

Λόγος Christology in the Prologue of John's Gospel:
A Rejection of Philo of Alexandria's Logos Philosophy?

By

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this thesis is my own original work and has not previously in its entirety or in part been submitted to any institution for a degree.

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Date: March 19, 2019

ABSTRACT

Λόγος Christology In the Prologue of John's Gospel: A Rejection of Philo of Alexandria's Logos Philosophy?

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A leading theory about the inspiration or origin of John's use of Λόγος as a metaphor for Jesus Christ in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel is Judeo-Hellenistic philosophical thought, principally the works of Philo of Alexandria and his use of a mystical logos as a pseudo-divine intermediary between transcendent God and humanity. Other scholars have postulated that John's Christological Λόγος is merely an evolutionary step from Philo's mystical logos or perhaps was derived from incipient-Gnostic thought. These views are troubling for an evangelical Christian with a conservative view of the inspiration of Scripture and a suitable response is required.

The work begins with a discussion of the use of a prologue in Greek literature and an evaluation of the evidence for John selecting this particular literary motif to introduce his gospel. The prologue literary motif was developed by prominent Greek writers as a means to establish the "back story" or to provide an overview, summary, or reveal the theme of a written work. John used the Prologue in the Fourth Gospel as a literary device to draw Greek-speaking diaspora Jews, converts to Judaism (proselytes), and Gentile 'God-fearers' steeped in Hellenistic culture closer in order to hear the gospel message. Further, John's Λόγος Christology is evaluated in light of the Greek philosophical beliefs of the first century and an evaluation of the Prologue in a cosmological, metaphysical, epistemological, and soteriological sense is presented. This portion of the work concludes with a review of the many Christological themes found in the Prologue to demonstrate John's use of a prologue was consistent with the literary standards of

his time. Also, the strong evidence for John's authorship, the date of writing (late first century, likely between 85–95 C.E.), and the provenance of the gospel (Ephesus) are established, which establishes that Philo's were surely available to John.

The most straightforward means to prove that John's Christological Λόγος was not merely the next step or "bridge" in the logical development of Philo's mythological logos but was rather a rejection of the Philonic logos was to perform a detailed comparison of the two writings. Philo's writings pertaining to his description of the nature, purpose, and work of his philosophical logos are closely examined. In general, Philo's logos is a philosophical construct built upon historical Greek logos that was believed to be the rational intelligence that unifies all creation and the sole face of God to humanity. Philo's ambition was to develop a unified system of thought regarding the Hebraic Old Testament concept of God with the Hellenistic metaphysical logos. Success in syncretizing the two belief systems would demonstrate that the logos found in the Jewish Old Testament preceded the Greek logos and thus the origin of the Greek logos.

A detailed exegetical analysis of the Prologue produced ten essential statements about the origins, person, and work of John's Christological Λόγος that is next compared to Philo's description of his mythological logos using a set of ten criterion. The work concludes that there are no intersections of thought between John's description of the Christological Λόγος and Philo's logos philosophy. Therefore, John's Prologue is an *explicit* "rejection" of Philo's logos philosophy, whether or not the apostle John was aware of the writings of Philo of Alexandria. John's Prologue is also an *implicit* apologetic, or better, a polemic against Philo's logos philosophy in so far as John's knowledge of Philo's writings can only be determined through circumstantial evidence, although motives are impossible to determine without direct knowledge of John's state of mind at the time of writing the Prologue.

These conclusions have many implications. For example, the scholarly view that Philo's mystical philosophy was an evolutionary step into what was to become John's Christological view of the Λόγος or that John's Λόγος is Philo's logos in abbreviated form may be suspect because neither conclusion is supported by the evidence presented. If there are no similarities of thought then there can be no evolution of thought.

John's Prologue to the Fourth Gospel was written for multiple purposes. John wrote a

persuasive evangelical writing with the purpose of attracting Greek-speaking Jews and Gentiles with the purpose of persuading readers to accept John's apologetic description of the incarnate Λόγος as God in flesh. In doing so, John *explicitly* rejects the Philonic logos as the detailed comparison of John's Christological Λόγος and Philo's philosophical logos demonstrate. John chose the word "logos" because it is a term recognizable to Gentiles and Jews, living within a Hellenistic culture, as a literary device to attract the largest possible audience as a means to present his polemic against the Philonic logos. It was John's stated desire that all his readers "...may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

DEDICATION

To Kathy, my wife and best friend. Your love and encouragement are my inspiration.

I also dedicate this work to my many friends and HiWay Baptist Church family who have encouraged me throughout the process of writing this thesis, particularly those who attend my Bible study classes and listen patiently after asking me about my thesis topic. I am truly blessed.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

The Works of Philo of Alexandra

| | | |
|------------------------|--|------------------------------------|
| <i>Abr</i> | <i>De Abrahamo</i> | On Abraham |
| <i>Aet.</i> | <i>De Aeternitate Mundi</i> | On the Eternity of the World |
| <i>Agr</i> | <i>De Agricultura</i> | On Husbandry |
| <i>Cher.</i> | <i>De Cherubim</i> | On the Cherubim |
| <i>Conf.</i> | <i>De Confusione Linguarum</i> | On the Confusion of Tongues |
| <i>Congr.</i> | <i>De Congressu Eruditionisgratia</i> | On the Preliminary Studies |
| <i>Decal.</i> | <i>De Decalogo</i> | On the Decalogue |
| <i>Det.</i> | <i>Quod Deterius Potiori insidiari solet</i> | The Worse attacks the Better |
| <i>Ebr.</i> | <i>De Ebrietate</i> | On Drunkenness |
| <i>Flacc.</i> | <i>In Flaccum</i> | Flaccus |
| <i>Fug.</i> | <i>De Fuga et Inventione</i> | On Flight and Finding |
| <i>Gig.</i> | <i>De Gigantibus</i> | On the Giants |
| <i>Hyp.</i> | <i>Hypothetica/Apologia pro Iudaeis</i> | Apology for the Jews |
| <i>Jos.</i> | <i>De Josepho</i> | On Joseph |
| <i>Leg.</i> | <i>De Legatione ad Gaium</i> | On the Embassy to Gaius |
| <i>Leg. All.</i> | <i>Legum Allegoriarum</i> | Allegorical Interpretation |
| <i>Mig.</i> | <i>De Migratione Abrahami</i> | On the Migration of Abraham |
| <i>Mos.</i> | <i>De Vita Mosis</i> | On the Life of Moses |
| <i>Mut.</i> | <i>De Mutatione Nominum</i> | On the Change of Names |
| <i>Op.</i> | <i>De Opificio Mundi</i> | On the Creation |
| <i>Plant.</i> | <i>De Plantatione</i> | On Noah's Work as a Planter |
| <i>Post.</i> | <i>De Posteritate Caini</i> | On the Posterity and Exile of Cain |
| <i>Praem.</i> | <i>De Praemiis et Poenis</i> | On Rewards and Punishments |
| <i>Prov.</i> | <i>De Providentia</i> | On Providence |
| <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> | <i>Questiones et Solutiones in Genesin</i> | Questions and Answers on Genesis |
| <i>Quaest in Ex</i> | <i>Questiones et Solutiones in Exodum</i> | Questions and Answers on Exodus |
| <i>Quis Het.</i> | <i>Quis rerum divinarum Heres sit</i> | Who is the Heir |
| <i>Quod Deus.</i> | <i>Quod Deus sit Immutabilis</i> | On the Unchangeableness of God |
| <i>Quod Omn. Prob.</i> | <i>Quod omnis Probus Libersit</i> | Every Good Man is Free |
| <i>Sac.</i> | <i>De SacriNciisAbelis et Caini</i> | On the Sacrifices of Abel and Cain |
| <i>Sob.</i> | <i>De Sobrietate</i> | On Sobriety |
| <i>Som.</i> | <i>De Somniis</i> | On Dreams |
| <i>Spec. Leg.</i> | <i>De Specialibus Legibus</i> | On the Special Laws |
| <i>Virt.</i> | <i>De Virtute</i> | On the Virtues |
| <i>Vit. Cont.</i> | <i>De Vita Contemplativa</i> | On the Contemplative Life |

The Bible and Others

| | |
|--------|------------------------------------|
| 1 Cor. | 1 Corinthians |
| 2 Cor. | 2 Corinthians |
| Col. | Colossians |
| Gen. | Genesis |
| Deut. | Deuteronomy |
| Ex. | Exodus |
| Ez. | Ezekiel |
| Gal. | Galatians |
| Heb. | Hebrews |
| Hos. | Hosea |
| Isa. | Isaiah |
| KJV | King James Version Bible |
| Lev. | Leviticus |
| LXX | Septuagint |
| Mal. | Malachi |
| Matt. | Matthew |
| NASB | New American Standard Bible |
| NET | NET Bible |
| NIV | New International Version Bible |
| NRSV | New Revised Standard Version Bible |
| Num. | Numbers |
| Ps. | Psalms |
| Prov. | Proverbs |
| Rev. | Revelation |
| Rom. | Romans |
| v. | verse |
| vv. | verses |

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Johannine scholarship generally views the origin of John's Λόγος¹ as lying within one of three divisions of scholarly thought, often with different segments within each division. Some scholars view the Prologue as the later literary work of one or more redactors using one or more written and/or oral, Jewish, or ancient Hellenistic sources. Other scholars suggest the *Logos* tradition was greatly influenced by the emerging Christian church from Jewish origins. The third division of scholarship views John's *Logos* Christology as an outgrowth of Hellenistic philosophical thought. Each of these disparate views are more explored in this section.

The first division of scholarship views the Prologue as strictly a literary work that is a compilation of multiple source sayings that morphed over time into a single *Logos* saying that John later adopted into his origin account (Hendricks 2014:2). One segment within this division views the Gospel of John as consisting of multiple strata, perhaps with oral saying sources. This theory is strongly predicated on the unique vocabulary and writing style found in the Prologue when compared to the remainder of the Gospel. For this reason alone, many scholars conclude John could not be the author nor could he have made any substantive changes to the original source material within the Prologue (von Wahlde 2010:25). It is debatable whether an author has a single, identifiable writing style. John, for example, displays different writing styles in his gospel, epistles, and Revelation, carefully gauged for different audiences for different purposes at different times. Vocabulary and style cannot be the determinative reason to deny John's authorship of his Gospel, particularly the Prologue.

¹ Λόγος = *Logos* (Word). The capitalized English word equivalent will be used to represent usage representing Jesus Christ. A reference to the word "logos" is enclosed by quotes. Otherwise, logos will not be capitalized. This importance of this approach to avoid confusion becomes apparent when comparing John's Christological *Logos* with Philo of Alexandria philosophical logos later in this work.

The second segment of thought is the controversial hymn tradition. This view suggests John's Prologue is merely an early Christian hymn of unknown authorship inserted, perhaps after the gospel was written. There is significant scholarly disagreement with hymn source theory, even with the type of hymnody present in the Prologue (Gordley 2009:781). This path of research does not bear fruit due to its lack of internal or external source support. This division of thought remains an interesting academic hypothetical.

The literary nature of the Prologue "plays a strategic role in the Gospel by its placement" (Kim 2009:423). It creates a tension in the reader's mind that can only be resolved by further reading. Bultmann (1971:13) agrees, "He [the reader] cannot yet fully understand them [subjects of the prologue], but they are half comprehensible, half mysterious, they arouse the tension, and awaken the question which is essential if he is to understand what is going to be said." John's Prologue engages readers regardless of his or her previous understanding of the Hebrew *Dabar* (Word), the Hellenistic or Gnostic *logos*, or the Palestinian Targum *Memra* (Word) traditions and introduces the incarnate Christ.

The development of John's *Logos* Christology will be fully explored in Chapter 5 although this short description is sufficient for this introductory discussion. John's central theme of the Fourth Gospel is the incarnation of the Word. Dobrin (2005:209) correctly notes that the Prologue "is theological rather than biographical or historical in its approach. It asserts that Jesus, the historical personage known to man, is the Ultimate Fact of the universe." John's Prologue is profound because of its highly developed yet succinctly stated Christology, immediately beginning with the first verse. The Prologue also reveals aspects of the relationship between Jesus Christ and the Father. The Prologue reveals that the Word of God is not an attribute of God but is a preexistent, co-equal member of the Godhead responsible for the creation of all things (Dobrin 2005:217).

Logos theology was a foundational concept from the days of the early church. Clement is the author of the earliest document written after the New Testament that makes reference to the *Logos*. Clement (ca. 97 C.E.) "inserts *Logos* in its special usage of God's revelation" in 1 Clement 13:3 (Estes 2016) and *Logos* as Jesus Christ in 1 Clement 27:4 (likely as an allusion to Colossians 1:16 or perhaps as a parallel to John 1:1 and Gen. 1:1). Similar allusions to the *Logos* are found in the apologetic *Letter of Barnabas* 6:17 (ca. 100 C.E.) and *Polycarp* 7, 2 (ca. 120

C.E.). Ignatius, bishop of Antioch (d. 110 C.E.) equates Jesus Christ with the *Logos* of the Prologue when he wrote in *To the Magnesians* (8:2) “... and the Word rejoices in teaching the saints—by whom the Father is glorified...” Justin Martyr’s *Letter to Diognetus* (12.9) states, “... there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word ...” The early Church Fathers recognized that John’s *Logos* was Jesus Christ, the Word.

The third segment of Johannine scholarship views the Prologue as a literary work separate from the Gospel, neither of which was written by the Apostle John. Beasley-Murray (2002: lxxiv), emblematic of this view, suggests the existence of a Johannine School or a community (for the purposes of this work, the term Johannine School and Johannine Community are viewed as synonyms) that authored the Gospel of John sometime after the death of John. Proponents of the Johannine Community theory suggest the writing of the Gospel of John was an amalgamation of thought by a cadre of anonymous individuals that were members of this Community (Köstenberger 2004:15-16). This notion relies on an inventive interpretation of the synagogue expulsion episodes found in John 9:22, 12:42, and 16:2 about those thought to have come together at a later time to form the Johannine School.

There is little, if any, internal (beyond the three references cited) or external evidence to support the existence of the School or that it was this group, or any group for that matter, that wrote and/or redacted the Gospel of John at an unspecified later date. This view also raises important questions about the inspiration of the Gospel. Conversely, there is ample evidence that the early church accepted the Gospel as written by the Apostle John (Klink 2008: 99-118). While pursuit of this path of research may be profitable, it will not be pursued in this work.

The second division of scholarship see possible external influences of the *Logos* tradition in emerging Christology (e.g., Col. 1:15-20, likely written in the early 50s) with strictly Jewish origins, although there are differing views even within this division. For example, some scholars view the *Logos* tradition as a replacement for the Jewish Sophia traditions, namely personified wisdom (e.g., Job 28.12, Prov. 8.9) or the דְבָר (Dabar [Word]) of God tradition (e.g., Gen 1:1, Prov. 8). In the Sophia tradition, all things were created by the Word, that is, the divine will of God, through the work of the Holy Spirit (Hildebrandt 1995:29). Wisdom is personified as the cosmic mediator between God and His creations. Wisdom was not withheld from humankind by God but is active and at work in the world. The Old Testament often refers to this as the creative

power of God's Word.² However, the LXX never speaks of the *Logos* of Yahweh in the uniquely personal way found in the Prologue nor can the parallels (e.g., Prov. 8:22-36) account for the "choice" of the word *logos* (Silva 2014:3.168). In the New Testament, we often view the synonymous use of ῥήματα (John 3:34; 14:10; 17:8) and λόγος (John 5:38; 8:55; 14:24; 17:6, 14; 1 John 2:5, 14) to represent the declaration of the "word" of God (Ritt 1990:2.359).

Other scholars view the Torah-speculations of rabbinic theology that may have functioned as a bridge from Sophia to *Logos*. The *Logos* concept superficially appears to parallel a number of Judaic traditions (e.g., Sirach 24). Many scholars view the *Memra* (Aramaic translation for the Hebrew for "word") found in the Jewish Targums as having played an important role in John's emerging *Logos* Christology (Ronning 2011:14, Boyarin 2001:243-244). Later, Jewish usage of the *Memra* of Jehovah was as the agent of Jehovah working in the world. The Targums introduced the "Word of Jehovah" as a replacement for "Jehovah" in Scripture each time God revealed Himself.³ The Torah speculations of rabbinic theology that may have functioned as a bridge from Sophia to *Logos*. The *Logos* concepts do seem to parallel a number of Judaic traditions (e.g., Sirach 24) although that research remains outside the scope of this work.

Ancient Jewish writings are a tantalizing possibility for the origins of John's *Logos* Christology as presented in his Prologue. However, this theory fails for two primary reasons. First, in these Jewish writings wisdom and *Logos* are two drastically different concepts, that is, wisdom is a creation of God (Sirach 1:9) and *Logos* is pre-existent, divine, and the divine appearing in human form. The *Logos* is the personification of God's truth and wisdom. Second, in Apocryphal writing, wisdom lacks the universal messianic message. In the Wisdom of Solomon, for example, wisdom is used synonymously with God's divine nature but without a salvific message. Similar usage of the concept of divine wisdom is also found in the Wisdom of Sirach 1 and 24 and Baruch 4 (Ridderbos 1997:30-31). For these reasons, pursuing ancient Jewish writings as the source of John's Christological *Logos* is not part of this work. However, we cannot discount the fuller meaning of John's use of the word *Logos* to John's Jewish readers.

²E.g., Ez. 37:4-5 (can give the breath of life) and Psalm 33:6 (has a role in creation)

³ E.g., Gen. 39:91, "The *Memra* was with Joseph in prison." In Ps. 110, the *Memra* was the angel that destroyed the first-born in Egypt.

The most significant criticism of this view is Wisdom and Logos are two drastically different concepts as Wisdom are a creation of God (Sirach 1:9) and Logos is pre-existent and divine (John 1:1) Ridderbos (1997:30-31).

In the third and final division of thought pertaining to the origin of John's *Logos* Christology, we examine the important role *Logos* played in Hellenistic philosophical thought. Kleinknecht (1964:77) describes the logos as representing the "Greek understanding of the world" and the nature of all creation. A remarkable feature of John's Prologue is that it introduces eternal concepts that would have been entirely amenable with the writings of ancient Hellenistic philosophers, pagans (particularly early Gnostics), Jews, and Greeks until the reader reaches verse 14, when "the Word became flesh" and thus "we have seen His glory." For the Greeks, however, logos represented a statement or "a word of creative power" (Kleinknecht (1964:80) but not in the same manner as the creative Word of God in the Old Testament.

There are many references to the logos dating to Plato and his philosophical descendants. Philo of Alexandria's (~25 B.C.E. – 50 C.E.) spent years attempting to rationalize Jewish and western Hellenistic thought, primarily Platonic thought, with the logos teachings of the Jewish Sophia and Debar of Yahweh traditions remaining one of the more prominent source theories. Philo, as will be shown later, presents the logos as an intermediary between God and creation, although with many limitations and exceptions (e.g., Philo never refers to the logos as a person). To reconcile his Old Testament faith with Greek philosophy, Philo interpreted Scripture allegorically, often producing corporate ethical principles with the purpose of demonstrating that the wisdom of the Greek philosophers originated with Moses.

There is a segment of scholarship that views the *Logos*, in a philosophical sense, as the next logical step in its development from the paganism of eclectic Jewish Hellenism that ultimately found its way into the Fourth Gospel (Thyssen 2006:133). More specifically, Thyssen views Philo's mystical philosophy as merely an evolutionary step in what was to become John's Christological view of the *Logos*. Danielou (2014:169) views the Prologue of John's gospel as originating with the Philo of Alexandria's Judeo-Hellenistic view of the Word of God presented in abbreviated form. Perhaps a more extreme view is John's *Logos* and the Philonic logos were birthed from quasi- or incipient-Gnostic Jewish thought, although the external evidence for this view is scant (Goodenough 1945:145). In the same category is the suggestion that echoes of

Logos Christology are found in the Nag Hammadi Codices although the evidence presented is based on the similarity of the vocabulary between the two writings. The evidence is not sufficiently compelling to support the conclusion that John's Gospel was superimposed upon an existing Gnostic system (Perkins 1981:379-380). Also, the use of the same word (or word family) does not automatically mean there is a common understanding of definitions.

An interesting hypothesis is the Gospel of John was of Alexandrian origin thereby strongly linking John's *Logos* with Philo's mystical logos (Gunther 1979:582). Other scholars take Gunther's view one step further when describing John's writing as virtually embracing Philo's understanding of Hellenistic Judaism (Schnackenburg 1968:125). In sum, the scholarly view of the impact of Hellenism on the writing of John's Prologue is a spectrum, ranging from a strong literary dependence to a general influence, and influences that are implicit from living within a Hellenistic Judaism culture (Gunther 1979:584). The majority view appears to be that John uses Hellenistic thought primarily as a literary motif with which to describe the logos.

Finally, there remains a small segment of scholarship that views Johannine *Logos* Christology as have Gnostic origins. Bultmann, for example, attempted to link the picture of Jesus found in the Prologue as a response to gnostic thought found in the Odes to Solomon and Mandaeen writings (Endo 1992:2). Specifically, Bultmann believed the *Logos* and references to John the Baptist represented the Apostle's response to a gnostic follower of John the Baptist. Thus the Prologue is a demythologized version of a gnostic hymn that John uses as an apologetic response (Bultmann 1971:21). However, there is no evidence that there was ever any gnostic thought connection with John the Baptist so the option is not considered in this work.

Each of these *Logos* origin theories fall short because none address the spiritual nature of John's *Logos* Christology found in the Prologue. None account for the incarnation of the Son of God for the purposes of eternal relationship with God. None address the need for salvation of the world only possible through the sacrifice of the God-man Jesus Christ. John used the *Logos* motif because first-century readers lived within a strongly Hellenized society, particularly those in Alexandria where Philo lived and wrote, and thus those readers would be more receptive to the Prologue's overtly Christian message (Du Toit 1968:11). John successfully used the familiar literary device of a prologue to attract Greek-speaking readers steeped in Hellenistic thought, intentionally create tension in mind of the reader (a typical Greek literary technique), and then

invite the reader to resolve the tension by further reading and reflection on the entire Gospel.

The following section presents the primary and subsidiary research questions answered by this work.

1.2 Primary research question

The primary research question that this thesis will answer is: In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel signify a rejection of and an apologetic response to Philo's logos philosophy?

1.3 Subsidiary research questions

There are five subsidiary research questions this thesis will answer:

What is the current state of scholarship concerning the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, especially as it relates to Philo's logos philosophy?

What is the historical, social, cultural, and literary background of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel?

What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos?

In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's logos philosophy?

What are the interpretive implications of distinguishing the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel from Philo's logos philosophy, and what new avenues of research do they present in the study of the Fourth Gospel?

1.4 Research Design and Methodology

The following research approach and methodology is used in this thesis in order to answer satisfactorily the primary and secondary research questions. The principal methodologies used are: a comprehensive literature review, a full exegesis (of John 1:1-18), and (3) a comparison of theological belief structures, that is, John's *Logos* Christology found in the Prologue with Philo of Alexandria's logos philosophy as found in his writings.

Chapter 2 examines the academic literature related to the content and context of the Prologue in the Gospel of John, specifically: (1) the use of the term *Logos* in the writings of the Apostle John and their context, (2) the historical use of a prologue and whether those uses reveal any unique features related to John's use of a prologue, (3) the purpose of John's use of the prologue literary device, (4) what John's Prologue reveals about his Christology, and, (5) summarize other contemporaneous *Logos* traditions. The primary methodology used is a comprehensive review of the available literature. The results and conclusions in this chapter fully answer the first subsidiary research question.

Chapter 3 explores the authorship, date, and provenance of the gospel as a necessary introduction to the historical, social, cultural, and literary background of John's Prologue. The results and conclusions in the chapter fully answer the second subsidiary research question.

Chapter 4 summarizes Philo of Alexandria's use in the context of the word "logos" (and its cognates) in the original Greek writings, separated into topical categories. This work is based on the work of Borgen (2005) and checked against Yonge's (2006) English translation. This chapter catalogs and classifies the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, particularly as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos, in tabular form without commentary or analysis. The work presented in this chapter fully answers the third subsidiary research question.

Chapter 5 presents a comprehensive exegesis of the Prologue, John 1:1-18. Exegesis of the passage uses the exegetical approach of Fee (2002), that is: (1) structural analysis of the passage, (2) establishing the text of the passage (biblical criticism), (3) analysis of the grammar, (4) analysis of keywords found in the passage, (5) final analysis (significance) of the passage, and (6) summary and conclusions. The final exegetical study of John 1:1-18 that reveals the central tenants of John's Christological *Logos*.

Chapter 6 presents a comparative analysis of Philo of Alexandria's philosophical logos developed in Chapter 4 with John's Christological *Logos* developed in Chapter 5. The analysis presents similarities and differences, particularly with respect to context and definitions. The result is an evaluation of the philosophical and theological overlap between John's *Logos* Christology and Philo's Hellenist-Judaistic mystical logos philosophy. The work presented in this chapter fully answer the fourth subsidiary research question.

Chapter 7 presents the interpretive implications of distinguishing John's *Logos*

Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel from Philo's logos philosophy, fully answering the primary research question. The results and conclusions presented in this chapter fully answer the fifth and last subsidiary research question.

The analysis of the distinguishing features of John's *Logos* Christology and Philo's of Alexandria's philosophical logos are identified and evaluated, the primary research question may be addressed. If there are key points of similarity or overlap present then we may conclude John may have leveraged Philo's work when writing the Prologue. However, if the analysis concludes there are no intersections of belief then we may confidently conclude that Philo's mystical logos was not a "stepping stone" in the evolution of Christianity from pagan origins.

John's *Logos* Christology may have a causal link with other known contemporaneous logos traditions, as summarized in Chapter 2, but this is an evaluation outside the parameters of this thesis. However, if there are no identifiable causal links to syncretic Hellenistic Judaism, then we may conclude that John's use of his unique and intentional Christological *Logos* motif clearly signifies a rejection of Philo's philosophical logos and is strong evidence that it was purposefully used as an apologetic response to Philo's mystical logos philosophy, whether intended or not, particularly considering the Gospel's intended readers. Future research into the other logos traditions identified in Chapter 2 is required in order to provide a more informed analysis.

1.5 Presuppositions and Assumptions

In every writing, there is a point of view, "whether conscious or unconscious, acknowledged or unacknowledged, explicit or implicit" and this thesis is no exception (Köstenberger 2004:3). Personal presuppositions inevitably influence Scripture exegetical interpretations and research conclusions in this work although any instances are not intentional.

Seven foundational presuppositions or assumptions related to the conduct of the work must be clearly stated at this time.

First, accurate research and exegesis begin with an understanding of authorial intent of the writing as intended for original readers based on its genre, historical-cultural background, and the lingual and literary conventions of the day (Klein 2004, Dockery 1994, Fee 2002, Virkler, 2007, Stein 2011). This exegetical approach will produce the most accurate

interpretation of Scripture and therefore give maximum glory to God.

Second, this work is limited to the writings of known historical characters and philosophies that the Apostle John was familiar with as he composed the Prologue in the late first century. It is possible that the writing of the Prologue may have preceded or followed the writing of the Gospel but it is not germane to this work. The most conservative approach is to use sources that precede the date the Gospel is believed to have entered circulation.

The proper dating of the writing of the Gospel of John is important to this work. If early writing of John is accepted then there is a very narrow window of time for Philo of Alexandria's writings (d. ~45-50 C.E.) to make its way into the hands of John. If John released the Gospel later in the first century then decades would have passed from the time of Philo's writing to the time John wrote the Fourth Gospel. A late dating certainly increases the probability that John was familiar with the works of Philo of Alexandria. This work assumes John had access to Philo of Alexandria's complete body of work when composing the Fourth Gospel. A more complete discussion of the dating of the Fourth Gospel is found in Chapter 3.

Third, this work assumes a high view of the Johannine tradition, that is, the Gospel of John was written by the Apostle John in its entirety with unity and coherence in composition. The justification for this assumption is also presented in Chapter 3.

Fourth, there has also been much scholarly debate regarding John's use of the Synoptic Gospels as source material for the Fourth Gospel. For the purpose of this work, Synoptic sources for John's Logos Christology are not considered. The rationale for this assumption is presented in Chapter 2.

Fifth, this work assumes that the Prologue is one literary unit that it consists of the first 18 verses of the Gospel, John 1:1-18. The prose and lofty message of the Prologue noticeably delineate these verses from the remainder of the Gospel. The shift in focus and style beginning with verse 19 clearly denotes the beginning of John's Gospel narrative. Even so, a small minority of scholars have suggested that the Prologue should be considered as John 1:1-5 (De Boer 2015:448). A critical reading of the Gospel finds that verse 14 ("The Word became flesh"⁴) and

⁴ The NASB translation is used unless otherwise stated.

verse 18 (“He has revealed Him”) are central to the Prologue’s message. For the purpose of this work, the Prologue is assumed to be John 1:1-18.

Sixth, in order to find the meaning of the text itself rather than from a translation, exegesis of the Prologue will be based on the Nestle-Aland Greek New Testament, 28th Edition and any known variants of the text.

Finally, I approach this work with an abiding born-again faith in Jesus Christ and the belief that the enabling work of the Holy Spirit are prerequisites for receiving the wisdom necessary for accurate biblical research and exegesis (1 Cor. 2:4-16). The present work assumes a high view of Scripture, that is, Scripture’s inspiration and inerrancy.

1.6 Delimitations of the Work

The scholarly literature contains numerous studies pertaining to the source and inspiration for John’s use of the *Logos* motif in his Prologue and other hints of Hellenistic influences found in the remainder of the Gospel, as summarized in Section 1.1. A complete analysis of competing source theories is an immense undertaking and is beyond the scope of this thesis. Thus, the scope of this thesis is prudently limited to the extant writings of Philo of Alexandria, particularly with respect to his syncretic Hellenistic and Judaic view of the *logos*.

1.7 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter has introduced the research topic and key research questions for this work. The preliminary literature review has established that a wide range of theories exist regarding the source and/or inspiration of the Christological *Logos* motif introduced in the Prologue to John’s Gospel. The preliminary literature review has also established a prominent potential source of that inspiration is the writings of Philo of Alexandria that describe a philosophical *logos* derived from Philo’s efforts to syncretize Greek thought with Old Testament sources. Next, the process of answering the research questions was fully defined.

A substantive review of the important topic-related literature is found in Chapter 2, particularly with respect to John’s *Logos* Christology, historical influences of Philo of Alexandria’s *logos* philosophy, the *Logos* in Scripture, and the purpose and context of a prologue used in Greek literature.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter reviews and interacts with the most significant current and historical literature associated with the first subsidiary research question (Section 1.3.1): What is the current state of scholarship concerning the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, especially as it relates to Philo's logos philosophy? In this chapter, the historical use of the prologue as a literary device, John's Prologue and his *Logos* Christology, John's use of *Logos* to describe divine attributes of Jesus Christ found in the New Testament, and the Prologue's Christological themes with respect to the *Logos* are examined. Given the very large body of literature related to John's Prologue, only the most noteworthy literature is presented and discussed.

The previous chapter described the foremost options for John's inspiration for the *Logos* motif in the Prologue and the rationale for narrowing the focus of this work to Philo of Alexandria's view of the *Logos* as representative of Hellenistic Judaism. Thus this literature review begins with internal evidence of the use of the *Logos* motif in the remainder of Scripture in order to determine if Scripture informs our understanding of John's *Logos* Christology found in the Prologue.

The word λόγος appears 330 times in the New Testament generally with the meaning of word, speech, language, statement, sermon, and the like (Ritt 1990:2.357). There are only two locations where the use of the word λόγος, in a technical sense, is found outside of the Prologue, that is, 1 John 1:1-3, and Rev. 19:13. In 1 John 1:1-3 the phrase λόγου τῆς ζωῆς (word of life) is found, although this usage is unlikely to have the same theological intent as that found in John's Prologue. Smalley (1989:11) suggests this phrase is the heart of the gospel although the phrase seems best interpreted as "the gospel" in context (Westcott 1902:6-7, Dodd 1946:5), although the grammar is admittedly very convoluted. Scholars have difficulty dating 1 John but the consensus appears to be a date coincident with or shortly after the date of John's Gospel (Kruse 2000: 27),

principally because about 80% of the concepts and themes found in the epistle are found in the Gospel (Akin 2001:28). Brown (1988:109) suggests epistle's *Logos* Christology may represent an early evolutionary or "primitive" view of John's understanding of the *Logos* although it's more likely this was one of the last or the last epistle written by John. More likely the word *Logos* is merely being used in a different connotation in his first epistle, perhaps as a response to proto-Gnosticism (Köstenberger 2004:18). Regardless, it is clear that the use of *Logos* in John's first epistle is significantly different than in the Prologue to the Gospel.

In Rev. 19:13, λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ (Word of God) represents a triumphant Gospel, advancing toward final victory and it is the only place in Scripture where the expression is specifically identified as Christ (Morris 1987: 220). In the Prologue, Christ is described as creator, incarnate, and redeemer, which is remarkably different from the executor of righteous judgment as found in Revelation. The apocalyptic genre of the Book of Revelation is also distinctly different than the Gospel of John or the epistles so any interpretation must be made with care. The usage of the word *Logos* in Revelation, in a technical sense, is distinctly different from its use in the Prologue or the epistle. In sum, suffice it to say that these two views of the *Logos* are not contradictory to that found in the Prologue but are merely different viewpoints of the same *Logos*.

Although significantly less probable, Synoptic Gospel sources for John's *Logos* Christology must be considered. There are three reasons why Synoptic sources for the Christological *Logos* found in the Prologue are not considered in this work. First, John was present during the entire earthly ministry of Jesus depicted in the Synoptics so disentangling sources from personal experience is merely an academic exercise (Morris 1995:51). It is a difficult task, if not impossible, to separate John's personal experiences from those of the authors of the Synoptics on purely literary grounds (Köstenberger 2004:17, contra Smith 1992). In fact, there are no substantive references that adequately demonstrated that John is dependent on one or more of the Synoptic Gospels nor has it been proven that the Gospel of John was written without the use of the Synoptics (Carson 1991:51). However, there remains a minority opinion that the Synoptics, as well as Luke-Acts and even Ephesians, are Johannine sources, particularly with respect to John's narrative framework and discourses (Brodie 1993:31, contra Fee 1983:5).

In a practical sense, the separation of John from Synoptic sources is a difficult task. It is undeniable that John had first-hand experience with the entire ministry of Jesus and certainly

received personalized instruction as a member of Jesus' inner circle. It is also reasonable to conclude that the Apostle John was deeply involved in the conduct of early church life (e.g., 3 John) and common Christian traditions (e.g., John 1:25, 32-33, 3:24; 11:2; 12:27; 18:40). The continuing Hebraic oral tradition in the first-century further complicates our ability to discern John's dependence on the Synoptics (Beasley-Murray 2002: xxxvi). Observance of the Jewish oral tradition continued beyond the time of the writing of the Gospels (Dodd 1976:423). The second reason Synoptic sources are not considered is John's *Logos* theology does not appear in the Synoptic Gospels, that is, John's *Logos* Christology is unique to the Prologue. However, there is little doubt that the Hellenistic view of the Greek *logos* was common in the world of the first century Jew (Boyarin 2001:246) and certainly implicitly touched any first century writing. John's Gospel, while reflecting at times hints of Hellenistic culture, remains distinctly a work of the Apostle John and strongly reflects his Palestinian Jewish traditions.

Finally, and perhaps most persuasive, is a statistical argument. There is very little material common between the Gospel of John and the Synoptics. As much as 92% of the material found in the Gospel of John is distinctive (Harris 2015:6). Other scholars are less impressed with this argument and suggest that there is no scholarly consensus on this issue (Lincoln 2005:38). However, affinities between John's Gospel and other canonical writings are difficult to prove through internal evidence with proponents heavily relying on perceived similarities and those similarities, without like consideration of the differences, are unjustifiable.

For the purposes of this work, John is viewed as an eye-witness to the narrative events in the Synoptics, logically assuming he was cognizant of early church worship practices, and that he was intimately familiar with Jewish oral traditions. With no discernable internal evidence that the Synoptics influenced John's *Logos* Christology found in his Prologue, the best view is there was a negligible impact of the Synoptics on John's writing of the Fourth Gospel. Thus, potential Synoptic sources as part of this study may be safely set aside.

In sum, God has provided us two distinctive visions of the *Logos* as, in addition to that of Jesus Christ incarnate (John 1:1, 14): the Gospel message (1 John 1:1-3), and a King advancing on the field of battle toward victory (Rev. 19:13). Both perspectives are theologically important although they do not advance our understanding of the unique Christological usage of the term *Logos* in the Prologue (Köstenberger 1992:25). There is no other usage of *Logos*, in a technical

sense, elsewhere in the New Testament nor is there any significant evidence that the authors of the Synoptic Gospels informed John's *Logos* Christology in any meaningful manner. John's usage of the *Logos* motif in his Prologue is unique in Scripture.

2.2 The Prologue as a Narrative Device

In this section, the Greek use of prologue is introduced followed by an examination of John's adoption of this narrative device for his specific purposes when he wrote the Fourth Gospel.

2.2.1 *Greek Use of Prologue*

The πρόλογος (prologue) as a narrative device was first introduced by Euripides (d. 406 BC) with his very popular Greek plays (Michellini 2006:103). In the ancient world, a prologue was used to preface a literary work by revealing key historical details, plot situations, and roles of the characters in a manner that made the work comprehensible to the audience (Lake, 2013: xii). The Prologue has been likened to the "overture to an opera" (Murray 2002:lxviii) or as a "foyer" to the Gospel (Carson 1991:110). This opening was important because most Greek plays were literary renditions of historical events that required the author to bring the audience up to date on historical events before the play may proceed. Cicero (d. 43 BC), for example, strived to gain the goodwill of the audience with a prologue so that the audience would be more receptive to the arguments presented in the play (Philips 2006: 39). In a modern sense, a prologue may be viewed as the pilot episode of a new television series or Act 1 of a modern stage play.

2.2.2 *John's Use of Prologue*

John's use of prologue reflects common Greek literary usage. John's prologue foreshadows important themes later found in the Gospel (Carson 1991:200) and immediately inform readers (listeners) of the divine identity of the *Logos*, Jesus Christ, particularly through the use of Christologically significant titles and divine descriptions of Jesus' birth and incarnation (Culpepper 1998:110-111). The Prologue, in that way, is informational yet it is also one of the most complicated doctrinal statements in the Bible (Borchert 1996:100). The apparent simplicity of the text would certainly have been attractive to John's intended audiences, which would have been "Greek-speaking diaspora Jews, converts to Judaism (proselytes), and Gentile 'God-fearers'..." (Harris 2015:5-6). Since the Gospel was originally written in Greek, it is logical

to assume that it was addressed to Greek-speaking people so that readers would be convinced that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and become believers (John 20:30-31). Other scholars disagree with this assessment. Bultmann (1971:13), for example, believes the Gospel of John was written to Jews from the Hebrew *Dabar* (Hebrew for “word”) tradition, the Hellenistic or Gnostic logos tradition, or even the Palestinian Targum Memra (Aramaic for “Word”) tradition. Given the small number of non-scholarly Hebrew speaking Jews present in the first century (Greek and Aramaic were the commonly used languages in the first century), it is unlikely John wrote his Gospel exclusively to the learned class of Jewish society. Also, there is no direct evidence of the presence of Gnosticism in Alexandria until the second century, thus eliminating this potential audience for the Fourth Gospel (Bruce 1983:7-8, Rutherford 1915:1245). The best assessment is the intended audience of John’s Gospel were Greek-speaking Palestinian Jews, Hellenistic Gentiles, and perhaps diaspora Jews that are the product of the first century Hellenistic culture. Acts 6, for example, speaks about complaints from the Hellenistic Jews about the level of care given widows so diaspora Jews, namely, Hellenistic Jews that had become Christians and were present in the early church. It is likely that diaspora Jews were targeted for John’s evangelistic tract.

The literary nature of the Prologue is also significant based on its placement within the Gospel (Kim 2009:423). It creates tension in the reader’s mind that can only be resolved by further reading. John wrote the Prologue to describe the coming of the Son of God in an engaging manner that would encourage readers to read the entire Gospel (Beasley-Murray 2002:5). By writing in this manner, the Prologue prepares the reader with evidence regarding the purpose of the historical narratives about the works of Jesus Christ that follow (Klink 2016:84). Bultmann (1971:13) views the Prologue as a complex, incomprehensible mystery that requires the reader to explore the entire Gospel before it may be completely understood.

The Prologue is often described as merely an introduction to the Gospel (Schnackenburg 1980:221; Ridderbos 1997:17) but that definition is inadequate. After entering the Prologue, readers soon find it more than a mere introduction to the work that follows. It represents perhaps the most glorious description of Jesus Christ in the New Testament (cf. Col. 1:15-20, Heb. 1:1-13). Jesus is the subject of the ancient biography. The Prologue is a special revelation from God in the sense of its inspiration by the Holy Spirit. This view of inspiration has been described as “simplistic” and “weak” by those with a low view of Johannine authorship and God’s inspiration

of Scripture in general (Newman 1993:7). God wrote the Bible in that He used the personalities of different individuals, often after long periods of physical, intellectual, emotional, and spiritual preparation so that each was prepared at precisely the right time, in the right place, and with the right experiences before putting pen to paper (2 Peter 1:20-21). Our Christian affirmation is that the original manuscripts are inerrant, inspired (by God Himself), and infallible in all it affirms. In other words, the Prologue was the product of God's special revelation to the Apostle John.

A remarkable literary feature of John's Prologue is that it introduces eternal concepts that would have been familiar to ancient Hellenist philosophers, pagans (and if Bultmann [1971] is correct, Gnostics), Jews, and Greeks, until the reader reaches verse 14 and "the Word became flesh" and "We have seen His glory." The intentional use of "we" and "us" in the text at vv. 14 and 16, respectively, demonstrates John's recognition of a community sense of witness in the testimony of the Gospel, particularly in the strong Christological assertions of the Prologue. The Jesus of history is suddenly and unexpectedly revealed as God-man incarnate. The Word is the defining force of all creation, existing before creation and extant today, yet Jesus wraps Himself with human flesh, representing not only "the culmination of the prophetic hope" of the Jews but also the hope of humanity's salvation (Carson 1991:23).

2.2.3 *The Genre of the Prologue*

The Gospel of John is of the gospel genre. The Prologue is thus a short introduction to a gospel (Mangum 2014). The remainder of the gospel is gospel narrative, although that is not particularly helpful in determining genre. Lincoln (2005:15) suggests the literary genre "of ancient biography . . . [or] ancient lives" as more appropriate. For the purposes of this work, the broad genre of "gospel" is sufficient with John 1:1-18 classified as a prologue.

2.3 John's *Logos* Christology

The *Logos* Christology or doctrine found in the Prologue to the Gospel of John is a foundational principle of Christian faith and practice. In this section, a short introduction to the internal and external evidence of John's *Logos* Christology is presented and contrasted with Philo of Alexandria's mystical logos. In the sections that follow, John's *Logos* Christology is examined in light of its philosophical, cosmological, metaphysical, epistemological purposes as the means for defining John's *Logos* Christology.

In his treatise, *The Cosmic Role of the Logos*, de Beer (2014:21) notes that in the majority of cases [in the New Testament] the word “logos” represents a “spoken word, story, or message” (Louw 1996: 399) with the exception John 1:1, where the *Logos* is identified as divine, preexistent, and the defining force of all creation. Alexander (1915:1914-1915) understands John’s uses the *Logos* motif in the Prologue served two purposes: to explain Jesus preexistence (His relationship with God) and the purpose of His incarnation (His relationship with the world). With respect to Christ’s relationship with the Father, His eternity is defined as, “In the beginning was the Word,” (John 1:1) thereby returning us to a time and place before the creation of the world, reminiscent of the creation account found in Genesis 1, “In the beginning ...”, which implicitly refers to the eternity of Christ. The *Logos* existed prior to creation when the universe was void. In the same verse, “The Word was with God” purposefully defines the Word’s relationship with God as an eternal fellowship or union, coexistence before creation (Borchert 1995:103). Finally, John exclaims “The Word was God,” thereby adding the principle that Christ is related to God is essence and identity (Kruse 2003:64). Christ is the *Logos* and therefore God is also the *Logos*. There is shared identity but differences remain with function within the Godhead.

The *Logos* motif is also used to express the Word’s relationship with humanity (Klink 2016:88). That relationship is defined as (1) Christ as creator of all things visible (“All things were made through Him”), which stands opposed to the Platonic and Philonic view of God as having created the world using preexisting matter, (2) Christ as the ultimate source of physical, intellectual and spiritual life (“In Him was life; and the life was the light of men”), unlike Philo’s logos, and (3) Christ Himself is the climactic act of divine revelation (The Word became flesh), reflecting His voluntary incarnation so that humanity “[may] observe His glory, the glory as the one and only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth.”

With respect to the external evidence, *Logos* Christology has been a foundational concept from the days of the early church. Clement is the author of the earliest document written after the New Testament that makes reference to the *Logos*. Clement (ca. 97 C.E.) writes of the *Logos* as being used by God in a special revelation in 1 Clement 13:3 (Estes 2016) and identifies the *Logos* as Jesus Christ in 1 Clement 27:4 (likely as an allusion to Colossians 1:16 or perhaps as a parallel to John 1:1 and Gen. 1:1). Similar allusions to the *Logos* are found in the apologetic *Letter of Barnabas* 6:17 (ca. 100 C.E.) and *Polycarp* 7, 2 (ca. 120 C.E.). Ignatius, bishop of

Antioch (d. 110 C.E.) equates Jesus Christ with the *Logos* of the Prologue when he wrote in *To the Magnesians* (8:2) “... and the Word rejoices in teaching the saints—by whom the Father is glorified ...” Justin Martyr’s *Letter to Diognetus* (12.9) writes, “... there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word ...” The early Church Fathers recognized that John’s *Logos* was Jesus Christ, the Word.

2.3.1 Philosophical Logos

At the time of John’s writing, the term *Logos* was infused with much philosophical meaning that had evolved over centuries. The philosophical logos found in the first century grew from the need to explain creation. Heraclitus of Ephesus (530-470 BC), for example, viewed nature as continuously changing and never repeating (Gamel 2016). His familiar metaphor of a man never stepping into the same river twice because the river and the man are constantly changing illustrates his observation that the properties of substances do not remain stagnant. By extension, if the properties of a substance are in a state of constant flux they cannot be known at any point in time. If the properties of a substance cannot be known then it is not a “thing” and the thing must be nothing and if it is nothing then it cannot be known. Therefore, knowledge of anything about the “thing” requires the substance to be immutable (Graham 2015). Heraclitus concluded from his thought experiment that there is a logos present, that is, a law or principle that does not change and thus controls all matter. Kleinknecht (1964:81) defines the Greek logos viewed by Heraclitus as “an intelligible and recognizable law” which makes the logos intelligible to humanity. In fact, Heraclitus views the logos as truth only if it is an eternal truth. This essential property has also been termed “the order of nature” (Clark 1997:37). Heraclitus next applied his conception of the logos to historical events and the human mind concluding that the logos is actually the mind of God that controls everything (Boice 1986:300).

This philosophical view of the logos is reflected by Plato and Socrates as the creative and governing mind of God that is in control of the universe or the “rational power set in man” (Kleinknecht (1964:82). The logos was divine but not a God. Later, Stoicism adapted and expanded this philosophy of the logos early in the fourth century B.C.E.⁵ The Stoics viewed the logos as a form of divine reason in which the λόγοι σπερματικός [spermatic word] were sparks

⁵ The apostle Paul debated the Stoics when he visited in Athens (Acts 17:18).

(plural) of a divine fire that emanated from the soul of the universal logos which created and inhabits every object in nature, according to Justin Martyr (Martyr 1997: Ch. 46). The logos emerged as a “universal, cosmic, and religious principle” for the Stoics (Kleinknecht (1964:82). For Philo of Alexandria, the logos, the “first-born of God,” was the preeminent mediator (there were others) with divine powers who bridged the gap between the perfect God and imperfect humanity, unlike his philosophical predecessors. Philo reflected the Platonic view of God as completely transcendent yet believed that an image of God was possible (consistent with the Platonic idea of “forms”). The image, the logos, is the model image used when humanity was created. Human forms are therefore an image of an image (*Op.* 23). Philo also called the logos the “second God (*Prov.* Fragment 1).”

There are scholars that theorize John selected the logos literary motif because the Greek logos, reflected by Philo, was a widely-known and accepted philosophical concept in the Roman world (Bernard 1948:xciv, Dodd:1968:54-55). The term logos plays a fundamental role in Hellenistic, particularly Philonic, thought although its usage is profoundly different from John (Dodd 1968:73). For the Greeks, the logos was a conceptual cosmic principle, a cosmic soul, that helped the early Greek philosophers solve metaphysical and epistemological difficulties (Boice 1999:35). John’s *Logos* was immanent and eternal, existent before creation and the agent of creation (Dodd 1968:263). Redefining the logos well-known by the first-century Roman world was an excellent means to encapsulate a description of the divine origin and purpose of the God-man Jesus Christ (Du Toit 1968:11). Fee (1983:29) calls the use of the logos motif a “bridge-word” familiar to those familiar with Greek philosophy and Johannine Christology, such as the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr’s defense of the *Logos* (Rokeah 2001:22). John’s use of the Greek logos motif was a “stroke of genius” because of its Platonic roots and therefore held “currency” for his readers (Boice 1986:300). Recognizing this, John leveraged the word’s wide semantic range in the first century for Hellenist and Hebrew cultures to his advantage (Parker 1988:31).

However, there are scholars that conflate redefined common terms (in this case, John subsuming the Greek logos) with adopting its ideas or underlying philosophy. For example, Thyssen sees (2006:133) John’s use of the Greek logos as demonstrating the impact of Jewish Hellenism on John. Harnack (1894:328) reflects the same view, “If we only possessed the

prologue to the Gospel of John with its “ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος” [in the beginning was the word] the “πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο” [everything through it came into existence] and the “ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο” [the word became flesh] we could indeed point to nothing but Hellenic ideas.” Evidence for these conjectures is lacking. A better view is John carefully selected the word “was” (ἦν) and used it exclusively with the word *Logos* where ἐγένετο [became] is used for a specific creation in time (cf vv. 3, 6, 10, 14, and 17). Hence, *Logos* was not a created being but was present before creation, unlike Philo’s created logos that he believes is eternal from the point of creation (Borchert 1996:103, Henriksen 2001:70, Morris 1995:65). The phrase is a transparent allusion to the Gen. 1:1 account of creation, “In the beginning. . .” where all of creation was formed at God’s spoken Word καὶ εἶπεν ὁ Θεός [Gen 1:3a, LXX]. Also, the preposition πρὸς [with] may be more literally translated as “towards” meaning that the *Logos* and God had a very close, intimate relationship, that is a “face-to-face” relationship (1 Cor. 12:12).

There is no obvious connection of John’s Christological *Logos* with the Philonic logos, which is situationally defined by Philo as either the “Word of God” in a distinctly Jewish sense or as the embodiment of divine reason in the Stoic philosophical sense. Philo’s equivocation is due to his desire to harmonize or syncretize Greek philosophy with the Hebrew Scriptures. To Philo, the logos was merely a distant conception without meaning to the individual or practical application and therefore distinctly different from John’s immanent and incarnate *Logos* (Dodd 1968:273). Finally, the first verse ends with a declaration about the divinity of Christ, θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος [the Word was God]. In algebraic terms, John is stating Christ ≡ God in all aspects of substance and divinity. Philo’s logos is a created demigod that remains subservient to God. A more complete analysis of the Philo’s view of the logos is found in Chapter 4, but suffice it to say the *Logos* motif found in the Prologue is placed there for literary purposes and as a contrast to the distinctly different Hellenistic logos philosophy rather than a reflection of that philosophy. The remainder of John’s Gospel has little if any Hellenistic tendencies, particularly in Christ’s farewell discourses and intercessory prayer. John had many opportunities to “double down” his *Logos* Christology as more than a literary motif in the remainder of the Gospel, particularly with Jesus’ discourses, but refrained from doing so.

A short excursus is required at this point in this discussion to acquaint the reader with

important differences between John's Christological *Logos* and Philo of Alexandria's philosophical or mystical logos. As you will read, the fundamental differences are profound. In the New Testament, God often interacts with humanity in order to see His will accomplished, particularly through God's sovereign selection of unexpected individuals and through the work of the incarnate divine *Logos*. The Philonic logos philosophy is concerned about how humanity might control the world in order to influence God (Kleinknecht (1964:90). For example, Philo equates the logos as God's perfect son who is like the high priest who brings forgiveness of sin and blessings from the Father. "For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world [the high priest] should have as a paraclete, his son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins, and a supply of unlimited blessings" (*Mos.* 2.134). Perhaps Philo is adopting the Jewish Messianic interpretation of Moses' words found in Deuteronomy 18:15, one of the principal pre-patriarchal Messianic prophecies. Yet elsewhere, Philo describes the logos as the revealer of God found in the Scriptures (*Gen.* 31:13, 16:8) as an Angel of the Lord (*Som.* 1.228-239, *Cher.* 1-3) and the first-born and chief of the angels. Guthrie (1981:322-23) succinctly summarizes Philo of Alexandria's distinctive logos philosophy in five points: (1) the logos has no distinct personality and is not known in personal terms; (2) the logos is God's first-born son and is eternal; (3) the logos is not linked to light and life as is John's *Logos*; (4) the logos is not incarnate; and (5) the logos has a similar intermediary purpose but is never personified as is John's *Logos*.

Philo presents a hierarchy in the relationship between God and the logos: "But the most universal of all things is God; and in the second place is the logos of God" (*LA* 2.86), which is reminiscent of John 5 where Jesus speaks of His voluntary subordination to God, although Philo neglects the equality of the divine natures of God and Jesus. Humankind, on the other hand, may have been created in the image of God (*Gen.* 9:6) but that image was of the logos because there can be no direct relationship between humankind's rational soul and the transcendent God (*QG* 2.62), although Philo later cautions against calling the logos God (*Som.* 1.230). Finally, Philo describes the logos as being the perfect man and the "image of God" described in Genesis 1 yet humanity is described as merely an image of that image (*Quis. Het.* 231; *Conf.* 147).

Philo describes the logos in many, sometimes unusual ways throughout his writings, such as being incorporeal yet the "pattern or expression" for the universe (*Op.* 20-25), the "instrument or agent" of creation (*Cher.* 127), and what "binds" creation (*Somn.* 1.241). The logos also

brought “order” to humanity in the form of rational thought (*Op.* 146, *Praem.* 163, *Det.* 86-90). Finally, Philo moves from the allegorical to the anagogical when he views the logos as used by God to “lead up the perfect person from earthly things to himself” (*Sac.* 8) yet seemingly later contradicts himself when he describes the *Logos* as “neither unbegotten or begotten” (*Nash* 1982:195) contradicting John 1:14. The *Logos* is also called the image of God, First-Born Son, the Chief born, the High Priest, and the Paraclete who bestows God’s blessings on humanity (*Mos.* 2:134) as the very shadow of God (*Leg. All.* 3:95). The concept of God incarnate was a foreign concept to Philo.

This short overview of Philo’s conception of the *Logos* is sufficient for the purposes of this chapter in order to compare and contrast with John’s *Logos* Christology. A much more in-depth analysis of Philo’s understanding of the logos is found in Chapter 5.

2.3.2 *Cosmological Logos*

The Prologue to the Gospel of John is cosmological in the sense that it describes the origin of creation. Pollard (1958:148) disagrees, stating that the gospel is “not interested in cosmology” but rather focuses on the self-revelation of God through His Son through the incarnation. The themes, however, are not mutually exclusive as the Prologue introduces many themes, as will soon be demonstrated. Pollard continues, “ I would go farther and assert that John wrote his Prologue as a summary of the *Heilsgeschichte* of which the incarnate life of the Son of God is the central point, and that it is as such that he intended the Prologue to be.” While this point is indisputable, other important themes are clearly present. For example, the Prologue describes the author and purpose of creation, the “equivalence” of God and Jesus Christ, the relationship between the Creator and the created, and the binary nature of the eventual fate of all who have ever inhabited His creation, that is, each individual’s acceptance or rejection of the God-man’s offer of salvation and its eternal effect. Jesus Christ is the *Logos*, according to the Apostle John. It, therefore, follows that John, in a cosmological sense, views Jesus Christ as self-existent from before time began (John 1:1). The *Logos* was present before and during creation and was the instrumental force for all creation (Newman 1993:7) and as a distinct person within the Godhead (Dobrin 2005:217).

“All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was

made” (John 1:3) echoes the Genesis creation story when all things were created by His spoken Word. There are two creation-related matters in the first verse of the Prologue. First, the *Logos* is the key actor in the creation story. This view is consistent with Paul’s creation theology (“For everything was created by Him in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible . . . all things have been created through Him and for Him” (Col. 1:16), believed to be written in 60-61 C.E., before the Gospel of John (Moo: 2005:46). The apostle John presents an alternative interpretation of creation (Genesis 1:1-2) in the Prologue, that is, all things were created by the Word (Greek: Λόγος, Aramaic: Memra, Hebrew: דְּבָר [dabar]) of God, under the “authority of the Spirit of God” (Hildebrandt 1995:29). Commentators generally agree that John wished his readers to be reminded of the first words of the Old Testament: “In the beginning . . .” thereby reaching back in time well before the genealogical human beginnings of Jesus Christ presented by Matthew and Luke in their Gospel accounts. The opening verses of each Gospel provide context and clues about the Synoptic Gospel writer’s perspective on the life and ministry of Jesus. Matthew’s Prologue was a genealogy that identifies Jesus as a descendant of Abraham and David, which alludes to that Gospel’s central theme of Jesus Christ as the Messianic king. Mark’s condensed prologue profiles the baptism of Jesus which establishes His true identity as the Son of God. Luke opens his Gospel with the birth announcements of Jesus and John the Baptist in a letter likely written to Gentiles as a Christian apologetic or perhaps as an account of the spread of the Christian Church. John’s Prologue is substantively different creation story because it reaches back to its eternal beginning before the physical universe was created (Morris 1995:65).

The Prologue and John’s *Logos* Christology is also an important New Testament origination story. “If the origin of Jesus is turned toward God as the *Logos* (1:1), then his presence in history will be the result of his being the ‘sent one’ of the Father” (Paulet 2004:29). In other words, the Prologue turns the attention of his readers to the unique and theologically significant origin story of Jesus Christ. By giving the title *Logos* to Jesus, the Apostle John has positioned Christ as the sole means by which God will communicate with His creation. Contrast Luke’s story concerning the origin of Christ (His human birth) and the Apostle John’s high Christological view of Jesus Christ’s divine origins (before creation) and Paulet’s point is made clear. Paul, writing perhaps thirty years before the Apostle John, confirms the identity of the Word as Jesus Christ, the God-man. The author of Hebrews writes that God “made the universe

through Him” (Heb. 1:2), which attests to His absolute authority over all creation. John’s use of *Logos* in his Prologue to the Fourth Gospel carries much more theological weight than it first appears. The apostle Paul reminds us in Col. 1:16 that “by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible . . . all things have been created through Him and for Him.” Jesus Christ is the creator of all of creation. There are no exceptions. Also, it’s only through Jesus Christ that creation is sustained. In Col. 1:17, “He is before [has existed prior to] all things, and in Him all things hold together. From a modern perspective, it appears that Paul is saying that only through the divine authority and power of the Creator that electrons remain in orbit around the atomic nuclei and all matter doesn’t instantaneously disintegrate into subatomic particles. The relationship between Christ and all creation is to be God’s agent in sustaining His creation (Nash 1982:66).

2.3.3 *Metaphysical Logos*

John 1:1 is unambiguously a very “metaphysical prologue” to the Gospel of John in that it represents a foundational theological statement about the divinity of Jesus Christ and His relationship with the Father (Birdsall 1996:693-94). John 1:1 contains the only unambiguous use of the word *Logos* in a Christological sense, namely, the *Logos* as the Son of God. Further reading finds the relationship between the *Logos* and God permeates the whole of the Gospel of John. In the verses that follow, John deftly develops the salvific importance of the *Logos* to all those who believe in His name, yet not until verse 14 John reveals, ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν (and the Word became flesh and dwelt [tabernacled] among us) that the divine *Logos* wrapped Himself with human flesh and walked among us. The Philonic logos philosophy views the logos as created by God as an intermediary between Himself and creation and has always “been” but now the Johannine *Logos* has “become” something, that is, Jesus Christ, who is God. This revelation represents the “the culmination of the prophetic hope” of the Jews and the only means for the salvation of the world (Carson 1991:23).

Ironically, Jesus Christ, the *Logos*, arrived incarnate but He was treated as insignificant and with strong opposition by religious leaders (MacLeod 2003:398). The Jews, as well as the remainder of the world, was unprepared for the arrival of the Son of Man. The *Logos* is the means for determining objective truth by drawing humanity into an eternal relationship with its Creator by the means of the incarnation of Jesus Christ (Waetjen 2001:265). Jesus would later

call this a “resurrection of life” (John 5:29). The opposite is equally true. Rejection of the *Logos* is no different from rejecting God’s offer of a personal relationship through the work of Jesus Christ. Jesus rightly calls this “the resurrection of condemnation” (John 5:29).

2.3.4 *Epistemological Logos*

The *Logos* is unveiled as Jesus Christ incarnate in the Prologue as the supreme act of self-revelation, and thus God Himself. The *Logos* is a new revelation that has important implications about Jesus’ deity, glory, and His role in revealing God to humanity (Ramsey 2010:59). The Prologue previews an important theme found throughout the Gospel of John, that is the contrast of the Old Covenant based on Law with the blessings of the New Covenant based on God’s grace. In this is found the Old Covenant curses satisfied by the substitutionary atonement by Christ’s death on the cross. Yet the world rejects Jesus Christ as the Messiah and the world rebuffs the objective truth of His divinity (MacLeod 2003:398). This is the principal theme of the first 11 chapters of John’s Gospel.

MacLeod (1998:249) observes the *Logos* indwells all men, although the text doesn’t seem to support that conclusion, particularly with respect to “...the world that did not recognize Him...” (v. 10) and “...His own people did not receive him” (v. 11) so that implicitly there will be unbelievers who reject the light. Scripture supports general revelation for all (Rom. 1:19-20) and therefore the presence of an internal moral compass and a sense of created order is present in all of humanity. First century Jews would have been acquainted with the concept of “light” as a necessity of life. The Old Testament, for example, often uses light as a metaphor for life (Ps. 1:1, 15:2, 23:3-4, Prov. 4:11-14), the presence of God (Ps. 104:2, 4:6, and 139:12) and God’s Word (Ps. 119:105). Light is also used to describe God’s covenant (Isa. 42:6) and the “glory of the Lord” (Isa. 60:1). However, John also uses light symbolism as a distinctly binary choice: one can choose to either move into the light or remain in the darkness (John 3:20-21). John calls for positive action on the part of the reader. John also uses the light metaphor as a means for describing one’s spiritual state, with physical blindness representing darkness (Chapter 9) and light representing spiritual enlightenment in Christ (Morris 1995: 74-75). Continuing, Jesus states, “I am the light of the world” (9:5) meaning that salvation is possible only through Christ. Likewise, seeing requires light and spiritual blindness is possible even in the presence of the Light. John uses light symbolism as a means of guiding readers to eventually make a volitional

choice for the light (faith in Christ) and away from darkness (Ramsey 2010:56).

2.3.5 *Soteriological Logos*

Salvation represents the deliverance that God provides on behalf of the sinner who repents from his sin, believes upon Jesus Christ for eternal life, and lives a life of submissive obedience to God's will as revealed in the Scriptures. For a follower of Christ, this definition is axiomatic and the Prologue is a clear reflection of this truth. Paul speaks about salvation in forensic terms (e.g., Rom. 3-5, Gal. 3) of being placed into a proper relationship with God. Bultmann looks to the resurrection as the focus of our belief for salvation (Bultmann 1976:75). However, John speaks to salvation in purely incarnational terms (Miller 1989:51). Early in the Prologue, salvific terms are expressed in analogies, such as light and life (Turner 1976:271). For example, for the Jews, the Torah was traditionally described as "light" in terms of its true revelation of God's light and is closely identified with creation and Israel in general (Dodd 1968:85). Yet, verses 4-5 and 10-12b describe the "life was the light of men ... [that] shines in the darkness" and that believers may "children of God ... to those who believe in His name .." which means that salvation is available through the person and work of Jesus Christ in the manner described by John in the remainder of his Gospel (Ridderbos 1997:45-46). Beasley-Murray (2002:12) sees value in both views in that the truth and light themes of the Prologue would have been familiar to Jews.

In verse 14, John begins to present the importance of the incarnation to salvation by returning to the use of his *Logos* motif for the fourth and last time, moving from the cosmological use of the term in verse 1 to its salvific use in verse 14. Beasley-Murray (2002:13-14) points to the use of the verb γινομαι ("became," in context) in place of εμι ("was," in context) to "signal" the importance of *Logos* in salvation. The *Logos* that was existent from eternity past became incarnate (O'Day 1995:521). Likewise, a spatial change from v. 1:1b occurs when the *Logos* "was with God" and v. 1:14b when the "*Logos* ... dwelt among us." Brown (1970:14) notes that "His glory" points to the Exodus when God revealed His glory to His people (Exodus 40:34), as well as at other times related to the descriptions of the Old Testament covenant and the dedication of the Tabernacle (Brown 1970:14). Instead of God's glory present only in the Tabernacle, God's glory, Jesus Christ, is present incarnate with his people, replacing Tabernacle and Temple. Verse 14 sets Christianity apart from all other religious traditions, that

is, the *Logos* took the form of sinful humanity (Romans 3:8) and lived among us (Philippians 2:6-7). God's presence of God's glory has the sense of humankind viewing God's glory and power through his "only begotten" Son, incarnate (Brown 1970:503). John will, in the Book of Glory (John 12-20), describe Christ's fulfillment of Old Testament prophecies, most important of which are His death, resurrection, and ascension that will complete the salvation story (Brown 1970:504).

2.3.6 Summary and Analysis

John uses the *Logos* motif in the Prologue to explain the eternality of Jesus, particularly with respect to His pre-existence and role in creation, His shared identity with God, and His incarnation that enabled Him to walk among His created. John's *Logos* Christology was recognized and practiced by the Church Fathers from the time of the writing of the Gospel of John. The purpose of the Prologue was to present a succinct summary of the gospel and to reveal important themes that would be expanded upon later in the text. John used the certain impact of the Greek logos conception on Gentiles and diaspora and Palestinian Jews for his particular literary purposes. However, John's purpose was to introduce the *Logos* as divine yet immanent God-man who was fully God and fully human for the purpose of reconciling the nations to God.

The Prologue develops its conception of the *Logos* in terms of location. The Gospel begins with an eternal *Logos* who was the agent of creation and was equivalent in all aspects to God. The description of the *Logos* evolves from the ethereal, pre-existent *Logos* to the incarnate *Logos* that walked among humanity. The *Logos* is related to God (1:1-2), creation (3-5), humanity and its response to the *Logos* (6-9), the Jews and their response to Jesus (10-11), those that become "children of God" (12-13), those that beheld the glory of Jesus (14), Jesus as the fulfillment of the Law (17), the intimacy of the relationship of the Father and Son (18) (Beasley-Murray 2002:237-238).

John's *Logos* doctrine may also be described in terms of its philosophical, cosmological, metaphysical, epistemological, and soteriological purposes. Philosophically, John's use of the *Logos* motif as a narrative device would have been immediately recognized by those steeped in Hellenism as the mind of God which controls everything in the universe (Plato, Socrates) or a cosmic soul that inhabits all things (Stoics). Philo of Alexandria viewed the logos as a form of demigod with a divine nature yet a created being who bridged the gap between an infinite God

and the finite world. Jews would have been attracted to the description of the *Logos* because of its similarity to the Hebrew *Dabar* tradition or the Targum *Memra* tradition. Cosmologically, John identifies the *Logos* as Creator and the purpose of creation. Philo views the *logos* as one of God's creations. The *Logos* as Creator is self-existent and the instrumental force behind all of creation. The obvious connection with the Genesis creation account would have been unmistakable by Palestinian or Hellenistic Jews and those believers familiar with Matthew and Luke would have recognized the Prologue as an origination story that began before creation. The *Logos* preceded creation and was the author and creator of all things. Metaphysically, the Prologue reveals the *Logos* as divine and equivalent to God. The relationship between Father and Son is explored throughout the remainder of the gospel. Yet, the *Logos* (Jesus Christ) arrived incarnate to the world and it is through the words of Christ that His offer of salvation is revealed and His divinity demonstrated by His death, resurrection, and ascension. The *Logos*, the "only begotten son" of God is revealed to be the only redemptive path available for humanity.

Epistemologically, the *Logos*, God, revealed as Jesus Christ incarnate is how humanity knows there is a God offering redemption from sin and eternal relationship with humanity. The *Logos* reveals God to humanity and His offer of grace to all who accepts Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Law and Old Testament prophecy. Soteriologically, the *Logos* is revealed as light and truth and those that receive Him and believe in His name may become children of God. The method that the *Logos* used to reveal Himself to humanity was to come among humanity incarnate so that all would behold His grace and truth of His glory and therefore "see" the Father. However, the Jews, as a people, rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah. For John, the incarnation is the essential element of salvation found in the Prologue and the entire gospel.

2.4 Christological Themes Found in the Prologue

The Prologue to the Gospel of John is distinguished from the Synoptics by its *Logos* Christology that is communicated in an understandable manner to its readers (Beasley-Murray (2002:ixv). The Gospel message explains the person and work of the *Logos* and the Prologue introduces the *Logos* (Jesus Christ) in a way that differentiates it from the Synoptics. John's Prologue takes us back to a time before creation where God's eternal purpose is introduced (Morris 1995, 64-65). All the Synoptic prologues speak an affirmation of the divinity of Jesus Christ but only John's Prologue speaks to the pre-existence of the *Logos*. John's Prologue is

theological rather than biographical or historical in its presentation (Dobrin 2005:209). The first verse of the Gospel of John remains a literary and theological masterpiece two thousand years after its writing.

The remainder of the Gospel explores the glory, mercy, and grace of God as revealed to humanity through Jesus Christ and further elaborates on the truths stated in the Prologue. In other words, the Prologue is a roadmap to the Gospel of John. To illustrate this important use of a prologue, Table 1 summarizes the many important themes found in the Prologue, such as those related to the relationship of God the Father to Jesus the Son, witnesses to the work of the Son of God, and where these themes are expanded upon within the remainder of the Gospel. Noticeably missing in the Prologue is a reference to the important themes of the Holy Spirit (which Jesus discusses at length in Chapter 6) or eschatology (see John 3:17-19, 6:47, 20:31 re: eternal life and 5:25-30 re: judgment, resurrection).

Another important observation may be drawn from this table. The connection of major themes introduced in the Prologue and the remainder of the Gospel illustrate congruence and consistency. Table 1 may also serve as evidence for John writing the Prologue after the body of the Gospel, although that point is not meaningful in an interpretive sense. Carson calls the evidence for late writing of the Prologue “realistic” yet “speculative” (1991:112). The manner in which biblical authors compose their writings does not affect our view of its inerrancy.

Table 1. Major theological themes found in the Gospel of John introduced in the Prologue. Sources: Kruse (2003:60), revised, updated, and expanded, Harris (2015:15), Carson (1991:111).

| Theme | In the Prologue | In the Gospel of John |
|---|------------------------|--|
| Jesus’ (<i>Logos</i>) pre-existence | 1:1a, 2 | 17:5 |
| Jesus’ (<i>Logos</i>) union with God | 1:1c | 8:58, 10:30, 20:28 |
| Power over all things | 1:3 | 3:35, 5:22 13:3, 16:15 |
| The coming of life in Jesus | 1:4a | 5:26, 6:33, 10:10, 11:25–26, 14:6 |
| The coming of light in Jesus | 1:4-5, 9 | 3:19, 8:12, 9:5, 12:46 |
| The conflict between light and darkness | 1:5 | 3:19, 8:12, 12:35, 46 |
| Believing in Jesus | 1:7, 12 | 2:11, 3:16, 18, 36, 5:24, 6:69, 11:25, 14:1, 16:27, 17:21, 20:25 |
| Entering the world | 1:9, 11 | 3:19, 12:46 |
| The rejection of Jesus | 1:10c, 11 | 4:44, 7:1, 8:59, 10:31, 12:37–40, 15:18 |
| Witnesses to the Truth | 1:10-12 | 1:7–8, 15, 19, 32, 34, 3:11, 26, 32–33, 4:39, 5:32–39, 7:7, 8:13–14, 18, 10:25, 12:17, 15:26-27, 18:37 |
| Eternal life | 1:12 | 3:36, 4:14, 5:24, 6:47, 54 |

| | | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|--|
| Divine regeneration | 1:13 | 3:1–7, 17:3 |
| The glory of Jesus | 1:14 | 12:41, 17:5, 22, 24, 16:27 |
| Jesus as the Son of God | 1:14 | 3:16, 17, 18, 35, 5:18 |
| The grace and truth of God in Jesus | 1:14, 17 | 4:24, 8:32, 14:6, 17:17, 18:38 |
| Jesus as the truth | 1:17 | 14:6 |
| Jesus and Moses/the law | 1:17 | 1:45, 3:14, 5:46, 6:32, 7:19, 9:29 |
| Only Jesus has seen God | 1:18 | 6:46 |
| Jesus’ revelation of the Father | 1:18 | 3:34, 6:46, 8:19, 38, 12:49–50, 14:6–11, 17:8,11 |

Liroy (2005:62-65) explores the unresolved “dynamic tensions” introduced in the Prologue that the reader will encounter later in the gospel, such as the “forces of faith” or “belief” represented by the metaphor of light and the “forces of unbelief” or “evil” symbolized as darkness. For example, light does battle with darkness yet darkness could not “comprehend” or “perceive” the light. Darkness was overcome by the light (1:5). In verse 9, the light that was perfect in every aspect came into the world in order for humanity to be spiritually enlightened. Light is often used in the Old Testament as a metaphor for life (Ps. 1:1, 15:2, 23:3-4, Prov. 4:11-14) and the presence of God (Ps. 104:2, 4:6, and 139:12). John certainly frames the tension between light and dark in the Prologue but he also introduces two additional aspects pertaining to this tension in the form of dualism. First, the tension calls for the reader to make a decision between light and dark. It’s a binary decision with only two available options (vv. 12-13, also 3:20-21). Next, John also explores this dualism in terms of sight and seeing with the parable of the blind man. Those that are spiritually blind are unable to see the light (9:5) and thereby unprepared to fully recognize the consequences of their sin (9:41).

2.5 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter is responsive to the first subsidiary research question (Section 1.3.1): “What is the current state of scholarship concerning the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, especially as it relates to Philo's logos philosophy?” In sum, John’s Christology is introduced in the Prologue and the supporting evidence is presented in the remainder of the Gospel.

John uses the Greek literary motif of the prologue to open his Gospel for three principal purposes. First, the use of a prologue would have been a familiar technique of introducing the

themes and short biographies of the characters in a work that was primarily presented in the oral form. John's Prologue introduces the Christ as the central character of the Gospel—His important attributes, such as eternal Creator, His equivalence to God, His incarnation, and His purpose for walking among His created. The diaspora Jews, steeped in Greek culture, would have been comfortable with John's use of a prologue. Palestinian Jews, as well as diaspora Jews, would possibly identify with the work when John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets, was introduced.. Therefore both groups would be receptive to his message. Greeks, born into a society that celebrates the Platonic dualist view of the inherent evil of the human form and emphasizes the immortality of the soul, would have also been attracted to the cosmology of the Prologue, that is, until verse 14 when "the Word became flesh and dwelt among us."

John's second purpose for using a prologue was as a literary motif was intended to encourage readers to examine the evidence supporting his startling revelation. Jewish readers would recognize the *Logos* motif from the Palestinian Targum Memra traditions and the term "Word of God" would instantly bring to mind the first creation story found in Gen. 1:1. Hellenistic Jews would immediately recognize the Platonic dualism of the Greek *logos* tradition. Jews that later became Christians would have become familiar with the Synoptics and would have immediately associated the *Logos* with Christ.

John also adopted the Greek prologue as a literary device to introduce the eternal *Logos* of the Christian world in a familiar manner while simultaneously redefining the familiar *logos* of the Greek world as the Christian *Logos*. The similarities to the Greek prologue appear clear yet its use was purposeful. The use of prologue in Greek writings would have been readily apparent to the Hellenized readers of John's Gospel. Also, the close connection between the themes introduced in the Prologue and expanded upon later in the Gospel is clearly on display when the entire Gospel is considered. John introduces a creation story that predates the Greek *logos* and introduces the divine *Logos* who was the creative force for all things. Greek readers, steeped in Platonic dualism, would have surely identified with the *Logos* until reaching verse 14 when the divine *Logos* cloaks Himself in the form of humanity. By that point in the story, the Greek reader would want to learn more about the eternal *Logos*. After all, the Gospel of John, at its core, is an ancient evangelistic writing.

Finally, John used a prologue to serve as a summary of the entire Gospel, introducing Christological themes and first-person testimony about the divinity and mission of Christ on earth, that would be more thoroughly explored and explained in the remainder of the Gospel. Within the Prologue itself, a creation story resides in which John reaches back before the beginnings of the genealogies of Matthew and Luke to a time before creation when the *Logos* was present with the Father. The creative force of the universe is revealed as the *Logos* and the *Logos* entered human history, incarnate, and the present hope of salvation for His creation. John also uses the Prologue to introduce all the main themes found in the remainder of his Gospel (see Table 1), which is strong internal evidence of Johannine authorship of the entire gospel.

In a practical sense, the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel functions as a means to foreshadow major themes of the Gospel (Carson 1991:110). By capturing the attention of the reader with the Prologue the reader is encouraged to explore the reasons for the incarnation of Christ and the subsequent rejection of the Son of God by fellow Jews. John's Prologue is also a summary of the principal themes of his *Logos* Christology that will be revealed in the remainder of the Gospel narrative, such as the eternal nature of Christ, the Word of God, and the eternal struggle of light against darkness (Brown 1997:374-376). Noticeably missing from the Prologue is any foreshadowing of the important themes of the Holy Spirit or eschatology that are important topics found later in the gospel. Finally, Liou (2005:65) points to the "liturgical quality" of the Prologue in that it summons believers to enter into a worship experience of the God of truth and light that arrived incarnate with an invitation to "believe in His name" in order to "become children of God" (v. 12).

In a technical sense, the *Logos* motif is confined to the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. There is little, if any, internal evidence that John was influenced by the writers of the Synoptic Gospels. In the Prologue, John presents his *Logos* Christology, that is, the *Logos* as Jesus Christ, His equality with the God, and His incarnation, as the force behind all of creation. John also describes the mission and purpose of the incarnation of Christ as the salvation of the world, although there will be those who will not "believe in His name" (1:12), although a discussion of the consequences of that decision is deferred until later in the Gospel. The Prologue serves as a theological summary in a few verses of what the apostle John will carefully reveal in the remainder of the Fourth Gospel (Harris 2004:173) as well as a "masterful statement with a poetic sound (Borchert 1996:101).

Chapter 3 examines two important aspects of John's Prologue. First, the importance of carefully considering the interrelationship between authorship, dating, and provenance of the Gospel of John are explored. Once these issues are determined then the historical, social, cultural, and literary context of the Prologue are explored, particularly with their impact on our understanding the writings of Philo of Alexandria and the exegesis of the Prologue found in Chapter 5.

CHAPTER 3

THE CONTEXT OF JOHN'S PROLOGUE

3.1 Introduction

Chapter 3 addresses the second subsidiary research question: What is the historical, social, cultural, and literary background of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel? This question is answered in two parts. This chapter begins by resolving three important and critically interrelated contextual questions as a unit: authorship, date of the writing, and provenance of the Gospel. The chapter concludes with an analysis of the historical, social, cultural, and literary context of John's Prologue.

3.1.1 *Authorship*

This work assumes a "high view" of the Johannine tradition, that is, the Gospel of John was written by the Apostle John in its entirety with unity and coherence in composition. This assumption is critically important to this work. If the authorship of the Gospel remains anonymous (e.g., Johannine Community authorship theory, pseudepigraphal authorship, later anonymous redactors, etc.), then the primary assumption for this work (i.e., the apostle John is aware of Philo of Alexandria's philosophical logos writings) cannot be resolved. If John is not the author, then any discussion of the external influences on apostle John are reduced to pure speculation. As Carson (1991:81) astutely notes, the "suffocating burden" stays with those suggesting an alternative theory [than John] of authorship.

There is clear and convincing internal and external evidence that John is the author of the Gospel that bears his name. With respect to the internal evidence, John often refers to the "disciple whom Jesus loved" (John 13:23, 19:26, 21:20) or the variant "the one Jesus loved" (John 21:7). The sons of Zebedee (James and John) and Peter were part of Jesus' inner circle and enjoyed a particularly close relationship with Jesus (Matt. 17:1, Mark 5:37, 14:33, Luke 8:51). Therefore, these three men are the most likely candidates for Jesus' unique nickname. Second, Chapter 21, (often called the Epilogue to the Gospel of John) includes is a list of disciples who were fishing with Simon Peter: "Simon Peter, Thomas (called Didymus), Nathanael from Cana

in Galilee, the sons of Zebedee, and two other disciples were together ..." (John 21:2). John 21:21 relates the episode when Peter asked Jesus a question about John, thus the writer of the Gospel cannot be Peter. In John 21:22, it appears that Jesus was making a comment to Peter about the longevity of the "disciple Jesus loved" (21:20). Since James (d. 44 C.E.) was the first of the Apostles to die (Acts 12:1-2), much earlier than the writing of the Gospel of John, the author could not be James.

The author of the gospel records many vivid recollections as one who was an eyewitness to the events (e.g., 153 fish caught [21:11], weight of spices used to embalm Jesus [19:39, names of people that are anonymous in the Synoptics [Philip and Andrew at feeding of multitude 6:7f], etc.). Also, Jesus entrusted the care of His mother with John upon His death, allowed John to witness the Transfiguration, and inspired the apocalyptic vision John recounts in the Book of Revelation. Of the three disciples of Jesus' inner circle, John was relationally the closest. The internal evidence strongly points to John as the author of the fourth Gospel.

There is also substantial external evidence to support the conclusion that the Apostle John is the "disciple whom Jesus loved." The Church Fathers recorded the earliest recorded support of Johannine authorship. For example, Irenaeus of Lyons (ca. 180 C.E.) quotes Polycarp, the bishop of Smyrna (d. 155 C.E.), traditionally considered a disciple of John the Apostle (Bacchus 1911), as saying John completed the writing of his gospel while in Ephesus (Eusebius, Eccl Hist. III.i.1). Clement of Alexandria wrote that John composed the gospel at the urging of his disciples (Eusebius, Eccl. Hist. VI.xiv.7). Other patristic writers, such as Eusebius, bishop of Caesarea in Palestine (d. before 341 C.E.) and Polycrates, bishop of Ephesus (d. 196 C.E.), wrote that John was the author of the Fourth Gospel. Finally, The Anti-Marcionite Prologue (ca. 150-180 C.E.) attributes the authorship of the gospel to the apostle John (Pearse 2006).

Westcott (1950:x-xxxv), in his classic commentary, presents an exhaustive (and exhausting) examination of internal and external evidence that supports Johannine authorship with a series of "Concentric Proofs." These convincing proofs include: the author is a Jew because he is aware of Jewish rites and religious practices, is from Palestine because he writes with knowledge about the geography and topography from pre-70 C.E., including significant points of interest within Jerusalem, was an eyewitness to the events of which he writes, was an apostle because of his intimate knowledge of Jesus and His inner circle, makes multiple

references to the “beloved” disciple, and, was a son of Zebedee. Later evangelical scholars build on Westcott’s analysis to arrive at the same conclusion (Morris 1995, Carson 1991, Borchert 1996, Hendriksen 2001, Newman 1993, Lincoln 2005, Burge 2000, Köstenberger 2002, Blomberg 1993, 2001). Importantly, there is no internal evidence contrary to this view.

There are many scholars, following in the footsteps of late 19th- and early 20th-century German scholarship, who continue to doubt John’s authorship of the Fourth Gospel. There are many proposals for the Gospel’s authorship (e.g., John of Jerusalem, John Mark, Lazarus, or John the Elder, among others), each with different early dates of authorship (Casey 1996, Attridge 2002b, Barrett 1978, Beasley-Murray 1999, Brown 1966, Culpepper 1998, Lincoln 2005) and all predating the destruction of the Jerusalem temple (70 C.E.). The opinion that the Prologue is a separate literary work yet theologically consistent with the remainder of the Gospel is commonly shared by scholars that advocate for alternative authorship of the gospel.

Advocates of the Johannine School of authorship recognize the gospel as an amalgamation of the work by a group of John’s disciples written after the apostle’s death (Beasley-Murray 2002:lxiv) and thus has a late date of authorship. Burge (2000:27) suggest that the “final edition of the Gospel may have been edited by John’s disciples, an amanuensis [professional scribe], or John’s community.” The internal evidence in support of the Johannine School theory rests squarely on the notion that a community of believers, ejected from the synagogue for their faith in Jesus Christ, were later responsible for authoring the Gospel (Köstenberger 2004:15-16).⁶ There is no internal or external evidence that this or any group wrote and/or redacted the Gospel of John at an unspecified future time. Nor is there any external evidence that the early church accepted the Community’s finished work as written by the apostle John, especially at an unspecified time after his death (Klink 2008: 99-118). A better view is the term “to be put out of the synagogue” was a reference to the Council of Jamnia⁷ and therefore the dating of the Gospel must have been after ca. 85-90 C.E.

⁶ The existence of the Johannine Community relies on an interpretation of the synagogue expulsions found in three verses: John 9:22; 12:42; and 16:2.

⁷ The Council of Jamnia is believed to be the venue when Jewish authorities decided to ban Christians from the synagogue, finalizing the split between the Jewish and Christian communities (Carson 1991:82).

Other scholars propose an alternative approach to Johannine authorship by rejecting the apostle John as the author of the complete Gospel yet suggest that John wrote portions, portions were contributed by anonymous sources, and anonymous disciples redacted the final version of the Gospel (Brown 1966:32, Culpepper 1975, Hengel 1989, Go 2009). A corollary view is the body of the Gospel was written first, followed by the first epistle of John, and then the Prologue (Miller 1993:446), although there is no significant internal or external evidence to support either view. A more nuanced proposal is John wrote a sizable portion of the Gospel or that there was a collection of his writings that were later redacted by a Johannine community with the Prologue (Burge 2013:55). A further, more moderate position is that later disciples did not make any substantives changes to the teachings found in the Gospel or with the essentials of Jesus' ministry (Beasley-Murray 2002 xxxvii) but merely redacted existing writings. With each of these alternative views of authorship, what is substantive or essential is based upon one's personal presuppositions or interpretative hermeneutic. Without factual evidence to the contrary, Beasley-Murray's comments are more hope than substance. The root problem with this view of Johannine authorship is the inability to state with authority that there were no later redactions that introduced serious changes to John's original work. Who guided and approved the final work? The authenticity of the Gospel relies heavily upon acceptance of the apostle John as the author of the Fourth Gospel.

Go (2015:8) deflects the important theological implications of denying the apostle John's authorship by an "end justifies the means" argument: Identification of the author of the Fourth Gospel is not important to understand the message of the gospel. This view is troubling in many ways. For example, consider John 20:30-31, John's purpose statement for the gospel. The writer wishes his readers to believe Jesus is the Messiah based on his eye-witness accounts "by his disciples" of Jesus' seven miracles (Book of Signs) plus the resurrection account. Later redactions by other than the apostle John (himself an eyewitness) undermine the entire gospel account. The internal and external evidence point clearly to the apostle John, the son of Zebedee and the brother of James and the author of the gospel of John.

This conclusion leaves one open question: Why did the apostle John not ascribe his name to the Fourth Gospel? The best answer is often the simplest answer. John's humility prevented him from calling attention to himself. He chose to shift focus away from himself to the person and work of Jesus Christ and His love of all His followers (Harris 2015:4).

3.1.2 *Dating the Gospel of John*

The dating of the writing of the Gospel of John is also an important aspect of this study. A date late in the first century give the writings of Philo of Alexandria over 40 years to circulate, certainly increasing the probability that Philo's writings would have had enough time to reach Ephesus and that John would have been aware of the writings when authoring the Fourth Gospel. On the other hand, an early date, particularly a date in the early 50s, not long after Philo's death, significantly reduces the probability that John would have had access to Philo's writings. If John was not familiar with Philo's writings about his mystical logos, which is inferred by an early date of writing, then John's use of the *Logos* metaphor would not be apologetic in nature (with respect to Philo's writings) and this study comes to a rapid close. A lengthy period of circulation inferred by a late date increases the probability that John was familiar with Philo's writings. Regardless, the date of writing must be determined based on the best information available.

The dating of the Gospel of John is equally as controversial as its authorship. As with authorship, the dating of the Gospel seems to reflect the views of two divisions of scholarship. One view, reflecting a high view of the Gospel, suggests 85-95 C.E. for the writing (Carson 1991:83). Harris (2015:6) tracks Carson with an estimate in the 80s or 90s. Likewise, Kruse (2003:32) concludes that the Gospel was written in the 80s or 90s. Others suggest that the use of terms such as "Sea of Tiberias" vice "Seal of Galilee" support a date range of 70-95 C.E. (Klink 2016:60). Another view is that the Apostle John and other apostles and disciples migrated to Ephesus in Asia Minor during the period of 66 to 69 C.E. and thus the writing took place sometime between 75 C.E. and 100, perhaps 80 or 85 (Lenski 1961:20).

Other scholars hypothesize that the Gospel of John must have been in circulation prior to 70 C.E. because the Gospel does not specifically comment on the destruction of the temple. This is an unpersuasive argument from silence. Morris (1995:30) gives his best estimate of pre-70 C.E. as "probable." A grammatical argument has also been proposed based on John's use of the present tense in his writing. However, John often refers to past events using the present tense (historical present). John 5:2, a reference to the pool near the Sheep Gate in Jerusalem, is an excellent example of John's extensive usage of the Greek historical present in the Fourth Gospel. Thus, grammar alone is not determinative in dating the Gospel (Carson 1991:82).

Another consistent argument for a post-70 C.E. writing are the few references to the

Scribes and Sadducees compared to the Synoptics, thought to reflect the groups' minor influence on post-temple Jewish society. There was a split between Christianity and Judaism (or more accurately, Christianity as a branch of Judaism) after the destruction of the temple at Jerusalem (Dunn 1991:35) and made permanent after the Council of Jamnia. John's *Logos* Christology was surely the "clearest symbol" that this separation was complete because it has very little to do with "authentic" or "proper" Palestinian Judaism (Boyarin 2001:244). Ironically, Boyarin's observations lend support for later writing of the Gospel of John, although that was not his intention. Patristic writings strongly support the view that the Apostle John wrote his Gospel during the reign of Emperor Domitian (81-96 C.E.) and that he died during the reign of Emperor Trajan (98-117 C.E.). Eusebius (Ecclesiastical History, III. xxiii) states John wrote his gospel after his exile and the death of Domitian, based on the writings of Irenaeus and Clement of Alexandria.

Two simple solutions to the date dilemma with respect to temple references come to mind. First, the destruction of the temple was up to 30 years in the past if authorship is assumed as ca. 100 C.E.. Why would one expect John to include mention of that event in his Gospel? Gospels are accounts used for the purpose of evangelism and not chronologically precise ancient histories, as expected in modern historical writings. John's failure to mention the temple's status is not determinative. Second, John is writing his Gospel with an evangelistic theme so that unbelievers would accept Jesus Christ as the Messiah and have eternal life (John 20:30-31), most of whom were probably Gentile (Harris, 2015:4). The destruction of the temple was certainly a tragedy to the Jews, but it would have been of little to no importance to Gentiles. However, if John's audience included diaspora Jews, then this argument is less convincing. A simple solution exists: Discussion about the destruction of the temple does not further John's goals for writing the Gospel and simply was not addressed.

Ironically, the Johannine Community theory of authorship (introduced in Section 3.1.1) naturally argues for a late date of authorship for two reasons. First, a community of redactors is only plausible if the work was completed after the death of the apostle John, perhaps many years after the temple expulsions. Second, the early textual evidence of the Gospel of John is more solid than any of the other Gospels which means the community redaction had to be completed before the Gospel circulated. P⁵², housed in the John Rylands Library at the University of Manchester, is dated by a "consensus of NT scholars and papyrologists" as ca. 125 C.E.

(Wallace 1990). Wallace further argues that since the fragment is not part of the original autograph it is quite possible that the Gospel of John was copied, circulated, and later made its way to and be buried in Egypt, even with a late date of writing. This fact also adds weight to the argument that Philo of Alexandria's writing had sufficient time to circulate from Alexandria to Ephesus.

3.1.3 *Provenance of the Gospel*

The Gospel does not present any internal evidence as to its place of authorship. The traditional location where John authored the gospel has been Ephesus, based on the words of the Church Fathers. Irenaeus (*Adv. Haer.* 3.1.2) notes that John wrote the gospel while living in Ephesus. Also, Eusebius (*Ecclesiastical History* V, xxiv) wrote that John served the Ephesian church and was buried in Ephesus. The Church Fathers uniformly wrote of Ephesus as the place John wrote his Gospel.

Alexandria, Egypt, has also been proposed as the home of the author of the Fourth Gospel (Gunther 1979:582). There are three points offered in support of this view. First, the popularity of the Gospel of John in Egypt in the second century is cited as evidence. In response, it is well known that Egypt, particularly Alexandria, was an early center of Gnosticism and the Gnostics used (and perverted) the Gospel of John particularly because of the Gnostic view of the dualism found in the Prologue (Morris 1995:55). Second-century Gnostic writing from Egypt, the "Gospel of Truth," contains a number of Johannine similarities as does Heracleon's commentary on the Gospel written ca. 170-180 (Burge 2013:7). A better explanation for the popularity of the Gospel of John in the late first and early second century Alexandria was the rise of Gnosticism.

Second, there were largely Jewish and Samaritan populations present in Alexandria (often described as "a little Palestine") in the first century. The argument is that a limited audience of Alexandrian Jews would best receive the obvious Hellenistic Judaism context of the Gospel and were, therefore, the intended audience (Brownlee 1972:182). This view is problematic because it assumes the Hellenist Judaism context of the Fourth Gospel closely parallels the Hellenist Judaism context of an Alexandrian author (Gunther 1979:588). This view also requires us to ignore all of the Palestinian Judaism references by John included in the Fourth Gospel. The Christian church and Hellenistic Judaism were widespread throughout the Roman

Empire in the late first century, so it is unlikely that only the Alexandrian Jews were the intended audience.

Finally, the discovery of ancient Johannine manuscripts is cited as the strongest evidence for an Alexandrian provenance (Gunther 1979:593). However, there is a much simpler explanation. The early manuscript evidence (including the earliest extant fragment of the Fourth Gospel, P⁵²) was well preserved in the warm, dry Egyptian climate, as attested by the large number of papyri in good conditions recovered during the past century (e.g., Nag Hammadi, Dead Sea Scrolls, Codex Sinaiticus).

Wallace (1999:12) takes a moderating position on the provenance of the gospel, that is, John wrote the bulk of the gospel while ministering in Palestine and later added Chapter 21 sometime after arriving in Ephesus in late 65 C.E.. Carson cites the Ephesian elder's testimony (21:24) that John's gospel is true and therefore a later addition to the gospel writing. The first person, singular statement (much the same as 19:35), according to Carson, suggests the statement was not John's but a witness of John's testimony. However, the oblique reference ("the disciple who bears witness") can also be explained in terms of other indirect references John uses to describe himself ("the disciple whom Jesus loved" is used six times in his gospel, 13:23-25, 19:26-27, 20:1-10, 21:1-25, 21:20-23, 21:24) and two further references to an unnamed disciple (i.e., John 1:35-40, 18:15-16). In addition, the plural "we" is a reference to knowledge common to fellow elders and leaders of the church at Ephesus. Wallace's observation may have merit, but it is a distinction without a difference. The completed gospel would have still begun circulation in Ephesus so for all intents and purposes, the gospel was authored in Ephesus. The better view is 21:24 is another example of John indirectly referring to himself as the disciple who personally observed all "these things" that he wrote of in his gospel (John 20:30-31). If so, this passage gives little guidance for dating the gospel yet may still be viewed as a confirmation of its Ephesian provenance.

3.2 Historical Context

The conclusion reached in Section 2.2.3 was that John's audience was eclectic. John wrote to Jews, including diaspora Jews, Palestinian Jews, and Jews deeply influenced by Hellenism, as well as Gentiles steeped in Greek culture. John wished persons from each group to

embrace the gospel message. John assumes that readers have an elementary knowledge of Jesus (the background material present in Luke, for example, is missing from John) perhaps through a familiarity with the Synoptics, from earlier teaching, or by word of mouth. The intended recipients of the gospel reflect the disparate historical backgrounds of the diverse groups.

C.H. Dodd first examined the importance of the Hellenistic historical context of Judaism on the Gospel of John in his 1958 commentary. Dodd invested over one hundred pages dedicated to the topic (Dodd 1958:3-115). Dodd's review of the historical religious setting of the first century addressed Hellenism (the Hermetic literature), Hellenistic Judaism (principally represented by Philo of Alexandria and discussed more fully in Chapter 5), Rabbinic Judaism, and Gnosticism. Added to Dodd's list is the unique historical perspective presented by the Old Testament. Each of these factors would have a part in the chaotic religious milieu of the first century, when John wrote the Fourth Gospel.

3.2.1 *Hermetic Literature*

The *Corpus Hermeticum* originates from Egyptian religious practices dealing with “astrology, magic or alchemy” and fused with Platonic and Stoic beliefs has been described as a cross-fertilization of Greek and Asian thought. (Dodd 1958:11). Morris (1995:56-57) describes the Hermetica as a fusion of Greek philosophy and Gnostic thought. The earliest extant literature dates from the fourteenth century and is believed to have been written originally in the second and third centuries A.D. (Dodd 1958:11). The first, twelfth, and thirteenth tractates include discussion of the logos (Morris (1995:57). However, there is no evidence that the Hermetic writings were influenced by Philo of Alexandria nor that John was influenced by these writings. However, the presence of these writings is symbolic of the chaotic religious milieu present in the first century.

3.2.2 *Hellenistic Judaism*

Diaspora Jews were to be found throughout the Roman world. The largest enclave of Jews outside of Palestine in the first century was Egypt, principally Alexandria. The production of the Septuagint (LXX) stands for perhaps the pinnacle of institutional Judaism fused with Hellenistic thought, particularly with respect to the fanciful stories of divine inspiration to satisfy

concerns regarding the efficacy of the translation.⁸ The LXX was translated from Hebrew into Greek during the period ca. 300-200 BC.

Greek culture was particularly attractive to conquered nations and most nations rapidly assimilated into the new culture and readily adopted its pantheon of gods. The Palestinian Jews viewed Greek culture as a significant threat to institutional Judaism although many diaspora Jews embraced the study and adoption of Greek practices and philosophies, including taking Greek names when it suited (e.g., Paul replaced Saul). Jews were attracted to centers of Greek culture, particularly Alexandria, and quickly assimilated into its culture and economy. These Jews became known as *Misyavnim* or Hellenists. Philo of Alexandria may be classified as such. A more thorough investigation of Philo of Alexandria as the exemplar of Hellenistic Judaism, particularly with respect his view of the *Logos*, is found in Chapter 5.

3.2.3 Rabbinic Judaism

Morris (1995:64) suggests that portions of the Mishna allow a modern reader to gain insight into the rabbinical debates of the period even though it was not codified until approximately 200 C.E.. The rabbinic view on the Torah, Sabbath, and the Messiah have particular importance to our survey of the historical milieu of the first century. Torah was sacred, revered by rabbis, and compliance the means to ensure the blessings of God (Morris 1995:65). The Torah was the arbiter of the rabbinical religious debates. It is not surprising that a legalistic mindset would creep into a religious system that defined spirituality in ethical terms evidenced by an ever-increasing number of prescriptive rules. The 613 foundational laws eventually evolved into the sixty-two tractates of the Oral Law that were later codified as the Mishna (Morris 1995:66). It is also not surprising that Jesus would engage in debates about the interpretation of the Law with the Pharisees and temple leaders (e.g., John 5-11). The Pharisees argued Torah, that is, compliance with the Oral Law and its proscriptions. Jesus taught that a change in the heart produced by a right relationship with God supersedes actions governed by man-made laws.

Sabbath observance was an important debate between Jesus and the Pharisees. It was in

⁸ From Jewish tradition, seventy-two scribes (six from each tribe) were assigned to produce a Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures. After 72 days of work, 72 identical translations were produced. Thus, the Septuagint (LXX) was declared to be divinely inspired.

this debate that His deity was brought into question (John 5:16-23). The Pharisees argued that the Sabbath was sacrosanct and a violation was a capital crime. However, there were exceptions were interpreted into the Law, but not without rabbinic controversy. At least one rabbinical school allowed for medical necessity in critical cases on the Sabbath (Dodd 1958:79). Circumcision, for example, was allowed on the Sabbath. Rabbi Eliezer (Tos. Shab. 15.16) concluded that performing a circumcision on the Sabbath was not proper, saying, “Circumcision repels the Sabbath.” His reasoning was that one exception (that is, not performing the circumcision on the seventh day as required by the Law) “makes oneself guilty of annihilating the Torah” and if one person annihilates the Torah, then the whole [community] annihilates the Torah. Jesus’ response to this debate was that God was Lord over the Law and the Sabbath (Luke 6:5). The debate within the Pharisaical community was certainly intense and the persecution of Jesus then began in earnest “because He was doing these things on the Sabbath” (John 5:16).

3.2.4 *Gnosticism*

Bultmann, unlike Dodd, focused on the Gnostic origins of John’s gospel, particularly the Prologue, and dismissed Old Testament and Jewish background studies. Writing in the 1930s Germany, Bultmann’s anti-Jewish predisposition was common for German theologians of that era. Bultmann believed that John adopted a pre-Christian Gnostic redeemer myth, himself a reformed Gnostic (according to Bultmann). Bultmann believed that John’s description in the Prologue that Christ came from God in heaven was pure speculation (Borchert 1996:79-80).

Morris (1995:68) views one of John’s purposes in writing the Gospel was to combat the rise of dualistic views of Christ, although this isn’t to say Gnosticism was a coherent system of practiced beliefs at the time John wrote his gospel. However, as discussed in Chapter 1, it is entirely possible that incipient Gnosticism was present in Alexandria in the mid-first century.⁹ However, there are no historical records extant that support the opinion that Gnosticism was

⁹ Gnosticism is a generic term that describe a diverse set of religious movements present in the Roman Empire between the second and fifth centuries C.E. (McDermond 2011:308) that believe salvation is achieved through special knowledge (Gk: γνώσις “knowledge”). The essential element of Gnosticism is “cosmological dualism” (Yamauchi 2000:414), the tension found between the spiritual world and the inherently evil physical world. There are “trends and tendencies” that seem to show an “affinity” towards Gnosticism in the first century, including the New Testament and the writings of Philo of Alexandria (Wilson 1974:185). These early beginnings of Gnosticism are often called proto- or incipient-Gnosticism.

present in Palestine (or Ephesus for that matter) until the second-century and none in Palestine before the New Testament was written (Dodd (1985:98). Still, there are indications that incipient Gnosticism was taking root in Alexandria in the first century, spawned from the dualistic views of Hellenistic thought prevalent in the first century. Philo of Alexandria was thoroughly indoctrinated in Hellenistic Judaism and Greek religious dualistic beliefs.

Borchert (1996:80) suggests that John's use the verbal form of γνώσις (knowing) and πίστις (believing) makes it clear that there was some form of incipient Gnostic thinking that had drawn the attention of the early Christian church. However, a better view is the verbal form of these words were deliberately selected by John to best express his Christology: The verbs γνώσις (Strong's Concordance 1108) and πίστις (Strong's Concordance 4102) are based on personal experience, not merely intellectual exercises. Nowhere else in the gospel is this clearer than in John's purpose statement (John 20:30-31). This is an experiential belief, not mere head knowledge.

3.2.5 Old Testament

John often inserts explanations of basic Hebrew or Aramaic terms or Jewish customs throughout his gospel for his Gentile readers in what may be called in-text footnotes. Two early examples are 1:38 ("... 'What do you seek?' And they said to Him, 'Rabbi [which translated means Teacher] ...)" and 2:6 ("Now there were six stone water pots set there for the Jewish custom of purification..."). John was making clear to Gentile converts basic Jewish customs of the day in order to better understand the life and work of Jesus. There are dozens of these in-text footnotes spread throughout the gospel (the last is John 21:19 wherein John explains the way John would be martyred). These footnotes added Old Testament context to the social and religious customs of the day for Gentile readers.

John's gospel gives many references to the Old Testament¹⁰ as well as to allusions to the dominant Roman culture of the day, although much differently than references in the Synoptics.

¹⁰Example Old Testament references include: John 1:23 (Isa 40:3); John 2:17b (Ps 69:9); John 3:14 (Num 21:9); John 6:45 (Isa 54:13, Jer. 31:33f); John 7:42 (I Sam 16:1f; Micah 5:2); John 8:17 (Num 35:30); (John 10:34; Ps 82:6); John 12:14-16 (Zech 9:9); John 12:38 (Isa 53:1); John 12:40f (Isa 6:10);; John 16:32 (Zech 13:7); John 19:24 (Ps 22:18); John 19:37 (Zech 12:10).

John's purpose is to inform the reader of how the life, death, and the resurrection of Jesus fulfills the historical prophecies of Israel, as found in the Old Testament. Morris (1995:50) observes that Bultmann's anti-Jewish sentiments are displayed when he dismisses the importance of the Old Testament as necessary for an understanding of the Gospel of John. John grasped that an understanding of salvation history requires an understanding of the history of Israel as revealed in the Old Testament, which, in turn, confirms Jesus Christ as the fulfillment of the Old Testament promises. Jewish believers would have held tightly to the Old Testament Messianic promises in the face of Jewish institutional persecution.

Closely following Jesus' ethical teachings will bring down the "hostility of the world" (as it continues to do today) and Christians must be "vigilant about compromise" (Plant 2012:18). However, this is not to say there was not strong animosity between splinter Christian sects and mainstream Judaism. The Council of Jamnia (ca 85-90 C.E.) under the leadership of Rabbi Gamaliel II reorganized institutional Judaism and added the curse of the heretics (Birkat ha-Minim, "benediction concerning heretics"), referring directly to Christianity. Although the text was not frozen until sometime in the ninth through the twelfth centuries, it is thought to accurately reflect the original formulation. The split between Judaism and Christianity was complete and Jewish Christians were expelled from synagogues (John 9:21, 12:39, 15:27).

Casey (1996:117) views the expulsions as evidence of open warfare between Christians and Jews although there is no significant internal or external evidence to support that view, would not have been countenanced by Jesus, and is not reasonable given the significant imbalance in social and political power between the Jews (and Romans) and the emerging Christian church. Although not likely the purpose of the Council of Jamnia the result was Christian churches were no longer a protected religion in the eyes of Roman opening the door to increased persecution by the Roman authorities (as predicted by Jesus in 16:2). The historical setting of the first century in the eyes of Jewish Christians was one of rejection from the synagogue followed by persecution by Roman authorities.

3.3 Social Context

It is well accepted within the scholarly community that the Gospel of John, particularly within the Prologue, has hints of Greek dualism (e.g., light vs. dark) that reflect John's intimate

knowledge of Hellenism. If, as this work suggests, John's Prologue was an apologetic response to Philo's mystical logos then it is important to note that John certainly had contact with Hellenistic influences prior to and/or coincident with his encounter with Philo's writings. The social context of the first century made continuing contact with Hellenism inevitable.

John was a Galilean fisherman. He lived and worked in a region ruled by Herod Antipas who was actively Hellenizing the region as a continuation of the work of his father, Herod the Great. Greek acculturation had been underway for 200 years in the Galilee. The archeological remains in the region (e.g., Sepphoris, Caesarea Maritima), trade and commerce, and coinage attest to the impact of Hellenism on Jewish society at this time. John would have had sustained contact with Hellenistic influences as part of his education at the time. Greek was the language of trade and as a son of a man who owned several fishing boats. John was certainly involved in sale and negotiations related to this business. He was surely fluent in Greek.

There remains a minority view that the Gospel of John is the most anti-Jewish of the four Gospels because of its repeated use of the term "the Jews." Casey (1996:116-118), who personally rejects the historical Jesus, goes one step further by stating the use of the term "the Jews" is derogatory and an "ethical falsehood" that has laid the foundation for two thousand years of enmity between Christians and Jews. Plant (2012:12-13) rejects Carey's ethical views as "misplaced" for two important reasons. First, all the important characters in John are Jews, except for Pilate. Therefore, the use of the term "the Jews" is best viewed as an internal conflict that does not involve the emerging Christian church. Second, the term "the Jews" in context is a metaphor for the Jewish leaders of the period, principally the temple officials and the Pharisees, who represent entrenched Jewish religious legalism that rejected Jesus and Jewish converts.

Kruse (2003:50) speaks to the use of the idiom "the Jews" from an accounting perspective. He counts 71 references to "the Jews" in 57 verses in the gospel, of which 33 were neutral (e.g., "salvation is from the Jews [4:22]) and three were directed toward believers. In contrast, the idiom is used only five times each in Luke and Matthew (Burge 2003:26). However, eight references were to Jewish people antagonistic toward Jesus and Jesus used the idiom in a harsh manner when referring to Jewish leaders 23 times. The term "the Jews" appears to have broad usage in John's Gospel. Not all Jews were hostile toward Jesus although context confirms the many recorded clashes Jesus experienced (and often precipitated) were expressly against

institutional Judaism.

It is important to observe that these conflicts did not originate with anti-Semites but were clashes that took place within the Jewish community. The conflict with “the Jews” was principally intra-Jewish, that is, Jesus and His followers (themselves Jews) were opposed by Jewish religious leaders. Even the Romans viewed these episodes as merely internal Jewish squabbles and not worth getting involved in. John’s Gospel does not describe the conflict between Christians and Jews, but it does describe conflicts between Jews within the Jewish community about Jewish religious issues.

Enmity between Christians and Jews grew to the point that Jewish-Christians were expelled from the synagogue (John 9:22, 12:42, 16:2, but not the Synoptics). John describes these Jewish-Christians as ἀποσυνάγωγος (“put out”), which is similar language as “spurn your name as evil” found in Luke 6:22. Being “put out” began with “social ostracism and verbal abuse” by the remainder of Jewish society culminating with the predicted killing of expelled believers (v. 16:2, cf. Matt. 23:34, Luke 21:16) by those thinking they are doing service to God (Lincoln 2005:83).

Setzer (1994:89-90) suggests that the expulsions were caused by Jewish-Christians refusing to recite Tractate b. Ber. 28b because it would impose a curse upon the reader (for apostasy) who would then be forced to remove himself from public worship, which is tantamount to permanent removal from the synagogue.¹¹ Left unsaid: Why would Jewish-Christians still associated with the synagogue consider themselves heretics? The best view is there were those within the synagogue that wished their beliefs to remain secret or their Christological beliefs were in the formative stages. Again, the names of Nicodemus (John 3:2, “. . . came to Him by night.” and Joseph of Arimathea (John 19:38, “. . .being a disciple of Jesus, but a secret one, for fear of the Jews . . . “ cf. Matt. 27:57-60, Mark 15:43-46, Luke 23:50-55) come to mind. It seems these two were at first unwilling to make public their profession of faith and accept the societal consequences for that decision (John 9:22, “. . . they were afraid of the

¹¹ b. Ber. 28b reads: “For the apostates let there be no hope and let the arrogant government be speedily opposed in our days. Let the Nazarenes and the Minim be destroyed in a moment and let them be blotted out of the Book of Life and not be inscribed with the righteous. Blessed art thou, O Lord, who humblest the proud!”

Jews, for the Jews had already agreed, that if anyone should confess Him to be Christ, he should be put out of the synagogue”). One can only imagine the tension caused by two prominent Jewish leaders remaining silent in the face of persecution within the Christian community, particularly by those who had experienced the full impact of temple expulsion for their public testimony. This was the level of societal discord within the Jewish community present when John wrote the Fourth Gospel.

Stezer (1994:91) also proposes that after 70 C.E. Jewish leaders began a stricter adherence to rabbinic orthodoxy and the split between Christian and Jew was complete by the Council of Jamnia (ca. 85-90 C.E.). This view seems reasonable given there are no further references to decrees by Jewish leaders expelling Christians from the synagogue found in contemporaneous Jewish writings. Evidence of the enmity between Christian and Jew is found in Justin’s writings (Dial. 16, 96) that recorded at least one account of Jews cursing Christians within the synagogue. The impact of the Gospel within the synagogue and the nature and extent of the expulsions remain unclear. The social upheaval by the Palestinian temple expulsions would have torn families apart and thus upended Jewish society. Even Jesus’ family was affected (John 7:5, “For not even His brothers were believing in Him.”). The expulsions remain an important milestone for the emerging Christian church: The rift between Christian and Jew was permanent (Lincoln 2005: 87). John’s Christology, as presented in the Prologue, was perfected during this period of dissension.

3.4 Cultural Context

John gave eye-witness accounts of many unique episodes in the life of Jesus that give insight into the cultural traditions of the day (e.g., Wedding at Cana, temple practices, enmity toward Samaritans, etc.). John demonstrates knowledge of the Jewish festivals and their symbolic importance in Jesus’ discourses (Feast of Tabernacles [Chapter 7], Feast of Dedication [Chapter 10], Passover [John 11:55, Chapter 12] and gave his eye-witness knowledge of the customs and geography of Palestine, such as Samaritan beliefs (Chapter 4). His description of the five porticoes at the Pool of Bethesda (Chapter 5), and the Pool of Siloam (Chapter 9), recently affirmed by archeological evidence. John also shows knowledge of Jesus’ use of the rabbinic style of argumentation when debating the Jews (e.g., 5:31-47, 8:31-59) (Kruse 2003:33-34). There is also evidence that he was familiar with one or more of the Synoptic Gospels and

perhaps aware of some of the writings of Paul (Lincoln 2005: 27-29).

John's ambition for his gospel was a wide audience of disparate background and level of knowledge of Jesus and the Book of Signs illustrates. The gospel writing would also bear fruit for those Christians living within a social and cultural context that is antithetical to the gospel message. His gospel holds the essential apologetic response of the early Christian church to the those steeped in the religious and philosophical setting of the first century.

3.5 Literary Context

The literary context of the Prologue has been the subject of intense research and publication over the past several decades, particularly with respect to its themes, theology, and structure. Go (2009:2), for example, explored the history of studies on theme and structure in his work on complex parallelism found in the Prologue. He wrote that the thematic approach has long been favored by scholars (e.g., Bultmann [1964], Morris [1971], and Brown [1955]), particularly with respect to studies of the *Logos* and *Logos* Christology, usually with opinions about reconstructing John's "sources" for his Prologue. Bultmann (1964), predictably, proposed the Prologue originated from a Gnostic hymn that celebrated John the Baptist and was later edited to suit their purposes (Bourchet 1996:101). Ritt (1990:2.359) views the portions of the Prologue referencing the incarnation of Christ as a "hymn" originating from Hellenistic Judaism wisdom tradition sources. Silva (2014:3.167) provides much needed context to Ritt's observation. John 1:14 is a succinct yet powerful statement about the incarnation of the Word that marks the wisdom narrative as moot. There is no parallel of the incarnation found in the Wisdom writings. Other scholars (e.g., Borgen [1970], Kysar [1976], and Culpepper [1980]) have focused on finding an underlying structure (e.g., chiastic, parallelism, or complex combinations of the two) to identify principal themes, such as "light," "*Logos*," and "life." There is no collective agreement of an underlying structural theme for the Prologue.

One view is the Prologue was based on an ancient poem appropriated from other religious traditions and edited by anonymous others, although the proposed arguments for this view have become increasingly speculative over time. Many scholars view the Prologue as poetry with two prose insertions (i.e., references to John the Baptist, 1:6-8, 15) although there are many other similar proposals (Carson 1991:112). Classical scholars, for example, have proposed

an underlying Semitic poetic structure based on Hebrew or Aramaic as the original composition language, assuming that the work was later translated into Greek. The majority view at this time appears to be that the author(s) of the Prologue are likely to have used earlier sources, but those sources are so intertwined with John's writing (or writing by a community of redactors) within the Prologue that it is impossible to separate original material (Carson 1991:113). The literary purpose of first eighteen verses as a prologue to the remainder of the Gospel is undeniable (see Section 2.4).

Thematic sources and structural analyses aside, John's Prologue has a well-defined organization and purpose. Unlike the genealogies of Luke and Matthew, John reaches back to the beginning of time before creation to mark the beginning of Jesus' ministry as the agent of creation and the source of light and life (1:1-5). John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets and witness to Jesus as the Son of God, point to the beginning of Jesus' ministry on earth (1:6-8). Next, the rejection of His own people to the coming of the Son of God as the 'true light' are recorded (1:9-13). Klink (2016:84) observes that at this point John introduces the opposing forces at work, "both seen and unseen." The incarnation of Jesus, 100% divine and 100% human, creator of all things, is then introduced as the glory of God ("We have seen His glory") to the world (1:14) John the Baptist again testifies that the Old Testament declares that Jesus Christ is the prophesied Messiah (1:15) who through His "grace and truth" has fulfilled the Law given to Moses.

The Prologue deftly takes the reader through a tightly-woven historical statement about the divinity of Jesus Christ leading up to arguably the most important event in human history: the incarnation of Christ. The remainder of the Gospel presents detailed eye-witness accounts of Jesus' miracles (the Book of Signs) and how He interacts with humanity offering the salvation that comes only through acceptance of His grace and truth (The Book of Glory).

Literary analyses of the Prologue are plentiful in the literature but will have a limited role in the exegesis of the passage. A typical literary analysis attempts to identify the underlying structure and themes with the goal of reconstructing sources. The Gospel of John, in whole, was authored by the apostle John so reconstructing sources has limited application in this exegetical analysis. However, there are portions of the Prologue where understanding structure (e.g., chiasm, etc.) aids our understanding of John's message.

3.6 Summary and Conclusions

This chapter examines two important aspects of John's Prologue. First, the importance of carefully considering the interrelationship between authorship, dating, and provenance of the Gospel of John was presented in Section 3.1. Next, an examination of the historical, social, cultural, and literary context of the Prologue was examined in Sections 3.2 – 3.5, respectively.

The weight of internal and external evidence strongly supports the conclusion that the apostle John composed the Gospel near the end of the first century in Ephesus for four reasons. First, strong external evidence supports this view, particularly patristic sources. Second, the most reasonable identification of the beloved disciple is the apostle John based on internal evidence, such being a disciple who personally witnessed the accounts. Third, the authoritative, eye-witness authorship of the gospel was written independently of the Synoptics. Finally, the gospel's detail descriptions strongly suggest a personal account of a writer with intimate knowledge of pre-70 C.E. Palestine. The preponderance of evidence supports a late first-century dating of the gospel, likely in the 80-95 C.E. period. The late date of composition confidently allows comparison of the *Logos* Christology found in the Prologue of the Gospel of John with Philo of Alexandria's (died ca. 50 C.E.) *logos* philosophy. A late date, near the end of the first century, suggests that Philo's work was circulating for over 40 years, thus significantly increasing the probability that John would have been familiar with his writings.

Finally, this work assumes the provenance of the Gospel is Ephesus, which is consistent with Johannine authorship and the available external evidence. The evidence for Alexandria as the place of origin of the Gospel, the only other significant proposal, is scant and predicated on the presence of Gnostic writings as foundational for the composition of the Prologue and thus an early date of compilation. The Gospel itself strongly suggests authorship by a Palestinian Jew and an eyewitness of the life and work of Jesus. Also, the clear message of the Gospel was not limited to Alexandrian Jews but included Diaspora Jews and Gentiles. The theory of an Alexandrian origin of the Fourth Gospel is, at its core, based on perceived "affinities" between the writings of the apostle John and Philo of Alexandria and disregards the strong external evidence from Church Fathers (Klink (2016:61).

The second half of this chapter (Sections 3.2 – 3.5) briefly examined the historical, social, cultural, and literary context of the Prologue that will be of value in the exegetical portion of this

work. The historical context of the Prologue is eclectic. John's intended audience of diaspora Jews within a Hellenistic culture, Palestinian Jews, and Gentiles across the Roman Empire also represents the cultural and religious milieu of the first century.

First-century readers were exposed to the *Corpus Hermeticum* (the fusion of Greek philosophy and Asian thought), Hellenistic Judaism (Judaism fused with Greek culture and philosophies), the prescriptive rules of Rabbinic Judaism, and the dualistic beliefs of incipient Gnosticism (at least in Alexandria, likely in Ephesus). The social order was greatly disrupted by the arrival of Jesus Christ who soon precipitated an internal struggle with the entrenched legalistic religious systems when He declared Himself as the Son of God and preached salvation through grace rather than observance of the Law.

The societal setting is further complicated by John's revelation that Jewish believers were expelled from the synagogue thereby hastening the permanent split between Christianity and Judaism are thought to have been later formalized by the Council of Jamnia, although this is a contentious conclusion. The gospel also addresses the social barriers present within Jewish religious society at the time with the episodes of Nicodemus and Joseph of Arimathea as secret followers of Jesus. Jewish society was undergoing chaos as the split between Christians and Jews grew. The split also precipitated "secret" followers of Christ who were perhaps motivated to avoid religious persecution. The Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, eloquent in its brevity, addressed the gospel message to each of these disparate groups.

John's Gospel reflects many eye-witness accounts of momentous events in the life of Jesus, particularly Jesus taking part in many temple observances, Passover, and interacting with the Pharisees in heated debate. Jesus also expressed knowledge of Samaritan beliefs. Jesus possessed a consummate knowledge of Jewish religious belief and practice yet, as the incarnate Son of God He also sought to bring a new covenant relationship to His chosen people with full knowledge that His message was going to be rejected.

The Prologue, in a literary context, has been the topic of much research, particularly with respect to themes and structures, although with little collective agreement among scholars. John's uses the prologue as a literary device (Section 2.2.2) as the means to introduce Christological themes (Section 2.4). In sum, the Prologue is a monolithic writing purposefully and expertly woven to introduce John's readers to Jesus Christ, God incarnate, but also as a

summary of and an introduction to the remainder of the Gospel.

Chapter 4 addresses the third subsidiary research question, “What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos?” Chapter 4 explores Philo's Hermeneutical approach to biblical interpretation and how the hermeneutic affects his understanding of Scripture. Primary sources will be used to identify and develop a family of images used by Philo to describe the nature and work of his philosophical logos.

CHAPTER 4

PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA'S LOGOS PHILOSOPHY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of an analysis of Philo of Alexandria's logos philosophy as found in his writings, as presented by Yonge's (2006) English translation, *The Works of Philo: Complete and Unabridged*. Contextual usage of the word "logos" and its cognates, as well as other important search terms, were found in *The Works of Philo, Greek Text with Morphology* (Borgen, 2005) and then checked against Young for the correct semantic usage.

The word "logos" has a very wide semantic range in Hellenistic Greek (Appendix 1). Based on a search of Borgen (2006) using Logos Bible software, Philo uses λόγος and its cognates 1,381 times in 1,175 articles in his writings, most of which are references to a narrative, account, writing, report and the like. The last subcategory of the semantic definition found in the lexicon of Liddell and Scott (1995) is the word λόγος defined as, "Wisdom of God, personified as his agent in creation and world-government . . ." Debrunner (1964:4.74) concurs, presenting contextual dictionary forms for logos as "narrative, word, speech" and the "utterance of thought in speech" with reference to Plato's usage in *Sophist* (263e). Ritt (1990:2.357) suggests a number of meanings for λόγος, such as "word, language, narrative, teaching, or account," among many other similar definitions although generally the word generally means "word, report, command." Each of these terms were used to search Borgen's Greek text to identify contextually significant passages that used λόγος and its cognates.

Identifying contextual usage of the word logos within the writings of Philo is the focus of this chapter. Our purpose is to construct a profile of Philo's visage of the logos. However, merely identifying the correct contextual use of the λόγος does not guarantee a complete picture of Philo's logos philosophy is painted. Various other search strategies were used to acquire a more complete picture of Philo's logos philosophy. The result of this work answers the third subsidiary research question, "What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it

relates to its conceptualization of the logos?” In Chapter 6, the essential elements of Philo’s logos philosophy will be compared and contrasted against John’s *Logos* Christology that will be developed in Chapter 5 in order to answer the fourth subsidiary research question.

4.2 Philo of Alexandria

In this section, a short biography of Philo of Alexandria is presented so that the Alexandrian version of Hellenistic Judaism may be appreciated before his writings are investigated, particularly his hermeneutical approach to Scripture interpretation. This section also examines Philo’s eclectic beliefs about the nature and character of the Greek logos through the lens of a thoroughly Hellenized Jew. Philo lived and wrote at a pivotal time in history as a contemporary of Jesus (although separated geographically) and as the Gospel was taking root in Palestine and other parts of the Roman Empire. His writings are the exemplar when the Hellenist view of the Jewish Bible, particularly the Pentateuch, is desired. Philo leans heavily on an allegorical hermeneutic of Jewish Scripture popular with first-century writers. When his allegorical interpretation of Jewish Scripture contradicts Greek thought, Philo usually allows his Greek presuppositions to trump Jewish dogma. However, Philo quickly reverts to a literal interpretation of Scripture when the topic is monotheism. This chapter seeks to fully develop each of these descriptions of Philo, particularly as they impact his understanding of the person and work of the logos. The rationale for Philo’s syncretic view of Scripture, other than his Hellenistic interpretive hermeneutic mixed with Jewish backgrounds, are outside the limits of this inquiry.

Philo of Alexandria was an enigmatic first-century Jewish intellectual whose work is generally characterized as a rationalization of diaspora Judaism within the dominant Hellenistic culture that existed in Alexandria, Egypt in the first century. The Septuagint, the Bible of the Seventy, and the Wisdom of Solomon (part of the Alexandrian Bible tradition) are examples of Alexandrian Jewish thought. A survey of recent Philonic scholarship reveals the disparate views of Philo as a mystic removed from the world, politician and envoy to Caesar, and as “philosopher preacher” (Danielou (2014:xv). Philo was a man of his time, wrestling with the tension of a transcendent creator, self-sufficient, and abstract ruler of the created order with an immanent God who reveals Himself and draws humanity close. Philo unites these disparate views of God in his conception of the divine logos (Lewy 2004:11), although from within his Hellenistic Greek

milieu. Regardless of which view is taken of Philo the man, there is no doubt that Philo was an important first-century figure standing at the crossroads of Jewish faith intersecting Greek culture.

Philo's works are best read in the context of a people seeking to live within the Greek culture while retaining their traditional religious beliefs. He was a contemporary of the rise of Synagogue Judaism coupled with Hellenistic "biblical embellishment" that reflect this era (Sandmel 1979:131). In other words, Philo's work interprets Alexandrian Judaism in light of Hellenism in contrast with the writers of the New Testament who interpreted the Old Testament in light of Palestinian Judaism. Philo's works record his struggle to construct this framework thus making his writings emblematic of Alexandrian Jewish thought during the first century. Philo was a spokesman for like-minded members of the Jewish diaspora who wished to spread to the world a new religion best described as Jewish religious thought syncretized with Hellenistic philosophy (Beasley-Murray 2002:lv).

Little is known about the life of Philo and what is known is widely published. In sum, Philo was born into a wealthy family that allowed him time to pursue his philosophical interests. He was stirred from his contemplative life and authorial interests with his election as head of a delegation that traveled to Rome to plead for the plight of Alexandrian Jews before emperor Gaius Caligula (39-40 C.E.) in response to the pogrom Prefect Flaccus instituted in 38 C.E. (*Spec. Leg.* 3.1-6, also see *Against Flaccus* and *The Embassy to Gaius*). Alexander, Philo's brother, was a wealthy customs agent for Rome who once loaned money to Herod Agrippa I. Marcus Julius Alexander, the younger of Alexander's two sons, married Bernice, the daughter of Herod Agrippa I (Acts 25:13, 23; 26:30). Philo's other nephew was Tiberius Julius Alexander who rejected his Jewish heritage and entered Roman civil service. Tiberius would later become procurator of the province of Judea (46-48 C.E.) and prefect of Egypt (66-70 C.E.), during which time he brutally put down a Jewish rebellion in Alexandria. Tiberius was politically astute, supporting Vespasian in his quest for power. Tiberius Julius Alexander's reward was the position of second in command of the Roman army during the siege of Jerusalem in 70 C.E. Philo of Alexandria, unlike the remainder of his dysfunctional family, continued to embrace and serve as an apologist for his Jewish beliefs but from a thoroughly Hellenized point of view.

Philo's writings defy a narrow classification but can be generally separated into three

groups; writings on the Pentateuch, philosophical treatises, and historical-apologetic writings. Each of these writings reveals different perspectives of Philo's logos. Philo's view of the transcendence of God, particularly with personified divine wisdom (Job 28:12; Prov. 8, 9) and the role of the "utterance" of God in creation, are common themes. Another important theme is Philo's explanation or description of how a transcendent God is able to have a relationship with humanity. Philo's system of beliefs reflects the Platonic view of a separation between imperfect humanity and the perfect God, thus an immanent yet eternal, divine intermediary is required. The logos, the highest of the intermediary creations of God, often called the "first-born" (*Agr.* 51; *Conf.* 146), and his allegorizing of the Hebrew Bible are perhaps the two most prominent themes found in his writings. Philo's allegorical interpretive approach does have its limits. When Greek philosophy and Old Testament writings contradict, Philo inevitably chooses the former while always strongly supporting the Jewish One True God. The most important intersection of thought between the Prologue and Philo is his understanding of the logos (Beasley-Murray (2002:iiv), the subject of this work.

4.3 Finding Logos in Philo's Writings

Searching Philo's writings for clues to his views of the logos was performed in a two-step process. First, a morphological search was performed for the locations where the word λόγος and its cognates appear. Next, a search was performed using other keywords suggested by reading Philo, the first search, and other lexical terms suggested by Liddel and Scott (1995).

A morphological search of Borgen (2005) using the noun λόγος including cognates quickly identified each occurrence of this word within Philo's original Greek writings. However, the text available with Logos Bible software is limited to parsing and lemma (dictionary form of the word) and does not include a gloss (basic English word meaning). A reverse interlinear is not available and the text is not syntactically or functionally tagged, as is common with Greek Bibles available today. Most importantly for this study, the semantic domain of words is not tagged. Taken together, searches reveal each occurrence of λόγος and its cognates but no semantic details thus that work was manually performed. Next, the search results were manually filtered for specific instances in which λόγος with cognates were found that describe attributes of God related to Philo's philosophical logos. Those instances were then cross-referenced to the English translation of Yonge (2006) to determine context.

This search strategy is unquestionably limited because there are many other locations within Philo's writings where he describes attributes of God related to his logos philosophy without specifically using the word λόγος. For example, Philo's interpretation of humanity formed from an image of an image of God (*Op.* 25; *Leg. All.* 53-54) is vital when developing a more fulsome understanding of Philo's logos philosophy although the word "logos" does not appear in these references. Further semantic searches were conducted on Yonge's (2006) English translation of Philo's writings using search terms suggested by the Liddell and Scott (1995) lexicon and others gleaned from a close examination of Philo's writings. Important key search terms from Liddel and Scott are shown in Appendix 1.

This two-step search approach does not guarantee every reference or allusion to Philo's philosophical logos was identified but the results of the searches are extensive and certainly satisfactory for identifying important characteristics of Philo's philosophical logos that will be compared and contrasted with John's Christological *Logos* in Chapter 6.

4.4 Philo's Interpretive Construct

Philo may be commended for his desire to interpret Scripture yet his interpretive framework (generally, allegory) and his hermeneutic presupposition (Neoplatonic thought syncretized with the Pentateuch's statements about God and His actions) are unique in the first century. An examination of his writings yields four important observations. First, Philo employs an allegorical hermeneutic to interpret Scripture in light of his Hellenistic culture (Danielou 2014:90). Philo's exegetical method applied to the Old Testament mirrors the philosophical approach of the early Greek philosophers, particularly Plato. An allegorical hermeneutic is used to search for messages hidden within the text that must first be uncovered and then a spiritual meaning is applied to arrive at the final interpretation and application. For Philo, virtually all animate and inanimate objects have a unique spiritual meaning that the reader must discern in order to achieve spiritual enlightenment. For example, Philo's preoccupation with the number seven and its spiritual significance is an excellent example (*Leg. All.* 8). An allegorical approach to understanding Scripture is significantly different from an evangelical interpretive hermeneutic in which the author's contextual meaning to his readers is first determined and then the eternal truth is then be applied to our modern context, often with multiple applications (Klein 2004; Dockery 1994; Fee 2002; Virkler, 2007; Stein 2011). There are times that Philo reverts to a

literal interpretive hermeneutic. Philo abandons allegory and leans strongly to a literal interpretation when Hebrew symbolic rituals, such as when he discusses circumcision or the Sabbath (*Mig.* 89-93, *Spec. Leg.* 1.1-11), are being interpreted. Philo's allegorical hermeneutic permeates his writings, particularly when he describes the nature and work of the logos.

The second observation is Philo's exegetical methods, although common in his context, are flawed at certain times. Philo often analyzes specific words using the Hebrew word's etymology and then proceeds to an interpretation according to the Greek root, thereby committing the interpretive "root fallacy" error (Fee 2009:182). For example, Philo etymologically interprets the word (from the LXX) Ἰσραήλ (Israel) that when correctly interpreted represents the ancient people of God and their land. Israel is transliterated from Hebrew יִשְׂרָאֵל, from the roots שָׂרָא (*sarah*) meaning "to contend, to fight" and אֵל (*'el*) meaning "God," or generally interpreted as "God strives" or "to wrestle with God," although commentators differ. Philo reinterprets Ἰσραήλ, as translated from Chaldean into Greek, as meaning "seeing God" (*Congr.* 51, *Som.* 2-172-174) in the sense of recognizing that He does exist and that His existence is individually revealed (*Praem.* 43-44). Philo concludes that Ἰσραήλ may be translated as meaning "the seeing nation" (*Leg.* 4-5), or as "He that seeth by day" (*Quaest in Gn.* 49). Philo then makes application of his interpretation as the people of Israel include those who are "inclined to the contemplation of God" and since the mind is "the whole soul," everyone may see God. Philo's use of an allegorical hermeneutic enables him to conclude that those who wish that "see" God (in the platonic manner of receiving God's wisdom and knowledge) is universal, even for non-Jewish philosophers. Why is this interpretation important? If Neoplatonism originates from the Pentateuch then Philo must allow even ardent Hellenists a means to identify with God as described in Scripture.

Third, when an allegorical argument does not support his presuppositions, Philo resorts to a grammatical argument. For example, Philo offers a grammatical argument about the presence of the logos within the LXX. Philo states (*Som.* 1.229-230) that the presence of the article preceding the noun (ὁ θεός) is a reference to God but the absence of the article represents a reference to the "the most ancient word" (logos). Thus, the logos may be found as the means through which transcendent God interacts with humanity throughout the Pentateuch and in many different forms. Philo's reasoning is surprising for one whose native language is Greek. Generally, the presence of an article is necessary for the noun to be definite. However, the

absence of the article is not determinative of definiteness (Wallace 1996, 243).

Finally, Philo understands the nature of the logos in a distinctly Jewish manner, such as when he exegetes personified divine wisdom (Job 28:12; Proverbs 8, 9). In and of itself God's utterances as the defining force of creation is consistent with mainstream Jewish thought in the first century. However, Philo writes that the logos is the Word (Wisdom) of God (*Sacr.* 8; *Som.* 1.182; *Op.* 13). Philo also identifies the logos as the angel of the Lord (e.g., *Leg. All.* 177-178; *Quod. Deus.* 180-182; *Mig.* 173-174; *Fug.* 5), the divine Word (*Som.* 1.190-191, 1.215; *Quaest in Gn.* 62), and YHWH Himself (Gen. 16:7-13, 32:24-28; Ex. 23:20; Hos. 12:4-5; Mal. 3:1), among many other names and functions of the logos that are more fully described in the following section.

4.5 Philo's Philosophical Logos

The philosophical or mystical logos did not originate with Philo but reflect Platonic beginnings, perhaps as early as the late 6th Century B.C.E. with Ephesian philosopher Heraclitus (Nash 2003:70). This philosophy was subsequently more fully developed by Plato and later adopted by the Stoics who added further details. Although there is a dearth of surviving writings by Heraclitus on the topic of the logos, it does seem to play a fundamental role in his philosophy. Heraclitus writes about the importance of living in accordance with the logos, which he describes as the unity of all things or the wisdom that directs all things. There is a cause behind every effect seen in nature and the logos is responsible. Plato's view of the logos seems to advance Heraclitus in many ways. The Platonic logos is described as the rational intelligence that unifies all creation. But how does the logos interreact with creation? Apparently, not all of humanity is equally imbued with wisdom and the degree of wisdom acquired is for each person self-determined. In Plato's *Republic*, for example, Plato explores the difference between a common person who seeks beautiful things and the philosopher who desires to know beauty itself. In other words, a common person recognizes that there is greater than human wisdom that was the proximate cause of creation. The philosopher wants to personally know and attain that wisdom. Plato also views this cognitive disparity as the difference between opinion and knowledge of absolute truth (Book V, 476d-480a). Philo's identification with philosophers of all stripe explains the conclusions he reached in his unique exegesis of the word Israel. Inclusiveness was required in order to gain acceptance of his view of the preeminence of the Pentateuch above all other

philosophies.

Philo is correctly described as a first century philosophical descendant of those Greek dualistic philosophies (principally Platonism and Stoicism) particularly with respect to his writings on the logos, a commonly used term in Greco-Roman culture and Judaism at that time. Philo's philosophical contribution to Platonic/Stoic thought was his ambition to synchronize into a unified or structured system of thought the concept of God found in the Old Testament (normally described in anthropomorphic terms [e.g., the Word of God, Gen 1:1] in Jewish religious belief and practice) with the Hellenistic view of a metaphysical logos. Philo concludes that there must be a created intermediary between the transcendent God and humanity, whom he also often describes in anthropometric and immanent terms. For example, Philo equates personified wisdom described in Prov. 8:22 (*Ebr.* 31) with the Greek philosophical logos. He concludes that all human wisdom is but a copy or picture of the heavenly logos (*LA* 1.43, 45-46), who in of itself is an image of the wisdom of God. His rationale for that belief is Moses wrote humanity was created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26). Humanity is, therefore, an image or impression of the logos or an image of an image of God. God's Word, His wisdom, is the logos of the Old Testament (*Sacr.* 8; *Som.* 1.182; *Op.* 13). In Philo's view, a portion of the omnipresent divine logos accounts for the reasoning capacity of the human mind and is therefore eternal (*Deus.* 47).

In Greek philosophy and largely reflected in Platonic thought, the logos refers to the rational, underlying intelligence of the universe. Greek philosophers developed this understanding through observation of the world around them. Philo, on the other hand, appears to inherit his view of logos largely from the Stoics, the first to systemize logos thought as the primary the source of reality (Beasley-Murray 2002:liv), the cosmic or divine reason that is found throughout all creation, and the rationale for "the ordering of physical reality" (Runia 2001:142). In ancient thought, every phenomenon had an underlying cause or agent. For example, Plato speaks of the divine craftsman with respect to the creation of the world's soul (reminiscent of Proverbs 8). The Stoics believed the universe was a living reality much like a living creature and logically a superior being is in control of reality. The Stoic's quest for the single, underlying principle or elementary particles of the universe are much like modern physicists searching for the elusive Grand Unified Theory of the universe. Philo's writings record his attempt to advance his philosophical understanding of the logos rationalized through

ancient Jewish beliefs as reflected in the Mosaic Law, which, incidentally, is also revealed as the logos. Philo's primary means for rationalizing Platonic thought with the Pentateuch was by defining the forms and function of the logos.

Philo's logos has many names and descriptions (*Conf.* 146) that he sought to harmonize with Platonic thought. The logos is called the image of God, the chief born, the high priest, the chief of angels, and the paraclete who bestows God's blessings on man (*Mos.* 2:134), the "second god" (*Prov.*, Fragment 1), the healer of the soul (*Leg. All.* 3:177-178), His chief deputy (*Agr.* 51), and the archangel of many names (*Conf.* 146; *Quis. Het.* 205). Philo also describes the logos as the revealer of God found in the Scriptures (*Gen.* 31:13; 16:8), an angel of the Lord (*Som.* 1.228-239; *Cher.* 1-3), the Words of God (*Som.* 1.148), the "first-born offspring of the soul" (*Som.* 1.202) and chief [eldest] of the angels (*Conf.* 146). The logos is also described by Philo as God's "reason," (Platonic wisdom), his "first-born son" (euphemistically, not ontologically, *Conf.* 63), and his lieutenant (*Agr.* 50-51).

Perhaps the most visually descriptive form of the logos is as "the very shadow of God" (*Leg. All.* 3:95). The writer of Hebrews speaks of Christ as the "exact representation of [God's] nature" (*Heb.* 1:3) although this is a picture of Christ's divinity and equality with the Father. Philo's depiction is of the logos standing in front of the eternal light of the Father and shielding humanity so that only the outline of God and the center shadow of the logos are visible. The logos stands between transcendent God and humanity. The apostle John, as will be shown in the following chapter, is much more specific, in a spiritual sense, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father . . ." (*John* 14:9). To see the incarnate Christ through spiritual eyes is a distinct picture of the Father, not merely a shadow of God obscured by the logos. Further, Philo states that the logos is the interpreter of God's will for humanity, ". . . His word (logos) [is] the interpreter of His will" (*Leg. All.* 2-207). Finally, Philo relates the logos to the Messiah, God's perfect son and emissary to humanity. For example, Philo interprets the Jewish Messianic interpretation of Moses' words found in *Deut.* 18:15, one of the principal pre-patriarchal Messianic prophecies, as a reference to the logos: "The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me (the logos, in Philo's view, not Moses) from among you, from among your countrymen, you shall listen to him." Philo consistently pronounces the presence of the logos in many forms and functions throughout the Pentateuch, usually when an immanent God is pictured by Moses in Scripture.

Philo's hermeneutical presupposition supporting the Hellenistic philosophical logos has many interpretive consequences. For example, the logos as God's emissary also means to Philo that it has the responsibility to bring forgiveness of sin and an endless supply of blessing to the world (*Mos.* 2.134). Philo describes God as the grand architect of all things and the logos as God's messenger or Divine Reason, the Platonic "Form" from which all things originate (*Aet.* 8-16), and as the indestructible Form of reason (*Det.* 75-76). The logos is personified wisdom (*Prov.* 8:22; *Ebr.* 31) and Philo writes that Moses calls this wisdom the "sight of God." God creates in His mind and the logos at that same instant carry out the activities necessary to bring that creation to fruition (*Op.* 17). Philo views the wisdom of Moses written in the Pentateuch as the predecessor and foundation of all Greek philosophies.

Philo describes the logos as fundamentally an intermediary, a messenger, between transcendent God and created humanity. In Philo's philosophy, a transcendent God cannot be immanent thus references to an immanent God in Scripture, whether YHWH, angel, or prophet, must be viewed as a reference to the logos at work. Thus, the logos serves two important functions. First, the logos must serve God. The logos is "continually a suppliant to the immortal God on behalf of the mortal race, which is exposed to affliction and misery; and is also the ambassador, sent by the Ruler of all, to the subject race" (*Quis Het.* 205-206). His exegesis of Num. 16:48 ("And *he* took his stand between the dead and the living . . .") is cited to support this view, although context clearly demands the pronoun "he" represents Moses, an uncreated God representing the living, and humanity signifying the dead in this verse. Second, the logos is the immanent form of God given to humanity, a visible representative, messenger, or mediator with humanity (*Quaest in Ex* 2:13) of the transcendent God (which is consistent with the Platonic Form of creation). The logos is God's ambassador to humanity (*Quis Het.* 205). Therefore God, as the supreme initiator of all things, transcendent and invisible, can have a relationship with visible humanity only through the divine logos as intercessor, mediator, and messenger.

This bifurcated view of the logos as "the first beginning of all things, the original species..." (*Quaest in Gen.* 4) is plainly the Platonic archetypal concept in disguise yet ostensibly derived from his exegesis of Gen. 9:6 ("...For in the image of God He made man."). Thus Philo's exegesis of the passage concludes that an image of God must exist (representing the Platonic Form of forms). The logos may function in the capacity of divine messenger but the logos reveals the image (wisdom) of God to humanity. In fact, Philo writes that the wisdom of God is

the source of all wisdom. God's wisdom (another Platonic Form) was reproduced or "stamped" by God on the logos. Philo then concludes that the image of wisdom that God stamped onto the logos was then used to likewise stamp humanity because there can be no direct relationship between humankind's rational soul and the transcendent God (*Quaest in Gn* 2.62), which is also greatly reflective of Platonic thought. It is only through the logos whereby humanity may perceive God (*Leg. All.* 1.37-38) or receive wisdom. Philo uses the metaphor the stamp producing thousands of identical impressions of the logos or humanity to represent humanity's creation and being embedded with wisdom. However, the stamp of creation does have limits. Humanity is mortal and thus the death of a mortal is immaterial in wisdom's continuation because the original "stamp" is immortal (*Det.* 75-77). Humanity has an expiration date. The logos is eternal.

Philo views Scriptural references to God as describing a dualist God, each with supreme and primary powers but with different functions: His Goodness and His Authority. Goodness (θεός, also called Creative Power or Beneficial Power (*Leg. All.* 125; *Fug.* 97, 103; *Mut.* 29-30) is called by Philo as "God" (*Mos.* 2.99-100) and the "maker of the whole world." (*Mut.* 28-29). The Creative Power, whom "Moses called God" (*Fug.* 97), is the source of "unalloyed" truth (*Det.* 125) and is "peaceable and gentle" (*Quaest in Gn.* 1.57). His Authority (κυριος, also called "Lord, Regent Power, or Royal Power (*Abr.* 121, *Mos.* 99-100) is the means by which God rules over creation (*Fug.* 95). Yet, Creative Power is "legislative, and chastising, and correcting" (*Quaest in Gn.* 1.57), which appears contradictory on the surface. Surprisingly, Philo does not see this dualistic view of God as a violation of his monotheistic sensibilities. Philo believes allegorical interpretation mixed with platonic philosophy is merely contrasting the two natures of God described in Scripture. However, this description of the basic nature of God clearly has its roots in Stoicism, particularly with his later identification of the logos as the "glue" that holds in tension the two revealed characteristics of God (*Abr.* 121). The motivation for this dualistic view of God is consistent with his Hellenistic philosophical belief of unity of being, that is, two equal and opposite powers present in the cosmic and human souls. Philo does walk a tightrope with his writings on the oneness of God. On one side are Philo's strict monotheistic beliefs and on the other side is Platonic dualism that must be reconciled with the Jewish God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Thus Philo adopts this obviously Platonic dualism motif to satisfy Hellenized Greeks without alienating Jews that still believe in a monotheistic God.

Philo describes the polar forces of Creative and Beneficent Power as an expression of the logos, that is, God's thinking and actions (Prov. 1.7; *Sacr.* 65; *Mos.* 1.283) although the extent and number of God's powers and their relation to the logos is vague and often overlap. God created everything by His Goodness and the Lord governs all that was created by His authority but the logos is left ontologically ambiguous. The essential point is Philo describes the logos as the glue that binds together Goodness and Authority, "for it was owing to the logos that God was both a ruler and good" (*Cher.* 1.27-28). In other words, an essential function of the logos is to unite the polar powers possessed by Almighty God. However, Philo felt the need to identify Creative Power as first among equals, perhaps as a reference to the importance given to the eldest son in ancient Jewish culture. Philo later states that Creative Power is the older of the two because it was king over what was once nonexistent. This is confusing because Philo also equates Creative Power as the logos in another writing (*Quaest in Ex.* 2.62). Philo's allegorical hermeneutic also led him to write that the cherubim are symbols of the two separate powers of God (*Fug.* 100), the logos is positioned above the mercy seat and above the Cherubim, and the flaming sword (Genesis 3:24) is a symbol of the logos that existed before creation (*Cher.* 1.27-28; *Sac.* 59; *Abr.* 124-125; *Quis Het.* 166; *Quaest in Ex.* 2.68) These descriptions, among others, strongly suggest Philo believed the logos was the first created thing. Philo also describes the logos as the mind of God which, in turn, mirrors the Stoic concept of the soul that consists of air and fire, two of the four basic elements that form everything in creation. Philo's allegorical hermeneutic allows a variety of often convoluted interpretive conclusions which props open the door to syncretization with Greek philosophy.

Philo describes the logos as the bonding agent that "glues" together the two functions of God. For example, the logos holds together the physical world and is that part of the human soul that holds together the human body without need of anything else (*Quis. Het.* 188). Philo views the logos as the power that holds the physical earth together, his power emanating from the center of the earth outward. The logos ensures the earth does not dissolve in the oceans. In sum, the logos brings coherence and stability to creation (*Plant.* 8-10). These descriptions of the function of the logos are very reminiscent of Paul's words in Colossians 1:17 that describe the power of Jesus Christ, "...and by Him all things hold together." In addition to holding together all creation, the logos also holds together the human soul and allows the human body to function (*Quis Het.* 188). However, it appears that the creation of all things was not through the power of

God but by (or through) the logos. The logos is a created image of God and He used this image as a template for creation of all things (*Leg. All.* 1.43) and is thus the “soul of the world” (*Aet.* 84). This dualist view of creation is consistent with Philo’s Stoic philosophical convictions.

Philo describes logos in many other, sometimes unusual, ways throughout his writings, such as being incorporeal yet the pattern or expression for the universe (*Op.* 20-25), the instrument or agent of creation (*Cher.* 127), and what binds together creation (*Som.* 1.241) the created the universe and the perfect man (in context, presumably Adam, *Som.* 8). Philo’s logos also brings order to humanity in the form of rational thought (*Op.* 146; *Praem.* 163; *Det.* 86-90), the human mind is a thin slice of the divine logos that is eternal, and the logos is what motivates humankind’s free will and intellect (*Quod Deus.* 47). We each share this identical portion of logos. Each person’s logos allows one to comprehend one’s environment and spiritual things (*Quis Het.* 234-236; *Det.* 90). This individual portion of logos is what separates humanity from plants and animals (*Quod Deus.* 48). God breathed the logos into Adam giving life to humanity (*Leg. All.* 1.37) thus “stamping” His indivisible image on each person, although each person exercises their portion of wisdom in different ways and extents.

Philo’s interpretive construct is anchored by his education in Greek science, philosophy, and rhetoric. For Philo, philosophy is “the desire to see things accurately,” that is, God and His logos (*Conf.* 97). Only God can comprehend God because our limited minds are unable to comprehend an infinite being so God must reveal Himself through an intermediate, created being, the logos. Thus, the logos is the source of instruction and correction to our soul with the responsibility to lead every person to “wisdom as its mistress” and avoiding foolishness (*Quaest in Gn.* 3.30). Philo uses the simile of the sun, “of light to light,” to represent the revealing of God Himself to humanity, a very platonic concept (*Mut.* 4-6). However, Philo sees a separation between those who can comprehend God and those who can comprehend God only by His actions, much as platonic philosophers saw their desire to comprehend the logos as more elevated than the common person’s desire to see the immanent actions of the logos. God’s wisdom is without limit (*Post.* 151), the source of all of God’s blessings (*Quis. Het.* 315), and His wisdom will guide His judgment of the universe (*Fug.* 196). However, as Philo observes, humanity desires wisdom yet rejects the wisdom of God (*Post.* 136). The logos is the image of God and thus begotten but it is infused with the divine power or wisdom of God. “[T]he most generic is God, and next is the logos of God, the other things subsist in [logos] only” (*Leg. All.*

2.86). The endowed few become so through a vision granted by God seemingly through philosophical enlightenment and reason (wisdom) as the result of personal effort (*Praem.* 39-40), which, as discussed earlier, separates the true philosopher from the rest of humanity.

Philo sees the immanent power of the logos throughout Scripture. Philo writes that manna is the “most ancient logos of God” (*Det.* 118). God provides wisdom to humanity through a “stream” that infuses followers of God with “manna” and humanity is thereby nourished by the logos (*Leg. All.* 3.175-176). Not all will benefit equally. In the view of Philo, the more perfect the person, the more nourishment (wisdom of God) is received (*Det.* 115-117). It’s at this point that Philo encountered a grammatical problem—wisdom (σοφία) is feminine and logos is masculine in Greek. Philo solved this grammatical inconsistency by arbitrarily concluding the “nature” of wisdom is masculine (*Fug.* 50-52). Setting grammar aside for a moment, a more distinct view of Christ as manna is described by the apostle John (6:31-33). The Father, not Moses, provided the manna for sustenance to the ancient Hebrews but the “bread of God” is given from heaven who “gives life to the world.” Philo allegorically interprets manna as God-provided wisdom (logos) that is necessary to comprehend God while John metaphorically describes manna as the eternal life-giving Word.

Thus far, it seems Philo has described the logos having most, if not all, of the functions of God. However, Philo does caution against mistaking the logos as God (*Som.* 1.230) even though the traits and attributes ascribed to the logos are remarkably similar to those of God. For example, Philo sees God’s judgmental powers over humanity and the universe as delegated to the logos (*Quaest in Gen.* 3.23). Philo’s uses the phrase “first-born” to describe the origin of the logos as a product of God’s thought and as having many of the characteristics of God. These described characteristics are often expressed in different, usually divine, ways. For example, in the Old Testament, when an angel of the Lord appeared it was actually the logos that came to reveal God’s purpose or message (*Som.* 1.228-239; *Cher.* 1-3). However, elsewhere Philo seems to state that the logos, is, in essence, God. “For that [logos] must be God to us imperfect beings, but the first mentioned, or true God, is so only to wise and perfect men” (*Leg. All.* 3.207). Philo seems to say that the logos is functionally the messenger of God to humanity and the logos is the only God humanity will ever know. Therefore, from the viewpoint of humanity, the logos is, for all intents and purposes, God. This view fits squarely with Philo’s view of a transcendent, unknowable God, although Philo has cheapened God’s significance to humanity. What Philo

fails to consider is worship will naturally migrate from God to the logos, a situation that God never tolerates in Scripture. On the other hand, For Philo, God remains transcendent and the logos is His immanent emissary to humanity. For the ancient Jew, an emissary represented his master in all ways and the message delivered was to be considered as coming from the mouth of his master. For all intents and purposes, the Master is vicariously present. This nuanced view of God and the logos is philosophically impressive but is dismissive of the common person's spiritual need to worship the One True God.

4.6 Summary and Conclusions

Philo was a Jewish scholar steeped in Alexandrian Judaism and schooled in Greek Platonic thought, the societal norm for educated Jews found in the Roman Empire in the late first century, particularly in Alexandria. Philo's philosophical logos is multi-dimensional in its description, purpose, and action and resists a simple definition or description, particularly given the scope and breadth of his writings. Table 2 (found at the end of this section) summarizes a proposed taxonomy of thematic elements Philo ascribes to God and summaries the key "forms" and "functions" of the logos that serve to answer the present subsidiary research question. Forms, for the purpose of Table 2, are largely static descriptions of Philo's logos. In general, these are descriptive nouns or adjectives. Functions describe actions that Philo attributes to the logos and are generally verbal in nature. Function describes the actions of the logos. For example, Philo describes the logos as playing a principal role in creation, which may be categorized as a function. Philo describes the logos as the image of God. This is descriptive and therefore classified as a form in Table 2. References to the location within Philo's writings for each form and function of the logos plus a short description of each are also included in Table 2.

Philo's interpretive hermeneutic arises from his deeply held Jewish beliefs molded by a prosperous upbringing in predominately Hellenistic culture. Philo matured into a well-respected Jewish scholar with strong connections to Roman society. His body of work reflects his struggle to rationalize his Hellenistic world-view with Greek philosophy, particularly Platonism and Stoicism, without sacrificing his ardent belief in the monotheistic God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Specifically, Philo's interpretive objective was to rationalize Alexandrian Hellenism and Greek philosophy with God described in the Pentateuch in order to demonstrate that Platonic thought evolved from earlier Jewish theology recorded in Scripture. The goal of rationalizing the

two disparate world-views must have been tantalizing challenge for Philo the scholar, although it is difficult to understand how his work would have found general acceptance within Roman culture at the time or with the remnant of traditional Jews, which were very likely a minority within Jewish society in Alexandria at the time. However, Philo's philosophical description of the logos may have been religiously satisfying to many Hellenistic Jews seeking to live in peace within the dominant Roman culture, Ironically, it was during the same period when Philo was interpreting the logos into the inspired words of Moses found in the Pentateuch that the real *Logos* incarnate was being rejected by Palestinian Jews (John 1:11).

Philo's work relies heavily on an allegorical interpretive hermeneutic, commonly found in Greek writing from the first century, even favored by many Church Fathers. Philo normally gives precedence to Greek philosophies when interpreting Scripture, principally Stoic, except when a literal understanding of a monotheistic God and Jewish rituals was required. However, it is not surprising to find redundancies, gaps, and overlaps in his description of the logos given the scope and depth of his written work, particularly given his interpretive hermeneutic. Philo's allegorical interpretations often demonstrated great skill with the written word, other times he writes with a heavy hand clearly incorporating Platonic/Stoic dualistic thought, particularly when attempting to reconcile his view of a transcendent God with the Bible's description of an immanent God dealing face-to-face with humanity. Philo's difficulty with syncretizing Platonic/Stoic philosophy with the tenants of Jewish theology in his writings is readily apparent to a reader with a 21st Century Christian, post-resurrection world-view, particularly with his definition and description of the person and work of the logos, the key theme of his writings.

Philo views the logos as having many functions but most importantly as having the mind and essence of God from eternity past. The logos, indestructible and bearing the image of God imprinted, also shares an eternal nature with the Father. This was an important matter for Philo given monotheism was his theological presupposition, even as he navigated through matters related to Platonic dualism. Philo's view of the logos appears to mature in the course of his writings. Early in his writings, Philo views a transcendent logos involved in all matters of cosmology. Then an immanent logos begins its existence independent of the essence of God at some past time but before the creation of the world. The logos, acting as an agent of God, created earth using the four elements that existed before time (earth, air, fire, water). The next stage in Philo's development of the logos finds the logos serving as the image of God's wisdom that was

used as the template in the creation of humanity. In Philo's view, the image of the transcendent God is "stamped" onto the logos and, in turn, this same image is stamped onto created humanity. Philo views the logos, the Word or Thought of God, as having the principal responsibility or function of mediator. The logos was the mediator that connects the thoughts and the wisdom of a transcendent God to humanity, although each person has an imperfect understanding of the logos that is limited only by one's perseverance to understand wisdom and one's innate reasoning capability. Philo's deference to the Hellenistic philosopher desperately searching for universal knowledge and wisdom is clearly in view.

Moving from the familiar Word of God as creator motif found in the Jewish Targums (e.g., Jerusalem Targum of Johathan ben Uziel renders Bereshit 1:27 as "And the Word [Memra] of the Lord created man in His likeness . . ."), Philo expands that description by stating the utterance or Word (logos) of God was the force behind creation as God's words (thoughts) and actions occur simultaneously and always correspond. A "thought" or "plan" in the mind of God becomes an ontological matter by the immediate action of the logos. Philo equates these "thoughts" as the utterances of God as found in Scripture.

The logos is also described by Philo as pre-existent, having an intimate relationship with God (positioned above the Mercy Seat and between the Cherubim in heaven), and functions as a mediator, ambassador, and paraclete (comforter) to humanity. The logos is also charged with the spiritual welfare of humanity by nourishing their souls and pastoring the flock. Philo uses the "divine thought" motif as wisdom throughout his writings. In sum, the logos is the proximate cause of the creation of all things.

The logos, the Word of God, is the bond that holds together all of creation. The logos, filled with the essence of the Father, is self-sustaining. The immanent logos, the image God, alleviates the need for Philo to reconcile the presence and actions of the immanent God found in Scripture. The immanence of God to humanity is no longer a concern for Philo. The logos becomes the revealer of God to humanity in a multiplicity of forms, such as the angel of God, chief angel, the first-born of God, the archetype of all things, even as the shadow of God. Philo doesn't ignore God but seems to promote Him out of a job. Philo also describes a hierarchy in the relationship of God and the logos: "But the most universal of all things is God; and in the second place is the Logos of God" (*Leg. All.* 2.86), which is reminiscent of John 5 where Jesus

speaks of His voluntary subordination to God. Only through the visible presence of the immanent logos (in many forms) may humanity have interaction with the invisible, transcendent God. It is only through the logos as an intermediary that humanity is able to have a relationship with God. In the Stoic mind, the immanent logos is the only means for the philosopher to understand creation and the universe, particularly the visible, created world, and to obtain wisdom of the universal uncreated force that formed and controls the universe.

Philo also attempts to syncretize Greek and Jewish thought in his description of the functions of God. For example, Philo goes to great lengths to describe the bifurcated nature of God's power. On the one hand, God expresses His mercy and grace to humanity through his Beneficent Power and is the source of truth for humanity through His Creative Power., Philo enigmatically describes each as God yet also as separate entities with the logos forming the "glue" that holds the two together. Philo later describes God as the supreme being and the wisdom of God (logos) as second best. Philo consistently wrote with a strong belief in monotheistic Judaism. Therefore, for what purpose does Philo describe God in two persons? There are two possible reasons. First, Philo is attempting to reconcile or prove that the Pentateuch preceded Platonic thought thereby forming the basis for Hellenistic Judaistic thought. This is the lynchpin in Philo's work: to syncretize the platonic view of an invisible transcendent God with the biblical descriptions of a visible immanent God. Philo borrows and refines the Greek logos construct to explain how the infinite and the created are linked. Second, Philo's construct of God was necessary because of the Platonic dualistic view of the divine creator. The concept of the Beneficent God and Creative God, functioning in completely different spheres of reality, linked together by the eternal yet immanent logos solved both problems. In this writer's opinion, Philo came as close to violating his firmly held Judaistic monotheistic beliefs as he dared. Philo's gallant attempt to reconcile the two belief systems was admirable in terms of his single-minded dedication to that purpose. The result, however, leaves many unanswerable questions.

Philo thus tips his hand about how to differentiate God from the logos within the Pentateuch. God may be identified when He is described as being in His transcendent, invisible form in Scripture, such as the utterance of God as the formative act of creation of the universe (Gen. 1). Philo also describes God as the Platonic "Form of forms," the universal intelligence or wisdom behind creation. For Philo, God is uncreated, the source of truth, the supreme being, and

creator of time. Philo's descriptions of God are necessarily lacking in detail because describing the infinite with finite words is not his interest. Simply put, it appears all other descriptions and functions of the immanent God found in Scripture are ascribed to the logos. For example, the logos as the archetype of God, first-born of God, high priest, eldest of the angels, God's chief deputy, provider of God's wisdom to humanity, provider of the Mosaic Law, model of wisdom for Abraham, the fire before Moses, the image of God that was stamped on the logos and then the logos stamped that image on humanity, the source of God's blessings, led Moses in the wilderness, and is the supplier of the immortal portion of the soul found in humanity. In short, Philo consistently interprets Scripture using the Greek presupposition that the infinite cannot interact in any way with the finite so there must be a mediator. The mediator role found in Scripture is, in the mind of Philo, the logos.

Humanity may only have interaction with the invisible, transcendent God through the visible, immanent logos. It is only through the logos as an intermediary that enables humanity to have a relationship with God. God does not make humanity in His image but rather humanity is made in the image of the logos, which is an image of God Himself (*Prov.* Fragment 1) so that distance between two is maintained. Humanity is a copy of a copy. Philo's rationale is based on his presumption that "for no mortal thing could have been formed on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe" (*Quaest in Gn.* 2.62) therefore an intermediary, the divine logos, is required. Consequently, humanity was made in the "likeness of the second God, who is the Word [logos] of the other" (*Prov.* Fragment 1). Thus, Philo describes the logos as the perfect man and the "image of God" described in Genesis 1 yet in the mind of Philo humanity is merely an image of that image (*Quis Het.* 231; *Conf.* 147).

The purpose of this chapter was to answer the third subsidiary research question, "What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos?" A sufficient contextual explanation of Philo's philosophical logos has been presented. However, a critique requires a standard of truth with which to compare Philo's logos philosophy. Chapter 5 will present a full understanding of the apostle John's *Logos* Christology by means of a translation, exegesis, and analysis of John 1:1-18, the Prologue to the Gospel of John. Chapter 6 is the venue for comparing and contrasting John's description of the divine *Logos* (Chapter 5) with Philo's description of his mystic, philosophical logos (Chapter 4). The fourth subsidiary research question, "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth

Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's logos philosophy?" may then be addressed in Chapter 6.

Table 2. Transcendent God and the form and function of the logos as depicted in the writings of Philo of Alexandria. *Source: Yonge (1995)*

| Logos Theme | Reference(s) | Summary Statement |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| God | | |
| Transcendent and invisible God | <i>Leg. All.</i> 125; <i>Fug.</i> 97, 103; <i>Mut.</i> 28-30; <i>Mos.</i> 2.99-2.100; <i>Op.</i> 64; <i>Ebr.</i> 106; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 1.57 | God has Beneficent Power, called God, maker of the whole world, is legislative, chastising, and correcting |
| | <i>Fug.</i> 97; <i>Det.</i> 125; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 1.57; <i>Abr.</i> 121, <i>Mos.</i> 99-100; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 1.57; <i>Quaest in Ex.</i> 2.62; <i>Mut.</i> 29-30 | God has Creative Power, called God, source of truth, peaceable and gentle, equated with the logos. Moses called Creative Power God |
| | <i>Abr.</i> 121; <i>Cher.</i> 1.27-28 | Beneficent and Creative Power are joined by the logos |
| | <i>Post.</i> 14; <i>Som.</i> 1.66 | God is transcendent |
| | <i>Sac.</i> 66-67 | God is uncreated |
| | <i>Op.</i> 24 | The supreme being is God and the logos, the wisdom of God, is second |
| | <i>Post.</i> 31 | God is the creator of time, the father of its father. The world is a younger son of God |
| The Logos | | |
| Forms of the Logos | | |
| Archetype of God | <i>Spec. Leg.</i> 1.329; <i>Det.</i> 75-77; <i>Op.</i> 24; 31; 134 | The image of God used to create all things; the image of the immortal logos |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.86; <i>Det.</i> 115-118 | The wisdom sent by God to humanity. It is the “what,” the universe of all things |
| | <i>Det.</i> 83 | The arch-type pattern of natural nature comes from the image of God, the logos |
| Second God | <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.21; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 2.62 | Logos created having the totality of all ideas |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.207 | Is like God to humanity |
| | <i>Som.</i> 1.147 | Blameless as God |
| Personified wisdom | <i>Ebr.</i> 31; <i>Quod Deus.</i> 182; <i>Fug.</i> 5; <i>Som.</i> 1.148 | As found in Prov. 8 |

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| First-born of God | <i>Agr. 51; Conf. 146-147; Quaest in Gen. 4</i> | An anthropomorphic logos; God's deputy; imitator of the Father; first born of all things. |
| High Priest | <i>Som. 1.215</i> | The logos functions as High Priest to humanity |
| Most ancient Word | <i>Conf. 147; Fug. 101</i> | Humanity may not be called sons of God but are children of the logos. The logos is the most ancient image of God. |
| Utterance of God | <i>Som. 1.182, 1.148; Sac. 65-66</i> | The thoughts in the mind of God are immediately put into action by the logos. |
| God's chief deputy, lieutenant | <i>Agr. 50-51</i> | God's principal assistant |
| Source of wisdom/Reason of God to humanity | <i>Som. 1.190-191, 1.215; Quaest in Gn. 62</i> | His most ancient Word, the wisdom of God |
| | <i>Det. 82</i> | We are capable of reasoning because God created the logos as the fountain of reason for humanity |
| | <i>Leg. All. 43-46; Deus. 47; Praem. 39-40; Op. 51</i> | Source of human wisdom, reasons, and intelligence |
| | <i>Leg. All. 1.37; Fug. 13</i> | A copy of the wisdom of the logos |
| | <i>Fug. 137-138</i> | The wisdom of humanity flows from the logos |
| | <i>Sacr. 8; Som. 1.182; Op. 13; Fug. 94, 97</i> | The Wisdom of God that is to be pursued by humanity |
| | <i>Leg. All. 3.95-96; Op. 20, 24-25, 31; Som. 2.242, 247</i> | Model or image of God for all things; stream wisdom like a river to humanity |
| | <i>Som. 1.70</i> | Model of wisdom for Abraham |
| Independent/self-sustaining | <i>Her. 188</i> | Self-sustaining, needs nothing else. Fills all things with its essence. |
| Image of God | <i>LA 1.43, 45-46; Sacr. 8; Som. 1.182; Op. 13; Leg. All. 1.43</i> | Every person has been given a small portion of the logos and therefore has some likeness of God. |
| | <i>Leg. All. 1.43</i> | Image stamped in the logos is the template for creation |
| | <i>Op. 25; Leg. All. 1.31, 1.53-54, 94; Quis Het. 231</i> | Humanity is an image of the logos, which is an image of God |

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| | <i>Quaest in Gen.</i> 2.62; <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.4 | Bearer of image of God stamped on humanity |
| Created being | <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.86; <i>Op.</i> 139; | A created being, infused with the wisdom of God |
| Source of immanent reason | <i>Fug.</i> 101 | Is in the presence of God, above the mercy seat, between the two cherubs |
| | <i>Op.</i> 146; <i>Praem.</i> 163; <i>Det.</i> 86-90 | Brings order to humanity in the form of rational thought |
| Reclusive | <i>Quis. Het.</i> 234 | Fond of retirement, solitude, and privacy |
| Shadow of God | <i>Quaest in Ex</i> 2:13; <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.96-3.100; <i>Som.</i> 1.206-1.207 | Intermediary between God and humanity |
| Son of God | <i>Conf.</i> 146 | "...the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for he is called, the authority, and the name of God, and the Word, and man according to God's image, and he who sees Israel." |
| Soul of the world | <i>Aet.</i> 84 | Soul of the world |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 91 | The immortal part of the soul is given to humanity from the Father through the logos. |
| Eternal/Indestructible | <i>Deus.</i> 47, <i>Cher.</i> 1.27-28; <i>Sac.</i> 59; <i>Abr.</i> 124-125; <i>Quis Het.</i> 166; <i>Quaest in Ex.</i> 2.68 | The logos is eternal |
| | <i>Som.</i> 1.62 | Filled with incorporeal powers |
| | <i>Det.</i> 75-76 | Created by God indestructible |
| Source of Mosaic Law | <i>Post.</i> 101-102; <i>Mig.</i> 130; <i>Som.</i> 167-168; <i>Mos.</i> 95, 253 | Source of and appears to be the Mosaic Law |
| | <i>Som.</i> 171 | Appeared to Moses |
| Source of virtue for humanity | <i>Som.</i> 118-119, <i>Post.</i> 159 | Source of virtue to humanity. Motivates humanity to pursue virtue, good actions |
| Functions of the Logos | | |
| Revelator | <i>Sacr.</i> 65; <i>Mos.</i> 1.283; <i>Fug.</i> 13 | Expression of God's thinking and action |
| | <i>Praem.</i> 43-44; <i>Leg.</i> 4-5; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 49; <i>Leg. All.</i> 1.37-38 | We may see God only through the logos |

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| | <i>Som.</i> 1.228-239; <i>Cher.</i> 1-3 | Reveals God's purpose or message to humanity |
| | <i>Mut.</i> 4-6 | Reveals God to humanity |
| | <i>Conf.</i> 146-147 | Revealer of God |
| Paraclete (Comforter) | <i>Mos.</i> 2.134-2.135 | Delivers an unlimited supply of blessings to humanity |
| Angel, arc angel, or chief angel of God, messenger to humanity | <i>Som.</i> 1.228-239; <i>Cher.</i> 1-3; <i>Leg. All.</i> 177-178; <i>Quod. Deus.</i> 180-182; <i>Mig.</i> 173-174; <i>Fug.</i> 5; <i>Conf.</i> 146; <i>Quis. Het.</i> 205; <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 3.27 | The means for revelation to humanity, other than an utterance. |
| | <i>Quis Het.</i> 205-206; <i>Quaest in Ex</i> 2:13 | Ambassador or mediator to humanity |
| Controller of all things | <i>Cher.</i> 36 | Helmsman and governor of the universe |
| Interpreter of His will | <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.207 | Interprets God's infinite will for finite humanity |
| Creator/Agent of creation | <i>Op.</i> 5, 10, 48; <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.31; <i>Cher.</i> 1.11; <i>Agr.</i> 12; <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.31; <i>Quis. Het.</i> 26-28 | Responsible for all creation, is the model for the universe |
| | <i>Conf.</i> 41; <i>Cher.</i> 127 | God's agent responsible for creation |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 1.329; <i>Cher.</i> 127 | Creates used the four pre-existent elements for creation |
| | <i>Spec. Leg.</i> 81 | Created the world |
| | <i>Op.</i> 20-25 | Pattern for the universe |
| | <i>Op.</i> 25, 31; <i>Post.</i> 31 | Humanity was created in the image of the logos, which is an image of God. |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 2.86; <i>Op.</i> 139 | Subordinate to God and superior to all created things |
| | <i>Sac.</i> 66-67 | Neither uncreated nor created as is humanity |
| | <i>Aet.</i> 8-16; <i>Quis. Het.</i> 315 | The original source of all things, including His blessings |
| | <i>Appendix 2: Fragments Extracted from the Parallels of John of Damascus, pg. 752A</i> | Sustains the universe and everything in it |
| | <i>Leg. All.</i> 1.37 | Breathed into Adam giving life to humanity |
| Sustainer of creation | <i>Quis Het.</i> 188 | Holds together the human soul and allows the human body to function |

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| | <i>Plant.</i> 8-10 | Brings coherence and stability to creation |
| | <i>Som.</i> 8, 241 | Binds together creation |
| | <i>Sac.</i> 66; 119; <i>Quis. Het.</i> 117-119 | Responsible for holding together all of creation |
| Source of judgment and forgiveness for humanity | <i>Som.</i> 1.84-1.86; <i>Quaest in Gen.</i> 3.15, 23 | Source of destruction and judgment on earth (e.g., Sodom) and protector of our virtue |
| | <i>Quaest in Gen.</i> 3.27, 28, 51 | Source of forgiveness to humanity |
| | <i>Spec. Leg.</i> 23 | Reproves and reproaches humanity |
| | <i>Fug.</i> 196; <i>Quaest in Gen.</i> 3.23 | Will guide God's judgement of the universe. Or, the logos will judge humanity and the universe. |
| Pastor for humanity | <i>Mut.</i> 113-116 | Responsible for pastoral care of humanity, the Royal Shepherd |
| Source of manna for humanity | <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.177-178; <i>Som.</i> 1.202; <i>Det.</i> 118; <i>Ques. Het.</i> 78-79 | First born offspring of the soul; the most ancient form of the logos |
| Healer of the soul | <i>Mos.</i> 2.134 | Delivers God's blessings to humanity |
| Bringer of God's blessings to humanity | <i>Leg. All.</i> 3.175-176; <i>Det.</i> 115-117 | Nourishes humanity with wisdom, although not all with benefit equally |
| Guide for/interacts with humanity | <i>Mig.</i> 67 | Moses' wilderness guide |
| | <i>Quod Deus.</i> 47 | Motivates humanity's free will and intellect |
| | <i>Quis Het.</i> 234-236; <i>Det.</i> 90 | Allows humanity to comprehend the world and spiritual things |
| | <i>Quaest in Gn.</i> 3.30 | The source of instruction and correction, avoid foolishness |
| Interpreter/Prophet | <i>Conf.</i> 81; <i>Deus.</i> 182; <i>Mig.</i> 81, 173-174 | Interpreter and prophet of God. |
| Agent of God | <i>Op.</i> 17 | Carries out the mind (will) of God |
| Sources of dreams | <i>Som.</i> 1.190-191 | Source of dreams from God |

CHAPTER 5

EXEGESIS OF JOHN 1:1-18

5.1 Introduction

A detailed exegesis of the Prologue is presented in this chapter, including the writer's translation of the passage. The Greek text used is NA28 (Aland 2012:292-293). The exegetical process generally follows Fee (2002). Chapters 4 through 6 answer the third and fourth subsidiary research questions in a three-step process. First, chapter 4 defined Philo's logos philosophy, as revealed in his writings, to answer the third subsidiary research question, "What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos?". Next, the product of the exegesis completed in this chapter is used to produce the principal elements of John's Christological *Logos* found in the Prologue, thereby determining the first element of the fourth subsidiary research question, "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's logos philosophy?". Finally, in chapter 6, the work products of chapters 4 and 5 may then be compared and contrasted in order to completely answer the fourth research question.

5.2 Organization of the Exegetical Analysis

Scholars have proposed a wide range of organizational options for the Prologue. McHugh (2009:78-79), for example, catalogs over a dozen variants. However, he found an almost unanimous agreement that vv. 1-5 and 6-8 are separate pericopes. Carson (1991) uniquely organizes the remainder of Prologue into separate pericopes, vv. 9-11, 12-13, 14, 15, 16-18. Kruse (2003) follows Carson. Most of the scholarly differences relate to the placement of vv. 9, 14, and 15, even though the placement of these verses have little impact on the exegesis. For instance, v. 9 is merely a transition between vv. 8 and 10 and serves to clarify the subject of the verb in v. 10. On this understanding, whether attached to v. 8 or 10 is inconsequential.

Westcott (1908:1) divided the Prologue into two parts. Part I consists of merely v. 1,

“The Word in his Absolute, Eternal Being.” Part II, vv. 2-18, is titled, “The Word in Relation to Creation.” Part II is further subdivided into three parts: “The Essential Facts” (vv. 2-5), “The Historic Manifestation of the Word Generally” (vv. 6-13), and “The Incarnation as Apprehended by Personal Experience” (vv. 14-18). NA27 and NA28, by their use of capital letters, periods, and spaces, seemingly view vv. 9-13 and 14-18 as separate pericopes, as does UBS 3-5, with a capital letter at the beginning of v. 9 but not with v. 18. Table 2 summarizes the range of Prologue subdivisions found in prominent commentaries and other important resources.

Table 3. Summary of Proposed Prologue Subdivision by Major Commentaries (author alpha order). *Sources: as shown*

| Commentary/Author | Prologue Divisions, by verse(s) | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------|------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-11 | 12-13 | 14 | 15 | 16-18 |
| Word Biblical Commentary: John (Beasley-Murray 2002) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-11 | 12-13 | 14 | 15 | 16-18 |
| The Gospel According to John (Carson 1991) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-13 | 14 | 15 | 16-18 | -- |
| Baker New Testament Commentary (Hendrickson 2001) | 1-5 | 6-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| Exegetical Commentary on the New Testament (Klink 2016) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-14 | 15-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| Tyndale New Testament Commentary (Kruse 2003) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-11 | 12-13 | 14 | 15 | 16-18 |
| The Interpretation of St. John’s Gospel (Lenski 1943) | 1-5 | 6-12 | 13-18 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| The Gospel According to Saint John (Lincoln 2005) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on John 1-4 (McHugh 2009) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| The Gospel of John (Michaels 2010) | 1-5 | 6-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- | -- |
| The Gospel According to John (Morris 1995) | 1-2 | 3-5 | 6-8 | 9-14 | 15-18 | -- | -- |
| UBS Handbook: John (Newman and Nida 1993) | 1-5 | 6-9 | 10-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| The Gospel According to St. John (Westcott 1908) | 1 | 2-5 | 6-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| NIDNTEE (Silva, 2014) | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-11 | 12-13 | 14-18 | | |

| | | | | | | | |
|--|-----|-----|------|-------|----|----|----|
| NA27 and NA28 (by the placement of paragraphs, periods, and capitals | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |
| UBS 3, 4, and 5 ¹ ((by the placement of paragraphs, periods, and capitals | 1-5 | 6-8 | 9-13 | 14-18 | -- | -- | -- |

Note 1. The NA27 and UBS4, as well as the NA28 and UBS5, have identical text bodies.

The literary rationale for the organization of the Prologue was presented in Section 3.5. In sum, John begins by presenting Jesus Christ as the eternal, pre-existent Word as the creator, of all things, having divinity equal to God, and therefore the source of light and life on earth (vv. 1-5). Next, John the Baptist is interjected into the Prologue as the prophetic witness that Jesus Christ is the Son of God (vv. 6-8). This approach also reflects the majority scholarship opinion regarding the first eight verses, that is, vv. 1-5 and 6-8 are separate pericopes. The remainder of the Prologue is divided into two pericopes, vv. 9-13 and 14-18, which seems to follow the chronological order in which the Word was revealed and is consistent with the majority of commentaries, as well as NA27/NA28 and UBS 3-5. Next, John resumes his description of Jesus Christ as the light of the world. The Light was rejected by those to whom He was promised although only those who accept Him as Savior become children of God (vv. 9-13). In concluding the Prologue, John reveals that Jesus Christ, the unique Son of God, arrived incarnate, and so fulfilled the promise of the Mosaic Law and the prophets. Again, John the Baptist was the prophetic witness of these events (vv. 14-18).

The organization of the exegesis of the Prologue and descriptive titles are thus:

John 1:1-5: The Eternal Word of God

John 1:6-8: The Witness of John

John 1:9-13: The Light Enters the World

John 1:14-18: The Word Became Flesh

As noted in Section 3.5, any further literary analysis of the Prologue, particularly with alternative literary sources does not further our understanding of John's Christological *Logos* and is hence outside the scope of this work. This literary structure, favored by a majority of scholars, is sufficient for identifying John's *Logos* doctrine. Within the exegesis of each pericope, a

smooth translation appears at the beginning of each section. A literal translation with alternative translation word choices are placed within brackets within each clause/sentence and within the exegetical discussion. Italics are used to denote the translation rather than using quotation marks.

5.3 John 1:1-5: The Eternal Word of God

5.3.1 Passage Text and Final Translation

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

1:1 In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 1:2. This Word was in the beginning with God. 1:3 All things through Him came to be, and without Him not even one thing came into being that has come into being. 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of humanity 1:5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it.

5.3.2 Source and Text Critical Issues

Verses 1:3-4. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν 1:4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων 1:3 *Through the Word everything came into existence, and without Him not one [thing] came into existence that has been made. 1:4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of humanity.*

Some manuscripts read οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. ἐν αὐτῷ (. . . *not one [thing] came into existence that was made. In Him . . .*) with a period at the end of verse 3. Other manuscripts read οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν ἐν αὐτῷ (. . . *not one [thing] came into existence that was made in Him.*) NA28 reads the former with a B rating, signifying high confidence. This reading is consistent with UBS4 and is used in the exegesis that follows.

Verse 1:4. ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν *In Him was life, . . .*

A few manuscripts read ζωὴ ἐστίν (*is life*) and there is a single manuscript with ζωὴ alone. NA28 reads *was life* with an A rating, signifying the text is certain. This reading is used in the exegesis that follows.

5.3.3 Analysis of the Grammar and Key Words

1:1a. Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, *In [the] beginning was the Word,*

The Prologue begins with three clauses, each repeating the common subject, λόγος and using the same substantive verb ἦν to describe the eternal nature of the Word with respect to time, the essence of His being, and His divinity (Westcott 1908:2). Louw (1996:156) defines ἦν, the imperfect active indicative of εἰμί, in context, as *already was or already existed*. However, the verb does not exclusively describe a completed past but rather an ongoing state. The actions of the divine Word occurred and are still unfolding before humanity today.

The first verse begins with the prepositional phrase Ἐν ἀρχῇ that tells readers the object of interest. However, the expected statement that God was present before creation does not appear. Instead, the Word, the subject of the clause, is identified as having been present for all eternity, from before time. The phrase also echoes the creation story in nature and context from Genesis 1:1, which John surely intended. The word ἀρχῇ refers to the beginning of history when there was nothing, before creation *ex nihilo*. John likely, as he often does, intentionally used language that may be understood in two ways. In the first verse, ἀρχῇ may be considered in a historical sense but also in a cosmological sense, which is much more momentous than the Genesis creation account. John's creation account is the backstory of Genesis 1:1.

Λόγος, the Word, is used in context as a noun for Jesus Christ and is only found in vv. 1 and 14. Thus, the phrase speaks to Jesus Christ Himself as existing before creation (although His preexistence is not unambiguously stated) and is a reflection of God, by his Word, speaking the universe into creation in Genesis 1. However, John never defines the term Word, which suggests that his readers knew (or thought they knew) its meaning. Jesus has a timeless undefinable origin before creation. Morris (1995:65) speaks to the presence of possible double meaning. In classical Greek, λόγος refers to word, thought, or mind, which is the content of God's revelation but these definitions don't reflect John's usage of the term in the Prologue. The Torah refers to the λόγος as divine wisdom, which falls short of addressing the magnitude of the event. Jesus was not only the creator of all things but was also present at the beginning of history, before creation.

1:1b. καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. *and the Word was with [or in the presence of] God, and the Word was [or was fully] God.*

The preposition *πρός* with an accusative object is normally translated as *with* (Louw 1996:791), but it also has the connotation of possessing common characteristics. The phrase *πρός τὸν θεόν* (*with God*) may then be interpreted as *in God's presence* or perhaps having a *personal relationship with God*. In context, the best view is Jesus was in God's presence at the moment of creation. Also note that God is placed first in the final clause, *θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* signifying John's emphasis has moved to God as opposed to the Word. The subject (Word) has a preceding article and the predicate (God) does not, thus must be translated as *the Word was God*, not "God was the Word." The grammar differentiates Jesus Christ, the Word, from God, not as equality although both share divine characteristics. The verse states the equivalence of the Word and God, neither has a superior or inferior position, thereby completely expressing the deity of Jesus Christ, the Word. Thus, this verse also addresses the unity found in the Godhead.

Wallace (1996:266-269) addresses the anarthrous construction of the last clause of this verse in great detail. The usage of an anarthrous *θεὸς* as the predicate nominative positioned before the verb fits the form of Coldwell's Rule. Wallace's analysis concludes the usage of *θεὸς* is qualitative, not definite or indefinite. If *θεὸς* in the final clause was indefinite then we would translate the anarthrous *θεὸς* as "a god," allowing polytheism. If *θεὸς* in the final clause was definite then we would translate the anarthrous *θεὸς* as equivalent to the Word, and thus *θεὸς* = the Word. This interpretation allows v. 1:1c to state "The Word was the Father," which leads to Sabellianism or modalism. An anarthrous *θεὸς* speaks to the qualities of God, that is, the nature of God, His essence, which are identical with those of the Word.

1:2. οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. *This Word was in the beginning with God.*

Οὗτος is a near demonstrative pronoun typically translated *this one* (Louw 1996:816). In context, the pronoun is referring to the Word. Although the clause appears to be redundant it does serve the valuable purpose of summing up and emphasizing the three important propositions presented in the first verse: The Word existed before creation, the Word was with God at the time of creation, and, the Word is God. The equivalence of deity of the first two persons of the Trinity (a concept that will remain undeveloped for centuries) is thus established.

1:3a. πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, *All things through Him came [exist] to be,*

The plural, neuter adjective πάντα is usually translated as *all, every* (Louw 1996:596) but in this pronominal form, *all things* or *everything* is more appropriate. The sum of a collection of things is in view, emphasizing the great number of different created things rather than a group of parts that define a whole. *All things* is emphasized because it is at the beginning of the clause—not a single thing came into being that wasn’t made by the Word. The second word in this clause is διὰ with a genitive object. It is a genitive of means, which points to the causative agent (Louw 1996:796) so *though/by Him* all things were made. Viewed distributively, the Word created all things, one by one. Finally, ἐγένετο (aorist middle indicative of γίνομαι) expresses the idea of *come to exist* (Louw 1996:157). Everything owes its existence to the Word. The Word was the sole agent of creation.

1:3b. καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν ὃ γέγονεν. *and without [apart from] Him [the Word] not even one [thing] came into being that has come into being.*

Χωρὶς (with a genitive object) is a negative marker, such as *without, not with, no relationship to, or apart from*” (Louw 1996:791). Οὐδὲ ἓν is a combination of negative particles that emphasize the negation. Οὐδὲ ἓν is an idiomatic statement *not even one* (Louw 1996:665). The NASB (and NIV) interpret the phrase as *nothing*. The TEV is more forceful with *not one thing in all creation*. An emphatic restatement of the first clause in this verse is presented followed at once by a negative clause (Morris 1995:70-71). The aorist middle indicative verb ἐγένετο (*became, came into being*) may be contrasted with its cognate perfect active indicative verb γέγονεν (*come into being*) is a grammatical means of emphasizing creation itself as *becoming* from the Word, as opposed to *being* (v. 1) when speaking of the Word Himself. The contrasting verbs reveal that although creation by the Word occurred at a point in time in the past (ἐγένετο) it’s significance continues to unfold (γέγονεν).

1:4a. ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, *In Him [the Word] was life,*

The verb ἦν does not refer to a particular time or period in history but rather the source of life. The noun ζωὴ refers to both spiritual and physical life (Köstenberger 2004:30-31, Morris 1995:72, Beasley-Murray 2002:11). However, vv. 1:4b (*as the light of men*), 1:5 (not taken by sinful humanity), 1:6-7 (testified to by John the Baptist), and 1:8 (John’s testimony of the Light) give more support to John viewing spiritual life rather than physical life. Physical life has already been included with creation in general in the earlier verses.

1:4b. καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων *and the life [the Word] was the light of [for] humanity [men].*

In other words, Jesus Christ (the Word) brought light to all people. In this metaphor light symbolizes the Word bringing illumination or knowledge about divine truth to every human being. This knowledge includes the ability to discern God's will (Köstenberger 2004:30-31) and our personal sinful nature. Köstenberger (2004:31) suggests *light of men* is better translated as *light for men* because the light imparts wisdom and is absolute and universal. Either "of" or "for" communicates the same message about the importance of the *light* to humanity's spiritual development.

1:5a. καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, *And the light shines in the darkness,*

The present, active, indicative verb φαίνει (*shines*) has the sense of producing light, such as heavenly bodies or fires (Louw 2006:172). The shining light is a reference to Jesus Christ (Köstenberger 2004:31, Beasley-Murray 2002:31) rather than an impersonalized light (Morris 1995:31). Beasley-Murray (2002:121) notes that even pagan Greeks would agree with John's description of creation. John now introduces the duality of light and darkness that becomes a central theme of the remainder of his gospel. However, it's at this point John makes it clear that he is not describing a dualistic creation standing in equal opposites because light soon overcomes darkness.

The present tense verb suggests the shining occurred and continues to shine to today. The light is more like heavenly bodies because the light is continuing and not like man-made earthly light, such as fire. Scholars differ as to when the light shined. Beasley-Murray (2002:74) suggests the shining light was present before and at the birth of Jesus. A better view is the light began to shine with the birth of Jesus and continues to shine today. The noun σκοτία (*darkness*) is likened to the realm of spiritual darkness where sin and evil abide (Louw 2006:755). Beasley-Murray (2002:11) represents a minority view of a dual meaning, that is, both spiritual and physical darkness is present. In a physical sense, spiritual darkness is descriptive of those who have either shut their minds to the spiritual (those who oppose or are alienated from God) and those who are ignorant of God. It is also a reference to the dark forces or Satan who oppose Christ (Louw 2006:755).

1:5b. καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. *and [yet] the darkness did not overcome*

[recognize, comprehend] it.

The word καὶ may be translated as a marker that expresses surprise or what follows is significant when the context demands. In the present usage, the best interpretation is words such as *and yet* or *yet* or *indeed* (Louw 2006:811). The aorist, active, indicative verb κατέλαβεν has a very wide semantic range, such as *to grasp* or *to comprehend* something that was not previously understood, *to understand*, or *to gain control over* (Louw 2006:382, 473). In the present usage, the sense is either the darkness was unable (actually, impossible) to overcome or conquer the light (Köstenberger 2002, Morris 1995) or people were unable or unwilling to comprehend or understand the light, that is, the truth of Jesus Christ (Beasley-Murray (2002), KJV, NASB). Fallen humanity will consciously reject the light in favor of darkness. Louw (2006:382) suggests that John may have used a wordplay with οὐ κατέλαβεν and a dual meaning of *not comprehend* and *not overcome*. John often uses such wordplays in his gospel and although a minority view, this interpretation best fits the context.

The indicative tense suggests that time is involved although that is not a fixed rule and is particularly dependent on the subject. Often scholars oversimplify the aspect of the aorist tense as corresponding to the English past tense (Wallace 1996:556). For example, Morris (1995:76) views this as a reference to Calvary yet does acknowledge that it may have a more general reference. Other writers understand this as a reference to the time when Jesus was alive on earth. The best view is this is a constantive aorist that points to all the events surrounding Christ, that is, John is summarizing all that has occurred without reference to the ending or the beginning (Wallace 1996:557). In this usage, the indicative aorist tense is summarizing events from the time of creation, to the time Jesus was alive on the earth, and through the completion of the Church Age (Beasley-Murray 2002:11). At no time does darkness either defeat or comprehend the person and work of Jesus Christ.

5.4 John 1:6-8: The Witness of John the Baptist

5.4.1 Passage Text and Final Translation

1:6. Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης· 7 οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. 8. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

There was a man having been sent from God, whose name was John. This one came as a witness so that he might testify about the light, so that all might believe through him. That one was not the light but he came so that he might testify about the light.

5.4.2 Analysis of the Grammar and Key Words

1:6. Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτοῦ Ἰωάννης· *There was a man having been sent [commissioned] from God, whose name (was) John.)*

John the Baptist now makes an unexpected appearance in the Prologue. John, as does the Synoptics, introduces John the Baptist as the forerunner and witness of Jesus Christ. The verb ἐγένετο is the aorist middle indicative of γίνομαι meaning *to be* or *to become* (Louw 2006:810). The aorist verb in this clause describes a completed action thus introducing and inserting John the Baptist into the storyline, so the best interpretation is *There was*. The perfect passive participle ἀπεσταλμένος refers to the sender instead of the person sent and as a completed action so *having been sent* is a proper translation. Louw (2006:190) describes the sending action as having a specific reason. Finally, the preposition παρὰ with a genitive object reflect the agent of the action, God. John the Baptist was sent by God for a specific purpose. John the Baptist was the last of the Old Testament prophets that brought a message of repentance to the Jews and the first prophet to proclaim the arrival of the Word. The apostle John inserts vv. 6-8 as perhaps a parenthetical statement about God's prior revelation concerning the coming of the Word before introducing the Word incarnate in v. 14.

1:7a. οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, *This one [John] came as a witness [for the purpose of] testimony so that [in order that] he might testify about the light,*

Verse 7 begins with the preposition εἰς with an accusative object showing intent with perhaps an expected result (Louw 2006:783). The best translation is *for the purpose of* or *for*. The preposition περὶ with a genitive object (φωτός) describes the content of the object, *about* or *concerning*. The subjective verb μαρτυρήσῃ may imply uncertainty although most scholars interpret the verb as *to testify*. The purpose of John the Baptist is to give personal testimony or to speak of the actions of the Word based on personal knowledge (Louw 2006:417). Note the double reference to the testimony μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ (*testimony in order to testify*) indicates the importance of the testimony of John the Baptist about the light. The KJV capitalizes Light as a title for Jesus Christ in vv. 7-9.

1:7b. ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. *so that all might believe through him.*

The conjunction ἵνα is a marker for a final purpose clause, typically translated as *in order to, for the purpose of, so that* (Louw 2006:784). The aorist active subjunctive verb πιστεύσωσιν communicates uncertainty so is best translated as *might believe*. Morris (1995:60) suggests the aorist is used to indicate a decision is expected. Humanity is expected to place its trust in Jesus Christ, the object of belief in this phrase, based on John's witness. The object of the clause is Christ, although some suggest the object is the truth about Jesus, the message of John the Baptist, or the light. However, unlike the apostle Paul who often packed prepositions with great theological meaning, the apostle John seems to use Jesus as the object of faith rather than as the agent of faith. In addition, the subject of v. 7 and v. 8 is John the Baptist so interpreting the pronoun as Christ is an unnatural interpretation no matter how personally satisfying it would be. The best interpretation is John the Baptist is making an introduction of Jesus Christ to the Jews, and thus to humanity. Köstenberger (2004:33-34) suggests that John's use of πιστεύσωσιν is the expectation of a "relational" trust relationship. The preposition δι' (in its crasis form) with a genitive object is typically translated as *through* and indicates the causative agent of the action. The pronoun αὐτοῦ refers to John the Baptist. John the Baptist came to testify about the light for the purpose of calling all humanity to believe in Jesus Christ.

1:8. οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. *That one [John] was not the light but (he came) so that [in order that] he might testify about [concerning] the light.*

The far demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνος refers to *that one*, a reference to an "entity" that is outside of the current discussion (Louw 2006:816). The word ἀλλ' (in crasis form) is a marker of a pending, more emphatic contrast (Louw 2006:791), *but* or *instead* are commonly used. The word ἵνα is a marker of purpose typically translated as *in order to* or merely *to*. The verb *to come* is implicit. As in v. 7, the aorist active subjunctive μαρτυρέω is best interpreted as *he might testify*. This is the purpose of the coming of John the Baptist. The preposition περὶ with a genitive object is properly translated as *about* or *concerning*. John the Baptist was not the light but rather he came so that he might testify about his personal knowledge about the light (Jesus Christ).

The negative unequivocal truth *John was not the light* serves to emphasize the positive statement in v. 7 that John came to testify about the light. But John the Baptist isn't the light. Wescott (1908:6) uniquely refers to John the Baptist as the lamp, not the light. Scholars point to

the presence of vv. 7-8 as evidence that followers of John the Baptist remain late in the first century who had raised John the Baptist above Jesus (Köstenberger 2002:34) although there is no internal evidence to support this view. The episodes of the salvation of Apollos (Act 18:25) and the seven disciples of John the Baptist (Acts 18:1-7) occurred in and around Ephesus likely in the 50s and cannot be extrapolated to conditions found in the late first century when John wrote the Fourth Gospel. The better view is John's negative statement was made to reinforce the importance of the coming ministry of the incarnate Christ. John the Baptist was the first and foremost witness of the arrival of the Messiah.

5.5 John 1:9-13: The Light Enters the World

5.5.1 Passage Text and Final Translation

1:9 Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. 10. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. 11. εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. 12. ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, 13. οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

9. The true light, who gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. 10. He was in the world, and the world was created through Him, yet the world did not recognize Him. 11. He came to His own, but His own people did not accept Him. 12. But as many as accepted Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to the ones believing in His name, 13. who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, or of the will of a man, but of God.

5.5.2 Source and Text Critical Issues

Verse 1:13. οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. . . . *children not born by human parents or by human desire or a husband's decision, but [were born] of God.*

A few manuscripts read οἳ οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν (*who not ... came into being*) or οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθησαν (*not ... they were born*). Other manuscripts and patristic quotations show ὃς οὐκ ... ἐγεννήθη (*he who not ... was born*). NA28 has an A rating, signifying the text is certain. This reading is used in the exegesis that follows.

Verse 1:13. οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. . . . *children not born by human parents or by human desire or not from [the] will of [a] man, but [were born] of God.*

One manuscript and one patristic quotation omit the entire clause. NA28 has an A rating, signifying the text is certain. This reading is used in the exegesis that follows.

5.5.3 Analysis of the Grammar and Key Words

1:9. Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

The true [authentic] light, who (gives) light [enlightenment] to humanity [everyone], was coming into the world.

The adjective ἀληθινόν refers to something that is *true* or *genuine* (Louw 2006:674). Beasley-Murray (2002:12) translates the word as *authentic*. The present, active, indicative verb φωτίζει suggests *giving light to, enlightening, or illuminating*. Thus, the true light illuminates humanity, that is, the Word has been revealed in sufficient detail for humanity to understand the message of the Word. Also, the present middle/passive participle ἐρχόμενον may be translated as *coming*. The noun κόσμον normally refers to the earth, the place where humanity lives, or all the inhabitants of the earth. Not only was the light sufficient to enlighten humanity, the light was coming into the world where humanity resides.

The grammatical challenge with this verse is identifying the subject of the verb ἦν (was) that begins the final clause (Morris 1995:83). Four options are in view (Trail 2013:23). First, the subject of ἦν is the true light which requires combining the verbs ἦν and the present middle/passive participle ἐρχόμενον (*coming*), thus *the true light was coming*. This interpretive option is consistent with the context of the Prologue, that is, the Word will illuminate humanity and the Word is coming. Second, the subject of the verb ἦν is assumed from the previous verses (*that light or the Word*) and the subject of the present participle ἐρχόμενον (*coming*) is the *true light*, or this *true light [the Word] enlightens humanity by coming into the world*. This option is also acceptable and consistent with John's chronological progressive revealing of the Word, His purpose, and His arrival. A third view is the subject of ἦν is *that light* from v. 8 and the subject of ἐρχόμενον is humanity. This option reflects the KJV translation, *That was the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.* (KJV). This interpretive option is less

desirable as it pulls the attention of the reader from the Word and onto humanity as the subject of the clause. The fourth and last interpretive option is the translation found in the NASB. The subject of ἦν is the implicit indefinite pronoun *there* or *There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man* (NASB). While grammatically possible, this option reverses the order of the final two clauses and requires an implicit pronoun. The first interpretive option is preferred for a more literal translation, remaining focused on the actions of the light (the Word), and because it flows more smoothly from and is consistent with the preceding verses. The light shines on all of humanity in order to provide necessary spiritual understanding for the purposes of salvation (Romans 1:20).

However, not all will accept the real light. John explains, *And this is the judgment, that the light is come into the world, but men loved the darkness rather than the light, for their works were evil* (John 3:19) and *I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believes on me may not abide in the darkness* (John 12:46). John states that some will reject the real light and pursue the darkness so this verse appears to add a more limited view of spiritual enlightenment. Those that hear the Gospel receive sufficient spiritual enlightenment for salvation although many will reject the light and embrace the darkness.

What remains is John's concept of how the Light illuminates humanity (ὁ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον). Is the source of the Light internal or external? Beasley-Murray (2002:123-124) presents three options in support of an internal source of Light. First, the true Light has shone on every person since creation and continues today. This view is consistent with the generally accepted view of General Revelation (Romans 1:20). Internal illumination of all humanity by the Light leaves all persons without excuse before Christ. The second option is the illumination was the incarnation of Christ in that the Light illuminated every person without distinction, not just Jews (*cf.* 1:4-5). However, this illumination is not likely to be the Holy Spirit as illuminator as the third member of the Godhead has not been introduced thus far. If not the Holy Spirit, then how is unclear. The last interpretive option views Jesus as the universal teacher and therefore the Light for humanity, although it is clear from the text that many will reject Jesus. This view cannot find any justification from the text. The Light may also illuminate externally, that is, an objective illumination of the world by the coming of the Word. The response to this internal illumination is binary. Individuals must accept or reject the Light. Once again, John likely has dual meanings in mind for φωτίζει: the Light internally illumines humanity in terms of General

Revelation but also the mere presence of the Light that spiritually illuminates all humanity, not just the Jews.

10a. ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, *He was in the world,*

The subject is denoted by the pronoun *He* because the object is masculine (τῷ κόσμῳ). The pronoun refers to *the Light* that was coming in the previous verse. The Word *was* and the Light *was coming* gives the arrival a progressive sense, a building of tension for the reader that will peak with v. 14 when the Word arrives incarnate. The Word is seen as having special importance with respect to the creation and now has great importance in terms of the future of humanity. The work of the Word is revealed to humanity in only these two functions in the Prologue.

In this verse, John begins to form the persona of the Light with the use of the masculine pronoun. John is saying, the Word was not only coming (v. 8), in fact, He was already in the world. There are differing views as to the time frame the verb ἦν refers to (e.g., a time before Jesus' birth or His birth and afterward, cf. v. 1). The best view is this is a reference to the Word as preexistent as well as His presence in the world prior to and after His physical birth. The noun κόσμῳ is usually a reference to the earth, the home of humanity although in context it is very likely a reference to the Jews or Israel in particular.

1:10b. καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, *and the world was created [came into being (existence)] through Him,*

In the second clause, the aorist middle indicative verb ἐγένετο may be translated as *to come into being* or *come into existence* (Beasley-Murray 2002:12). The preposition δι' with a genitive object is best translated as *through*. The context of the noun κόσμος in the second clause is slightly different from its usage in the first clause. Here the term points to all the created things on the earth, which includes humanity. Köstenberger (2004:36), pointing out John's progressive use of κόσμος, suggests an expansive use of the term to include the entire universe of created things (cf. Colossians 1:16-17). Köstenberger is surely correct in an absolute sense, although the context of v. 10 is best viewed as the coming of the Word, the promised Deliverer, as the prophet John the Baptist declared.

1:10c. καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. *[yet] the world [all of humanity] did not*

recognize [acknowledge] Him.

The third clause once again begins with the conjunction καὶ (*and yet*) with the context of “surprise” and “unexpectedness” much like the beginning of v. 5 (Louw 2006:811). The aorist active indicative verb ἔγνω preceded by οὐκ may be interpreted as *not recognizing* or *not acknowledging*. This a reference to those that do not acknowledge or believe the Word (Jesus Christ) for who He is. This usage of κόσμος contextually refers to a subset of humanity, specifically those that reject the Word or more likely it is a reference to the Jews who rejected Jesus as the promised Messiah. Given John’s intended audience, his two references to κόσμος in this verse may be intended to be interpreted by the Jews as applying to themselves as well as by gentiles, although in a more general manner. The reference to Israel may also be a synecdoche for *all of humanity*.

1:11a εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, *He came to [his] own (people),*

The neuter adjective ἴδια can be translated *one’s own [things]* although in context it is better translated as *his own* (NASB) or the *exclusive property of someone* (Louw 2006:557). John has been building anticipation for readers in his description of the Word with a series of carefully chosen verbs: The Word *was* before time began (v. 1a, 2), *was* in the presence of God (v.1b), *was* the source of life (v. 4a), *was* the light for humanity (v. 4b), *was* coming into the world (v. 9), and *was* in the world (v. 10a). The climax is the Word *came to* His people. The aorist active indicative verb ἦλθεν means, in context, *He came*. The clause is thus translated as *He came to His own [people]*.

Various options have been suggested for the implicit subject of the clause. Hendriksen (1953:80) and Morris (1995:86) suggest the land of Israel. Louw (2006:112) suggests the phrase means *His own people*. Scripture records the Jewish religious leaders as rejecting Jesus (with a few notable exceptions) as do a majority of common Jews Jesus came into contact with. The Jews had priority over the Gentiles based on God’s covenantal relationship with them. Jesus also prioritized his ministry to the Jews (*I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel*, Matthew 15:24). The interpretation appears to be the majority scholarly view.

A more expansive view, particularly because the previous verse referenced the entire world, is the subject of the clause is the entire world. The world is the creation and the property of the Word (Köstenberger 2004:37, Beasley-Murray 2002:95-96). Therefore, Jesus came not

just to the Jews but to all people, which is consistent with the context of vv. 10-11. This view has much to recommend it given that John's gospel was very likely written to Gentiles as well as diaspora Jews, although both views have merit. There is a possibility that John was again intentionally ambiguous given his eclectic audience.

1:11b. καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. *but [and] [His] own [people] did not accept [receive, welcome] Him.*

The verse continues with οἱ ἴδιοι, a masculine plural adjectival phrase meaning *His own* with an implicit subject, as discussed above. The aorist active indicative verb παρέλαβον has the meaning *to accept* or *to welcome* as a guest (Louw 2006:452) plus a negation. Thus, the clause may be literally interpreted as *His own people did not accept Him*.

1:12a ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, *But as many as [All who] received [accepted] Him,*

The plural pronoun ὅσοι means *as many as* or *all who* in a comparison of quantities sense (Louw 2006:594). Once again, the aorist active indicative ἔλαβον has the meaning of *to accept* or *to receive* although in a positive sense in its usage, or *But as many as received Him*. The KJV and NASB render these verbs as (not) received-receive in vv. 11-12. Accept has a more contextually correct connotation because it requires action on the part of the recipient. Receive appears to be too passive for the context of vv. 11-12. So, the clause may be rendered as *But as many as received Him . . .*

1:12b. ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, *He gave them (the) right [authority, privilege] to be [become] (the) children of God,*

The aorist active indicative ἔδωκεν with αὐτοῖς is simply *He gave to them*. The aorist middle infinitive γενέσθαι describes the ability to *acquire* or *experience a state* (Louw 2006:153). The concept is being given the ability or authority, derived from a rightful source, to change one's state or condition of being. Köstenberger (2004:37) describes this as God's authorization to become His children. The aorist middle infinitive γενέσθαι may be rendered *to become* this new state. The phrase τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι describes the result of the change of being, that is, those who believe have the authority or have been offered the privilege of becoming a child of God. The noun τέκνα, never singular, is often a reference to biological children or close personal relationships (Louw 2006:109). We do not become God's biological

children but God changes our status before Him from estrangement into a close personal relationship, certainly a brand new existence. New believers are children of God who immediately embark on a life-long journey of progressively becoming more like the Father. Finally, the aorist tenses of ἔλαβον (*received*) and ἔδωκεν (*gave*) suggest the two events occur simultaneously. When one receives Jesus as Lord one immediately becomes a child of God with all the benefits and responsibilities thereto.

1:12c. τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, *to the ones believing in His name,*

The final clause of this verse adds a condition or restriction to the right or authority of humanity to become children of God. The present active participle πιστεύουσιν means *believing* with the concept of complete trust and reliance (Louw 2006:375). The ones believing in His name, that is, the ones that place their complete trust in the person and work of Jesus are the ones who have been given the authority or ability to become children of God. This also infers acceptance of the humanity and divinity of Jesus Christ. The ones believing in His name are the same persons as the *as many as received Him* found in the first clause. In fact, the grammar would allow a translation of *But as many as accepted Him and believing in His name . . .* The more literal translation shown above is preferable.

1:13a. οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων *who [the (ones)] were born, not of bloods [blood],*

Verse 13 describes the subsequent spiritual rebirth that follows belief in His name. What follows are three different situations that demonstrate spiritual rebirth is not linked in any way to natural or worldly influences. First, becoming a child of God does not occur from natural reproductive processes. The genitive plural noun αἱμάτων is literally translated as *bloods*. A literal translation is *The ones not from bloods*. Morris (1995:89) views *bloods* as an idiomatic expression for “blood” where the plural form is a reference to drops of blood, although this view is not helpful when the full force of the three negatives are considered. Köstenberger (2004:39) notes the plural is based on the ancient belief that the natural process of procreation requires the mixing of the blood of the parents. Being born into the family of God is not based on the blood or ethnic origin of the parents. John is likely making the case that Jewish heritage and thus covenantal inclusiveness do not constitute spiritual rebirth.

1:13b οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς *nor of [the] will of the flesh,*

The second means a person is able to become a child of God is through natural procreation, which is common to all humankind. The aorist middle indicative verb θελήματος is a reference to human will or desire. Louw (2006:291) describes σαρκὸς θέλημα (literally, *desire of the flesh*) as an idiom describing sexual or physical desire. The noun σαρκὸς is a reference to human desire or human nature. Beasley-Murray (2006:13) limits the full force of the word to sexual desire in this verse. This is not a statement of illicit desire but is a reference to what is a natural sexual desire that results in human reproduction.

1:13c οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. *nor of (the) will of a man but of [to be given birth from] God.*

The third factor that does not influence spiritual rebirth is the will or desire of a particular person. The noun θελήματος, as in the prior clause, is a reference to a human will or desire, in this case, a reference to the singular noun ἀνδρὸς. The phrase θελήματος ἀνδρὸς is likely to that of a husband's desire for children (Köstenberger 2004:40). The aorist passive indicative verb ἐγεννήθησαν is literally to give birth. In context, the passive means to be given birth. The act of spiritual regeneration or rebirth originates only from God (ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν) and not from the desires of a person or persons. God Himself (ἐκ θεοῦ) is the source of the rebirth, which is a metaphor for a new spiritual life.

Taken as a whole, the verse emphasizes with a series of three negatives that all natural factors in the birth process, which are under the control of individuals, are excluded from a spiritual birth, which is a work of God alone. Humanity has been given the power to become children of God but the spiritual rebirth is solely a work of God. Spiritual rebirth stands opposed to the Jewish view that merely physical birth as a Jew makes one a child of God.

5.6 John 1:14-18: The Word Became Flesh

5.6.1 Passage Text and Final Translation

14 Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. 15 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. 16 ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος· 17. ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.

18. Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

14. The Word became flesh and took up residence among us, and we saw His glory, glory as the One and Only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. 15. John testified concerning Him and has proclaimed saying, “This was the One of whom I said, ‘The One coming after me is greater than me, because He existed before me.’” 16. Indeed, we have all received grace after grace from His fullness, 17. for the law was given through Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. 18. No one has ever seen God; the One and Only Son who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made Him known.

5.6.2 Source and Text Critical Issues

Verse 1:18. Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. *No has ever seen God (the) only (one), God, who is in the bosom of the Father, that one made (him) known.*

Some manuscripts read ὁ μονογενὴς θεὸς as *the only God* or *the only Son*. One manuscript and a few patristic quotations use μονογενὴς υἱὸς θεοῦ as *the only Son of God*. Another manuscript and a patristic quotation reads ὁ μονογενής as *the only one*. NA28 shows *only God* with a B rating, signifying high confidence. However, NJB, NRSV, REB, and TEV use *the only Son*. The KJV uses the very familiar *the only begotten Son*. The NASB uses *the one and only Son* with a footnote, “other MSS use God [instead of Son].” The NA28 reading is used in the exegesis that follows.

5.6.3 Analysis of the Grammar and Key Words

1:14a. Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, *And the Word became [came into being, born] flesh [man] and took up residence [lived, dwelt] among us, and we saw [observed, beheld] His glory,*

The grammatical construction of this sentence is awkward. It begins with the main clause that describes the incarnation of the Word into flesh, then it adds a spatial or temporal dimension, and ends with testimony that confirms the divinity of the Word incarnate. This is not a statement that Jesus ceased to be what he was before, that is, 100% divine. In context, the noun σὰρξ means the Word *became* (ἐγένετο, from v. 10b, *came into being, made, born*) flesh and blood,

100% a human being. These seemingly antithetical statements are but one of many found in Scripture. Note that Jesus became *man* and not “a man” (Westcott 1908:10). Jesus was human but not like any particular human being. Literally, the Word took physical form. Wallace (1996:264) terms σὰρξ a qualitative predicate nominative in that the Word joined humanity and wasn’t just “a flesh.” The aorist, active, indicative verb ἐσκήνωσεν speaks to the Word, as a flesh and blood being, taking up (temporary) residence and (*dwelt*) with humanity. The Word has taken the world as a new home since v. 1 states the Word’s home is with the Father.

Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο also links back to v. 3 in which πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο. All things came to be through the work of the Word and through the Word, the Word became flesh. The Word was the author of the first creation. It appears John is stating that the Word is also the author of a second creation, that is, the Word becoming flesh. The literal concept behind ἐσκήνωσεν is to “pitch one’s tent” much in the same way that God took up residence in the Tabernacle in the time of Moses, particularly during the Exodus. There also seems to be a temporal aspect. God was not always present in the Tabernacle. The Jews met God in the Tent of the Meeting and today humanity may meet Jesus Christ, divine, yet clothed in humanity. The concept of *dwelt* may be ingressive (*began to dwell*) or complexive (*dwelt completely*). Both views may correctly describe Jesus’ incarnation (Köstenberger 2004:41). The divine Word clothed in humanity lived among humanity, although temporarily.

The aorist middle indicative verb ἐθεασάμεθα (*we saw, we beheld*) refers to those who personally beheld the glory of Jesus Christ or perhaps more narrowly as the apostolic witnesses. The glory of God was revealed in Jesus Christ. Those that saw or beheld His glory were followers who personally came into contact with Jesus, witnessed the miracles He performed, and His death and resurrection (Köstenberger 2004:42, Beasley-Murray 2005:13-14). However, the apostle John (and the Synoptics) relate episodes when many people beheld Jesus’ ministry, His miracles, and even His resurrection, yet without experiencing a heart change. These people saw and heard but did not understand. Thus, those that beheld His glory not only were personal witnesses of Jesus’ ministry but also those who experienced the life-changing grace and spiritual rebirth that comes with being a child of God. A minority of commentators suggest this is a reference to merely the twelve Apostles or all the believers that make up the universal church. These two interpretations are either contextually too restrictive or too expansive, respectively, to be of practical help. John’s reference to His glory (τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ) also brings to mind the

God's visible presence as He took His place in the Tent of the Meeting. This glory is a visible glory described as brilliance or radiance. The following clause further unpacks John's understanding of τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ.

1:14b. δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. *glory as the (of) [unique] only one and only (begotten, one) from [of] (the) Father, full [complete] of grace and truth.*

The second half of v. 14 begins with the word glory and it is immediately followed with the comparative ὡς (*as*) thereby offering a comparison of God's glory with that of the Father's only Son. The adjective μονογενοῦς can be translated as *only begotten* (only KJV, NASB) or as *the one and only* (e.g., NIV, NET) son. The definition must also communicate the uniqueness of the Son, that is, the only one of its kind. There has never been and nor will there ever be another Son of God.

The clause πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας describes the one and only Son of the Father as being πλήρης (*full or complete*) with the qualities of χάριτος (*grace*: mercy, compassion, love) and ἀληθείας (*truth*). The clause modifies the *only begotten (one)*, not *glory*, as believed by a minority of commentators (i.e., the *glory* was full of grace and truth).

God's χάριτος (*grace*) is the showing kindness or graciousness to another (Louw 2006:748). To the Jews, the Old Testament speaks of God's ḥesed, (*loving kindness or undeserved favor*) by selecting Israel as the object of His covenant love. God's ἀληθείας (*truth*) is a statement of the Word also having God's intrinsic property of absolute truth or truth revelation. The Word has the identical eternal and divine properties of grace and truth exhibited by the Father. For the Jew, this expresses the certainty that God will be faithful to His covenant promises. This pairing of grace and truth is similar to the pairing of ḥesed and 'emet (*absolute truthfulness, faithfulness*) often found in the Old Testament (e.g., Ex. 34:6). These two words paint a picture of the indescribable God in the Old Testament (thus, Jesus in the New Testament) as one whose perfect love endures forever. Yet, God's truth also includes the exercise of His perfect judgment on those that reject Him. The side of God's truth is not discussed in the Prologue per se but is thoroughly addressed in the body of the gospel.

The following preposition παρὰ with a genitive object means *of* or *from* (as v. 6) the Father. This is a grammatical conundrum. If the preposition is translated as *from* then the implied

word *coming* must be supplied and *coming from the Father* could modify either *only begotten* or *glory*. Beasley-Murray (2006:14-15) and Köstenberger (2004:44-45) see the phrase as modifying the *only begotten* Son. It's the Son's glory that is in view. A minority view is, again, the phrase modifies *glory*, that is, the glory of the Father is to be found in the Son (NRSV). The Son's glory is sourced from the Father, that is, the eye-witnesses to the Son's glory were actually seeing the Father's glory. This issue cannot be resolved grammatically as both interpretations are allowable. However, it is usually good practice to connect the modifying phrase with the closest noun (*the only begotten*). For this reason and because the context appears to be more in line with the Prologue taken as a whole, the former has the most appeal.

The Son's glory isn't derived from the Father because He is the Father's One and Only but because the Son's divinity is equivalent to the Father. The Son is equally deserving of the inscription grace and truth. The glory of God was present on earth as was the Word in the same way that the glory of God was made visible as he took up residence in the Tabernacle, during the wilderness wanderings, on Mt. Sinai, and periodically to the prophets.

1:15 Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. *John testified concerning [about] Him and has proclaimed saying, "This was the One of whom I said [speak], The One coming after me is greater than [surpassed, in front of] me, because He existed before me.*

The perfect active indicative verb κέκραγεν means *proclaims* or *shouts out* (Louw 2006:398). In this verse, the perfect tense is properly interpreted as a present tense. Köstenberger (2004:45) suggests the verbs κέκραγεν (*proclaims*) and μαρτυρεῖ (present active indicative, *testifies*) form a hendiadys that describes John the Baptist's continuing ministry. A hendiadys is usually two nouns (or verbs) conjoined with an "and" that may be rewritten as a single descriptive phrase. In this verse, the two verbs may be expressed as *loudly testifies* so the verse (unexpectedly) can be termed a hendiadys. The effect is to strongly express the present reality of John the Baptist's proclamation of his prophetic message.

The phrase οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον may be literally translated as *this One was who/whom I say/tell* or better, *this One was [He of] whom I speak/said*. The aorist active indicative verb εἶπον ("saying") is an indicator of a quoted statement that follows. The article ὁ is usually translated a definite article but when standing alone *he* is required. The present passive participle ἐρχόμενος

(*He comes*) has as its subject the pronoun *ὁ*. The prepositions *ἐμπροσθέν* (*in front* or *before* [Louw 2006:716]) and *ὀπίσω* (*after* [Louw 2006:469]) describe physical or special positions, in front of and following, respectively. The perfect active indicative verb *γέγονεν* describes *to come into existence* (Louw 2006:157). Literally, this phrase may now be literally rendered as *He [who] follows me comes, in front of me came into existence, because first me was*. The phrase *because first me was* is a *ὅτι* expegetical clause because it provides further clarification or explanation of what was just said (Wallace 1995:459). The adjective *πρῶτός* signifies the first at a point in time.

This verse appears to link vv. 14 and 16 as a parenthetical remark that furthers John statements about the divinity of Christ. John places the physical existence of the Word chronologically following John the Baptist. But he then says that John the Baptist said that the Word is greater than himself. The rationale for that statement is He either (1) preexisted or (2) has a superior position than John the Baptist. The majority view is this is a reference to a superior position (Köstenberger 2004:45, Morris 1995:96, Beasley-Murray 2002:15), which is certainly true in a divine as well as an ontological sense. This view is also consistent with the Jewish belief that the wisdom of age placed someone superior to another of lesser age. However, the Prologue, thus far, reveals that is the Word was divine, the creator, and pre-existent. The better view is the Word has a superior position because of His preexistence.

The Word also comes before him in importance (*has a higher rank than I* [NASB], *greater than I* [NET]) because the Word was the author of all creation. In other words, the One coming after me is greater than me because He was preexistent. By making this statement, John intentionally links the glory, grace, and truth demonstrated by God to the same characteristics found in the Word. Then in v. 16, John expands the presence of the divine grace and truth present in the Word (*His fullness*) as gifts to all those who have received Him and become children of God (v. 12).

1:16 ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος.
Because we have all received grace after grace from His fullness,

The apostle John is now speaking, not John the Baptist. The noun *πληρώματος* describes the completeness (*fullness* by KJV, NASB, NET) of the Word and refers back to *full of grace and truth* in v. 14. God is the source of grace and truth. The aorist plural *ἐλάβομεν* preceded by *ἡμεῖς πάντες* may be translated as *we all have received*. The preposition *ἀντὶ* with a genitive

object signifies *upon* or *after* so that the phrase χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος may be rendered *grace upon grace*. The NET bible interprets this phrase as *one gracious gift after another*. This phrase functions as an explanation of the first half of the verse. The Word is the source of an unending stream of grace to those that who are the children of God. This grace given is a reflection of the inexhaustible supply of God's grace (Louw 2006:748) and that grace is freely given (Louw 2006:568).

Köstenberger (2004:46-47) unexpectedly supports an alternative view of the meaning of the phrase as *grace instead of grace*. He views the grace that God provided to Moses was either supplemented or replaced with a greater amount of grace by Christ. Louw (2006:573) reads ἀντὶ with a genitive object as *for, in place of* therefore this interpretation is grammatically acceptable. However, the picture of replacement grace is inconsistent with the truth of God's endless supply of grace. Grace is not described as consumable so why would it need to be replaced? If God is immutable then His grace must also be eternal and unchanging. The best view is God continues to shower us with grace and then even more grace. This is a statement of cumulative grace rather than the replacement of one for another.

1:17 ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.
for the law was given [granted, imparted] through Moses, grace and truth came through [was imparted] through Jesus Christ.

The word ὅτι (*because, for*) begins an exegetical clause that provides further clarification or explanation, in this case v. 16. The verse explains the source of the grace upon grace that is received by believers. A comparison is offered with the grace the Law provides through Moses and the grace that comes through Jesus Christ (Köstenberger 2004:46-47). The aorist passive indicative verb ἐδόθη is best translated as *was given* or *was granted*. The Law was given by God *through Moses*. The Law refers to at least the Torah, the first five books of the Old Testament, and is likely a reference to the whole Judaistic religious tradition. The aorist middle indicative verb ἐγένετο means *came through, was imparted* or *happened*. The concept is something of value was transferred (Louw 2006:565). The preposition διὰ with a genitive object means *through*. Because the Law was given by Moses, grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

Note the three contrasting relationships between the Law given through Moses and grace

and truth through Jesus Christ. First is a comparison of the Law with grace and truth. The Law came through God's *loving kindness and truth* (Exodus 34.6) but now grace and truth have been personally delivered to humanity by the Son of God. Second is a comparison of Moses versus Jesus Christ. Moses, a human being, delivered the Law that was provided by God. The ultimate expression of God's love was delivered by grace and truth: Jesus Christ incarnate. Finally, grace and truth were *given by* Jesus Christ instead of imparted through Moses. Moses was the vessel through which God delivered the Law to the Jews. Jesus Christ Himself imparted grace and truth to all those who accept Him. Taken together, the grace and truth imparted by Jesus Christ are superior in all ways to the Law given by God through Moses to the Jews. Christ was operating through His personal character and love for humanity. Moses, a servant of God, gave the Law in obedience to God's command.

1.18a Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· *No one has ever seen God;*

The perfect active indicative verb ἑώρακεν means "has seen." The adverb πώποτε means *ever* (Louw 2006:620) or perhaps *at any time* (NASB). Thus the phrase may be judged as: *No one has ever seen God*. There is not universal agreement with the interpretation *has seen* as a reference to physical sight. Köstenberger (2004:49) and Beasley-Murray (2002:15-16) see this as a reference to physical sight although detractors quickly reference Exodus 33:20 (*No one may see Me and live*). Theophanies, by their very nature, are but a glimpse of that portion of God's character and attributes He allows to be seen. Theophanies reveal but a shadow of God. Morris (1995:100) points out that although some have been given partial visions of God, no one has seen or can comprehend God. Therefore, God can only be *seen* through Jesus Christ.

1.18b μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο. *(the) only (one), Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has made (Him) known.*

The adjective μονογενής, as in v. 14, describes *one that is unique* or *one of a kind*. The NET Bible translates μονογενὴς θεὸς as *the only one, himself God*. More literally, *the one and only God* is a good translation. The phrase μονογενὴς θεὸς is implicitly a statement that Jesus Christ is God according to Köstenberger (2004:48-49) and Beasley-Murray (2004:15-16). A better view is the statement is implicitly about the equivalence of Jesus Christ and God, or in mathematical terms, Jesus Christ \equiv God while still having the closest possible relationship with each other. This verse also form an inclusio with v. 1 to conclude the Prologue. In v.1 we learn

that the Word \equiv God, in a mathematical sense. If v. 18 states Jesus Christ \equiv God, then John has told us that the Word \equiv Jesus Christ.

The noun κόλπον means *bosom* and describes one who is close to the Father's heart or one *who is in closest fellowship with the Father* (NET). The statement brings to mind the ancient Jewish habit of reclining to eat meals, with the honored position next to the host of the meal. An intimate relationship with the Father is in view, as noted above. The demonstrative pronoun ἐκεῖνος is emphatic and literally means *He (Himself) made him known*. The aorist middle indicative verb ἐξηγήσατο means to “make something fully known by careful explanation or by clear revelation” (Louw 2006:339). Louw (2006:411) includes an alternate meaning as “providing detailed information . . . to inform, to relate, to tell fully.” The first definition option is less likely in this verse as Jesus Christ did make God known to believers but God does not make Himself fully known to humanity. God has sufficiently revealed Himself on matters of salvation and all necessary aspects of the Christian life. The second definition is more on point. God has made *His invisible attributes . . . eternal power and divine nature* known to humanity by clear and convincing revelation (Romans 1:20). This clause reads thus: *the one and only God, who is in the bosom of God, that One [Jesus Christ] has made Him known*.

5.7 Summary and Conclusions

The Greek vocabulary found in the Prologue is deceptively simple but the Christological theology of the Prologue is quite complex and profound. The following are ten essential emphases of John's *Logos* Christology found in the Prologue, derived from above exegesis.

1. Jesus Christ is pre-existent and eternal (John 1:1a, 2). The λόγος (Jesus Christ) was present before creation. The λόγος preceded creation and was present with God when the universe was created. Even before the creation of the heavens and the earth (*cf.* Gen 1:1), Jesus Christ was present, in a historical and a cosmological sense. Jesus Christ shares eternity with God.

2. Jesus Christ is divine (1:1b, 2, 3a). The fully divine Jesus Christ exists as a separate person in this revealing of the first two persons of the Trinity (a concept that will be developed later in church history but used here for clarity). Jesus Christ enjoys a unique position in creation because of His close, very personal relationship with the Father, distinctive of the Trinity. The

λόγος is in the presence of God. The λόγος, however, is a distinct person yet has the fully divine nature and attributes of God, yet He is God. Because Jesus Christ shares God's divine nature, He is not a created being.

3. Jesus Christ is the creator of all things (1:3). Every single thing that has ever been created was created by the λόγος. The λόγος was the sole agent of creation and that act of creation continues today. Jesus Christ is the creator of all physical life and the creator of all inanimate objects, including the basic elements from which all of creation emanates—Jesus Christ created all things *ex nihilo* (out of nothing). Jesus Christ is also the creator of the internal moral compass that was placed in every person.

4. Jesus Christ is the source of humanity's spiritual enlightenment (1:4-5, 9). A spiritual, divine light has been present in every human being from creation. The light shined throughout the Old Testament beginning with the *Proto-Evangelium* (Gen. 3:15), the Passover Lamb, the serpent lifted up in Num. 21:8 (*cf.* John 3:14, 15), and, the sacrificial shedding of blood found in the Levitical laws. The light shined in the New Testament with the birth of Jesus, His crucifixion, and His resurrection and ascension. The light shined in His free offer of salvation. The light continues to shine today in a dark and evil world. This spiritual light provides sufficient wisdom to each person to discern the existence of God (General Revelation), apprehend one's sinful nature, and the ability to recognize divine truth (internal moral compass). Implicit in this statement is the λόγος is the source of salvation for humanity. These and other divine attributes were revealed to sinful humanity by Jesus Christ.

5. John the Baptist called for repentance, heralded the coming of the Messiah (1:6-8, 15). John the Baptist, the exemplar of His never-ending light that shines upon humanity, came to proclaim the coming of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ. John the Baptist came to bring testimony and a call to repentance to the Jews. John the Baptist introduced Messiah Jesus Christ to all humanity. John was a man, commissioned by God, and God's agent who testified of the coming Light to humanity. Jesus Christ *was* from eternity past, is the λόγος, is Himself God, is the true spiritual Light to humanity, and is the object of our faith. The apostle John quotes John the Baptist as saying Jesus Christ is greater than himself in all aspects (v. 15). John the Baptist was chronologically older in human days, but Jesus Christ was his senior based on His divinity, eternity, and glory.

6. A majority of fallen humanity reject spiritual enlightenment (1:5, 10-11). The life that brings true light to humanity is Jesus Christ, who supplies spiritual enlightenment to all persons sufficient for salvation. Fallen humanity will continue to reject the true Light and intentionally embrace the darkness. Yet the Light, the object of our faith, continues to shine. The Jews and the world (lit. a large portion of humanity) did not acknowledge Him (v. 10b) or show hospitality (v. 11b). Those people who have voluntarily accepted spiritual darkness and suppressed the spiritual light present in all people (*cf.* 1.4b) are implicitly liable for God's righteous judgment. Rejection of the Light tacitly includes an active resistance or hostility towards the spiritual light.

7. A minority of fallen humanity embrace spiritual enlightenment, become children of God (1:12-13). The great majority of Jews that heard Jesus speak rejected Messiah Jesus but a few individuals, not limited to Jewish descent or nationality, did accept Jesus' salvific message and were adopted into the Kingdom of God. Those that believe in His name, irrespective of nationality or ethnicity, become children of God. The will of an individual may not establish this spiritual relationship. At the moment a person *receives Him*, that person also became a child of God, that is, one is *begotten* of God. A child of God is one who is slowly transformed into the image of God, through His sovereign grace, not due to nationality or ethnicity. The context supports the conclusion that more than intellectual knowledge or assent to the historical Jesus Christ is required (*cf.* v. 5).

8. Salvation is not the product of human work (1:12-13). This is a clear rejection of the Jewish view of their special relationship with God that ensured their communal righteousness based on keeping the Mosaic Law. Works righteousness does not produce salvation. In the same way, merely being biologically born into a particular ethnicity or belief system does not qualify a person to become a child of God.

9. Jesus Christ arrived incarnate in the world (1:14). In an act of supreme love, the λόγος took on the mantle of humanity while preserving His divine nature. Jesus is 100% human and 100% divine, "...concurring in one Person and one Subsistence, not parted or divided into two persons, but one and the same Son, and only begotten, God the Word, the Lord Jesus Christ..." (The Confession of Chalcedon). The λόγος lived among humanity taking on human nature yet remained without sin. During His earthly ministry, the apostle John and others

personally observed, studied, composed, and reflected on His glory. John wished to fully comprehend the presence of the Son of God, the miracles He performed, and His death and resurrection. Jesus' glory was derived from His own being, not by virtue of His relationship with the Father. The *fullness* (cf. vv. 16-17) of God may be described as His grace and truth and because Jesus Christ reflecting the Father, those attributes also describe the Messiah.

10. Jesus Christ is the source of grace and truth (16-18). The apostle John and others that believe in His name, will, from His fullness, continue to receive grace from Christ's infinite supply of grace, through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is through the Father that grace and truth flowed through Jesus Christ to humanity, and therefore the actions of the Son bring glory to the Father. While the Law came *through* Moses who never saw God, the grace that has been extended to humanity came *from* Jesus Christ, and superior to that originating from Moses and the Law. Jesus Christ may *see* the Father in some manner, likely a theophany as God is spirit. However, we may *see* God, through spiritual eyes by believing in His name and becoming a child of God. Thus, faith in Jesus Christ, who has an intimate relationship with the Father, is the only means by which the Father may be properly comprehended by humanity.

In this chapter, an exegesis of the Prologue has produced ten key principles that encompass John's *Logos* Christology. In Chapter 4, the writings of Philo of Alexandria were examined to identify and quantify the key attributes of his logos philosophy, based upon Philo's contextual use of the term. Possible intersections of John's *Logos* Christology developed in this chapter may now be compared and contrasted with Philo's logos philosophy developed in Chapter 4. Thus, Chapter 6 will answer the fourth subsidiary research question: "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's logos philosophy?".

CHAPTER 6

SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES: JOHN'S *LOGOS* CHRISTOLOGY AS TO PHILO OF ALEXANDRIA'S *LOGOS* PHILOSOPHY

6.1 Introduction

This chapter compares and contrasts the results of the investigation into Philo of Alexandria's philosophical *logos* completed in Chapter 4 with the outcomes of the exegetical study conducted in Chapter 5 that characterized the apostle John's Christological *Logos*. The principle intersection of thought between the apostle John and Philo of Alexandria is their view of the person and work of the *Logos*. Thus, the principal purpose of this chapter is to investigate and analyze apparent similarities and differences in their views of the *Logos*. The results of this comparative analysis answer the fourth subsidiary research question: "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's *logos* philosophy?" The standard for comparison is the ten point description of John's Christological *Logos* presented in Section 5.7. Each of those descriptive statements of John's Christological *Logos* are summarized followed by Philo's description of seemingly like or dissimilar characteristics. A conclusion is reached with each of the ten points of comparison with respect to Philo's philosophical *logos*, which serves to answer the fourth subsidiary research question. Old Testament Scripture references are limited to the Pentateuch and Psalms given Philo's writings on the *logos* are generally confined to those particular portions of Scripture.

6.2 The *Logos*: Christological or Philosophical?

6.2.1 *The Logos is pre-existent and eternal*

The apostle John announces the *Logos* was present before creation and took His rightful position beside God at the moment of creation. Implicit in this description of the *Logos* is He is co-eternal and shares the same glorious divine nature as God. John 1:1 is also a statement about the very nature of the first two persons of the Godhead. On the one hand, the Godhead is presented as two distinct persons in the Gospel of John with each person described as fully God. On the other hand, Scripture confirms there is only One God (Deut. 6:4-5) yet John describes

each person of the Godhead as united in purpose, essence, and nature. Many metaphors about the Trinity have been proposed from as early as the Church Fathers until today. In the author's Theology I class some years ago, the instructor suggested the triple point of water (0.01C, the equilibrium temperature where water may exist as a solid, liquid, and gas) was an adequate metaphor for the Trinity. As a thermodynamicist, this writer quickly deflated the metaphor (the fallacy is the essence, water, generally has constant properties but, in fact, it moves from one form to the another only with temperature or pressure changes). Resolving this divine trichotomy is impossible using the language of finite minds and therefore remains a matter of faith. Please note that only the first two persons of the Godhead are explicitly described in the Prologue.

God, and thus the *Logos*, exhibit many divine attributes that humanity cannot hope to emulate. These incommunicable attributes include aseity (God is dependent on nothing for His existence and He has existed eternally without prior cause), immutability (the essence of the *Logos* does not change, particularly with respect to His attributes and will), and eternity (the *Logos* has no beginning or ending and is not constrained by time). In sum, God is entirely self-sufficient, unchanging, and transcends the limits of space and time. God is also not constrained by the laws that govern the universe. Noted physicist Steven Hawking (2018:38) writes in his book "Brief Answers to the Big Questions," published after his death in March 2018, "There is no God. No one created the universe . . ." Paradoxically, he writes several pages later, "I prefer to think that everything can be explained another way, by laws of nature." Hawking atheistic presuppositions caused him to miss an important point that instantly resolves the apparent contradiction. Eternal *Logos*, divine creator of all things, established the laws of the universe that we must live by but He is not constrained in any way by those same laws.

Philo of Alexandria also describes the logos as having a close relationship with God (positioned above the Mercy Seat and between the Cherubim in heaven) although contextually the reference describes physical proximity rather than due to relationship or composition (essence). The philonic logos does not enjoy the intimate relationship shared by the members of the Godhead. For Philo, the logos is looking onto the throne of God as one would attend an event honoring others. Philo's logos is watching and observing, not contributing to God's actions in the throne room. Philo's logos is a heavenly observer, not a participant.

Philo describes God as the supreme being who stamped His wisdom onto the logos and

making the logos second in the heavenly line of authority (*Op.* 24). Philo defines wisdom in his writings as “the knowledge of all divine and human things, and of the respective cause of them” (*Congr.* 79). Since the wisdom of the logos is a copy of God’s wisdom and the logos is a created being, according to Philo, we are obliged to conclude that the logos occupies this exalted position not by divine right but by the sovereign selection of God. The logos, according to Philo, occupies an exalted position in relation to God but does not have the same familial position, relational, or share the divine nature as God as does the *Logos*.

Philo often depicts the logos as having divine characteristics, such as “firstborn,” “archetype of God,” or “chief deputy.” On the surface, each of these titles appears to describe divine characteristics. However, on closer observation, we find that Philo is describing functions of the logos, not divine characteristics. For example, Philo’s “firstborn” description in context describes the logos as an “imitator” or “image” of the Father in a dualistic sense. Instead, from Philo’s view, this and like terminology explicitly describe the logos as God’s first creation imbued with certain divine attributes by God, “For that [logos] must be God to us imperfect beings, but the first mentioned, or true God, is so only to wise and perfect men” (*Leg. All.* 3.207). In other words, the work of the logos, from the view of humanity, appears to be the divine in action although those actions are based on God’s creative power hidden from humanity.

Philo’s logos has many other forms and purposes, such as an angel of the Lord that appeared in order to reveal God’s will to particular people (*Som.* 1.228-239; *Cher.* 1-3). The logos is God’s messenger to humanity that appears in many forms. God remains transcendent yet the immanent logos appears visibly to humanity, presenting certain characteristics of God that Philo describes as divine characteristics. The “image of God” (*Leg. All.* 1.43) is particularly crucial to Philo’s Greek dualistic logos philosophy, such as the logos is God’s messenger and supplier of wisdom to humanity. Philo’s dualistic philosophy requires separation of divine God from immanent humanity so the created logos is the intermediary. The “image of God” motif is used by Philo to justify a divine logos because it is described as an exact copy of the wisdom of God. The “image of God” from which the logos is formed is not an exact duplication but rather the image is limited to the “wisdom” of God. The logos is viewed as the “stamp” of wisdom that is then imprinted onto humanity via the logos thereby maintaining God’s distance from humanity. Philo also calls the logos the “high priest” and the “chief of angels” (*Conf.* 146), although these remain functional descriptions rather than a description of divine characteristics.

Philo does call the logos the “paraclete” that bestows God’s blessings on humanity (*Mos.* 2:134) and as God’s “reason,” which are, again, are functional descriptions of how wisdom and virtue flow from a transcendent God, through the logos, to immanent humanity. These, and many other descriptive terms (see Table 2) are used synonymously and contextually wherever in Scripture Philo found reference to transcendent God directly interacting with immanent humanity (e.g., angels in the Old Testament, Moses speaking to the burning bush, the angel with the flaming sword guarding the Tree of Life [Gen. 3:24], etc.). In each of those episodes, Philo substitutes a contextually appropriate appearance of the logos as the revealer of God found in Scripture.

Philo’s view of God is not of prime importance within the scope of this work although a short discussion is appropriate in light of verse 1. Philo certainly views God as One God, transcendent and uncreated, although he does embrace Greek dualistic thought with respect to God’s functions displayed in Scripture, especially when it relates to God’s relationship with His created. Philo recognized the seeming two “faces” of God described in Scripture (love and judgment) and he puts a name to these two functions. First, the Beneficent Power is closely related to the creative and judgmental characteristics of God. Second, the Creative Power reflects God as truth and His love for humanity. Philo views the logos as the intermediary between these two “faces” of God and humanity thus providing a glimpse of God through the work of the logos. Humanity exists as an image of God to the degree or amount of wisdom provided to humanity by the logos. In fact, each person receives a small yet specific portion of the wisdom of the logos and it is through that act we each have some likeness of God. Humanity is an image of the logos, which is an image of God—we are a copy of a copy of God’s wisdom. The philonic logos stands between humanity and transcendent God. It is through this clever act of interpretation that Philo is able to reconcile his monotheistic beliefs with Greek dualism. In contrast, John describes an imminent, divine, and eternal *Logos* who humbly and voluntarily became human as the supreme act of love.

6.2.2 *The Logos (Jesus Christ) is divine*

The fully divine Jesus Christ exists as a separate person within the Godhead in an intimate and perfect relationship with the Father. The eternal *Logos* exhibits the same divine nature and attributes of God. The *Logos* is uncreated because He shares the same divine, eternal nature as uncreated God. Implicit in this description of the *Logos* is recognition that He shares

God's holiness and separateness. God must also be separate and distinct, holy in all His ways (Leviticus 11:44) and never mistaken for the profane (Lev. 10:9-11). Thus, these same attributes of holiness must apply equally to the *Logos*. The *Logos* also displays other incommunicable attributes or perfections that are implicit with His divinity, such as His equivalence in nature and substance with God. For example, the three "omnis" describe important incommunicable divine traits. First, the divine *Logos* is omnipresent. The totality of God is present everywhere in creation. The *Logos* is present in heaven with God at creation but is also present, in equal measure on earth or anywhere in the universe. When the Bible speaks of God in heaven it is picturing God as being in control of all things and being exalted by all the heavenly hosts, not as God limited to a single physical space. Second, God is omniscient. *Logos* has perfect knowledge of Himself and all other things, from eternity past to eternity future. Finally, God is omnipotent. God is all-powerful and may do whatever He wishes to do with His created. Philo does not ascribe these characteristics to his *logos*, likely because it would violate his monotheistic sensibilities.

Philo consistently interprets Scripture using Hellenistic presuppositions, such as there can be no direct relationship between humankind's rational soul and the transcendent God (*Quaest in Gn* 2.62), and therefore there must be a mediator. The role of the mediator found in Scripture is, in the mind of Philo, the *logos*. As stated in the previous section, Philo's *logos* is a created being that does not share all the divine, eternal attributes of an uncreated God. The incommunicable traits found in the *Logos* are not present in Philo's conception of the *logos*. The *logos* is described as creator but with a caveat: All the power found in the *logos* was imbued by creative power by God. If the *logos* was God's first act of creation prior to the creation of the universe and humanity then by definition the *logos* was not present at time of creation, that is, his own creation. The co-eternal *Logos* was personally responsible for the creation of all things and His own creative power is not derived from that of God but is a feature of His eternal divine essence. This is an essential difference between Philo's philosophical *logos* and John's Christological *Logos*.

Philo also credits the *logos* with the role of binding together the polar Beneficent and Creative powers of God. Regardless of Philo's view of which of these two "sides" of God have precedence in power, the fact remains that Philo states that Creative power is the older of the two. Philo describes a bifurcated God that is no longer uncreated or eternal in his quest to

syncretize basic Hebrew theology with Greek dualistic beliefs. Equally confusing is Philo's attempt to equate the created logos to Creative power in *Quaest in Ex.* 2.62. In essence, Philo describes the created logos as superior to God as Beneficent power. This logical inconsistency is not addressed by Philo. Philo also describes the logos as having the mind of God. Certainly, John's Christological *Logos* has the mind of God but for different reasons. The eternal uncreated *Logos* and eternal uncreated God share the same essence, exist in a perfect relationship, and therefore, have the same mind. What One knows the other knows. What One desires, the other desires. Philo's created logos does not share any of these divine characteristics.

6.2.3 *The Logos is the creator of all things*

Every single thing that has ever been created was created by the *Logos*, including physical life and all non-physical objects, including the basic elements from which all creation originates. The *Logos* created all things *ex nihilo* (out of nothing) and therefore humanity creates from the things God has provided. The *Logos* is what holds together and sustains creation. *Logos* is sovereign over all of creation with no limitations, from the smallest detail, which means that He does what He wants, when He wants, and to whom He wishes (Ps 93:1-2; 103:19). Since God is perfect, by definition His will and actions are also perfect. The corollary to this observation is if *Logos* commands something to be done then it will be done immediately and perfectly (Ps. 33:6-9).

Philo describes the logos as pre-existent but only because his creation preceded the creation of the heavens, the earth, and humanity. For Philo, the creation of the logos appears to be primarily one of timing, not eternity. This is a necessary conclusion because Philo states that the logos is a created image of God that was used as a template for the creation of all things (*Leg. All.* 1.43). Philo also calls the logos the "soul of the world" (*Aet.* 84), among other titles, although, to the Greek mind, the soul is the life force that animates life and leaves the body at death for life eternal. The soul takes up residence on the moon according to Plutarch (c. 40-120 C.E.) although Greek philosophers have suggested many other destinations. Philo sheds some light on his view of the soul more clearly in *Leg. All.* 91 where we learn that the immortal part of the soul is given to humanity from the Father through the logos, a view clearly informed by Greek dualism. The Prologue does not directly address a theology of the soul although John clearly states that the *Logos* was the creator of all things and thus whatever the *Logos* created

was by His hand without the need for an intermediary being, particularly the eternal soul that inhabits every person.

Philo views important functions of the logos as the creation of the universe, which includes the perfect man (*Som.* 8), and holding together the physical world including the soul within the physical bodies of humanity. The apostle Paul describes Jesus Christ as holding “all things” together (Col. 1:17), although there are significant differences between the two views to be explored. First, Philo states that the acts of creation were performed by God using the logos as His “instrument” (*De Cherubin* 127). In contrast, the *Logos* was the proximate cause of creation, not through an intermediary. The divine *Logos* is quite capable of creation *ex nihilo*, including humanity with an eternal soul. Philo, on the other hand, describes the creative work of the logos based on the prior presence of the “four elements” (earth, air, water, and fire). In other words, the creative acts of the logos are derived works from God having been provided the four elements as the building blocks of creation. In the Stoic mind, the act of holding together creation is described by Philo as “bringing disorder and irregularity into order and regularity” (*Som.* 1.241), thus creative acts by the logos appear to be more “housekeeping” than original works of creation. Also, Philo describes the immanent logos as the only means for humanity to understand the created world. It is through the wisdom of the created logos that formed and controls the universe. The logos is created by transcendent God as the means to interact with the immanent universe. Hence, the philosophical creative and sustaining acts attributed to the logos are derived works and inconsistent with John’s statement that the *Logos* is creator and sustainer of all creation *ex nihilo*.

Philo describes his philosophical logos as the conduit to humanity that produces rational thought, intellect, and free will (*Quod Deus.* 47) thereby bringing order to humanity. In Philo’s view, God breathed the logos into Adam to give life to humanity (*Leg. All.* 1.37) and then stepped back allowing the logos to interact with humanity in the many forms discussed earlier. Some may liken these tasks as remarkably similar to God’s creation and sustaining of humanity through Adam. However, the apostle John affirms that creation is the sovereign territory of uncreated, eternal God. The *Logos* created and then breathed life into humanity. The *Logos* is life-giver and sustainer, the author of humanity’s soul, eternal, and therefore there is no need for the *Logos* to take on different names, forms, or functions. Philo is using finite descriptions of forms and function to describe the infinite, an impossible task. The unbegotten eternal *Logos*

subsumes all functions of the philonic logos.

Philo describes the logos placing a portion of the soul within each person. Philo describes the “soul [a]s divided into seven divisions; there being five senses, and besides them the vocal organ, and after that the generative power” (*De Opificio Mundi* 217), obviously derived from Greek Platonic thought. However, it is not surprising that Philo would be comfortable with this definition as the word “soul” is never used in the Old Testament as a reference to the immortal soul but rather as a life principle, to a particular living being (e.g., Gen. 1:20-21, 24), or to the creation of humanity (Gen. 2:7) when God breathed life into dust. For John, the *Logos* created each person as a unique individual who must personally answer to God for their actions (v. 1:12) so John implicitly sees each person as possessing a God-given unique and complete soul, not an identically “stamped” portion of soul given by the logos to every person.

The *Logos* implicitly incorporated free will and intellect into His creation and Philo agrees with that assessment. However, that motif is consistent with Scripture and their agreement on this point is not surprising. However, for Philo, intellect is one’s ability to exercise the wisdom “stamped” onto humanity by the logos, which is an image of God’s wisdom. Philo and John do agree that God did the creative work however the *Logos* stands front and center as the creator. Philo’s logos, as second to God, His “Shadow” executed God’s plan, although from the viewpoint of humanity the work was completed by the divine logos. For John, the creative work of the *Logos* is made apparent in all of creation and is independent of humanity’s view of the *Logos*.

6.2.4 *Jesus Christ is the source of humanity’s spiritual enlightenment*

A spiritual, divine light is placed in every human being at the point of creation, according to the apostle John. Implicit in this description of *Logos* is He is the creator of our intellect and the source of the internal moral compass that was placed in every person. This spiritual light provides sufficient wisdom to each person to discern the existence of God, apprehend one’s sinful nature, and the ability to recognize divine truth (internal moral compass). Implicit in this statement is *Logos* is the source of salvation for humanity. These and other divine attributes were revealed to sinful humanity by Jesus Christ.

Logos reveals Himself to humanity in three unique ways. First, through His creative actions beginning with initial creation *ex nihilo* as well as His continuing majesty and sustaining

power of humanity (Ps. 19:1). God also reveals Himself through inspired, authoritative Scripture (Ps. 19:7-11) provided to humanity by those chosen by God. Finally, *Logos* reveals God to humanity. Humanity knows God when humanity sees and believes in *Logos*. In contrast, Philo's interpretive construct of the logos is guided by his Greek philosophical hermeneutic. For Philo, philosophy is "the desire to see things accurately," particularly God and His logos. The mind of humanity is finite and cannot conceive of the mind of an infinite God so Philo's philosophical journey is doomed from inception. It seems that humanity's innate need to pursue God is a possible point of agreement between John and Philo, although this point is debatable given the depraved sin nature of humanity.

There are wide differences between Philo and John in their understanding of how God reveals Himself, the point of pursuing God in the first place. For Philo, God may only reveal Himself through an intermediary, that is, the wisdom of God, the logos. Philo describes the spiritual enlightenment brought by logos in the form of a simile, "of light to light," to describe how the logos reveals God. However, Philo also believes that philosophers have an inside track to enlightenment compared to the remainder of humanity. Philosophers alone seek to comprehend God while all others are limited to an understanding of God based on His actions, that is, the actions of the logos. The apostle John writes of the *Logos* coming to bring spiritual enlightenment to all of humanity, not to a privileged few based on personal effort. Philo believes that humanity desires wisdom excepts rejects the wisdom of God (*Post.* 136). The apostle John writes that the *Logos* came incarnate but was rejected by His own people. Rejection is a common theme, although Philo's view of humanity's rejection of wisdom is a rejection of the opportunities to come to a greater understanding of God. The apostle John describes rejection in terms of humanity rejecting the spiritual enlightenment that results in a personal relationship with God in terms of becoming a child of God and enjoying eternal life with the *Logos*, an incomprehensible concept to Philo. Philo sought philosophical enlightenment rather than spiritual enlightenment and eternal relationship.

Philo also describes the logos, a creation of God, as fundamentally as a messenger between transcendent God and immanent humanity. After creation of the logos, God retreated from His created and remained distant. The logos became a vague image for humanity, alternately playing the role of an angel, prophet, or even *Yahweh*. The roles of the logos are read into Scripture and Philo, often using an allegorical hermeneutic to justify his Greek dualistic

presuppositions, identifies the work of the logos. The apostle John views the work of the person of the *Logos* by His actions, such as creation, salvation, rejection, and incarnation. There are no disguises or interpretive legerdemain at play. The *Logos* goes about His work in perfect submission and relationship with the Father. The philonic logos is commissioned by the Father to perform works. The *Logos*, as will be described in an upcoming section, directly touches humanity through His incarnation. The logos interacts with humanity in various disguises. The *Logos* singular is worthy of the glory of humanity. In fact, the logos steals the glory due God when humanity is fooled into believing that the logos is God. God never countenances stealing of His glory in Scripture and He warns readers that punishment follows. The *Logos* reveals God to humanity. God earnestly desires to be revealed to humanity and He did so through the incarnation, crucifixion, resurrection, and glorification of the *Logos*. Conversely, the infinite God revealed Himself to the finite. The role of the created logos, whether intended or not, was to conceal the uncreated God from humanity. Philo assumes that a transcendent God does not desire to directly interact with His created and never considers the possibility. The work of the *Logos* is the transcendent God reaching down, in love, to touch humanity. For Philo, immanent humanity cannot touch God, only the logos.

6.2.5 *John the Baptist called for repentance, heralded the coming of the Messiah*

John the Baptist, the last of the Old Testament prophets, came to proclaim the coming of the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, the *Logos*, as the object of our faith. Jesus Christ was superior to all other humans because of His divinity, eternality, and glory. John the Baptist was the herald for the coming *Logos*, as predicted in the Old Testament (Isa. 40:3; Mal. 3:1). John's baptism was performed on Jews as a sign of spiritual cleansing and personal recommitment to the Law in preparation for the arrival of the Messiah. Implicit in true repentance is God's faithful forgiveness of individual sin (Ps. 32:5; 86:5). Philo's view of repentance is, as we should expect, closely aligned with the call of John the Baptist. Philo often calls for his readers to turn away from sinful action and redirect one's life in conformance with the Law (*cf. Leg. All.* 2.78; 3.105-106). Philo describes the logos as God's messenger but does not cite a comparable forerunner of the logos.

There are approximately 100 instances in his writings where Philo calls for one to repent of sin. One entire section is dedicated to repentance (*Virt.* 175-186) in which Philo defines

repentance in a very philosophical manner, “crossing over from ignorance to a knowledge of those things to be ignorant of which is shameful; from folly to wisdom, from intemperance to temperance, from injustice to righteousness, from cowardice to confident courage” (*Virt.* 175-186). Each of these characteristics clearly has Greek wisdom overtones and are only a shadow of the covenantal law requirements of repentance. John the Baptist came to testify about the true Light of the world and preached repentance in light of judgment (Luke 3:17). Philo’s repentance is directed toward accessing God’s wisdom in order to acquire divine knowledge and a vision of God (*Quod. Deus.* 143), to become like God, and to rise above the material world (*Fug.* 63), in order to contemplate the divine logos (*Som.* 1,71; 2.249).

The differences between Philo and John related to repentance are clear: Philo wishes to grow in wisdom and knowledge about God (static condition) in order to become like God while John the Baptist encouraged people to make a radical change in their life (Matt. 3:11) and return to their covenantal relationship with God (although as an individual, not as a collective call to repentance) in order to avoid eternal condemnation of their sin. John says repentance requires an active response to the Light of the world in order to experience life change. For Philo, humanity is passive and through the work of the logos some amount of wisdom is “stamped” into the human soul (*Leg. All.* 2.31-32). Philosophically, Philo and his colleagues gain the wisdom necessary to see and possibly to know God through personal achievement. For John, true repentance begets a right relationship with God and explicitly avoid eternal punishment.

6.2.6 A majority of fallen humanity reject spiritual enlightenment

The *Logos* brings true light or spiritual enlightenment to all persons sufficient to become children of God (salvation). Fallen humanity will continue to reject the true Light and intentionally embrace the darkness and are implicitly personally liable for God’s righteous judgment (Matt. 3:12). Rejection of the Light tacitly includes an active resistance or hostility towards the spiritual light. Wisdom, in an Old Testament sense, is a form of knowledge that allows humanity to have a deep understanding of something or understand the practical significance of something (Ps. 104:24; 136:5). Scripture also describes wisdom as putting knowledge to work in a practical sense (Prov. 2:2-5) or to increase in wisdom in order to understand the person of God more fully. For Philo, wisdom leads to a deeper philosophical understanding of transcendent God and the universe.

Philo views the logos as the source of light for humanity although the product of that light was that portion of wisdom embedded in the soul of each person. Philo presents the logos as more than one form of light but rather as one of many forms of light. For example, The Israelites fed on manna provided by the “most ancient logos of God” (Det. 118). In addition, wisdom is provided to humanity by a “stream” that injects God’s people with “manna” by which God’s people are nourished by the logos (*Leg. All.* 3.175-176). Philo resorts to an allegorical interpretation to identify the provider of the manna (the logos) and the content of the manna (wisdom). The apostle John quoting Jesus identifies the wilderness manna as originating from God and the eternal life-giving logos as analogous to the manna that is giving life to the world (John 6:32-33). Philo is speaking in terms of God’s covenant people but it is best to view this statement as collective (all humanity). Philo also relates that not all will benefit equally with this infusion of wisdom from the logos. Wisdom is proportioned based on, in the view of Philo, the more perfect the person. The more perfect the person, the more wisdom is received. Perfection, however, is viewed as the possession of various virtues. Philo dedicates an entire writing (*On the Virtues*) to defining the virtues. Generally, the virtuous few are those that have overcome the indignities of human life by diligently pursuing virtue over seemingly a long time and thus collecting a disproportionate share of wisdom. Greater wisdom allows one to have greater knowledge of the logos (which is only visible to humanity) and thus come closer to transcendent God. For Philo, anyone can pursue wisdom although it is relatively few Greek philosophers with sufficient stockpile of virtue who have success with the pursuit.

The apostle John states the unique *Logos*, the One and only Son of God, brought the promise of spiritual renewal first to His own people and then to the world. Every person that hears of the person and work of the *Logos* has an opportunity to embrace the Truth. The message is universal and the grace and truth of the *Logos* is easily comprehended by the world, “so that all might believe through Him” (John 1:7b), not a select few philosophers.

6.2.7 *A minority of fallen humanity embrace spiritual enlightenment to become children of God*

Most of the Jews who heard Jesus speak rejected Messiah Jesus but a few individuals, not limited to Jewish descent or nationality, did accept Jesus’ salvific message and were adopted into the Kingdom of God and became children of God. To be a child of God is to live in His presence

and enjoy all of the familial benefits of that relationship. Philo's philosophical logos is given the responsibility of the spiritual welfare of humanity by nourishing their souls with God's wisdom and pastoring the flock as the Royal Shepherd (*Mut.* 113-116). The logos appeared to Moses on Mount Sinai as the giver of the Mosaic Law to the Israelite nation (*Mos.* 95, 253). Philo's logos is also said to be the source of virtue (*Som.* 118-119) and rational thought for humanity (*Det.* 86-90). The logos has many other functions, such as prophet (*Deus.* 182), healer of the soul (*Mos.* 2.134), the source of judgment and forgiveness for humanity (*Quaest in Gen.* 3.27, 28, 51) and represents personified wisdom (specifically as presented in Prov. 8:22). The philonic logos as a healer of the soul in context means the logos delivers God's blessings to humanity in the form of wisdom. Philo writes that Moses calls this wisdom the "sight of God" or the "vision of God." Philo views the wisdom of Moses written in the Pentateuch as the predecessor and foundation of all Greek philosophies.

A common theme found in Philo's philosophical writings is the value of philosophy to humanity. A small portion of humanity will pursue a virtuous life in order to increase in wisdom (provided by the logos, *Sacr.* 9; *Som.* 1.182) as mentioned earlier. The gift of reason was received from God (*Op.* 77) and those who use reason to pursue wisdom will receive the greatest knowledge of God. Philosophy, according to Philo, is what allows humanity to "live in conformity with nature" (*Prob.* 160), which is Philo's way of saying how humanity may live a moral and virtuous life. Philo defines the four virtues as wisdom, self-control, courage, and justice (*Leg. All.* 1.63-64).

John's Christological *Logos* brought a message of salvation to humanity that will be accepted by a minority of people. Those accepting the salvific message of the incarnate *Logos* are given the privilege of becoming children of God. Philo views the logos as providing humanity with a path to gain wisdom through personal effort in order to become enlightened with knowledge of God. The philosopher represents those that pursue this enlightenment through their personal efforts to live a virtuous life. A believer in the incarnate *Logos* recognizes that belief is a spiritual gift from God received not on the basis of one's personal effort. John's salvific message is based on what the *Logos* brought to humanity, not what humanity could achieve through personal works. Philo's writings describe an outsider looking into the personal affairs of God, not becoming part of the family of God. Philo's philosophical logos may allow a minority to become enlightened about God and the universe but John's Christological *Logos*

allows all of humanity to become children of God, although only a minority will accept the offer. As John speaks often in his gospel, mere knowledge or assent of the person and work of Jesus Christ is not sufficient for salvation. The minority of respondents is a point of similarity between Philo and John although the object of our faith and the means by which faith is pursued are remarkably different.

6.2.8 *Salvation is not the product of human work*

The apostle John rejected the Jewish view of their special relationship with God that ensured their communal righteousness based on keeping the Mosaic Law. Works righteousness nor being born into a particular people or ethnic group does not produce a relationship with God. It is only through faith in the completed work of Christ on the cross that results in salvation and eternity in the presence of God. Works righteousness does not replace salvific faith.

As touched on in the previous section, Philo's logos is the image of God's wisdom that was used to imprint each person with wisdom. The logos, as the Word or Thought of God, connects the thoughts and wisdom of God to humanity. As part of creation, individuals remain with an imperfect understanding of the logos. Our understanding of the logos may only be perfected through perseverance in understanding wisdom and limited only by the reasoning capability given to each person. For Philo, in general, it was the philosopher that was granted the necessary quantity of the gift of reason to allow him to pursue wisdom and thus a greater experiential understanding of God and the universe. There is a marked difference between John's view of salvation through the completed work of Christ and Philo's philosophical pursuit of works righteousness.

6.2.9 *Jesus Christ arrived incarnate in the world*

The *Logos* incarnate, Jesus as 100% flesh and blood and 100% divine, has no parallel in Philo's philosophical writings or in history for that matter. For Philo, transcendent God does not initiate contact with finite humanity much less take on the humble form of the created and walk on earth with immanent humanity. Philo does speak of the Beneficent Power that performs legislative, chastising, and correcting functions but those functions are carried out by the logos by directive action of Beneficent God. Philo writes that the logos is the source of destruction on earth as well as the source of forgiveness to humanity. The logos is also described as guiding God's judgment of the universe and will judge humanity at some time in the future. Philo

believes in the immortality of the soul although only a portion of the soul is immortal and, again, it is the logos that provides it to humanity. In sum, Philo certainly recognizes the presence of evil in the world and the eternality of the soul but does not attempt to define a means to reconcile humanity's sin with God's righteousness. The limit for humanity is a deeper knowledge and understanding of God and the universe. Philo's metaphysical concept of the logos placed as the mediator between God and humanity is perhaps the only similarity with the anthropomorphic *Logos* described by the apostle John. The *Logos* reaches down to humanity. The philonic logos encourages a segment of humanity to reach up to the logos in its futile attempt to understand God.

There are further, very significant differences between Philo's philosophical logos and the apostle John's Christological *Logos* that should be considered at this time. First, the incarnation of the *Logos* certainly demonstrates God's love for humanity and His desire to be in an eternal, loving relationship with His created. For Philo, the Creative Power is peaceable and gentle but personal interaction with humanity is impossible. God, regardless of Philo's functional descriptions, never reaches out to humanity because the infinite cannot penetrate the finite (the same apologetic response used today by many agnostics). The logos is the mediator of all things to humanity. Philo describes the logos as a created being (*Leg. All.* 2.86) that is eternal (a logical inconsistency, *Deus.* 47, *Cher.* 1.27-28) that is humanity's source of virtue (*Som.* 118-119), humanity's paraclete (*Mos.* 2.134, 135), interpreter of God's will (*Leg. All.* 2.207), and sustainer of humanity with wisdom (*Leg. All.* 2.175-176). The logos also appears in various forms, such as personified wisdom (*Prov.* 8), High Priest, chief deputy, and even as the image of God (*Leg. All.* 1.43). The logos appears in many forms as the messenger of God to humanity. This is the limit to which the logos, the messenger of God, appears to humanity. However, the logos never appears in a form that calls humanity into a direct relationship with God.

None of the many forms in which the philonic logos appears describes the humanity and divinity of the logos, a mark of the *Logos*. The logos does the will of God in creation, for example, but the relationship is one-sided—the logos responds to an order with the immediate action of creation and interacts with humanity when commanded but never communicates back to God. The logos was a messenger but never returns a message. In the first-century the word of an emissary from a distant king are the words of the king. Thus, the logos speaks with the authority of God. However, this is a description of merely a functional relationship between God

and the logos, not a relationship based on the two moving together in perfect synchronism and for the same purpose.

Philo's logos never addresses humanity's sin that separates God from humanity because God is transcendent and the separation was permanent. Reconciliation of humanity with God is not possible because there was never a relationship to begin with. In contrast, John's *Logos* walked among humanity for the sole purpose of reconciling sinful humanity with a righteous God. The *Logos* was not a messenger from God because He is God and therefore possessed within Himself the power of reconciliation. The incarnate *Logos* walked on earth to facilitate His ministry of reconciliation, as well as present to humanity an intimate picture of God's perfect grace, mercy, and love.

For Philo, the purpose of the logos was to bring rational thought to humanity (*Op.* 146; *Praem.* 163; *Det.* 86-90), which in turn motivates humanity's free will and intellect (*Quod Deus.* 47) and allows one to comprehend one's environment and spiritual things (*Quis Het.* 234-236; *Det.* 90). Humanity may have free will and the ability to grasp spiritual things through the work of the logos but this philosophical stance does not consider the basic sinful nature of humanity who, left to their own devices, would not seek deliverance from God, free will or not. Thus God reached down to humanity by sending *Logos* as the means for humanity to be reconciled to God. None of the many forms or functions of the logos replicate this act. Nor does Philo describe the actions of the logos as voluntary actions on behalf of humanity. Instead, the relationship between God and the logos should be viewed as hierarchal—God commands and the created logos obeys as His intermediary. Humanity's only relationship with uncreated God is once removed through the created logos.

Jesus Christ said, "He who has seen Me has seen the Father" (John 14:9), which represents John's view of the divinity of the *Logos*, opposite of the philonic logos. God has reached down to humanity through the uncreated *Logos* and it is through the *Logos* humanity may view God. Philo views the relation as unidirectional, that is the only means for the philosopher to understand God and the universe was to obtain the wisdom of God that may be delivered to humanity through the work of the logos. The apostle John does not view the need of an intermediary for God's salvific message. God sent the incarnate *Logos* to humanity for the purpose of lifting up humanity into eternal familial relationship. The nature of Philo's God is

secretive, “For he has not revealed his nature to anyone” (*All. Leg.* 3.206) and only the logos reveals transcendent God. God created the logos and the logos then proceeded to carry out the plans of God with respect to humanity. It is only through the logos as an intermediary that humanity may have any interaction with God. In fact, the logos, what Philo also calls the perfect man, creates humanity based on the image of God “stamped” on the logos. John’s *Logos* arrives among humanity incarnate, God in flesh.

6.2.10 *Jesus Christ is the source of grace and truth*

John adds the terms grace and truth at this point in the Prologue because both are essential for understanding the God of our salvation. Grace and truth are biblical truths found throughout the Old Testament. For example, Abraham “believed the Lord, and He counted it to him as righteousness” (Gen. 15.6) and then Paul argues in Rom. 4:2-5, 16 that Abraham was justified by grace. Thus grace is also an Old Testament doctrine although followers of the Law needed Paul to write a reminder. We also read that the Law was given after the nation of Israel was formed by former Egyptian slaves. This act of God is the exemplar of God’s grace in action. Other examples of God’s grace abound in the Old Testament, such as God’s response to David’s moral failings, the acts of Rahab the prostitute, Jonah’s message and Nineveh’s response, and so on. Clearly, God’s grace is a central theme of the entire Old Testament.

If one can earn salvation, then one does not need grace. It is only through the reason and wisdom provided by Philo’s logos that one may become knowledgeable about God and the universe. God’s grace does not play a role because the logos does not require an understanding of and repentance from one’s sin. Instead, one must only strive to lead a virtuous life. In much the same way, the standard of truth stated hundreds of times throughout Scripture as “Thus says the Lord” is based on the unchanging character of God. John the Baptist preached a message of repentance, that is, turning away from sin and back to conformance with the Law in preparation for the coming of the divine *Logos* and His message of forgiveness and eternal life.

Grace and truth are attributes that reflect the fullness of God and thus the *Logos*. Philo’s logos is the messenger that a limited set of characteristics of God to humanity. John’s *Logos* is God living among humanity. The grace and truth of the Logos bring glory to God by sharing those attributes with humanity. For Philo, the logos is the revelator and we may only see God through the created logos, an image of an image (*Praem.* 43-44; *Leg. All.* 1.37-38). The *Logos* is

God thus seeing the *Logos* is to see God, an unthinkable proposition to Philo. We see God through spiritual eyes when we believe in His name and become a child of God. This new familial relationship allows us to see and abide with our Father. It is only through the *Logos* that we may properly comprehend the Father.

As a side note, John speaks of grace and truth as the essence of the *Logos*. Philo views grace and truth within the framework of four Greek virtues (temperance, prudence, courage, and justice, although Plato replaced prudence with wisdom in some writings) that define good moral behavior. The pursuit of these virtues was supremely important to the Stoic mind of Philo. Plato argued that the four virtues are mutually exclusive as one may act with great courage but with injustice. Bad behavior or poor choices result from a lack of wisdom in the individual. The Greeks viewed the four virtues as evidence of a moral existence yet the virtues are based solely on willful personal acts. They are volitional acts for the purpose of a person being viewed as exceptional within Greek society. However, the presence of the four virtues in any amount does not reflect the heart of the individual, reminiscent of Jesus' condemnation of the Pharisees as whitewashed tombs (Matt. 23:27). In contrast, grace and truth are divine attributes that describe the essence of the *Logos*. For the child of God, grace and truth are to be emulated but cannot be replicated because these are immutable attributes of God.

Philo describes one further action of the logos: The logos dwells in the soul of persons whose "life is an object of honor" (*Post.* 122). Philo suggests that the invisible God does have an earthly presence in the invisible soul (*Cher.* 101). Philo sees the presence of an image of the invisible God present in each person by virtue of the "image of an image" motif discussed earlier. Each person is born with this image as part of one's soul. This is where and how God grants the gifts of peace, "the highest of blessings" (*Mos.* 1.304) and "joy" (*Som.* 1.71). Once again, the gifts of peace and joy are experienced only by the virtuous and thus represent works righteousness. Philo's words sound remarkably similar to the peace and joy that comes from being a child of God. However, like terms often have different definitions. Philo understood the Stoic ideal of *apatheia*, that is, the desire to be free from all emotions or passions. These are not emotions or passions in the modern sense of the terms. The Stoics classified emotions as either healthy or unhealthy (generally presented as pairs of opposite emotions) and that our reactions to either must be always under strict control by the individual. Healthy emotions include joy, peace and so on. The unhealthy emotions are part of opposite pairs, such as pain or suffering, fear, lust,

and pleasure, and so on. Stoicism was an ethical approach to life, the way to live a virtuous life or moral excellence, therefore, it was the practice of the virtues that created happiness. One who lives a virtuous life controls one's emotional responses to uncertain events of life, even those that are highly desirable, such as peace and joy. Thus, the logos was the source of the virtues and the desirable emotions of joy and peace. The apostle John implicitly moves the frame of reference for a follower of *Logos* from dealing with the daily vagaries of life to an eternal perspective. The peace and joy that comes from the *Logos* is the result of becoming a child of God and is based on the finished work of the *Logos* on the cross, not through human efforts, for the reward of eternity in the presence of God.

6.3 Summary and Conclusions

The most prominent theme found in Philo of Alexandria's writings is his attempt to syncretize or at least to philosophically justify the theology of the Pentateuch with Greek Platonic philosophy. The most prominent character found in Philo's structured philosophical writing is the logos. Philo describes the logos in terms of its origins and in its many forms taken and functions performed as God's intermediary with humanity. The apostle John's Prologue is also a *Logos* origination story, although John's writing, although brief and unstructured in comparison, also describes the *Logos* as a divine emissary. No other significant contextual intersections of thought regarding Philo description of a mystical logos and John's description of the divine *Logos* were found.

The analysis began with a detailed survey and summary of Philo's writings pertaining to his view of transcendent God and the many forms and functions of his philosophical logos in Chapter 4. The results of the survey were summarized in Table 2. Exegesis of John's Prologue (John 1:1-18) was completed in Chapter 5. Ten theologically significant descriptions of John's Christological *Logos* were identified and discussed in that chapter. In this chapter, Philo's philosophical views of transcendent God and the work of the logos were compared to and contrasted with the person and work of John's Christological *Logos* in order to identify any intersections of thought. The ten points evaluated identified and discussed in this chapter.

First, the *Logos* is pre-existent and eternal. God and *Logos* exist as the first two persons of the Godhead and therefore both exhibit many incommunicable attributes, including eternity.

Philo describes the logos as a created being yet also as eternal, an obvious contradiction in terms. The logos is not God but is second only to God in the heavenly hierarchy. The logos is spatially close to God but does not enjoy perfect relationship or share essence with God as does the *Logos*. Philo does describe certain divine characteristics although those were bestowed by God and not fundamental to its existence. The philosophical logos is “stamped” with the image of God that is then “stamped” onto humanity. This “second hand” reproduction process is required because, in Philo’s view, a transcendent God may not directly interact with imminent humanity. This sets the stage for Philo to designate an intermediary with humanity, the logos. For John, the *Logos* is God and is not limited in His interaction with humanity. God, by His hand in creation, set the physical laws of the universe but is not limited in His acts by those laws.

Second, the *Logos* is divine. The *Logos* is not a created being but shares the same divine nature and essence as uncreated God in a perfect relationship. Philo describes the logos as having the mind of God but in context, the logos knows what God desires and thus instantly complies with His desires. The *Logos* and God are equal in all ways and synchronized in purpose yet the function of the *Logos* is to bring glory to God. The *Logos* and God have a shared understanding of the eternal will of God with respect of the offer of salvation to humanity. Philo’s logos does not possess these eternal characteristics or sense of being or mission. In fact, this writer never found a passage in Philo’s writings describing the logos as possessing self-awareness. The created logos exists solely to carry out the will of God as servant and underling.

Third, the *Logos* is the creator of all things. It was through His divine power that *Logos* performed the initial act of creation *ex nihilo*. Philo views the function of the logos as mediator or representative of transcendent God to humanity but do not share all the attributes of uncreated God. In fact, the logos was imbued with certain divine attributes by God. One of the divine powers given the logos was the power to create, although his creative power was limited to the finite elements of earth, fire, water, and air that God provided to the logos. Philo’s logos is a created being, not existing from eternity past but created by God for the purposes of creating humanity “as his instrument” with rational thought and intellect, from a Greek philosophical point of view. However, John describes the *Logos* as God Himself and as creator and who breathed life into humanity, which represents all of the functions of life, including the eternal soul.

Fourth, Jesus Christ is the source of humanity's spiritual enlightenment. The *Logos* as creator placed into each person an intellect and internal moral compass sufficient for discerning the truth of the existence of God. God reveals Himself to humanity through creation, Scripture, and through the finished work of the *Logos* on the cross. Seeing and believing in the salvific message of Jesus Christ is sufficient for securing an eternal relationship with God. Seeing the *Logos* is seeing God. For Philo, philosophy equates to "the desire to see things accurately," particularly with respect to God and the logos. The logos reveals greater understanding to those that desire and pursue enlightenment (wisdom) through reason, although this form of enlightenment refers to innate knowledge rather than a personal commitment. For John, spiritual enlightenment meant a saving knowledge of the *Logos* and an active, personal response (John 20:30-31) with the result of one becoming a child of God for eternity. Philo pursued philosophical enlightenment, not a personal relationship with God. A personal relationship with transcendent God was inconceivable to Philo. The role of the logos was as messenger rather than as revealer of God. The *Logos* unveiled God as interacting with His created for the purposes of eternal personal relationship.

Fifth, John the Baptist called for repentance and heralded the coming of the Messiah, the *Logos*, as the object of our faith. John preached a message of repentance, in an Old Testament sense, yet required baptism as a form of personal recommitment to the Law and in expectation of the coming of the Messiah. This repentance was in the Old Testament sense of changing the trajectory of one's life to conform to the tenants of the Mosaic Law. Implicit in the apostle John's Prologue is the necessity for the forgiveness of personal sin. Philo describes one of the functions of the logos is to facilitate humanity's repentance of sin, although this is repentance in a very philosophical sense. This function of the logos was to change one's actions to ones that were philosophically virtuous that was a precursor to growing in wisdom and knowledge about God. The desired response was to turn from wrong and pursue virtuous actions. In contrast, John the Baptist encouraged a life-changing state of mind in order to restore covenantal righteousness in preparation for the physical coming of the *Logos* and His righteous judgment.

Sixth, a majority of fallen humanity reject spiritual enlightenment. John states the *Logos* is the spiritual light of humanity yet many will consciously reject the true Light and expose themselves to God's righteous judgment. Rejection is not benign but an active resistance or hostility toward the *Logos*. Philo views the logos as the source of wisdom infused into humanity,

although it seems some receive a greater portion than others. The greater amount of wisdom attained the more perfect the person. An increase in wisdom is possible by living a virtuous life, in a philosophical sense. The greater the wisdom present in a person, the closer one comes to understanding God and the universe. Philo's view is wisdom may be earned by one's actions has all the marks of a works righteousness philosophy. One may earn a relationship with the divine solely through one's actions. John implicitly acknowledges that God has provided within each person at birth all the "wisdom" necessary to recognize and acknowledge the presence and power of God. Further, the arrival of *Logos* incarnate is irrefutable evidence that God reached down to humanity seeking an eternal relationship. For Philo, only a select few philosophers are sufficiently virtuous to "earn" sufficient wisdom to understand God and the universe. For John, the invitation for a personal relationship with the *Logos* is universal and not based on one's personal ethics or works, although only a few will accept the offer. It is the darkness of Philo's mystical logos that attempts to extinguish the humanity's spiritual light but it will fail (v. 1:5)

Seventh, a minority of fallen humanity embrace spiritual enlightenment and become children of God. For Philo, a minority will strive to lead virtuous lives for the purpose of increasing wisdom and thus achieve some undefined greater knowledge of God. John writes that a minority will express faith in the *Logos* in order to become children of God. Both express the view that only a minority of humanity is impacted although the actions required are substantially different. The *Logos* offers the opportunity for an intimate relationship with God while the logos offers enlightenment from a distance. The logos offers the promise of enlightenment but as an outsider looking in on God, much like the logos. Philo's philosophical logos does not deliver any form of a relationship with God.

Eighth, salvation is not the product of human work. John the Baptist called for a personal change of direction, that is, a return to covenantal righteousness in expectation of the soon coming Messiah. John introduces the *Logos* as the means to a salvific relationship with God through faith, independent of the Law. Philo's logos is based on the principle of works righteousness that John implicitly denies.

Ninth, Jesus Christ arrived incarnate in the world. The *Logos* incarnate, 100% divine yet also 100% human, has no parallels in Philo's logos philosophy. Philo acknowledges the presence of evil in the world and the eternity of the soul but does not attempt to reconcile humanity's sin

with an uncreated God wishing for an eternal relationship with His created. For Philo, our relationship with God is limited to greater knowledge or enlightenment, not a relationship. Philo describes the logos as assuming unique forms when communicating with humanity, often when God is speaking in the Pentateuch and Proverbs. John describes God reaching down to touch humanity through the person of the *Logos*, an act unimaginable by Philo. This deed demonstrates God's love for humanity and His willingness to be in personal relationship with His created. Philo's logos never appears in the form of a messenger desiring a personal relationship with humanity nor is it concerned with addressing the sinful nature of humanity. The logos takes and executes God's orders. The *Logos* came as divinity in cloaked in human flesh and He lived His life in perfect harmony with the will of the Father.

Finally, Jesus Christ is the source of grace and truth. The incarnate *Logos* arrived to facilitate a personal relationship and to offer the opportunity for every person to become a child of God. This act facilitates the most intimate of relationships and is a picture of the perfect relationship between God and the *Logos*. The *Logos*, incarnate as a symbol of complete love and reaching down to humanity in rescue from sin, presents God as perfect mercy, grace, and truth. Philo suggests the logos as revelator and mediator in the image of God. The *Logos* is God.

The final chapter of this work will present a short synopsis of the work and then presents a response to the primary research question, "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel signify a rejection of and an apologetic response to Philo's logos philosophy?" The final two sections will address the two-part final subsidiary research question, "What are the interpretive implications of distinguishing the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel from Philo's logos philosophy, and what new avenues of research do they present in the study of the Fourth Gospel?"

CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

This chapter concludes the work with a synopsis of the research problem followed by a final assessment of the primary research question, “In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel signify a rejection of and an apologetic response to Philo's logos philosophy?” The concluding two sections of this chapter answer the final subsidiary research question, in two parts: “What are the interpretive implications of distinguishing the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel from Philo's logos philosophy, and what new avenues of research do they present in the study of the Fourth Gospel?”

7.2 A Brief Reiteration of the Problem

The origin of John's *Logos* Christology is generally discussed by scholars as (1) originating from or relying on a literary or oral tradition (often described as a hymn tradition), or (2) was a later addition by redactors of the gospel of John using written and/or oral Jewish or Hellenistic sources, or (3) having Jewish origins from within the emerging Christology, often cited as a replacement of the Jewish Sophia traditions or the Memra (The Word of the Lord) translation from the Jewish Targums written in Aramaic, or (4) growing out of Judeo-Hellenistic philosophical thought that found its way into the Fourth Gospel, principally through the works of Philo of Alexandria and his use of a mystical logos as a pseudo-divine intermediary between transcendent God and humanity. The body of literature that addresses the first three options is immense and its evaluation is not part of this work. The writings of Philo of Alexandria has been a long-running topic of research although one aspect or application of those works sparked the desire to pursue this thesis. There are scholars who have approached John's use of the word “logos” in the Prologue as having been inspired by or originated directly from Philo's writings. Some have even postulated that John's Christological *Logos* found in the Prologue of John's gospel is merely an evolutionary step from Philo's mystical logos. This view is troubling for an

evangelical Christian and a suitable response is called for. Thus, the primary research question was formulated, “In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel signify a rejection of and an apologetic response to Philo's logos philosophy?”

The work began with a discussion of the use of a prologue in Greek literature and the evidence for John's purpose for selecting this particular literary motif to introduce his gospel, thus answering the first subsidiary research question, “What is the current state of scholarship concerning the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel, especially as it relates to Philo's logos philosophy?” The literature review revealed that the prologue was developed by prominent Greek writers as a means to establish the “back story” for the audience of Greek plays or to provide an overview, summary, or reveal the theme of a written work. John used this prologue as a literary device to draw into his Messianic story an eclectic audience of potential readers. Further, John's *Logos* Christology is evaluated in light of the Greek philosophical beliefs of the first century, as well as an evaluation of the Prologue in a cosmological, metaphysical, epistemological, and soteriological sense. The literature review concludes with a review of the many Christological themes found in the Prologue.

Next, in Chapter 3, the strong evidence for John's authorship, the date of writing (late first century, likely between 85–95 C.E.), and the provenance of the gospel (Ephesus) were asserted. The essentials surrounding the origins of the gospel must be established in order for any analysis of the Prologue to be made possible. This work firmly establishes John as the author of the entire Fourth Gospel and the work was completed at a time and place when Philo's writings were available to John. There is no direct evidence that John was ever in possession or aware of Philo's writings but this work presents strong circumstantial evidence in this chapter that Philo's writings were available to John at the time he wrote the Prologue. The chapter concludes with an evaluation of the historical context at the time the Prologue was written as well as the social, cultural and literary context of the apostle John's first century. This portion of the work answered the second subsidiary research question, “What is the historical, social, cultural, and literary background of the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel?”.

The most straightforward means to prove that John's Christological *Logos* was not merely the next step or the “bridge” in the logical development of Philo's mythological logos was to perform a detailed comparison of the two writings. Chapter 4 closely examined Philo's

writings pertaining to his description of the nature, purpose, and work of his philosophical logos. In general, Philo's logos is a philosophical construct built upon the long-known Greek logos that was then believed to be the rational intelligence that unifies all creation. Philo's ambition was to syncretize the Hebraic Old Testament concept of God with the Hellenistic metaphysical logos into a unified system of thought. Success in syncretizing the two belief systems would be to demonstrate that the Jewish Old Testament predated the Greek logos and thus the origin of the Greek logos. This analysis answers the third subsidiary research question, "What are the primary tenets of Philo's philosophy, especially as it relates to its conceptualization of the logos?"

Chapter 5 includes a detailed exegetical analysis of the Prologue that produced ten essential statements about the origin, person, and work of John's Christological *Logos*, that is summarized in the following section. Chapter 6 compares Philo's description of his mythological logos with each of these ten essential descriptive statements that encompass John's *Logos* Christology, thus answering the fourth subsidiary research question, "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel compare to and contrast with Philo's logos philosophy?". In sum, the points of similarity are demonstrably negligible.

7.3 Significant Conclusions Reached by the Work

The work thus far has identified and defined ten points of comparison between John's description of the Christological *Logos* from the Prologue and Philo of Alexandria's philosophical logos. The following is a summary of the ten essential elements of John's Christological *Logos*, derived from an exegesis of the Prologue, and a point-by-point comparison with Philo's mystical logos. This work was the basis used to formulate the conclusions reached in this work that answer the primary research question, "In what ways does the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel signify a rejection of and an apologetic response to Philo's logos philosophy?" that follows.

1. The Logos is pre-existent and eternal. Philo's logos was a created entity possessing a necessary portion of uncreated God's divinity for performing the tasks given to him. Philo uses descriptive terms reminiscent of those used to describe the person and work of the predicted Messiah found in the Old Testament. The logos was not present at the creation.

2. The *Logos* (Jesus Christ) is divine. Philo views God as transcendent and thus requires

a mediator with humanity. The logos does not share all the divine or eternal characteristics of the *Logos*. The power of the logos is bestowed by God and is not part of his nature. The *Logos* and God are both uncreated and share the same essence and exist in perfect relationship.

3. The *Logos* is the creator of all things. Every single thing that has ever been created was created by the *Logos ex nihilo*. The *Logos* holds together all creation and is sovereign over creation. For Philo, the logos was created by God to perform particular tasks using a variety of identities. The logos was created as a template for the creation of all things although his creative works were derived works. The logos created all things from the “four elements” that were provided (earth, air, water, and fire).

4. Jesus Christ is the source of humanity’s spiritual enlightenment. The *Logos*, as part of the act of creation, placed a divine light within humanity (wisdom), our intellect, and an internal moral compass sufficient to discern the existence of God and that the *Logos* as the source of eternal salvation. For Philo, the mind of humanity is finite and cannot conceive of an infinite God thus the need for the unique and privileged role of the philosopher who seeks to better understand God is required. Certainly, the major point of disagreement is centered on the incarnation of the *Logos* who seeks the salvation of humanity in the form of an eternal, personal relationship with God. These concepts were completely foreign to Philo and do not describe the work of his description of his mystical logos in any way.

5. John the Baptist called for repentance, heralded the coming of the Messiah. In context, John’s call for repentance distinctly reflected the Old Testament action of spiritual cleaning and personal recommitment to the Law of Moses, clearly consistent with Philo’s beliefs. This repentance is generally passive, requiring action but not necessarily a heart change. John describes the *Logos* as calling for a radical change in a person’s life so that individuals may come into an eternal personal relationship with God. For Philo, the logos enables persons to gain the wisdom necessary to know God better by means of virtuous actions (works righteousness). Fundamental to John’s entire gospel is his use of the verb “believe” requires personal action rather than merely knowledge (John 20:30-31).

6. A majority of fallen humanity reject spiritual enlightenment. John describes the *Logos* as the source of humanity’s spiritual enlightenment although many will reject the *Logos* as true Light and will intentionally continue to embrace the darkness. Spiritual enlightenment, in

context, is a personal knowledge and belief in God. Philo also describes the logos as the light for humanity although, in the Greek context, the product of enlightenment is wisdom that comes to the soul of each member of humanity. However, Philo believed that each person benefits differently. Wisdom, however, is described by Philo as possession of the various “virtues” in amounts as earned by each individual. The greater the amount of virtue present, the greater the wisdom provided by the logos and thus a greater understanding of the logos is possible. The ultimate goal is that one becomes closer to transcendent God, rather than “know” God, as John teaches.

7. A minority of fallen humanity embrace spiritual enlightenment to become children of God. John states that the majority of Jews rejected the *Logos* as Messiah yet those that do embrace the *Logos* become children of God and receive all the benefits of that familial relationship for eternity. Philo describes his logos as having the responsibility for the spiritual welfare of humanity. The logos appeared many times in Scripture as personified wisdom, thus delivering to humanity blessings in the form of increased wisdom.

8. Salvation is not the product of human work. John states that salvation comes as a free gift from the *Logos*. Philo writes that our understanding of the logos is perfected by personal perseverance with acquiring wisdom and our success is limited only by our capacity for reason. Humanity may pursue knowledge of transcendent God only through increasing knowledge of the logos. For John, salvation for eternity is a free gift from God.

9. Jesus Christ arrived incarnate in the world. The incarnate *Logos* as 100% divine and 100% human has no parallel in Philo’s writings. There is also no parallel with an immanent God reaching down to humanity with the purpose of developing an eternal relationship. Philo does write the logos as guiding God’s judgment of the universe, including humanity. Reconciliation is not a function of Philo’s logos and, for Philo, it is impossible for God to directly interact with humanity. The *Logos* came in incarnate form into the world with a message of salvation. The logos was commanded to be a messenger to humanity in a functional relationship with God. Philo never speaks about the logos and humanity’s sin nor the need for God’s grace, mercy, and love.

10. Jesus Christ is the source of grace and truth. John uses the terms grace and truth in the Prologue because they are essential to our understanding of salvation and the work and

person of the *Logos*. To know the *Logos* is to know God. God is grace and truth and therefore cares about the eternal destiny of individuals. Salvation is based on the grace of the *Logos* given to humanity and is not a product of individual effort. For Philo, the logos functionally is the revelator of God and has a presence in our invisible soul. But since the logos is “an image of an image” of God we see God imperfectly and dimly as the logos is all that humanity with “see” of the transcendent God. Peace and joy come only to the virtuous (works righteousness), not as the free gift of God’s grace.

Based on the comparative analysis, this work concludes that there are no significant intersections of thought between John’s description of the Christological *Logos* and Philo’s logos philosophy. This lack of any agreement regarding the person and work of the *Logos* signifies an *explicit* “rejection” of Philo’s logos philosophy, whether or not the apostle John was aware of the writings of Philo of Alexandria. Admittedly, John’s motives for adopting the word “logos” as a metaphor for the second member of the Trinity cannot be determined with certainty but the best explanation that explains the large body of circumstantial evidence presented is that he chose the word “logos” because it was generally recognizable to both Gentile and Jew. It was meant to draw attention to his gospel. Thus, John used the word “logos” as a literary device within the context of the Prologue to attract the largest possible audience, which constitutes an *implicit* apologetic, better, a polemic response to Philo’s philosophical logos.

These conclusions, however, are predicated on two important assumptions. First, the authorship, dating, and provenance of John’s gospel suggest that it is possible that John was or could have been aware of Philo’s writings of the logos. If so, then it is reasonable to conclude that John’s redefining the use of the Greek word “logos” was purposeful as a literary device given the dominance of Greek philosophy and Hellenistic Judaism at the time. If John was not aware of the Philonic logos then any answer to the primary research question is pure speculation. For the purposes of this work, it is sufficient to demonstrate the possibility that John was aware of the Philonic logos. (Ironically, those scholars who propose the writings of Philo as the source of John’s logos metaphor must accede to the fact that John knew of Philo’s writings on his philosophical logos). Second, John’s gospel, as discussed in Chapter 3, was more than likely directed at larger Greek society particularly since John was residing in Ephesus at the time of writing. John wrote his gospel to Gentile God-fearers (e.g., John often pauses to explain Jewish customs and geographical references to non-Jews), Greek-speaking diaspora Jews (e.g., John

proclaims Jesus as the Jewish Messiah as the fulfillment of Old Testament prophecy), and converts to Judaism (proselytes) living in a Hellenistic world. If John was aware of the Philonic logos and addressed his gospel principally to a Greek-speaking audience then we may safely conclude that John, consciously or unconsciously, was directing the Prologue of his evangelical writing to those who were aware of the importance of the concept of the logos to the Greek-speaking culture, and perhaps also with the Philonic logos.

This conclusion has other possible implications. For example, the scholarly view that Philo's mystical philosophy was an evolutionary step into what was to become John's Christological view of the *Logos* (e.g., Thyssen 2006:233) or that John's *Logos* is Philo's Word of God in abbreviated form (Danielou 2004:169) may be quickly discarded because that conclusion is contradicted by the substantive evidence presented in this work. If there are no similarities of thought or common agreed-upon definitions then there can be no evolution of thought.

In sum, this work supports two important conclusions. First, the work concludes that description of the *Logos* found in John's Prologue is an *explicit* rejection of the Philonic (Greek) logos. This conclusion holds whether or not John was aware of the writings of Philo of Alexandria. Those readers with knowledge of Philo's writings would have certainly recognized a comparison with and a rejection of the Philonic logos. Other Greek-speaking readers would have immediately recognized the repurposing of the Greek logos tradition in John's Prologue. In either case, John's literary motive would have been accomplished when the *Logos* was introduced in context. Second, from the circumstantial evidence available, this work concludes that John's *Logos* Christology was an *implicit* polemic against Philonic logos philosophy. This conclusion is necessarily limited because there is no direct evidence that John was aware of the writings of Philo when he composed his Prologue. Even so, motives can only be ascribed to an individual with a firm knowledge of the person's state of mind at the time of writing. Thus, the motive to write an apologetic response cannot be ascribed to John. However, regardless of his motive, the apostle John did write an evangelical writing to Greek-speaking readers that presents the arrival of the incarnate *Logos* with His message of grace and salvation. John's purpose statement for the gospel confirms his desire for his readers to respond positively to his gospel message so that, "... you may believe Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and by believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31).

7.4 Interpretive Implications of the Work

In this section, the fifth and final subsidiary research question is addressed, “What are the interpretive implications of distinguishing the *Logos* Christology in the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel from Philo's logos philosophy?”

Jesus Christ spoke presciently when he posed the following question to His disciples, “Whom do you say that I am?” (Matt. 16:13). The early church struggled with the form of the incarnate *Logos* for the first 400 years of its existence. For example, the Docetists believed that Jesus Christ was historical and bodily existed but His human form was an illusion. The Arians believed that the Son of God was a created being and subordinate to God the Father. The modern Jehovah's Witnesses are the philosophical descendants of the Arians. The Nestorians believed that there was a distinction to be made between the human and divine nature of Christ, that the two natures were united within the body of Jesus, instead of Jesus Christ being 100% divine and 100% human. In the heresy of Sabellianism (also called Modalism), the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three different modes or presentations of God found at different times in Scripture but not simultaneously, as opposed to the Trinitarian view of three distinct persons within the Godhead, co-equal, co-eternal, persons of one substance. Mormons, for example, believe that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three separate Gods. Unitarians completely reject the Trinity and see Jesus Christ as our inspiration to live a morally pure life but He is not divine. The early church struggled with the person and work of Jesus Christ and rightly declared and rejected each of these heretical beliefs. Many similar belief systems continue to misunderstand or outright reject the person of Jesus Christ yet continue to have influence within our society today as they did in the first century. It is safe to say that every major cult and heresy err with regard to His deity or His humanity or the relationship between His two natures, as described by John in his Prologue.

One of the classic arguments by agnostics against Jesus' incarnation is that it is impossible for the finite to penetrate the infinite, the same argument used by Philo of Alexandria to justify the presence of the logos. Even if God does exist, we can never know Him personally or something about His existence, according to Philo. This is also the view of the Deists, such as Thomas Jefferson, that is, transcendent God created the universe and then He left His created to function according to natural laws. The point these groups miss, Deists, Atheists, and Agnostics

alike, is God, the infinite Creator, can penetrate our finiteness thereby communicating to us a message of salvation and He did so through the person and work of the *Logos*. He came to us when we could not reach out to Him. This is one of the fundamental axioms of Christianity.

Finally, we observe that John's three uses of *Logos* in his Prologue describe the essential truisms of Christianity. The first two instances occur in the first verse in which the *Logos* is revealed in eternity as God (1:1) and thus the *Logos* is also eternal. John describes the *Word* as uncreated God, the eternal Word, who was present before the heavens and earth existed. Next, we learn that the Word is the second person of the Trinity and "the Word was with God." Jesus Christ was not only in the presence of God but was in perfect relationship with God. The *Logos* was not a philosophical concoction but a Person who has the most intimate possible relationship with God the Father. The *Logos* is unique and possesses all of the incommunicable attributes of God. Heb. 13:8 reminds us that Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Finally, from v.1, we learn that "the Word was God." What more can be said about Jesus Christ? Whatever may be said about God may also be said about Jesus Christ.

The third instance of John's use of *Logos* occurs in v. 14 where John describes the most amazing miracle of the Bible—the infinite, eternal Son of God took on human form and walked among humanity. The result of His incarnation was that those that walked with Jesus "observed His glory," meaning that God's glory was made manifest at the cross. Jesus said, "Now is the Son of Man glorified, and God is glorified in Him" (John 13:31). The disciples and others witnessed Jesus willingly offered Himself as the propitiation for our sins on the cross and they saw the glory of God (2 Cor. 4:4-6). This action by the *Logos* remains the most profound mystery in all the universe.

7.5 Recommendations for Future Study

The final subsidiary research question asks for new avenues of research presented in the study of the Fourth Gospel as a result of this work. There are a number of research options to extend this work. The obvious literary (e.g., hymn tradition), Rabbinic Judaism, incipient-Gnostic, and Hermetic tradition source materials used by John to prepare the Prologue have been the subject of research and grist for scholarly papers for decades. Also, the theory of a Johannine Community as later redactors in some fashion continues to be a popular topic of research. Both

are obvious and not included on this list.

1. The work concluded, from the evidence available, that the provenance of the Gospel of John was Ephesus. Section 3.1.3 noted that a minority of scholars have argued that Alexandria Egypt was the home of John when he authored the Gospel (Gunther 1979:582). Research that concludes that Alexandria has the provenance of the Gospel of John will have a significant impact on the conclusions presented in this work and thus should be closely evaluated.

2. Alexandria, Egypt is believed by many scholars as the location where Gnosticism was birthed. It is well known that the Gnostics were aware of the Gospel of John and often attacked and abused it in various heretical writings. Further research on the origins of Gnosticism in Alexandria is fitting, its attempts to pervert the gospel, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of those attacks may be a fruitful path of research.

3. A corollary topic would be to determine if there are Gnostic influences found in the writings of Philo of Alexandria. What are the differences found in Philo's writings with respect to Greek and Gnostic dualistic beliefs and whether or not each can be separated from the other in his writings?

4. Another related research topic is the relationship between the Johannine tradition and the Jewish Sophia tradition and Gnostic thought regarding Sophia. We see the Nag Hammadi writings seem to contain Johannine language and imagery which should also be further explored.

5. Research into the circle of influence and breadth of distribution of Philo's mystical logos writings would be an interesting research topic. How were Philo's writings viewed by other Jewish groups steeped in Hellenism? Did Philo's works have any discernable lasting impact?

6. The existence of the Council of Jamnia (c. 85-90 C.E.) and its expulsion of Jewish Christians from the synagogue continues to be a contentious topic. Further research into the Council would increase our understanding of when and how the split between the Jews and Jewish Christians occurred in the first century. The implications of John's three references to synagogue expulsions should also be included in this work.

7. Finally, a current topic of research that seems to be growing is a better definition of the audience of the Fourth Gospel. Was John's intended audience broad, as determined by this work

to include Gentile God-fearers, Greek-speaking diaspora Jews, and converts to Judaism or was it much more focused, as one commentator suggested, on specifically Alexandrian Jews?

APPENDIX 1

SEMANTIC RANGE OF ΛΟΓΟΣ

The following is an abstract of the semantic range of the Greek word “logos” taken from Liddell and Scott (1995:1057-1059). This lexicon was selected because it includes Hellenistic Greek meanings and usage. In general, the top level definitions found in the lexicon remain augmented with subsection definitions. Summaries of significant subsection definitions are included. The word(s) in bold suggest useful search terms that were used in this work.

λόγος, ὁ, verbal noun of λέγω

- I. Computation, reckoning, account, tale, value, worth
- II. Relation, correspondence, proportion, rule
- III. Explanation, statement of a theory, argument, discourse, premise, principle, thesis, reason
 - 7. **Reason**, law exhibited in the world-process, by the same law, the **divine order**.
 - b. **In Neo-Platonic Philos., of regulative and formative forces, derived from the intelligible and operative in the sensible universe.**
- IV. Inward debate of the soul, thinking, abstract reasoning, reflection
 - 2. **Reason** as a faculty, of human Reason, also of the reason which pervades the universe
 - a. **Creative reason,**
- V. Continuous statement, narrative (whether fact or fiction), oration, tale, fable, speech
- VI. Verbal expression or utterance, phrase, report, rumor, mention, notice, discussion, dialogue
- VII. A particular utterance, proverb, maxim, saying, assertion, word of command
 - 1. **divine utterance, oracle.**
- VIII. Thing spoken of, subject-matter, plot, thing talked of, event
- IX. Expression, utterance, speech, intelligent utterance, precise language, dialogue, language
- X. The **Word or Wisdom of God**, personified as his agent in creation and world-government.

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