only was Jesus not received by a world made through him, but also he was rejected by a

³⁹⁴ Herman N. Ridderbos, 44.

³⁹⁵ Kostenberger, 37.

³⁹⁶ Barrett, 136.

³⁹⁷ R. E. Brown, 10.

³⁹⁸ Barrett, 136; Carson, 124; Kostenberger, 37.

³⁹⁹ Barrett, 136; Kostenberger, 37.

⁴⁰⁰ Barclay, 59.

⁴⁰¹ Kostenberger, 37.

people specially chosen by God as his very own (Exod 19:5).”⁴⁰² However, as D. A. Carson considers οἱ ἴδιοι a relational term (1:41; 5:18; 10:3, 4, 12), insisting “John focuses not on the mere status of the covenant community but on their proper relationship to the Word.”⁴⁰³

Verse 12: The verses 10-11 referred to those who did not receive Jesus, while verses 12-13 refer to those who receive Him. This indicates that there were two kinds of people in Israel: those who did not believe in Jesus, and those who did. The text agrees: ὅσοι ... ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι (“to all who received him, he gave the right to become children of God”). Only those who receive Jesus get “the right” to become children of God. The word ἐξουσία may denote “power,” “authority,” “liberty,” and “right.” In this text the “right” means “the privilege of becoming the covenant people of God,”⁴⁰⁴ not the power to wield great influence as a child of God.

According to the text, those who receive Jesus are called as τέκνα θεοῦ (“children of God”), which means “the spiritual children of God whether Jew or Gentile (11:52).”⁴⁰⁵ In John Jesus is also called a υἱός θεοῦ (“son of God”).⁴⁰⁶ Paul also used υἱός θεοῦ (“son of God” [Gal 3:26]), as an expression of implication, i.e. children by adoption.⁴⁰⁷ Therefore, “both writers presume a distinction between the ‘sonship’ of

⁴⁰² Ibid.

⁴⁰³ Carson, *John*, 125.

⁴⁰⁴ Ibid., 126.

⁴⁰⁵ A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, vol. V (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1932), 11.

⁴⁰⁶ Ibid.; Carson, 126; Kostenberger, 39.

believers and the unique ‘sonship’ of Jesus.”⁴⁰⁸ The Logos is the only υἱός θεοῦ (“son of God”), and could give this right to believers.

The phrase τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ (“to those who believed in his name”) is equivalent to ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν (“to those who received him). John emphasizes faith, because true faith is in those born of God (1:13).

Verse 13: This verse shows how to become one of the children of God. It is possible only if one receives Christ, and believes in his name (v. 12). The phrases οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς (“not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will”) serve to emphasize ἐκ θεοῦ (“of God”). Only God can offer the right to become his sons (children).

Verse 14: The ancient Greeks were dualists, believing in spirit and matter. The idea that a deity would assume human nature in Jesus was anathema; i.e. it was impossible that immaterial Reason could become a physical being.⁴⁰⁹ However, John contended that “the Word did not merely become manifest as an apparition, but literally was made flesh.”⁴¹⁰

The term σὰρξ (“Flesh”) denotes “all of the human person in creaturely existence as distinct from God.”⁴¹¹ The verb ἐγένετο (“became”) does not mean “changed into” in the sense that Jesus who becomes human ceased to be God.⁴¹² It means

⁴⁰⁷ Robertson, 11; Carson, 126.

⁴⁰⁸ Carson, *John*, 126.

⁴⁰⁹ Kostenberger, 41.

⁴¹⁰ Ibid.

⁴¹¹ Barrett, 164; Kostenberger, 40.

⁴¹² Kostenberger, 40.

that “God now has chosen to be with his people in a more personal way than ever before.”⁴¹³ Because the world was dark and fallen, and full of sin, God wanted to forgive and save the world through his only son, Jesus Christ (1 John 2:2; 4:10). For this work, the Word became the flesh.

The verb ἐσκήνωσεν’s original form is σκηνώω, meaning is “to pitch one’s tent or tabernacle.”⁴¹⁴ This word recalls the Tabernacle of Israel (Exod 25:8, 9; 33:7, 9; 40:34-38). Israel mainly met with God in the Tabernacle. Therefore, ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (“the Word pitched his tent among us”) means the Logos became the flesh,⁴¹⁵ and tabernacled with people.

The Greek δόξα (“glory”) was commonly used in Hebrew, *kabod* (“glory” or “honor”).⁴¹⁶ The word, specifically, was used to denote “the visible manifestation of God’s self-disclosure in a theophany (Ex 33:22; Dt 5:22), and the ‘glorious’ status of God’s people when he rises to save them (Isa. 60:1).”⁴¹⁷ John, however, asserts that the glory of God is the Word, declaring the glory points to δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός (“the glory of the One and Only who came from the Father,” v.14). As the word μονογενής means “only,” “begotten only,” and “only child,”⁴¹⁸ Jesus is the only begotten Son of God. Through the only begotten Son of God, one can get eternal life (3:16).

⁴¹³ Carson, 127.

⁴¹⁴ Robertson, 13; Kostenberger, 41; Carson, 127.

⁴¹⁵ Kostenberger, *John*, 41.

⁴¹⁶ Verbrugge, 346.

⁴¹⁷ Carson, 129.

In the phrase πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (“full of grace and truth”), the word χάρις (“grace”) was used only four times only in John (14, 16, 17), while the word ἀληθεία was used commonly.⁴¹⁹ In the OT there are similar constructions: “loving-kindness [Hebrew, *hesed*] and truth [Hebrew, *emet*] (Exod 34:6; cf. 33:18-19).”⁴²⁰ Scholars note “both ‘loving-kindness’ and ‘truth’ refer to God’s covenant faithfulness to his people Israel.”⁴²¹ The phrase “grace and truth” in this text points to God’s faithfulness, who sends Jesus, his only begotten Son. Furthermore, the incarnate Christ came down to earth with the attributes of God, i.e. with ‘loving-kindness’ and ‘truth.’

John’s witness concerning the Word’s preeminence (1:15)

John the Baptist’s witness of the Word is introduced once more by the Evangelist. Verse 14 and 16 demonstrate continuity. The witness of John the Baptist in verses 6-8 referred to the coming of the pre-existent light into the world, while this verse announces the priority in time. That is to say, John the Baptist began first his ministry before Jesus does, but Jesus really was “before” John the Baptist. Thus the evangelist may imply that Jesus should be honored above the Baptists, because Jesus was of eternal origin.⁴²²

The final revelation brought by Jesus Christ (1:16-18)

Verse 16: The word ὅτι connects verse 15, and resumes the thought of verse 14. Verse 15 interrupts the continuity of the context in the prologue. John the Baptist’s witness concerning the Word did not have to be referred to again (verses 6-8).

⁴¹⁸ Peter Coad, “Greek Bible Study.”
<http://www.greekbiblestudy.org/gnt/greekWordStudy.do?id=541626&greek=true>, (accessed 18 February, 2008)

⁴¹⁹ Barrett, 139.

⁴²⁰ Kostenberger, 44-45.

⁴²¹ Ibid., 45.

The word πληρώματος (“fullness”) occurs here only in John and, moreover, it is a Gnostic term. Few books in the New Testament would have used the word in its Gnostic sense as did some early Christian writers (Col 1:19; 2:9; Eph 1:23; 3:19; 4:13).⁴²³ However, the word here is not used in this sense, but rather for declaring the fact that the full grace and truth of God is in the incarnate Word. His purpose was to bring “life...abundantly” (10:10).⁴²⁴ Therefore, “fullness” looks back to verse 14, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας (“full of grace and truth”), and now carries the meaning that the incarnate Word is full of grace and truth.

The phrase χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος frequently is Trans. “grace upon grace.” According to Schnackenburg, the preposition ἀντὶ indicates “the correspondence between the grace possessed by the Logos and that of those who receive him.”⁴²⁵ Therefore, the grace received from Christ corresponds to the grace of Christ. D. A. Carson, however, insists that this view is wrong: “This view does not adequately treat the way v. 17 is cast as the explanation of v. 16. Moreover, ἀντὶ never unambiguously bears the meaning ‘corresponds to,’ except in certain compounds.”⁴²⁶ In addition, the word ἀντὶ can mean: “in return for;” “upon;” or “in addition to.” D. A. Carson explains the meaning of the former is alien to the context, and ignores the connection between v. 16 and v. 17, and the latter is used in the word ἐπί, not ἀντὶ.⁴²⁷ Carson confidently translates ἀντὶ as

⁴²² Ibid.

⁴²³ Barrett, 140; Carson, 131; Kostenberger, 46.

⁴²⁴ Kostenberger, 46

⁴²⁵ Schnackenburg, 276.

⁴²⁶ Carson, 131.

⁴²⁷ Ibid.

“instead of,” because the next verse, 17, follows “grace instead of grace” (v. 16) with the explanatory “for” or “because.”⁴²⁸ *For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.* Accordingly, “the grace and truth that came through Jesus Christ is what replaces the law.”⁴²⁹ Does the word *χάρις* mean “*the law was given through Moses*” and *ἀλήθεια* “*truth came through Jesus Christ*”? Carson does not offer an exact definition for each word. Therefore, the grace Christians receive corresponds to the grace of Christ.

Verse 17: The Evangelist again uses the expression, *ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια* (“the grace and the truth”) in verse 14. He intends to explain “how the reality of divine grace only came upon earth with the incarnate Logos.”⁴³⁰

The term *νόμος* (“law”) in John is used as a source of revelation (1:45; 8:17; 10:34; 12:34; 15:25) to indicate the incarnate Logos.⁴³¹ Similarly, the expression *ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια* (“the grace and the truth”) also reveals the incarnate Logos. In John Moses appears as a witness for Jesus, like John (5:45), and Moses plays a typological role (3:14; 6:32), i.e., leader of the exodus.⁴³² Note the symmetry of verse 17:

ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη (“the law through Moses was given”)
ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο (“the grace and truth through Jesus Christ came”)

Scholars observe *νόμος* and *Μωϋσέως* are separated from each other, and neither is eternal; *ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια* and *Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ* are one, not separate, and

⁴²⁸ Ibid., 132.

⁴²⁹ Ibid.

⁴³⁰ Schnackenburg, 277.

⁴³¹ Ibid.

eternal. That grace and truth came through Jesus Christ indicates “the eschatological character of the event of Salvation.”⁴³³ Therefore, one must receive the incarnate Logos in order to obtain grace and the truth from Jesus Christ. Only he can adopt humanity as the eternal children of God, and dwell with us eternally.

Verse 18: In the final verse of the prologue, the Evangelist refers again to God, who was referred to in verse 1. The Evangelist asserts that the Logos was with God, and also that he was God.

The phrase θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε (“no one has ever seen God”) reflects a general view in the OT (Ex 33:20; Deut 4:12) as well as the ancient world.⁴³⁴ However, God made a way to be seen. He became the Word, the Logos.

The words ὁ μονογενῆς υἱὸς mean “the only begotten Son.” The Word was God (v. 1) indicates that “Jesus is unique and divine, though flesh.”⁴³⁵ The phrase ὁ μονογενῆς υἱὸς is closely related to verse 1. The Son was εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς (“in the bosom of Father”) indicates the unmatched intimacy of Jesus’ relationship with the Father.⁴³⁶ They are each persons, but they are only one God. Thus, the Word was with God and the Word was God (1:1). Jesus was unique, Jesus was God, and Jesus was in the bosom of the Father.⁴³⁷

⁴³² Ibid.

⁴³³ Ibid.

⁴³⁴ Barrett, 141; Barclay, 73; Kostenberger, 49; Carson, 134.

⁴³⁵ Kostenberger, 49.

⁴³⁶ Wallace, 360.

⁴³⁷ Barclay, 74.

CHRISTOLOGY AND ΛΟΓΟΣ

Christological Controversies and λόγος

The prologue of the Gospel of John describes the significant attributes and activities of Jesus: “Preexistence (Jn 1:1),” “Deity (Jn 1:1),” “Creative work (Jn 1:3),” “Incarnation (Jn 1:14),” and “Revelatory work (Jn 1:4-5, 14, 18).”⁴³⁸ George E. Ladd says “the Logos theology pervades the entire Gospel.”⁴³⁹

However, early theologians misunderstood the attributes and activities of Jesus. They debated the two natures—deity and humanity—of Jesus, and did not unite them. Some denied that Jesus was fully divine, others denied that he was fully human. Orthodox christology emerged later from the council of Nicea (325), and Chalcedon (451).

Ebionism (2nd Century): Denial of the Divinity of Jesus

What is known about the Ebionites comes from the writings of Christian early theologians. According to Justine Martyr (ca. 100-165), the Ebionites considered Jesus as the Messiah, but believed he was simply human, born in the ordinary way, not of a virgin.⁴⁴⁰ Irenaeus (ca. 130-200) explains that the Ebionites regarded Jesus as surpassing others in righteousness and knowledge, but denied his virgin birth, holding that Jesus was an ordinary man.⁴⁴¹ According to Eusebius (ca. 260-340), the Ebionites were divided in opinion regarding the person of Jesus. One group believed Jesus to be an ordinary man, born naturally from Mary and her husband. The other claimed Jesus was born of a Virgin

⁴³⁸ Millard J. Erickson, *The Word Became Flesh* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1991), 26-27.

⁴³⁹ George E. Ladd, *A Theology of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1974), 242.

⁴⁴⁰ Justin Martyr, *Dialogue with Trypho*, Trans. by Thomas B. Falls. (New York: Christian Heritage, 1948), 48.

⁴⁴¹ Erickson, 43.

and the Holy Spirit. However, neither group believed in his preexistence, his being the Logos.⁴⁴²

Cerinthus (fl. 100), an Ebionite,⁴⁴³ held another christology, known as “Adoptionism.” Accordingly, Jesus was an ordinary man adopted by God as a son. Cerinthus divides Jesus from Christ, insisting “there was no real union between the Christ and Jesus, only a sort of conjunction.”⁴⁴⁴ Therefore, Jesus was a mere human, and could not fulfill the role as Savior of all people. Finally the Ebionites’ christology is known through the Clementines.⁴⁴⁵ Like Cerinthus they held to, a definite distinction between Jesus and the Christ, believing “the Christ, the Son of God, has appeared in a series of incarnations in perfect men like Adam, Enock, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and finally Jesus.”⁴⁴⁶

The Ebionites admitted that Jesus was a historical being, but rejected a divine Jesus. John obviously disagrees: Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν (“in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. Jesus was in the beginning with God,” Jn 1:1, 2f). The Logos preexisted with God, had a relationship with God, and was God. Furthermore, in verse 3 John says that Jesus was a creator (πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν, “all things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made”). The Logos also possesses divine attributes: omnipresent (Matt 28:20;

⁴⁴² Eusebius, *Ecclesiastical History* 3. 27.

⁴⁴³ Erickson, 43.

⁴⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁵ Ibid., 44.

Eph 1:23), omniscient (Jn 16:30; 21:17), omnipotent (Jn 5:19), and immutable (Heb 1:12; 13:8). Thus, the Logos is the deity. The idea that Jesus was adopted by God as his Son is not found anywhere in the Bible. Jesus and Christ cannot be divided because Jesus is a name and Christ is his role. One does not assign a man or woman two names, one personal, and the other to describe his job. Thus, the two names, Jesus and Christ, are not two people who have two characters but one man with one character.

Docetism (Late 1st Century): Denial of the Humanity of Jesus

The Docetics believed that “Jesus merely ‘seemed’ or ‘appeared’ to possess human nature.”⁴⁴⁷ A divine life is a seemingly human body,⁴⁴⁸ that is to say, “a spiritual flesh.”⁴⁴⁹ Early docetists like Valentinus and Apelles taught that “the body of Christ was not born of humanity.”⁴⁵⁰ Jesus had “a heavenly or ethereal body that simply passed through Mary.”⁴⁵¹ In short, “Jesus appeared human but was really divine.”⁴⁵² They denied Ignatius’ insistence that Christ “was really born, and ate and drank, was really persecuted by Pontius Pilate, was really crucified and died ... really rose from the dead.”⁴⁵³ They denied a genuine humanity. Docetism was “under the influence of Gnosticism;”⁴⁵⁴ i.e., a sect with a thoroughgoing metaphysical dualism, attributing creation to the demiurge,

⁴⁴⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁴⁸ Donald G. Bloesch, *Jesus Christ* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997), 58.

⁴⁴⁹ Erickson, 47.

⁴⁵⁰ Bloesch, 58.

⁴⁵¹ Ibid.

⁴⁵² H. W. House, *Charts of Christian Theology and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 53.

⁴⁵³ Ignatius, *Epistle to the Trallians* 9.

who depreciated the process of human generations and birth. The Gnostics divided the world into two parts, the spiritual world (good) and the world of matter (evil). They believed that all creation was created by an intermediate being, the demiurge, not by the supreme God, and insisted that all material aspect of humans are evil because the world of matter is evil. By means of these influences, the Docetics denied that Jesus was a human because they thought that Jesus Christ was not evil. Thus, “Jesus was merely transmitted ‘through’ or ‘by means of’ Mary the virgin, but was not born ‘from’ or ‘of’ her.”⁴⁵⁵ Therefore, the Docetics denied the humanity of Jesus, insisting on the deity of Jesus.

However, the Fourth Gospel claims the Logos had ζωή (“life,” 1:4), became σαρκί (“flesh,” 1:14), was ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ (“in the world,” 1:10), and came to τὰ ἴδια (“his own home,” 1:11). A human life is born of a pregnant woman. The Logos also was born of a pregnant woman, Mary, (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18-2:11; Luke 1:30-38). Mary became pregnant with the Logos through the Holy Spirit (Matt 1: 18), not by having a sexual relationship with a man. Moreover, the Logos had a human development (Luke 2:50, 52). He had the essential elements of a human being—human body (Matt 26:12; Jn 2:21), reason, and will (Matt 26:38; Mk 2:8). He possessed the infirmities of human nature—weary (Jn 4:6), hungry (Matt 4:2; 21:18), thirsty (Jn 19:28), and tempted (Matt 4; Heb 2:18). Finally, he was repeatedly called a man (Jn 1:30; 4:9; 10:38). This data indicates that the Logos had a human nature.

⁴⁵⁴ Erickson, 45-46.

Arianism (4th Century): Denial of the Full Divinity of Jesus

Arius (ca. 250-336) was a presbyter of the church district of Baucalis in Alexandria.⁴⁵⁶ Arius emphasized the absolute and extreme transcendence of God. Arius thought that “God could not have created by direct contact with the world.”⁴⁵⁷ God is the One and only, and is the true Divinity (Jn 17: 3). According to Arius, Jesus, God the Son, is not fully equal to God the Father. Arians considered Jesus, God the Son, as a creature, citing some biblical passages (Pro 8:22; Acts 2:36; Col 1:15; Heb 3:2).⁴⁵⁸ However, Arius saw differences from other creatures. Jesus was the first creature created, before the beginning of time. In additions, Jesus was created directly by the Father.⁴⁵⁹ Therefore, Arius believed “the Son has a beginning, but God is without beginning.”⁴⁶⁰ Arius denied that Jesus Christ is the eternal, unbegotten, uncreated Son of God.⁴⁶¹ Jesus is inferior to the Father (cf. Jn 14:28) and is merely the highest created being.⁴⁶²

However, John 1:1- 3, the Logos was in the beginning, was with God, and made all things. These verses say that the Logos preexisted with God and made all things with God. Therefore, the Logos does not have a place or time of origin. He is eternal with God. According to Colossians 1:17, Jesus holds the world. How could a creature hold the

⁴⁵⁵ Ibid., 46.

⁴⁵⁶ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁵⁸ Ibid., 51-52.

⁴⁵⁹ Ibid., 51.

⁴⁶⁰ Edward R. Hardy, *Christology of the Later Fathers* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1954), 330.

⁴⁶¹ Ibid., 333.

⁴⁶² Erickson, 52.

world? Jesus made the world. Eventually, what one has to understand though the biblical data make clear that the Logos is not inferior to the Father, but equal to God the Father.

Therefore, the Logos is fully divinity.

The Council of Nicea (AD 325)

The Arians denied the deity of Christ, and insisted that he is less than the Father. Athanasius (293-373), however, repudiated their view. Rather, Athanasius maintained that Jesus is the full deity, of one essence with the Father, eternal.⁴⁶³ The emperor Constantine had established Christianity as the official religion of the state. He did not want a christological debate in the church, so he summoned an ecumenical council to settle the issue in AD 325 at Nicea in Bithynia. In peace the creed of Nicea was adopted:

“We believe ... in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only-begotten Son of God, Begotten of the Father before all ages. Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made.”⁴⁶⁴

However, there was a difficulty, that is to say, the term *homoiousios* (Jesus was “of similar substance” as the Father), i.e., Jesus was not a deity. The emperor, in order to overcome this problem, suggested a replacement term *homoousios* (Jesus was “of the same substance” as the Father). The creed of Nicea affirmed that Jesus was true divinity, like the Father.⁴⁶⁵

The creed also affirmed the incarnation and humanity of Christ, but it did not say how the humanity and deity were related in Christ,⁴⁶⁶ opening a new debate.

⁴⁶³ Ibid., 53.

⁴⁶⁴ Bernard L. Ramm, *An Evangelical Christology* (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1985), 31.

⁴⁶⁵ Ibid.

Appollinarianism (4th Century): Denial of the Full Humanity of Jesus

Apollinarius, Bishop of Laodicea in Syria (310-390),⁴⁶⁷ did not believe that Jesus Christ is two Sons, the Son of God and the son of Mary, arguing the scriptures teach that Christ was a unity.⁴⁶⁸ Apollinarius objected to dualism, i.e., that both divinity and humanity were in Jesus. Apollinarius believed that a human is made of mind (or soul) and flesh. He thought that the flesh of Jesus was a little different from what other people possess. Namely, “the human flesh in Christ was joined with the Godhead in an absolute oneness of being.”⁴⁶⁹ Christ is closer to deity than humanity:

“First, Apollinarius regarded Christ’s flesh as being glorified; it has become ‘divine flesh’ or ‘the flesh as being glorified; it has become ‘divine flesh’ or ‘the flesh of God.’ Second, since Christ’s flesh cannot be separated from the Word, it is a proper object of worship. Finally, Apollinarius held to the *communication idiomatum*: the flesh shares the names and properties of the Word, and vice versa.”⁴⁷⁰

Therefore, the human flesh of Christ could not be the same as a human has. Donald G. Bloesch explains that “Christ was primarily divine, and the human was no more than a passive instrument.”⁴⁷¹ Apollinarius insisted that Christ was human, but not a full human. Furthermore, H. Wayne House explained that “the divine Logos took the place of the

⁴⁶⁶ Ibid.

⁴⁶⁷ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, *New Dictionary of Theology* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1988), 35.

⁴⁶⁸ Erickson, 59.

⁴⁶⁹ Ibid., 60.

⁴⁷⁰ Ibid., 61.

⁴⁷¹ Bloesch, 59.

human mind.”⁴⁷² Therefore, Appollinarians associated the Logos with reason in all people.⁴⁷³

If Appollinarianism is right, Jesus Christ is a monstrosity. The fact that Jesus Christ was fully human is proved by Heb 2:14 and 1 John 4:1-3. Jesus Christ fought against Satan and felt pain. Jesus overcame the attack of Satan, enduring all loneliness. The Fourth Gospel says that “the Logos became flesh (1:14).” Here, “flesh” means the entire human person in existence as distinct from God.

Jesus Christ was not used as a passive instrument. As a full human he had free to live his life. However, he gave himself up, made himself nothing, became as a servant, and glorified his Father for the Kingdom of God (Phil 2: 6-11). He never lived as a passive instrument. A full human, he actively served the Kingdom of God.

Nestorianism (5th Century): Denial of the union of both Divinity and Humanity

Nestorius (AD 428 – 451) was a patriarch of Constantinople and a representative of the Antiochene christology that stressed duality, i.e. the two natures of Christ.⁴⁷⁴

Nestorius asserted that there were two separate persons in the incarnate Christ, a Divine and a human.⁴⁷⁵ Nestorius drew “a sharp distinction between the human and the divine natures in Christ, denying any real organic union between the man Jesus and the indwelling divine Logos.”⁴⁷⁶ Nestorius did not support the term *theotokos* (‘bearer of

⁴⁷² H. Wayne House, *Charts of Christian Theological and Doctrine* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1992), 54.

⁴⁷³ Ibid.

⁴⁷⁴ Erickson, 62; Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, 457.

⁴⁷⁵ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (Oxford New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 1138; Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, 457.

⁴⁷⁶ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, 457.

God;’ commonly Trans. ‘mother of God’) declared at the Council of Ephesus (431) amidst much acclamation from the populace. Nestorius believed that God cannot have a mother, and no woman can give birth to God.⁴⁷⁷ Rather, Nestorius preferred *anthropotokos* (‘bearer of man’), or *Christotokos* (‘bearer of Christ’).⁴⁷⁸ Nestorius’ view like this was condemned by Cyril of Alexandria, who held that there was only one nature in Christ. Cyril, moreover, insisted that the “two natures” have their indivisible unity.⁴⁷⁹

However, the Gospel of John does not say that the two natures in the Logos do not have union. The Logos was from before eternity and made the world (Jn 1:1-3). There is no beginning or end for the Logos. The Logos raises the dead (Jn 5:25; 11:25). The Logos executes judgment (Jn 5:22). The Logos is one with the Father (Jn 10:31). The Logos was of divine nature. In John 1:14 the Logos became flesh. The Logos became weary (Jn 4:6). The Logos was also human. The Gospel of John declares that the Logos has two natures, divine and human, in one person. Therefore, the Logos is theanthropic. Nestorian heresy caused the Council of Chalcedon (451), which declared that “the two natures coexist without division and without separation.”⁴⁸⁰

Eutychianism (5th Century): Denial of Distinction of Divinity and Humanity

Eutyches (AD 378-454) was the archimandrite of a large monastery at Constantinople.⁴⁸¹ However, in AD 448 he was repeatedly summoned by the Synod of

⁴⁷⁷ Erickson, 62; Bloesch, 60.

⁴⁷⁸ Sinclair B. Ferguson, David F. Wright, and J. I. Packer, 457.

⁴⁷⁹ Bloesch, 60.

⁴⁸⁰ Ibid.

⁴⁸¹ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 577.

Constantinople, led by Flavian the local patriarch, to explain his christology.⁴⁸² He maintained that “there was only one ‘nature’ in Christ ‘after the union,’ and denied that his manhood was consubstantial with ours, a view which was held to be incompatible with our redemption through Him.”⁴⁸³ Eutyches denied the distinction of Christ’s two natures like Nestorius. The Synod of Constantinople could not accept the doctrine that Christ’s human nature was consubstantial with ours.⁴⁸⁴ Therefore, Eutyches was excommunicated and deposed from the archimandrite of his monastery.

John does not say that the Logos is only “one nature,” i.e. without distinction between natures, his divine and human natures. The writer of Philippians recorded that the Logos was God in very nature, but he wanted to be human (2:6-7). He had a divinity in himself, but gave up divinity to accomplish God’s will. The Logos became a man for the Kingdom of God. In John 1:1-18, the Logos is divided into two natures.

The Orthodox Response: The Council of Chalcedon

The Council of Chalcedon was convened in 451 to bring the controversies described above to a resolution. The council took three basic actions:⁴⁸⁵

It reaffirmed the Nicene Creed as expressive of orthodoxy. It rejected both Nestorianism and Eutychianism. Finally, it adopted a statement of its own, which was to be the standard of christological orthodoxy for many years to come.

Chalcedon agreed on a comprehensive statement:

We, then, following the holy Fathers, all with one consent, teach men to confess one and the same Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the same perfect in Godhood and

⁴⁸² Erickson, 64.

⁴⁸³ F. L. Cross and E. A. Livingstone, 577.

⁴⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁸⁵ Erickson, 65.

also perfect in manhood; truly God and truly man, of a reasonable [rational] soul and body; consubstantial [coessential] with the Father according to the Godhood, and consubstantial with us according to the Manhood; in all things like unto us, without sin; begotten before all ages of the Father according to the Godhood, and in these latter days, for us and for our salvation, born of the Virgin Mary, the Mother of God, according to the Manhood; one and the same Christ, Son, Lord, Only-begotten, to be acknowledged in two natures, *inconfusedly, unchangeably, indivisibly, inseparably*; the distinction of natures being by no means taken away by the union, but rather the property of each nature being preserved, and concurring in one Person (*prosopon*) and one Subsistence (*hypostasis*), not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ, as the prophets from the beginning [have declared] concerning him, and the Lord Jesus Christ himself has taught us, and the Creed of the holy Fathers has handed down to us.⁴⁸⁶

Modern Christology issues and λόγος

Controversy over christology has existed from the beginning until now. The christology of modern theologians Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Paul Tillich will be discussed below.

Karl Barth (1886-1968)

Karl Barth was born in 1886 in Basel, Switzerland. His father was very strict, and had taught the Bible for preachers, and Barth's background includes conservative Reformed Church of Switzerland. In 1902 he decided to become a theologian, and later studied at universities in Bern, Berlin, Tubingen, and Marburg. Barth however did not complete a doctorate, but later he was showered with honorary degrees from many great universities. In 1908 he was ordained to the ministry of the Reformed Church, taking a position as assistant pastor in Geneva, but he was unfulfilled by his ministry. In 1911 he moved to a small parish in Safenwil, a village on the border between Switzerland and German. It was at Safenwil that theological history was made.⁴⁸⁷

⁴⁸⁶ Philip Schaff, *The Creeds of Christendom*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1977), 62-63.

The key point of Barth's theology is Jesus Christ. Barth's entire "eleven-volume *Church Dogmatic* is one long explanation and unfolding of this one name, Jesus Christ."⁴⁸⁸ Theology depends upon Jesus Christ.

Barth thought that Jesus had personality; independent personality of the early heresy. Barth also protects the impersonal humanity of Christ affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon (AD 451).⁴⁸⁹ Therefore, Barth maintains that "the central statement of the christology of the Early Church is that God becomes one with man: Jesus Christ 'very God and very man.'"⁴⁹⁰

Barth based his christology on his exegesis of John 1:14 ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο ("The Word became flesh"). Barth believed that Jesus is *truly God* because ὁ λόγος ("The Word"), spoken of in John 1:14, is "the divine, creative, reconciling, and redeeming word which participates without restriction in the divine nature and existence, the eternal Son of God."⁴⁹¹ Barth affirmed 'theotokos' (Mother of God) reaffirmed by Chalcedon (451) for three reasons:⁴⁹²

- (a) The Word is the subject of the becoming; nothing befalls him, but the incarnation is his own act.
- (b) This becoming took place in the divine freedom of the Word; it does not rest upon any necessity in the divine nature, but God did it in sovereign freedom.
- (c) Even in the state of becoming or of having become, the Word is still the free and sovereign.

⁴⁸⁷ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992), 66.

⁴⁸⁸ Harold H. Rowdon, *Christ the Lord: Studies in Christology Presented to Donald Guthrie* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1982), 299-30.

⁴⁸⁹ Bloesch, 66.

⁴⁹⁰ Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, trans. G. T. Thomson. vol. I, 2 (Edinburg: T. & T. Clark, 1956), 125.

⁴⁹¹ Ibid., 132.

⁴⁹² Rowdon, 301.

Barth also believed that Jesus is *truly man* because ‘the Word became *flesh*.’ “He became man, true and real man, participating in the same human essence and existence, the same human nature and form, the same historicity that we have.”⁴⁹³ However, even though Jesus is truly man, he cannot sin, because he is also God, and God cannot sin.⁴⁹⁴ Finally, Barth believes that ‘the Word *became* flesh,’ i.e. “he [Jesus] takes a human nature upon himself in addition to a divine nature.”⁴⁹⁵ Barth affirmed that Jesus is God and man, not accepting the separation of his human and divine natures.

Emil Brunner (1889-1966)

Emil Brunner was born two days before Christmas, 1889, in Zurich, Switzerland. He was raised and educated in the Reformed tradition of Zwingli and Calvin, and later he received a doctorate in theology from the University of Zurich in 1913. He taught theology most of his life at the same university. However, he also taught at Princeton University in the United States (1938-1939), and at the Christian University of Tokyo (1953-1955).⁴⁹⁶

Emil Brunner disputed the doctrine of the two natures of Christ, and insisted that Jesus is true God as well as true Man. Brunner insisted that Jesus Christ, the divine revelation does not belong to the realm of the historical personality, but to the realm of the divine being, the divine nature, and the divine authority.⁴⁹⁷ Therefore, Brunner considered Jesus Christ a deity, i.e. God. Brunner explains, “the humanity of Christ is a

⁴⁹³ Karl Barth, 147.

⁴⁹⁴ Ibid., 155.

⁴⁹⁵ Rowdon, 301.

⁴⁹⁶ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, 78.

‘historical mask’ in which the divine Word clothes himself.”⁴⁹⁸ Brunner claimed the personality of Jesus was an observable historical phenomenon, i.e. Jesus Christ was also purely man.⁴⁹⁹

Brunner also thought that God and Jesus Christ are one, but Brunner makes a distinction in the fact that God is the revealer who unveils to us that was eternally hidden, and Jesus is the one revealed by God.⁵⁰⁰ God himself became the personal Word of revelation.⁵⁰¹ The Word exists eternally in God himself. Therefore, Brunner insisted the Word is true Man, and true God.

Paul Tillich (1886-1965)

Paul Tillich was born on August 20, 1886 in the family of a Lutheran pastor who had lived in the German town of Starzeddel near Berlin.⁵⁰² Tillich, from an early age, had a deep interest in theology and philosophy, and studied critical philosophy, theology, and biblical studies at several major German universities. While training to be a professor of theology Tillich was ordained by the Protestant state church, and received an appointment as a tutor at the University of Halle. In 1933 Professor Tillich moved to New York to teach at Columbia University and Union Theological Seminary, refusing offers from Harvard University and the University of Chicago Divinity School. During his

⁴⁹⁷ J. Edward Humphrey, *Makers of the Modern Theological Mind: Emil Brunner* (Waco, TX: Word Books, 1976), 100.

⁴⁹⁸ Emil Brunner, *The Mediator*, trans. Olive Wyon. (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster, 1947), 346.

⁴⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 343.

⁵⁰⁰ Humphrey, 101.

⁵⁰¹ Emil Brunner, *Dogmatics*, trans. Olive Wyon. vol. I (Philadelphia, PA: Westminster Press, 1950), 281-85.

⁵⁰² Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, 115.

teaching ministry, Tillich published, *Systematic Theology; The Courage to Be*; and *The Dynamic of Faith*.⁵⁰³

Paul Tillich asserted that God is Being-Itself or the power of being, or the ground of being.⁵⁰⁴ Tillich did not make God into an object, rather he considered God as the highest being, first cause, or ultimate substance. When Tillich refers to the person of Jesus of Nazareth, however, Tillich called him “a New Being,” which overcomes the gap between non-historical elements (essence), the new reality that is sought above history, and historical elements (existence), the new reality that is sought within history.⁵⁰⁵

Tillich denied that Jesus was “God become man.” Jesus Christ was “essential man appearing in a personal life under the conditions of existential estrangement.”⁵⁰⁶

Nevertheless, Tillich believed that there is a divine presence in Jesus, observing ‘essential Godmanhood’ in him.⁵⁰⁷ However, he thought that Jesus was not “divine” and did not have a “divine nature.” Jesus was an entirely new order of being.⁵⁰⁸

Tillich thought that Jesus could not resurrect in body because Jesus was human. Why then did Tillich use the term “New Being” for Jesus? The “New Being” could overcome the gap between non-historical elements (essence), and historical elements (existence). It was possible only through God’s power. However, God could not appear in historical elements (existence) because He is non-historical elements (essence). Therefore,

⁵⁰³ Ibid., 115-16.

⁵⁰⁴ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. I (Chicago, IL: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), 235.

⁵⁰⁵ Wayne W. Mahan, *Tillich’s System* (San Antonio, TX: Trinity University Press, 1974), 32-33.

⁵⁰⁶ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, 95.

⁵⁰⁷ Ibid., 94.

⁵⁰⁸ Stanley J. Grenz and Roger E. Olson, 128.

“Jesus must have been a human being who achieved a union with God that belongs essentially to every human being.”⁵⁰⁹

However, it is hard to understand how non-historical elements can appear in historical elements. Tillich admitted it is a paradox.⁵¹⁰ Tillich thought that Christ is a symbol of a New Being appearing under the conditions of existence, yet conquering the gap between essence and existence.⁵¹¹ Jesus was merely human; otherwise, Christ was charged with the essential parts. George Tavard disputed Paul Tillich: “Paul Tillich has failed to account for the biblical picture of Jesus and for the christological dogma as the Church has always believed ... Thus both the Christ-character and the Jesus-character of Jesus the Christ have been lost.”⁵¹²

However, John’s Gospel says that the Logos is eternal with God (Jn 1:1), was creator with God (Jn 1:3), and further was God (Jn 1:1), so that the Logos is true God. And both Jesus and Christ cannot be separated. The designation of Jesus as “the son of God” (Matt 4:3, 4:6, 8:29, 14:33, 16:16, 26:63, 27:54; Mk 3:11, 5:7, 9:7, 15:39; Lk 1:35, 4:41), and Christ (Messiah)⁵¹³ mean points to “the son of God” (Matt 26:63; Mark 8:29). Accordingly, John cannot agree with Tillich.

⁵⁰⁹ Ibid., 129.

⁵¹⁰ Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. II, 90-92.

⁵¹¹ Ibid., 120.

⁵¹² George H. Tavard, *Paul Tillich and the Christian Message* (London: Burns & Oates, 1962), 132.

⁵¹³ Harper Collins uses the designation ‘Messiah’ instead of ‘Christ’ in the Bible he published: *The Harper Collins Study Bible*. Both ‘Christ’ and ‘Messiah’ have the same meaning, “anointed.”

CONCLUSION

The more time that passes, the more heresies appear. “Postmodernism,”⁵¹⁴ for example, has caused many to stray from the real truth. The word of God, that is to say, the real truth, has been greatly distorted by liberal theologians. They have detracted from the word of God, the truth. Therefore, Christians need the explicit and definite knowledge of the word of God. The correct understanding of Jesus Christ, the word $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, in John 1:1-18, is most important, even though its meaning has been continually disputed, from the ancient Greek philosophers to the present day. Therefore, the purpose of this thesis was to clarify, as best as possible, the true meaning of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. It has been posited that any understanding of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ that differs from the author of the Fourth Gospel’s understanding of the term is fatally flawed, and must be discarded.

The first chapter traced and examined the etymology of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. Classical Greek philosophers struggled to define the word $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. They had limited knowledge. They generally thought of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ as “universal reason.” Later, Hellenistic philosophers understood the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ as merely material, not transcendent deity. However, these thinkers could not explain correctly the concept of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, because they did not have a good understanding of God. Hermes considered $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ an intermediate between God and man, changing the concept of $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ into a father-son relationship. Philo, a philosopher during Hellenistic Judaism, understood the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ as an important factor in cosmology (“the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ plays an intermediate role as the creative power, as well as the ruling power”), anthropology (“the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is the paradigm which human beings are made according to only the human mind”), and anagogic thought (“the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is meant

to guide the human soul to the realm of the divine”). In Hebrew thought, the word “*dabar*” (דָּבָר), as used in the OT, foreshadows the *λόγος*, because the word דָּבָר has the denotations of the Creator, as well as the Revelator, i.e. the same divine attributes the *λόγος* has. The word דָּבָר was used as the “word of Yahweh,” 241 times. Therefore, the word דָּבָר was used to imply in advance the character of Jesus Christ, that is, *λόγος*, who will appear soon.

The second chapter examined the background of John’s Gospel, both authorship and date. The author of the Fourth Gospel is almost certainly the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, according to the external and internal evidence. The external evidence, i.e. the writing and letters of the early fathers, Eusebius, Irenaeus, and Polycrates, attests to John’s authorship. Westcott and D. A. Carson argued well for John the apostle being the author. Specifically, Westcott insisted that ‘the disciple whom Jesus loved’ (Jn 13:23; 19:26; 21:7, 20; 20:2) is surely John the son of Zebedee, because the writer in the Fourth Gospel referred to John the Baptist as John only (Jn 1:6), unlike other important characters’ names, such as Simon Peter, Thomas Didymus (Jn 11:16; 20:24; 21:2), Judas son of Simon Iscariot (6:71; 12:4; 13:2, 26), Caiaphas the high priest that year (11:49; 18:13). D. A. Carson’s refutation of P. Parker was persuasive, citing Parker’s lack of a biblical foundation for his inference. It is safe to conclude that the author was the apostle John, the son of Zebedee, and that the Fourth Gospel should be dated between AD 80 and AD 100. “The Twelfth Benediction,” the evidence that both papyrus fragments, Rylands Papyrus 457 (P⁴⁵) and the Papyrus Egerton, and the observation of J. Ramsey Michaels

⁵¹⁴ The meanings that the word ‘postmodernism’ include are that “the objectivity of knowledge is denied” and “Knowledge is uncertain.” (Millard J. Erickson, *Postmodernizing the Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1998), 18.)

argue persuasively for *John* being written in the latter half of the First Century, certainly not later than AD 100.

The third chapter, the exegesis of John 1:1-18, demonstrated that the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ existed from the beginning of all things, created all things, and was God. The $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was one with God in nature, even though they differed in person. The duality is explained in verse 18: *No one has ever seen God, the only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, he has made him known (RSV)*. The $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ came into a world that was full of darkness, giving up the throne of God, because this world needed his light to brighten the darkness. The reason this world was dark was because people did not possess the true life, the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ (v. 4), so they could not see the true light (v.5). What is the meaning of the life in the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$? It points to eternal life (3:16; 5:24). Therefore, Carson is right that both the ‘life’ and the ‘light’ relate to “salvation.” Verse 12: *to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God (RSV)*. Those who become children of God are children of the true life (light), the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. They are those who receive eternal life, i.e. salvation. However, that one can receive salvation is only by God’s grace and love. The grace and love of God was made possible by the obedience of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ (v.17). The $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was of the same nature and stature as God, but the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ did not want to be equal with God, he wanted to glorify God the Father (Phil 2:5-11). This humility and obedience gave those who believe in the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ eternal life. In verse 18, John again shows that both God and the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is one God, even if they are each individual persons.

The final chapter examined historical christological controversies, and the thought of modern theologians. Ebionism denied the divinity of Jesus. Docetism denied the

humanity of Jesus. Arianism denied the full divinity of Jesus. Appollinarianism denied the full humanity of Jesus. Nestorianism denied the union of both divinity and humanity. These and other historical christological heresies are directly traceable to an incorrect understanding of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. Similar christological controversies have been numerous, seemingly endless, continuing into the Twentieth Century with theologians such as Karl Barth, Emil Brunner, and Paul Tillich. Karl Barth believed the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is truly God as well as truly man, became flesh, but did not accept the separation of the human and divine natures. Emil Brunner also believed Jesus is truly God, as well as truly man, but divided into two natures; God is the revealer who unveils to us what was eternally hidden, i.e. Jesus is revealed by God. Paul Tillich calls God “Being-Itself,” and Jesus “a New Being,” dividing both God and Jesus from the beginning. Moreover Tillich divided Jesus into an historical element (existence), and a non-historical element (essence). Paul Tillich offered the fallacy of not considering God, Jesus, and Christ as one.

What was the meaning of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ intended by John the Evangelist? John wanted to say that the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was truly man, and truly God. The $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was a real man. It was “flesh” (1:14), “in the world” (1:10), came to “his own home” (1:11), and was born by a pregnant woman, Mary (Isa 7:14; Matt 1:18-2:11; Lk 1:30-38). Moreover, there are other evidences: a human development (Lk 2:50, 52); the essential elements of human nature: human body (Matt 26:12; Jn 2:21), reason, and will (Matt 26:38; Mk 2:8); the possession of the infirmities of human nature—weariness (Jn 4:6), hungry (Matt 4:2; 21:18), thirsty (Jn 19:28), and tempted (Matt 4; Heb 2:18); and finally, he was repeatedly called a man (Jn 1:30; 4:9; 10:38). Nevertheless, the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ was truly God. The evidences are in several verses of the Bible. In John 1:1-2 the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ preexisted with God, had a

relationship with God, and was God. It also was a creator, because “*all things were made through him, and without him was not anything mad that was made*” (Jn 1:3). Further, the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ has divine attributes: omnipresent (Matt 28:20; Eph 1:23); omniscient (Jn 16:30; 21:17); omnipotent (Jn 5:19); and immutable (Heb 1:12; 13:8).

Any christology that does not correctly understand the meaning of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ in John 1:1-18 has been and will always be fatally flawed. The surest christology is the christology that is solidly based on the correct meaning of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ in John 1:1-18.

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