

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 120 – April 30th – John 1:1-28

Introduction to John's Gospel

Stylistic Peculiarities

The Greek style of John's Gospel is "highly individual" (Barrett) but also closely resembles that of 1, 2 and 3 John. It lacks the niceties and subtleties characteristic of classical Greek style but its language is as impressive as it is clear. John's vocabulary is fairly small, yet some of his frequently used words occur rarely in the other Gospels.

In analysing the peculiarities of John's style, Barrett highlights nine particular features:

1. John tends to link sentences together with *καί* rather than the more complex constructions that are common in Greek.
2. Sometimes John's sentences are not even linked by *καί* but are simply laid side by side.
3. John frequently uses *οὖν* as a connective, often simply as a narrative link rather than with any argumentative force. "This is an unmistakable feature of John's style."
4. John uses *ἐκεῖνος* substantively (in the singular), which is far (19 times) rarer in the rest of the New Testament.
5. John uses *ἐμός* rather than *μου*, and uses it with a repetition of the definite article.
6. The phrase *ἀφ' ἑαυτοῦ, ἀπ' ἑμαυτοῦ* occurs 13 times in John but only 3 times (all plural) in the rest of the New Testament.
7. John uses *ἐκ* with the genitive in place of the partitive genitive.
8. John uses *ἵνα* (and *ὅτι*) frequently without expressing purpose.
9. John likes the construction *οὐ (μη) . . . ἄλλα*.

Influences shaping the Fourth Gospel

The extent to which John's language and thought are influenced by Greek language and thought or by Aramaic is a hotly debated issue. Having considered the argument, Barrett draws the conclusion, "Perhaps it is safest to say that in language as in thought John treads, perhaps not unconsciously, the boundary between the Hellenic and the Semitic; he avoids the worst kind of Semitism, but retains precisely that slow and impressive feature of Aramaic which was calculated to produce the effect of solemn, religious Greek, and may perhaps have influenced already the liturgical language of the Church."

Beasley-Murray argues that the relationships between the Fourth Gospel and other contemporary religious movements are complex. Having reviewed a number of suggested influences he concludes, "The links traceable between the Gospel and diverse Hellenistic and Semitic traditions make it implausible to settle for any one of them to the exclusion of the rest... The breadth of the Evangelist's sympathies is demonstrable above all through his employment of the Logos concept in the prologue... What he achieved in the prologue to the Gospel he did in the body of the Gospel; the bells he had set ringing in the minds of his readers in the first eighteen verses of his book continued to ring out the message with a multitude of associations that helped to commend and interpret the good news he sought to convey. If it has made the task of interpretation more difficult for modern readers, it will not have been so for its earliest readers. Few of them, doubtless, will have caught *all* the associations present in the text, any more than moderns do. This is the gospel that speaks accordingly as the hearers and readers can receive it. That applies equally to the ignorant and the learned who seek God through its pages."

Authorship

In the early church there is almost universal attribution of the Fourth Gospel to the apostle John: "Certainly from the end of the second century on, there is virtual agreement in the church as to the authority, canonicity and authorship of the Gospel of John" (Carson). Many contemporary scholars question this attribution. Carson presents a detailed examination of the arguments and concludes that the author, who is referred to in the gospel as 'the beloved disciple,' is indeed John the son of Zebedee.

Date and Provenance

Carson writes, "Almost any date between about AD 55 and AD 95 is possible. Even so, 21:23 'suggests it was probably nearer the end of that period than the beginning' (Michaels...). More by way of default than anything else, I tentatively hold to a date about AD 80." This date is also favoured by Beasley-Murray. Patristic evidence suggests John wrote the gospel from Ephesus. Carson thinks that there is no clear evidence to suggest a different provenance (though many have been suggested).

Characteristics and Theology

John's gospel focuses almost entirely on Jesus' ministry in Judea in contrast with the Synoptics, which focus on his ministry in Galilee. Carson considers the two perspectives to be complementary rather than contradictory. He suggests that John's narrative sheds light on puzzling features of the Synoptic narratives such as Jesus being able to borrow a donkey for his entry into Jerusalem. Such features would be more easily understood if Jesus had visited Jerusalem on previous occasions.

John is concerned to demonstrate *who Jesus is*, to explain the *salvation* that he has come to give and to demonstrate that in him the *eschatological age* has dawned. (Beasley-Murray sums up the Fourth Gospel's theological emphases under the headings, *Christology*, *Soteriology* and *Eschatology*.) Jesus is the fulfilment of the entire sweep of the Old Testament, "He is the new temple, the one of whom Moses wrote, the true bread from heaven, the true Son, the genuine vine, the tabernacle, the serpent in the wilderness, the passover" (Carson). Jesus has brought in the eschaton, the age of fulfilment – the Spirit has been given and eternal life is available now.

Purpose

The purpose of the Fourth Gospel is stated by the author in 20:30-31. Carson argues that the purpose of the work is evangelistic; it is intended particularly for Jews and Jewish proselytes to convince them that the Messiah they long for has come and is Jesus. Carson writes, "Part of his goal, then, in writing an evangelistic book for Jews and proselytes, is to make the notion of a crucified Messiah coherent. The *intrinsic* offence of the cross he cannot remove. What he can do, what he feels he must do, is to show that the cross was there from the beginning of Jesus' ministry (Jesus is early announced as the Lamb of God, 1:29), and that the cross is at one and the same time nothing less than God's own plan, the evidence of the people's rejection of their Messiah, the means of returning Jesus to the Father's presence, the heart of God's inscrutable purposes to bring cleansing (Jn 13) and life to his people, the dawning of the promised eschatological age, God's astonishing plan to bring glory to himself by being glorified in his Messiah."

Both Carson and Beasley Murray suggest that John's gospel may have been organised from material preached by the Evangelist. Beasley-Murray concludes, "No doubt the synoptic Gospels reflect a like process, but the Fourth Gospel is supremely the preacher's gospel – every episode in the book shouts out to be preached – and it is so because it is the product of a highly effective preacher's proclamation of Christ in the Gospel." Carson includes in his introduction an excellent section on 'Preaching from the Fourth Gospel,' focussing particularly

on the gospel as narrative and the need to pay attention to John's theme concerning the place of Jesus in the sweep of redemptive history.

Structure

Beasley-Murray provides the following suggested outline structure:

I. 1:1–18:	THE PROLOGUE
II. 1:19–12:50:	THE PUBLIC MINISTRY OF JESUS
A. 1:19–51:	<i>Testimonies to Jesus</i>
B. 2:1–4:42:	<i>The Revelation of the New Order in Jesus</i>
C. 4:43–5:47:	<i>Jesus the Mediator of Life and Judgment</i>
D. 6:1–71:	<i>Jesus the Bread of Life</i>
E. 7:1–8:59:	<i>Jesus the Water and Light of Life</i>
F. 9:1–10:42:	<i>Jesus the Light and Shepherd of Humankind</i>
G. 11:1–54:	<i>Jesus the Resurrection and the Life</i>
H. 11:55–12:50:	<i>Jesus the King, Triumphant through Death</i>
III. 13:1–20:31:	THE PASSION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS
A. 13:1–17:26:	<i>The Ministry of Jesus to the Disciples in the Upper Room</i>
B. 18:1–20:31:	<i>The Death and Resurrection of Jesus</i>
IV. 21:1–25:	EPILOGUE: THE MISSION OF THE CHURCH AND ITS CHIEF APOSTLES

Works frequently referenced in these notes on John

Barrett, CK	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , London, SPCK, 1967
Beasley-Murray, GR	<i>John</i> , <i>Word Bible Commentary</i> , vol 36, Word Books, 1987
Carson, DA	<i>The Gospel According to John</i> , Leicester, IVP (Apollos), 1991

John 1:1-18 The Prologue

The Prologue has a poetic character and scholars have debated its poetic form. Beasley-Murray concludes, "If from one point of view the prologue may be viewed as a poem provided with explanatory comments, from the literary viewpoint it is a closely knit composition, constructed with consummate artistry."

Carson comments, "The Prologue summarises how the 'Word' which was with God in the very beginning came into the sphere of time, history, tangibility – in other words, how the Son of God was sent into the world to become the Jesus of history so that the glory and grace of God might be uniquely and perfectly disclosed. The rest of the book is nothing other than an expansion of this theme." Beasley-Murray similarly, quoting Thyen, writes that the Prologue is "a directive to the reader how the entire Gospel should be read and understood." It is like the overture to an opera. Beasley-Murray suggests the following structure:

vv 1-5 The Word and Creation

vv 6-8	The Witness to the Word by John the Baptist
vv 9-13	The Reactions to the Word in the World
vv 14-18	The Confession of the Word by the Church

Verse 1

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.

ἀρχη, ης f beginning, origin

ἦν "The continuous tense is to be contrasted with the punctiliar ἐγένετο (vv 3,6,14). It indicates that by ἀρχη is meant not the first point in a temporal sequence, but that which lies beyond time." Barrett.
Carson suggests that it may be "possible that John is making an allusion to his colleague's work, saying in effect, 'Mark has told you about the *beginning* of Jesus' public ministry; I want to show you that the starting point of the gospel can be traced farther back than that, before the *beginning* of the entire universe'."

Beasley-Murray comments on the phrase ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, "The statement recalls the first word of the Hebrew Bible, b'eresit, rendered in the LXX, as in the Gospel, ἐν ἀρχῇ. The association was the more evident to the Jews, since they referred to books of the Bible by their opening words, and so 'In the beginning' was the Jewish name for 'Genesis.' In that beginning God *spoke*, and the universe was created (Gen 1:3, 6, 9, etc). This representation was entirely comprehensible to Jews, since to them, as to other peoples throughout the ancient Orient, the Word, especially the Word of God, was not so much an expression of thought as a powerful *action*, a concept not native to Greeks. So we read in Ps 33:6: 'By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth!'"

In the LXX there are two uses of the term which are relevant here: a creative and powerful word (Gen 1:3,6,9; Ps. 33:6), and a prophetic or revelatory word (Jer 1:4; Ezek 1:3; Am 3:1 etc.). In later Jewish thought the 'word' became personified in inter-testamental wisdom writings (see also Prov 8:22). Carson comments, "In short, God's 'Word' in the Old Testament is his powerful self-expression in creation, revelation and salvation, and the personification of the 'Word' makes it suitable for John to apply it as a title to God's ultimate self-disclosure, the person of his own Son. But if the expression would prove richest for Jewish readers, it would also resonate in the minds of some readers with entirely pagan backgrounds. In their case, however, they would soon discover that whatever they had understood the term to mean in the past, the author whose work they were then reading was forcing them into fresh thought (see on v. 14)." In the N.T. the Word of God is frequently the message of the Gospel (Lk 8:11; 2 Tim 2:9; Rev 1:9; 1 Jn 1:1). John represents the substance of the Gospel as being Christ himself.

πρὸς with the acc. usually means 'in the presence of', but cf. Prov 8:30 for a parallel usage with respect to Wisdom. John's sense here is that the λόγος was pre-existent, creative and divine. Carson says that by this phrase John expresses the "peculiar intimacy between the Word and God: the Word is oriented *toward* God." Edith Humphrey, "Receiving, Praying and Worshipping Together in the Body of Christ" (Transmission, Spring 2014 pp.17-19 at p. 17) writes, "John 1.1 presents the Son as the Word who is 'towards' (Greek, πρὸς) God, not just 'with' God, as our English versions put it. Father and Son show their true being and life by facing one another, not in isolation."

θεος ἦν ὁ λόγος "θεος being without the article is predicative and describes the nature of the Word. The absence of the article indicates that the Word is God but is not the only being of whom this is true... John intends that the whole of his gospel shall be read in the light of this verse. The deeds and words of Jesus are the deeds and words of God." Barrett.

Verse 2

οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.

Verse 3

πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν

That the Logos was God's agent in the creation is now reasserted both positively and negatively.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι
χωρὶς prep with gen without, apart from
εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, a, an,
single

γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι

MSS. Should the words, ὃ γέγονεν be joined with what goes before or with what follows? The oldest mss (p66, p35*, x, A, B) have no punctuation. All punctuation is in any case non-original and therefore amounts to evidence of interpretation.

The majority of the committee that compiled the UBS text followed the consensus of ante-Nicene writers in joining ὃ γέγονεν with what follows. Metzger, however, dissents from this view and takes the words with what precedes them. Both he and Barrett argue that this fits better with the context and the general style of John. Carson also concludes that "the arguments of Schnackenburg ... in favour of reading the words with the rest of v 3 seem persuasive."

Verse 4

ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων·

ζωη, ης f life

"Since the perfect tense of γέγονεν is naturally followed by a present, some authorities (notably κ D OL MSS), read ἐστὶν in v 4 instead of ἦν. The external attestation for ἦν is slightly better than for ἐστὶν; the latter is probably due to accommodating ἦν to γέγονεν; moreover the occurrence of ἦν in the next line indicates that such was read also in the first." Beasley-Murray

φως, φωτος n light

"The life was the essential energy of the Word. The Word signified the communication of the knowledge of God; hence the life was the light of men, which gave them true knowledge and by shining in their midst submitted them to judgement." Barrett.

Verse 5

καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

σκοτια, ας f darkness

Because John identifies Jesus with the light of the world, 'darkness' in consequence takes on a corresponding ethical quality: it is those who oppose Jesus and the Gospel.

φαινω shine, give light

The present tense indicates continuous action.

καταλαμβάνω attain, seize; midd. realize, understand

καταλαμβάνω may mean to overcome, or, especially in the middle voice, 'to grasp with the mind' John may mean both here (so Barrett). Carson terms it, "A masterpiece of planned ambiguity." Perhaps, 'the darkness did not *master* the light.'

Verses 6-8

"The Word in whom inheres the life which is the light of men was first displayed in the public arena of history when a man sent from God bore witness to him." Carson. "His ministry provides the historical context for the beginning of the gospel, and heralds the appearance of the incarnate Logos in the world, which is the theme of the following verses." Sanday & Headlam.

Verse 6

Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης·

The aorist ἐγένετο is to be contrasted with the continuous tenses of verses 1-5 – we now touch the plane of history.

ἀπεσταλμένος Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom s
ἀποστελλω send, send out

"Sent and commissioned by God; like Moses (Ex 3:10-15) and the prophets (e.g. Isa 6:8); like Jesus himself (3:17 and many other passages)." Barrett.

παρὰ preposition with gen from

Verse 7

οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν, ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ.

μαρτυρια, ας f testimony, witness

εἰς μαρτυριαν for the purpose of witnessing. Witness (μαρτυρεῖν, μαρτυρια) holds an important place in the thought of the gospel.

μαρτυρήσῃ Verb, aor act subj, 3 s μαρτυρεω
bear witness, testify, be a witness

πάντες Adjective, m nom pl πας
πιστεω believe (in), have faith (in)

"The second ἵνα clause is dependent on the first. The purpose of John's witnessing, though not its actual result, was that all should believe in Jesus. πιστεuein (cf. Hebrew יָמַן) corresponds closely to μαρτυρεῖν; it means to accept the testimony as valid, and the fact thereby attested as fact. Cf. 1:35-7; the two disciples heard John's witness and believed." Barrett.

Verse 8

οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο demonstrative adj. that (one),
he, she, it

Verse 9

ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινὸν ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

ἀληθινος, α, ον real, genuine, true

"In John's usage, ἀληθινος is to be distinguished from ἀληθης, which is applied only to opinions and statements, and those who hold or make them... and means simply 'veracious' ... ἀληθινος [generally] means 'real', 'genuine'." Barrett.

φωτίζω give light to, light, shine on,
enlighten

Barrett thinks that this refers not to inner enlightenment (general revelation) since verse 10 denies this, but rather the light shines to reveal what men truly are – it shines to judgement (cf. 1 Cor 4:5; 2 Tim 1:10). It should therefore be translated, "... which shines upon every man..." Carson similarly sees this as a reference to the fact that Jesus' coming sheds light upon all, exposing them for what they are.

ἐρχομενον may agree either with ἄνθρωπον or φως, i.e. of the coming of men into the world or of the incarnation. The latter is preferred by Barrett and others who cite 3:19 as a parallel. Carson also argues for this reading which is reflected in the NIV text (with the alternative reflected in a footnote).

Verse 10

Ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω.

κοσμος in John's Gospel generally means the world of men and of human affairs. Barrett provides helpful analysis of its use.

ἔγνω Verb, aor act indic, 3 s γινωσκω

John uses the verbs γινωσκω and εἶδον in an OT sense, almost equivalent to faith, rather than the Hellenistic sense. However, John's usage does not exclude the cognitive element in 'knowledge'.

Verse 11

εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.

ἴδιος, α, ον one's own

The neuter plural perhaps means 'his own property' (cf. 19:27), though it could here mean possessions – Israel, the temple etc. ἴδιοι means his own people – i.e. the Jews.

παρέλαβον Verb, aor act ind, 1s & 3pl
 παραλαμβανω take, receive, accept

"Again and again under the old covenant, the prophets describe the recalcitrance of the people of God. 'All day long I have held out my hands to an obstinate people, who walk in ways not good, pursuing their own imaginations – a people who continually provoke me to my very face' (Is 65:2-3), declares the Lord. 'From the time your forefathers left Egypt until now [the onset of the Babylonian exile], day after day, again and again I sent you my servants the prophets. But they did not listen to me or pay attention. They were stiff necked and did more evil than their forefathers' (Je 7:25-26). This is the theme that John is picking up, and will develop in his own way; for if there was one dominant point that Christians had to make in their evangelism of the first-century Jews (whether Jews steeped in a Semitic tradition or those more orientated to the Hellenistic world), it was that the Scriptures themselves require that the man they proclaimed as Saviour and Lord be crucified and largely rejected by his own people. That theme, as we shall see, reaches a climax in 12:37-41." Carson.

Verse 12

ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,

"By themselves, vv 10-11 would be grim indeed; but vv 12-13 immediately soften the sweeping rejection of the Word by indicating that, as in Old Testament times, there remains a believing remnant. Many have pointed out that the words 'his own did not receive him' (1:11) could have been placarded over the first twelve chapters of this book, but over chs 13-21 we might raise the banner, 'Yet to all who received him...' Carson.

ὅσος, η, ον correlative pronoun, as much as;
 pl. as many as, all

"To receive Christ is to accept him in obedience and faith as an envoy of the Father." Barrett.

ἔδωκεν Verb, aor act indic, 3 s δίδωμι

"Men are not by nature the children of God, as for example by virtue of an indwelling σπερματικός λογος. Only by receiving Christ do they gain the right to become children of God." Barrett.

ἐξουσία, ας f authority, right, capability,
 power

The privilege of becoming the covenant people of God.

τέκνον, ου n child; pl descendants

John reserves υἱός for Christ and uses τέκνα for Christians. Paul, while using υἱός for both, underlines the distinction by insisting that Christians are children only by adoption – a similar theme to that of John in this verse.

πιστευω see v.7

πιστευω εις is characteristic of John and is to be distinguished from πιστευω with the dative which means 'give credence to'.

ὄνομα, τος n name, title, person

Verse 13

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

αἷμα, ατος f blood

This, and the following phrases serve to accentuate ἐκ θεου. No human agency can be responsible for a birth such as this (cf. 3:6). The plural *bloods* may refer to both parents.

θελημα, ατος n will, wish, desire
σαρξ, σαρκος f flesh, physical body,
human nature

"σαρξ in John is not evil in itself (see the next verse), but stands for humanity over against God." Barrett.

ἀνηρ, ἀνδρος m man, husband
ἐγεννήθησαν Verb, aor pass indic, 3 pl
γεννωω be father of, bear, give birth to;
pass be born

Early western authorities have the singular here, making it a reference to the virgin-birth of Christ rather than the new-birth of Christians. The reading is not original – it has the support of no Greek MSS. "Yet it remains probable that John was alluding to Jesus' birth, and declaring that the birth of Christians, being bloodless and rooted in God's will alone, followed the pattern of the birth of Christ Himself." Barrett.

Verse 14

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

σαρξ, σαρκος f see v.13
ἐγένετο see v.3

Through the 'word' of God all things were created in the beginning: on the sixth day the word became flesh in the creation of mankind in the image of God. But *here* in Jesus we see the *true* image of God, the one in whom God's glory is made visible.

John thinks in Hebrew terms. Flesh stands for man in his entire created being, not a faculty in man (cf. 1 Tim 3:16). Thus also if man receives the Spirit it is a divine endowment not a natural faculty. "When 'the Word became flesh', God became Man." Bruce.

Carson comments, "Because the succeeding clauses in this verse allude to Exodus 33:7-34:35, it is tempting to think this first clause does the same. The 'tent of meeting' was the place where the LORD 'would *speak* to Moses face to face, as a man speaks with his friend' (Ex 33:11). In Exodus Moses hears the divine name spoken by God himself, and this is followed by God's *word* written on two stone tablets. Now, John tells us, God's Word, his Self-expression, has become flesh."

σκηνοω live, dwell

Does not mean that the Word dwelt in human nature as in a tent but that he dwelt in our midst. Carson comments, "Whether the allusion in John 1:14 is to the tabernacle or to the tent of meeting, the result is the same: now, the Evangelist implies, God has chosen to dwell amongst his people in a yet more personal way, in the Word-become-flesh." Barrett comments, "It has been thought that the word σκηνοω was chosen here with special reference to the word δοξα, which follows. It recalls, in sound and in meaning, the Hebrew כָּשׁ, which means 'to dwell'; the verb is used of the dwelling of God with Israel (e.g. Ex 25:8; 29:46; Zech 2:14), and a derived noun כִּישׁ (sh^echinah) was used (though not in the Old Testament) as a periphrasis for the name of God himself. Further, the bright cloud settled down (כָּשׁ) upon the Tabernacle (Ex. 24:16; 40:35), and since this cloud was the visible manifestation of the presence of God (cf. ὀφθησομαι, Ex 25:7 LXX) the abiding presence of God suggested his glory."

θεαομαι see, look at, observe

"The faith of the Church rests upon a real beholding of one who, however glorious, was a real historical person." Barrett. Cf. 1 Jn 1:1-3.

δοξα, ης f glory

Glory is an important theme in John. "In the LXX δοξα often renders כבוד, and denotes particularly the manifestation (often of light) accompanying a theophany (e.g. Ex. 33:22; Deut 5:21; 1 Kings 8:11; all כבוד, δοξα). It acquired in the Old Testament an eschatological significance (e.g. Isa 60:1; Hab 2:14; both כבוד' δοξα), which is retained in the New Testament (e.g. Mark 8:38; 13:26; Rom 8:18; 1 Peter 4:13), though in the New Testament the eschatological δοξα occasionally appears, by anticipation, in the present (2 Cor 3:18; Eph 3:21). The clearest example of this proleptic δοξα is the Transfiguration (Mark 9:2-8 and parallels), an incident which is not recounted in John... John nevertheless asserts that the glory of God was manifested in Jesus." Barrett. Carson comments, "Jesus' glory was displayed in his 'signs' (2:11; 11:4, 40); he was supremely 'glorified' in his death and exultation (7:39; 12:16, 23; 13:31-32)."

μονογενης, ες only, unique

μονογενης implies that Christ is the unique heir of the Father – the τελος of Israel.

παρα see v.6

πατηρ, πατρος m father

πληρης, ες (sometimes not declined) full, complete, full-grown

χαρις, ιτος f grace, unmerited favour

Carson argues that the phrase πλήρης χάριτος και ἀληθείας modifies 'glory' rather than the Word. "The glory of God manifest in the incarnate Word was *full of grace and truth*. In that case John is almost certainly directing his readers to Exodus 33-34... There Moses begs God, 'Now show me your glory' (Ex 33:18). The LORD replies, 'I will cause all my goodness to pass in front of you, and I will proclaim my name, the LORD, in your presence. I will have mercy on whom I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I will have compassion' (Ex 33:19). God's glory, then, is supremely his goodness. So Moses stands on Mount Sinai, and, we are told, 'the LORD came down in a cloud and stood there with him and proclaimed his name, the LORD. And he passed in front of Moses, proclaiming, "The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin" ' (Ex 34:5-7)... The glory revealed to Moses when the Lord passed in front of him and sounded his name, displaying that divine goodness characterised by ineffable grace and truth, was the very same glory John and his friends saw in the Word-made-flesh."

Of χάριτος και ἀληθείας Barrett writes, "The same words (with articles) recur in v.17. χαρις occurs four times only in John, and only in the prologue (1:14,16,17); ἀληθεια is very common. The pair recalls the Hebrew pair חסד נאמא (*hesed we'emeth*, e.g. Ex 34:6, cf. 33:22, δοξα in the same context). The two Hebrew words are closely related in meaning (signifying God's loyalty and faithfulness to his covenant and covenant people), but in the LXX חסד is most often rendered ἐλεος, and has the meaning 'grace', 'undeserved favour'; it is this sense that underlies the New Testament use of χαρις."

ἀληθεια, ας f truth, reality

In John ἀληθεια is characteristically the Christian revelation brought by and disclosed in Christ. "This revelation arises out of the faithfulness of God to his own character, and to his promises, of which it is the fulfilment." Barrett.

Verse 15

(Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· Οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· Ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν·)

This verse is a "planned parenthetical remark" (Carson), picking up again the theme of verses 6-8. It was of *this one* that John spoke. Beasley-Murray speaks of the verse as "an anticipation of 1:30."

μαρτυρεω see v.7

κραζω cry out, call out

The tenses here are interesting. The perfect κέκραγεν emphasises a historical act with continuing effect – hence the witness (present tense μαρτυρεῖ) continues.

εἶπον Verb, aor act indic, 1s & 3pl λεγω
ὀπίσω prep with gen after, behind, follow
ἐμπροσθεν prep with gen before, in front of
γέγονεν Verb, perf act indic, 3s γινομαι
πρῶτος, η, ον first, leading, foremost,
earlier

Verse 16

ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν, καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος·

πληρωμα, τος n fulness, completeness

Looks back to verse 14 – of this full complement of grace and truth we have all received. Cf. Eph 3:14-19.

πάντες see v.7

ἐλάβομεν Verb, aor act indic, 1 pl λαμβανω

"The 'we' who have received this new grace may have begun with John and the earliest eyewitnesses (cf. 1:14), but it now includes all who share the same faith (cf. 20:29)." Carson.

ἀντι prep with gen for, in place of

There are three interpretations of the phrase

χαριν ἀντι χαριτος

i) ἀντι of accumulation – 'grace upon grace' i.e. 'all of grace', 'of grace from first to last' (so Bultmann, Barrett and Beasley-Murray – also reflected in the wording of the NIV, GNB, RSV).

ii) 'in the place of', i.e. the grace of the OT and the law is replaced by the grace that has appeared in Christ (so Sanders, Brown and Carson). On this view, verse 17 expands on vv 14-16 – Carson draws attention to the ὅτι at the beginning of verse 17.

iii) ἀντι = 'matching', i.e. grace corresponding to grace.

Verse 17

ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.

νομος, ου m law

ἐδόθη Verb, aor pass indic, 3 s δίδωμι

Note the difference between the verbs ἐδόθη, ἐγένετο.

ἀληθεια, ας f see v.14

The contrast must be seen as one between the good and the better. This is uniformly the NT view of the relation between the Testaments (see particularly Hebrews with its theme of the 'better' covenant). "There is no hint of polemic against the Law... The earlier revelation of the covenant faithfulness of God was brought to an eschatological fulfillment; the second Exodus under the Logos-Christ led to the new order of the eternal kingdom of God." Beasley-Murray.

Verse 18

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

οὐδεὶς, οὐδεμία, οὐδεν no one, nothing

ὄραω see, observe, perceive

πώποτε adv ever, at any time

Christ alone is the revelation of God. "*No-one has ever seen God*, John writes, as if to remind his readers not only of a commonplace of Judaism, but also of the fact that in the episode where Moses saw the Lord's glory (Ex 33-34), to which allusion has just been made (1:14), Moses himself was not allowed to see God (Ex 33:20). 'We should perhaps say, less anthropomorphically but equally metaphorically, that Moses saw, so to speak, the afterglow of the divine glory' (Bruce)." Carson. Cf. Ex 34:18-20.

μονογενης, ες see v. 14

Barrett admits that μονογενής θεός has better MSS support than the alternative μονογενής υἱός, but states, "υἱός seems to be imperatively demanded by the following clause, and is in conformity with Johannine usage." Beasley-Murray suggests that μονογενής θεός should be accepted as strongly attested and the harder reading. He quotes Lindars who writes, "The harder reading has the merit of bringing the thought back to v 1, and so constitutes another case of the Johannine *inclusio*, 'God' here has the same meaning as 'and the Word was God' (1c)."

Carson comments, "What it means is that the beloved Son, the incarnate Word (1:14), himself God while being *at the Father's side* – just as in v 1 the Word was simultaneously God and with God – has broken the barrier that made it impossible for human beings to see God, and *has made him known*. This prepares the way for 6:46 and 14:9: 'Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father.' "

κόλπος, ου m bosom, chest, lap

Expresses intimate communion, cf. Lk 16:22-23; Jn 13:23.

ἐκεῖνος, η, ο see v.8

ἐξηγήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s

ἐξηγεομαι tell, relate, explain, report, make known, reveal

Can mean 'rehearse facts' or 'recount a narrative', but has a more specialised use in Greek, meaning the publishing or explaining of divine secrets, sometimes by the gods themselves. "From this Greek term we derive 'exegesis': we might almost say that Jesus is the exegesis of God." Carson.

Verses 1-18 – Postscript

"The emphasis of the Prologue, then, is on the revelation of the Word as the ultimate disclosure of God himself. That theme is dramatically reinforced by the remarkable parallels between v 1 and v 18, constituting an *inclusio*, a kind of literary envelope that subtly clasps all of 1:1-18 in its embrace. Thus 'in the bosom of the Father' is parallel to 'with God'; 'the unique one, [himself] God', is parallel to 'was God'; and to say that this unique and beloved Person has made God known is to say that he is 'the Word', God's Self-expression." Carson.

Verses 19-51

Dodd draws attention to the relationship between vv 6-8 and verses 19-51. In verses 6-8 the evangelist states that John:

- i) Was not the light;
- ii) Came to bear witness to the light;
- iii) That all might believe.

These three elements are now expounded in three days of witness:

- i) vv 19-28 – John was not the light;
- ii) vv 29-34 – John's testimony concerning the coming one;
- iii) vv 35-51 – Belief in the Christ.

Verse 19

Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου ὅτε ἀπέστειλαν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι ἐξ Ἱεροσολύμων ἱερεῖς καὶ Λευίτας ἵνα ἐρωτήσωσιν αὐτόν· Σὺ τίς εἶ;

μαρτυρία, ας f testimony, witness

ὅτε conj when, at which time

ἀποστελλω send, send out

Ἰουδαῖος, α, ον a Jew, Jewish, Judean

"οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι (the singular is used only at 3:25; 4:9; 18:35) is the title regularly given by John to Judaism and its official leaders, who stand over against Jesus and (here) John. Their headquarters are at Jerusalem, where their conflict with Jesus reaches its height." Barrett.

ἱερεὺς, εως m priest

ἐρωταω ask, request, beg, urge

Carson suggests that the senders may have been leaders of the Sanhedrin (cf 11:47). He comments, "The Sanhedrin was largely controlled by the family of the high priest, and so it was natural enough that the envoys be priests and Levites, who would in any case be interested in questions of ritual purification and therefore in John's baptism."

Verse 20

καὶ ὁμολόγησεν καὶ οὐκ ἠρνήσατο, καὶ ὁμολόγησεν ὅτι Ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμὶ ὁ χριστός.

ὁμολογεω confess, declare

ἠρνήσατο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀρνεομαι deny, disown

"ὁμολογεῖν and ἀρνεῖσθαι suggest confessing and denying *Christ* both in John (9:22; 12:42; 13:38; 18:25,27) and elsewhere in the New Testament; and the Baptist proceeds at once with what may be called a negative confession of Christ." Barrett. His denials that he was the Christ form part of his positive witness to the Christ. Note the emphatic ἐγώ, 'I am not...'

Verse 21

καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτόν· Τί σὺν; σὺ Ἠλίας εἶ; καὶ λέγει· Οὐκ εἰμὶ. Ὁ προφήτης εἶ σὺ; καὶ ἀπεκρίθη· Οὐ.

Ἠλίας, ου m Elijah

Cf. Mal 4:5.

προφήτης, ου m prophet

"Cf. 7:40 where also 'the prophet' is distinguished from 'the Christ' (and contrast 6:14, where possibly 'the prophet' is a title of the Messiah). There are indications of a belief, or hope, that a new prophet, or one of the prophets of old, would be sent to the assistance of Israel." Barrett. Cf. Dt 18:15-18 for the promise of a prophet like Moses who would speak God's words.

ἀπεκρίθη Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s
ἀποκρῖνομαι answer, reply

"The Synoptic Gospels report that Jesus identified John the Baptist with the promised Elijah (Mt 11:14; 17:12; Mk 9:13; cf. Lk 1:17), but they never suggest that the Baptist himself made the connection. Here he refuses to make it – a refusal which, when placed alongside the Synoptic evidence, suggests that he did not detect as much significance in his own ministry as Jesus did." Carson.

Verse 22

εἶπαν οὖν αὐτῷ· Τίς εἶ; ἵνα ἀποκρισὶν δῶμεν τοῖς πέμψασιν ἡμᾶς· τί λέγεις περὶ σεαυτοῦ;

ἀποκρισις, εως f answer, reply

δῶμεν Verb, aor act subj, 1 pl δίδωμι

πέμψασιν Verb, aor act ptc, m dat pl πεμπω
send

σεαυτου, ης reflexive pronoun yourself

Verse 23

ἔφη· Ἐγὼ φωνὴ βοῶντος ἐν τῇ ἐρήμῳ· Εὐθύνατε τὴν ὁδὸν κυρίου, καθὼς εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας ὁ προφήτης.

"John replies *in the words of Isaiah the prophet*, applying Is 40:3 to himself (as the Synoptics apply it to him: cf. Mt 3:3; Mk 1:3; Lk 3:4)." Carson.

ἔφη Verb, imperf act ind, 3s φημι say

βοαω call, cry out, shout
 ἐρημος, ου f deserted place, uninhabited
 region, desert
 εὐθύνετε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl εὐθύνω
 make straight

εὐθύνω is an unusual verb to find here. It does not occur in the LXX nor in any other Christian quotation from the OT.

ὁδος, ου f way, path, road, journey

"In the original context, the Old Testament prophet is calling for a (metaphorical) improvement in the road system of the desert to the east, a levelling of hills and valleys and a straightening of the curves, to accommodate the return of the covenant people from exile. But even in Isaiah, the end of the exile begins to serve as a model, a literary 'type', of the final return to the Lord far greater than a return to geographical Jerusalem. If Isaiah 40-66 begins by announcing good news to Zion (= Jerusalem), it goes on to anticipate a still greater redemption effected by the suffering Servant of the Lord (Is 52:13-53:12), climaxed by a new heaven and new earth (Is 65-66). It is this 'typological' connection, already established in the book of Isaiah, that the New Testament writers take up and understand to be fulfilled in the voice of John the Baptist, who cried in the desert, preparing a way for the Lord, and thereby announcing the coming of Jesus Messiah." Carson.

Verse 24

Καὶ ἀπεσταλμένοι ἦσαν ἐκ τῶν Φαρισαίων.
 ἀπεσταλμένοι Verb, perf pass ptc, m nom pl
 ἀποστελλω

"Some texts insert οἱ before ἀπεσταλμένοι, understanding the envoys of v 19 as sent by the Pharisees, an unlikely situation, since Pharisees generally were laymen. The article is omitted by most MSS, indicating that Pharisees were included in the deputation, or possibly formed a second one." Beasley-Murray. The NEB translates, "Some Pharisees who were in the deputation asked him..."

Verse 25

καὶ ἠρώτησαν αὐτὸν καὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· Τί οὖν
 βαπτίζεις εἰ σὺ οὐκ εἶ ὁ χριστὸς οὐδὲ Ἠλίας
 οὐδὲ ὁ προφήτης;
 βαπτίζω baptise, wash

Barrett states that "It must not be inferred from the form of this question that either the Messiah, or Elijah, or 'the prophet', was expected to baptize. The question rather means, Why do you perform what appears to be an official act if you have no official status?" (so also Beasley-Murray). Others, however, think that Baptism *was* expected as a preparation for the coming of the Lord. It was an eschatological rite to protect from the imminent baptism of fire.

Carson points out that baptism was not unknown, "Some Jewish groups practiced 'proselyte baptism', i.e. proselytes were baptised in the process of converting to Judaism. In the monastic communities of Qumram, members invoked passages such as Ezekiel 36:25 to justify their daily baptism, a sign that they were the righteous community of the end-time. But in both instances baptism was *self-administered*. Candidates baptised *themselves*. One of the things that characterised the baptism of John the Baptist is that he himself administered it. It may even be that the authority implicit in such an innovative step triggered the assumption in the minds of at least some Pharisees that John's baptism was an end-time rite administered by an end-time figure with great authority. Nevertheless, their question should not be interpreted to mean that they have all unambiguously identified John's baptism as an eschatological rite: there is no good evidence to support such a view (*contra* Bultmann...). Rather, they want to discover by what authority John is baptising *Jewish* people as part of their preparation for the kingdom he is announcing. Looking around for an adequate authority to sanction so extraordinary a practice, they wonder if he is an eschatological figure. And if he is not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet (principle eschatological figures), then what could possibly justify his baptism?"

Verse 26

ἀπεκρίθη αὐτοῖς ὁ Ἰωάννης λέγων· Ἐγὼ
 βαπτίζω ἐν ὕδατι· μέσος ὑμῶν ἔστηκεν ὃν
 ὑμεῖς οὐκ οἴδατε,

"John's reply indicates that his baptism is a preparation for the appearance of the hidden Messiah, who already stands in Israel's midst and is about to fulfill his Messianic task."
 Beasley-Murray.

ὕδωρ, ὕδατος n water

Cf. Mk 1:7-8 and parallels (Mt 3:11; Lk 3:16).

μεσος, η, ον middle

ἰστημι and ἰστανω stand, stand firm

The form of the verb here is subject to a number of textual variants. Barrett prefers "the late verbal form στηκει (from στηκειν) [which] is found twice only in John, here and in 8:44." UBS reads the perfect ἕστηκεν concerning which Metzger comments "The perfect tense, so frequently employed with theological overtones by the fourth Evangelist, conveys a special force here (something like 'there is one who has taken his stand in your midst'), a force which was unappreciated by several Greek witnesses."

οἶδα (verb perf in form but with present meaning) know, understand

Verse 27

ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος, οὗ οὐκ εἰμι ἄξιος ἵνα λύσω αὐτοῦ τὸν ἱμάντα τοῦ ὑποδήματος.

ὀπίσω prep with gen after, behind

ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος may reflect the messianic expression ὁ ἐρχόμενος, cf. Mk 11:9.

ἄξιος, α, ον worthy, deserving, fitting
λύσω Verb, aor act subj, 1 s λύω loose,
untie, release

ἱμας, αντος n strap
ὑποδημα, τος n sandal

Cf. Mk 1:7 and parallels.

Verse 28

ταῦτα ἐν Βηθανίᾳ ἐγένετο πέραν τοῦ Ἰορδάνου, ὅπου ἦν ὁ Ἰωάννης βαπτίζων.

ἐγένετο Verb, aor midd dep indic, 3 s γινομαι

There are several variants here of the town name:

- Βηθανία κ* B Θ it vg pesh hl boh
Heracleon
- Βηθαβαρα λ 33 cur sah Origen Eusebius
- Βηθεβαρα φ sin
- Βηθαραβα κ^c hl^{mg}

Metzger comments, "The earliest and most widely attested reading is Βηθανία. Origen, who in his travels was unable to locate Bethany by the Jordan, adopted the reading Βηθαβαρα, which he apparently found in a few copies current in his day (he declares that Βηθανία is the reading of 'nearly all the manuscripts'), and to which he was attracted because of what he regarded as an edifying etymology: 'the etymology of the name [Bethabara] corresponds with the baptism of him who made ready for the Lord a people prepared for him; for it yields the meaning "House of Preparation".' "

Barrett comments, "At 10:40; 11:1ff. Jesus is said to remove from the place where "John was baptising at the first" to Bethany, the home of Mary, Martha and Lazarus. This may have suggested to early readers of the gospel that the place where John baptised cannot have been Bethany, and so have helped to support the reading Bethabara; but in fact 11:1,18 seems carefully worded so as to distinguish Bethany near Jerusalem from the other Bethany."

πέραν prep with gen beyond, across
Ἰορδάνης, ου m Jordan River
ὅπου adv. where