

## THE “LOGOS” IN JOHN’S PROLOGUE

### THE PROLOGUE IN JOHN IS MAINLY POETIC

For many decades now it has been recognized by most scholars that the prologue of John’s Gospel was a hymn in praise of God, the Father. The New American Bible displays the poetry and prose layout which makes up the prologue. A slightly different poetic form of the prologue is set out by Raymond Brown as:

1 <sup>st</sup> Strophe	verses 1 and 2	3 <sup>rd</sup> Strophe	verses 10 to 12b
2 <sup>nd</sup> Strophe	verses 3 to 5	4 <sup>th</sup> Strophe	verses 14 and 16

Noteworthy, is the fact that the poem is arranged in what is called *staircase parallelism form* in which the last word of one phrase becomes the first word of the next finally rising to the climax in verse 14.

### INTERNAL DETAILS OF THE PROLOGUE

Our understanding of the prologue is considerably helped when we examine its internal details. These give us clues as to how to understand its various parts. For instance, Catholic theologian *Raymond Brown comments that:*

the Greek word *zoe* (life) never means natural life in John’s writings *and that* The prologue is speaking of eternal life. *The Gospel According to John 1-12 (The Anchor Bible)*, p. 7

So John 1:4 in saying: “*and the **life** was the light of men*” means ‘the **eternal life** or “life of the age to come” was the light of men.’ Also verse 18 shows that “*No one has seen (got to know) God*” and therefore *God’s salvation plan* or *immortality plan* is sent in the form of a man (verse 14) to explain, **reveal** or declare Him (verse 18). According to verse 17 such revealing was only partially accomplished by the Law, but “*grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ.*”

### ‘THE LOGOS’ MISAPPLIED

Before he died in 1928 the eminent Professor Loofs explained how the earliest concept to pervert the Christian doctrine about God and Jesus came about:

The Apologists [Justin Martyr, Tatian etc. of the second century] used the metaphysical misinterpretation of the concept of Son [as preexisting logos]...This was a *philosophical* new interpretation of John’s logos idea and imported into the church’s theology...They presented **Philo’s philosophical logos idea** [as a “second God”] as Christian teaching and read it back into Scripture. The Apologists laid the groundwork for the perversion of Christianity into a revealed [philosophical] teaching. Specifically their Christology influenced further development disastrously. They were the cause of the beginning of the Christological problems of the 4th century. They transferred the concept of Son of God onto the preexistent Christ. They took this for granted.

They thus shifted the starting point of Christological thinking away from the historical Jesus [the only real Jesus] back into preexistence. They shifted Jesus’ life into the shadows and elevated the Incarnation [of a preexisting Son]. They connected Christology to cosmology and were unable to connect it to salvation. Their Logos [Word] teaching is not a “higher” Christology than the ordinary one. It fell in fact far behind the genuine assessment of Jesus: it was no longer GOD who revealed Himself in Christ, but the Logos, the lesser God, a God who as God was subordinate to the supreme God.

*Leitfaden zum Studien der Dogmengeschichte*, part 1, pp. 90, 97, 1890, reprinted 1949, translated by Professor Anthony Buzzard.

## LOGOS THEOLOGY

The ancient Greek Stoic philosophers described the Logos as **the rational principle of the universe**. They did not describe it as a person. However, Platonic philosophy did describe the Logos as a person — **an intermediary** between the remote supreme God and His creation. This idea became part of Christian theology when Justin Martyr of the mid-2<sup>nd</sup> century AD and his disciples, who were trained in and promoted Greek philosophy, became Christians and interpreted **John 1:1** in neo-Platonic terms so that “the logos” or “word” was interpreted as a person — as Jesus. It has since been called *Logos theology*.

### AN ISSUE OF INTERPRETATION AND TRANSLATION

So the logos theology that is maintained today concerns the understanding of the background and meaning of the Greek word “logos” **as John used it** and the translation of the Greek words “houtos” and “autos.” Firstly we will look at the background and interpretation of logos.

### JOHN DID NOT GET HIS CONCEPT OF “THE LOGOS” FROM GREEK SOURCES

Based on the assumption that John wrote his book for Gentile Christians, and so with Greek concepts, Trinitarians of the past have made several claims concerning where John got his concept of “the logos”:

1. From Greek Platonic philosophy.
2. From Philo (in Egypt) who applied Greek philosophy to explain the Hebrew Scriptures.
3. That John originated the concept himself.

However, firstly, it is now recognized by most scholars that the people John wrote for were primarily **Jewish non-Christians**. The Gospel of John was “*written so that [they] may believe that Jesus is the Christ (Messiah)*” (John 20:31).

Secondly, although at first glance it may appear that Philo’s understanding of *the logos* was of a person separate from God, yet deeper investigation reveals that:

The Logos for Philo is ‘God’ not as a being independent of ‘the God’ but as ‘the God’ in his knowability – the Logos standing for that limited apprehension of the one God... *Christology in the Making*, p. 241.

So, although the Gospel of John was written in Greek, it is written with a thoroughly Jewish mindset; and most Trinitarians have dropped the claim that Greek platonic philosophy was John’s source or that Philo was John’s source with respect to the *logos*. Yet, some Trinitarians have moved to **the position that John originated the concept himself** i.e. he made it up. However, under the article ‘Logos’ *The International Standard Bible Encyclopedia* states that:

It would be inconceivable that the apostle [John] lighted upon the word [Logos] by chance or that he selected it without any previous knowledge of its history or value. It may be assumed that when he speaks of the ‘Word’ in relation to God and the world, he employs a mode of speech which was already familiar to those for whom he wrote...

So, some of the leading theologians today have largely demonstrated that **the word** is to be interpreted in **biblical Hebrew terms** which were also expressed in **the Aramaic targums** i.e. the Hebrew word **dabar** = **memra** in Aramaic which = **logos** in Greek. And so the Hebrew word **dabar** was translated as *logos* in the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Now, the Hebrew word **Dabar** occurs 1,440 times in the Hebrew Scriptures and the phrase “the word of Yahweh” occurs 242 times in the Hebrew Scriptures. So how was this term used in the Hebrew Scriptures?

“DABAR,” AND THEREFORE “LOGOS,” NEVER  
REFERS TO A PERSON

Examples are:

- ❖ “By **the word** (Heb. *dabar*) of Yahweh the heavens were made” (*Ps. 33:6*). *So this is God’s creative decree which brought forth the Genesis creation.*
- ❖ “Hear **the word** of Yahweh, you dictators of Sodom. Listen to **the law** of our God, you people of Gomorrah” (*Isa. 1:10*). *So by Hebrew parallelism “the word of God” = “the law of God” (the Torah - the Mosaic law).*
- ❖ “There was **a word** that Yahweh sent against Jacob, and it **fell upon** Israel” (*Isa. 9:8*) *Here we see the word used in reference to judgment as well as seeing the idea of God’s word personified.*

So in all of the **1,440** occurrences of *dabar* in the Hebrew Scriptures there is **no instance where it refers to a person**. This is also true of all the same instances where *dabar* was translated as *logos* in the Septuagint *O.T.* — so never used of a literal person.

**THE ARAMAIC TARGUMS WERE THE BIBLE OF  
FIRST CENTURY PALESTINE**

Because Aramaic had become the language of the common people in Palestine after the Babylonian Exile the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Aramaic in the form of *the Aramaic Targums*. These were the scrolls that were read in the synagogues so that the people could understand. By contrast the Septuagint was mainly the Bible of the Greek world outside of Palestine. The *Encyclopedia Britannica 2003*, art. “Targum” informs us that:

The earliest Targums date from the time after the Babylonian Exile when **Aramaic had superseded Hebrew as the spoken language of the Jews in Palestine**. It is impossible to give more than a rough estimate as to the period in which Hebrew was displaced by Aramaic as a spoken language. It is certain, however, that Aramaic was firmly established in Palestine **by the 1st century AD**, although Hebrew still remained the learned and sacred language. Thus the Targums were designed to meet the needs of unlearned Jews [i.e. the great majority] to whom the Hebrew of the Old Testament was unintelligible, (emphasis ours).

*ARAMAIC IN THE CHRISTIAN SCRIPTURES*

**WORDS:** Talitha qoum, ephatha, abba, raca, mammon, rabboni, maranatha, eli eli sabachthani, korbanas, sikera, hosanna.

**PERSONAL NAMES:** Bartholomew, Simon-bar-Jona, Barabbas, Bartimaeus, Barsabbas, Barnabas, Bar-Jesus, Boanerges, Cephas, Thomas, Tabitha.

**PLACE NAMES:** Gethsemane, Golgotha, Gabbatha.

**THE HEBREW SCRIPTURES AND THE ARAMAIC TARGUMS WERE JOHN’S  
PRIMARY SOURCE FOR THE CONCEPT OF “THE WORD”**

The Targums were produced at a time when God was thought of in His transcendence so that people were afraid to attribute any human thoughts and actions to God or direct references to Him. So in the Aramaic Targums the word *memra* was used as a **periphrasis** or circumlocution (a substitute word) for God. Instances of periphrasis are: Matthew’s use of “heaven” instead of writing “God” or “Yahweh,” and Jesus’ use of the word “Power” (Matt. 26:64) also as a periphrasis for “God” or “Yahweh.” In no instance of its use in the Aramaic Targums did it carry the thought of a person separate from God who is the Father.

EXAMPLES OF USAGE OF THE WORD “MEMRA”

❖ Genesis 3:8:

Hebrew Scriptures: “They heard the sound of Yahweh God walking in the garden...”

*Aramaic Targum*: “They heard the voice of **the word** [*memra*] of the Lord God walking in the garden...”

❖ Exodus 19:17:

Hebrew Scriptures: “And Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet God.”

*Aramaic Targum*: “And Moses brought forth the people out of the camp to meet **the word of God.**”

❖ Exodus 31:13:

Hebrew Scriptures: “...is a sign between **me** and you throughout your generations.”

*Aramaic Targum*: “...is a sign between **my word** and you throughout your generations.”

So John and his readers were very familiar with the term *memra* and its Greek equivalent *logos*.

**DABAR/MEMRA/LOGOS MEAN MORE THAN SIMPLY “WORD”**

However, *memra* was not a simple substitute for “Yahweh” but denoted a special characteristic of “Yahweh” in reference to His speaking i.e. His activity of commanding in wisdom and power. Therefore, because *memra* = *logos* then *logos* also refers to **God’s activity of commanding**.

THROUGHOUT THE NEW TESTAMENT, WITH ONE EXCEPTION,  
“LOGOS” NEVER REFERS TO A PERSON

The word “logos” appears over **300 times** in *the Christian Greek Scriptures*. Again it **is never used of a literal person**, except legitimately in Revelation 19:13 which we will come to later.

EXAMPLES OF THE USAGE OF ‘LOGOS’ IN THE NT

- ❖ “And when Jesus finished these **sayings** (Gk *logoi*), the crowds were astonished at his teaching” (*Matt.7:28*).
- ❖ “But I tell you that every careless word (Gk *rema*), that people speak, they shall give **an accounting** (Gk *logon*), for it in the day of judgment.” (*Matt.12:36*).
- ❖ “These are matters which have, to be sure, the **appearance** (Gk *logon*) of wisdom in self-made religion” (*Col.2:23*).
- ❖ “Let no evil **speech** (Gk *logos*) proceed from your mouth” (*Eph.4:29*).
- ❖ “Jesus replied, “I will also ask you one **question** (Gk *logon*). If you answer me, I will tell you by what authority I am doing these things” (*Matt.21:24*).
- ❖ “Instead he went out and began to talk freely, spreading the **news** (Gk *logon*)” (*Mark 1:45*).
- ❖ “You have no part or share in this **ministry** (Gk *logon*), because your heart is not right before God.” (*Acts 8:21*).

THE BROADER MEANING OF “LOGOS” ACCORDING TO THE LEXICONS

Bauer’s Greek/English Lexicon states that *logos* variously refers to:

*A communication whereby the mind finds expression – of utterance, statement, question, proclamation, prophecy, command, instruction, message, revelation, the gospel, and declaration.*

Added to this list are definitions from other lexicons. These are:

*Decree, plan, expression of mind, creative thought, purpose, promise, wisdom, or reason.*

*“LOGOS” ENCOMPASSES THOUGHT, SPEECH AND ACTION*

However, it is often stated by Greek linguists that ‘word’ is really a rather inadequate translation of *logos* in John’s prologue. So the rather long phrases ‘**God’s creative thoughts expressed into activity,**’ ‘**God’s expressed/declared/decreed/commanded purpose or plan**’ or similar phrases more adequately reflect the full meaning of *logos*. Somewhat more encapsulated phrases might be: ‘**God’s declared or decreed purpose**’ or ‘**God’s self-revelation**’ or ‘the expression of divine purpose.’

BUT JESUS IS “THE WORD OF GOD” IN *REVELATION 19:13!*

- ❖ “He is clothed in a robe dipped in blood, and **the name by which he is called** is The Word of God”  
*Does this prove that we must view the pre-existing logos/word in John 1:1 as Jesus?*

*A NAME NOTABLY TO APPLY IN THE FUTURE*

“*The Word of God*” of Revelation 19:11-16 is a name applied to Jesus only in this one **future scenario**. Therefore, it cannot be stated for certain as having been applied to him prior to these future events. Speculatively:

- The absolute earliest, it could have been applied to Jesus **at his conception** in the statement concerning the new stage of events that: “the word became flesh” (John 1:14).
- More, likely, he could have been called “the Word of God” **after his resurrection** when he had fulfilled all (for his first advent) that was prophesied about him in the Hebrew Scriptures. This was completed with his death and resurrection. Similarly, in this passage of 19:11-16 he is called “*Faithful and True,*” but such was not fully applicable until he “*became faithful as far as death*” (Phil 2:8).

So, because the prologue of John speaks of God’s impersonal word it is **incorrect to read back** the future scenario of Jesus into the pre-creation scenario of God’s *logos* or purpose in John 1:1.

## IT IS ILLOGICAL FOR “LOGOS” IN JOHN 1:1 TO REFER TO JESUS

Because God is *the Father*, it makes no sense for Trinitarians to interpret the “logos” as Jesus. This would make John 1:1 become contradictory as in the following experiment: If we replace the terms “God” with “*Father*” and “word” with “*Jesus*” it reads as: ‘In the beginning was Jesus and Jesus was with the Father and **Jesus was the Father.**’ *Yet it is not part of Trinitarian belief that Jesus is the Father.*

*A PERSON’S WORD HAS NO PERSONALITY OF ITS OWN*

Certainly we all recognize that the word or expressions of a person have no personality of their own separate from the person whose word it is. One parallel is that the spirit of a person is not a separate person from him/her.

## SO WHAT IS THE ‘LOGOS’ IN JOHN’S PROLOGUE?

James Dunn comments that:

The Logos is God in his self-manifestation in creation, in inspiration and in salvation... The Logos was the one God in his self-revelation. *Did the First Christians Worship Jesus*, p. 83, 4.

So the thought given by the term ‘logos’ is of ‘**the expression of God’s purpose, “the message of the divine plan”**’ i.e. “**the good news.**”

From research, in recent decades a significant number of theologians have concluded and demonstrated that *the word* is, in fact, not a person — not Jesus Christ; but is to be **interpreted in biblical Hebrew/Aramaic terms** because the Gospel of John, although written in Greek, is a thoroughly Jewish book. These theologians also have demonstrated that John 1:1 speaks of only one person, namely the Father.

## PERSONIFICATION RATHER THAN HYPOSTATIZATION

Because the poetic factor in John's prologue was not recognized in earlier times, it was taken literally. This has resulted in **hypostatization** of (*to ascribe essence to*) "the word" in verses 1-5 and so caused misunderstanding of John's intent. When a literary piece is poetic it is generally given to *metaphorical interpretation*, which in this case is the figurative language of **personification**. *Roger Haight a Jesuit scholar explains that:*

Hypostatization means making an idea or a concept into a real thing...the symbols Wisdom, Word, and Spirit, which are found in the Jewish Scriptures and refer to God, are not hypostatizations but personifications ... A major development occurred when a **personification** became transformed into hypostatization. *Jesus Symbol of God*, p. 257

The personification in John's prologue is appropriate because his sources were Hebrew and Aramaic literature where personification was freely used. For instance, the Hebrew term *dabar* translated 'word' is often personified in the Hebrew Scriptures *e.g.* "With speed his word runs" (Psalm 147:15). Interestingly the prologue shows striking parallels with Proverbs 8:22-30 where Lady Wisdom is personified, but never hypostatized. There is also a certain similarity to the introduction to the Letter to the Hebrews. So a personified impersonal *logos* was not a new idea to John or his readers. Additionally, *logos*, although grammatically of masculine gender in Greek, does **not mean that it is actually sexually masculine when translated into English**. This is just the same as when a French masculine or feminine noun is logically neuter when translated into English. From the above it is evident that God's *logos* has been personified and therefore does not refer to any literal person.

Furthermore, James Dunn says concerning the prologue of John: "In the earlier stages of the poem we are still dealing with the Wisdom...not as a **personal being**, but as the wise utterance of God **personified**." (*Christology in the Making*, p. 242). Also on this issue C.J. Wright states that: "When John presents the eternal Word he was not thinking of a Being." And Dr. Colin Brown of Fuller Seminary comments that: "To read John 1:1 as if it means 'In the beginning was **the Son**' is patently wrong." Furthermore, *Roger Haight* says:

"One thing is certain, the Prologue of John does not represent direct descriptive knowledge of a divine **entity or being** called Word, who descended and became a human being. To read **a metaphor** as literal speech is misinterpretation..." *Jesus Symbol of God*, p. 210.

## WHY THE WORDS "HE" AND "HIM" ARE INCORRECT IN VERSES 2 – 4 OF THE STANDARD TRANSLATIONS

As shown above the word *logos* was never used in the Scriptures to refer to a person and is therefore a reference to **something grammatically neuter**. Nevertheless the popular versions of the N.T. render verse 2 to say: "He was in the beginning with God." The Greek word here is *houtos* which means "this" or "this one" according to the context. Yet the context of the impersonal "word," as throughout all of the Scriptures, excludes a rendering of "this one" in the sense of reference to a person. So *houtos* in the context of John 1:2 simply means "the same" as in most early translations right up to the 1890s, or "this" as is the case with all other references to impersonal things in the Scriptures.

Also, the three occurrences of the Greek word *autos* in verses 3 and 4, usually rendered "him," should be rendered impersonally as "it" — again because of the context.

*THE IMPERSONAL "WORD" IN TRANSLATIONS OF JOHN 1:1-4 PRIOR TO THE KJV*

Even prior to the 1611 KJV, eight major translations and one lesser translation used either a **small 'w'** for word or the pronoun **"it"** with reference to *the word* or both. These are: Tyndale (1534), Coverdale (1535), Matthew's Bible (1537), The Great Bible (1539), Taverner's NT (1540), Whittingham (1557), The Geneva Bible (1560), Bishop's Bible (1568), and the Thomson NT (1607). Also the note on John 1:3: "all things were made by IT" in the Campbell New Testament by Campbell, Macknight, and Doddridge, 1826 says:

Every English version before that of King James [some 13 versions], preferred IT to HE because of the laws of concord: WORD being in English NEUTER, the pronoun referring to it should be in the same gender. The Vulgate also uses HOC, the neuter gender, to agree with VERBUM, neuter. Luther, in like manner, prefers the neuter pronoun. In Italian, PAROLA (the word) is feminine, and so is the pronoun agreeing with it. So in the French versions. Dr. Campbell justifies IT in a long note on this passage, and shows that the authors of the common version departed from their own rule in the fourth verse of the same chapter, where the term LIGHT is as clearly applied to the same person as the term WORD, and yet, in the fifth verse, they translate the pronoun agreeing with it, by the same pronoun IT, — 'and the darkness comprehendeth IT not.' ... The best reason, as it appears to us, for this preference, is that the antecedent to the word IT can only be the term WORD; but the antecedent to the term HIM may be more naturally concluded to be GOD, the nearest noun — which would materially change the sense of the passage.

NOTE: The first time the rendering *'him'* in English was used came in 1582 with the Rheims version of the NT by Roman Catholic priest Gregory Martin.

*THE IMPERSONAL "WORD" IN TRANSLATIONS SINCE 1611 A.D.*

There are numerous translations since 1611 that reflect the fact that a second person is not being spoken about in John 1:1-3 e.g. LeClerc (1701), Wakefield (1791), Campbell (1826), B. Wilson's Diaglott (1864), Concordant (1926), William Temple (1939), the 1985 translation by the Jewish historian Hugh J Schonfield, The Unvarnished New Testament (1991), and the 1993 translation by Robert W. Funk.

*Examples of Modern English renderings are:*

- "In the beginning was the purpose, **the purpose in the mind of God**, the purpose which was God's own being" G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*.
- "In the beginning there was **the divine word and wisdom**. The divine word and wisdom were there with God. **It** was there with God from the beginning. Everything came to be by means of it." *Robert Funk*.
- "In the beginning was **the Plan**, God's Plan, divine!! Everything took shape **through it**, nothing **without it!! It** brought life and light for all, shining in the dark, never overcome!! **It** entered the world **it** had planned, yet the world refused to know!! God's own people refused!! But all who accepted, who trusted, could become God's children, not born in a woman's blood, not conceived by any man, but born of God!! ... And the Plan became flesh..." *David L. Edwards* (a Trinitarian).

*NOT MASCULINE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE BIBLES*

The Elberfelder and Luther Bibles have *Das Wort* (*Das* being neuter and a capital letter being standard for all nouns in German) and the French Segond version has *La parole* (feminine) and in Russian it is *slovo...en bylo* (neuter).

*TERTULLIAN'S VIEW*

*Tertullian* (155-230 A.D.) translated *logos* as **speech** and states: "It is the simple use of our people to say [of John 1] that the **word of revelation** was with God." This view survived in Spain and southern Gaul until at least the 7<sup>th</sup> century.

## ISSUES IN THE EARLIEST ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

In translating from the Roman Catholic Latin Vulgate of the day, *John Wycliffe* gave us the first translation of the Bible into English. It was called **Wycliffe's Bible** and was completed in **1384**. However, it didn't remove the **errors of the original Latin Vulgate** completed in AD 384 by Jerome **or the many errors that had accumulated in it over time**. These errors included "he" rather than "it" in John 1:3, 4.

Then *William Tyndale* planned to translate the Bible into English **from the original languages**, rather than from the corrupted Latin Vulgate. He had studied at Oxford University and later at Cambridge. He was fluent in 7 foreign languages including Greek, Hebrew, and Latin, and so was very well qualified for this task.

- In **1526**, whilst at the university of Wittenberg, Germany, Tyndale completed his full printed translation of the **Tyndale New Testament** (revised in 1534). This was the first English translation directly from Greek texts. **The three occurrences of autos in John 1:3, 4 were rendered as "it."** Then around 1529 he began translating the Old Testament directly from Hebrew texts, but only completed the Pentateuch and the nine historical books.
- In **1535** *Miles Coverdale* completed the parts of the OT that Tyndale had not completed and then, with Tyndale's revised New Testament, Coverdale had the complete Bible in English printed (probably at Hamburg). This became known as the **Coverdale Bible**.

Now Tyndale was viewed as a heretic, firstly because he criticized Henry VIII for his plan to divorce Catherine of Aragon and secondly, because in his translation, Tyndale had shown that words such as "priest," "church," "penitence," and "charity" as used in the then current versions were incorrect and should be rendered as: "elder (senior)," "congregation," "repentance," and "love." He was executed in 1536. Nevertheless, others carried on this work so that:

- In **1537** *John Rogers* (pseudonym "Thomas Matthew") made a compilation of all of Tyndale's translation work i.e., the 1534 New Testament, the Pentateuch, and the nine historical books. Where there were gaps in Tyndale's work, Rogers used the translations by Miles Coverdale (1535). This compilation of the complete Bible was called the **Matthew's Bible**.
- In **1539** a revision of the Matthew's Bible was printed and was called the **Great Bible**. This version was accepted by **Henry VIII** (died 1547) to be read in the churches. **Still the three occurrences of autos in John 1:3, 4 were rendered as "it."**

## THE GENEVA BIBLE

During the six year reign of Edward VI, Protestantism advanced rapidly in England, until Catholic **Mary** became Queen in 1553 and which resulted in persecution of Protestants, many of whom left England. These included William Wittingham, Thomas Sampson, and Anthony Gilby, who all arrived in Geneva, Switzerland. During their time there they revised Tyndale's translation of the New Testament with the use of the third edition of Stephanus' Greek New Testament and with the help of noted Biblical scholar Theodore Beza.

- In **1557**, *William Wittingham* printed what was later called the **Geneva New Testament** - the first English Bible that included verse divisions. This translation was considerably more scholarly than all the preceding versions, especially the Great Bible which had been adapted to please Henry VIII and **the three occurrences of autos in John 1:3, 4 were rendered as "it."**

Wittingham, Sampson and Gilby remained in Geneva after Queen Mary's death in 1558 so that they could complete a revision of the Old Testament. This finally resulted in the production of the **Geneva Bible in 1560**. The scholarship and purity of English found in this Bible were of the highest quality.

### THE DIVINE RIGHT OF KINGS ISSUE LEADS TO A LOWER QUALITY VERSION

#### *THE GENEVA BIBLE BANNED FROM CHURCHES*

The problem with the Geneva Bible was that it contained marginal notes that disputed the claim of the divine right of Kings. So because the new queen, **Elizabeth I** was so upset by these marginal notes in the Geneva Bible, she refused its use in the churches and ordered a revision of the Great Bible by eight of the C. of E. bishops. So:

- In **1568** the **Bishops' Bible** became the official Bible of the English Church. Yet this version was significantly inferior to the Geneva Bible both in scholarship and linguistic eloquence. **Still the three occurrences of *autos* in John 1:3, 4 were rendered as "it."**

#### *THE EFFECT OF KING JAMES I ON PURITY OF TRANSLATION (1604-1611)*

In 1604, at Hampton Court Palace, King **James I** of England was persuaded by the Puritans that the issue of the differences between the Geneva and the Bishops' Bibles should be settled by having a new translation of the English Bible. However, James stipulated that: The *Bishops' Bible* **must be the basis of the translation.**

#### *THE COMMITTEES, SCHOLARSHIP AND THE RESULTING KING JAMES VERSION*

To undertake this work, which took nearly seven years, three committees of the best of scholars were established. These were at: Westminster, Cambridge University and Oxford University and produced the **King James Version in 1611**.

Because the Bishop's Bible contained very significant amounts of Tyndale's work, it is estimated that 83% of the NT in the KJV is directly from Tyndale's NT. However, because the remaining 17% of the NT had to be based on the Bishops' Bible and other sources the final result did not match the Geneva Bible in purity. Indeed, the King James Version was basically rejected by the Puritans, the scholarly community, and many church leaders who recognized the Geneva Bible to be superior and so continued to use it in preference to the KJV.

#### *CATHOLIC INFLUENCE ON THE KJV NEW TESTAMENT*

The Catholic counter-reformation cause was furthered by the Bible translation work of English Catholics working in Rheims, France to produce a translation of the NT into English from the Latin Vulgate. The primary translator was *Gregory Martin* of Oxford and his work, the **Rheims New Testament** was published in **1582**. The preface of the Rheims N. T. stated: "*It [the Latin Vulgate] is truer than the vulgar Greek text itself. It is not only better than all other Latin translations, but than the Greek text itself, in those places where they disagree.*"

#### *JOHN 1:1-4 RENDERED IN THE RHEIMS NEW TESTAMENT*

- ❖ "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. <sup>2</sup>**The same** was in the beginning with God. <sup>3</sup>All things were made by **him**: and without **him** was made nothing that was made. <sup>4</sup>In **him** was life, and the life was the light of men."

Soon after, William Fulke published a work paralleling the Rheims New Testament with the N.T. of the 1572 *Bishop's Bible*.

Although there is some debate over just how much the Rheims New Testament influenced the translation of the KJV New Testament, it is evident that, in being available in the form of Fulke's parallel editions for over 20 years before work began on the KJV, it did have some substantial influence, even though it was not listed as one of the earlier English translations to be consulted by the translators of the KJV.

Nevertheless, James G. Carleton, in his book entitled: *The Part of the Rheims in the making of the English Bible*, argues for a very extensive influence. Certainly, there are a number of **phrases directly attributable** to the Rheims New Testament, and it has been demonstrated that much of the English of the 1611 KJV New Testament had adopted **the same latinate terminology** that is also found in the Rheims New Testament of the same text. Furthermore, the director of apologetics and evangelization for Catholic Answers, James Akin states that:

It is commonly acknowledged that, in preparing the KJV, the translators made use of the Rheims New Testament and adopted many of its readings in preference to those of other English editions. The KJV in many places thus bears a Douay-Rheims "slant" absent from prior translations.

So it is my contention that the change from "it" to "him" in John 1:3-4 in the KJV occurred because of the influence of the Rheims New Testament as well as the older Wycliffe Bible – both based on the corrupted Latin Vulgate.

### **WILLIAM LAUD BANS THE GENEVA BIBLE COMPLETELY**

When Charles I ascended to the throne in **1625** after the death of his father King James he appointed William Laud to be dean at Canterbury. Among the first orders given by Laud was the **banning of any further printing of the Geneva Bible in England**. However, lovers of this translation were still able to obtain copies of it from Europe until Laud finally issued an edict forbidding the importing of the Geneva Bible saying that it would cause economic hardship to British printers.

#### *THE POPULATION IS LEFT WITH A LESSER BIBLE - THE KJV*

So, what really brought the KJV to the fore in time in the public mind had little to do with its quality and its merits as a translation, but rather to **political and economic factors**, as well as the fact that there was no longer any access to the superior Geneva Bible, the last printing of which was in 1644 in Amsterdam. So in summary, if it had not been for the dictates of queens, kings, and some of the church hierarchy for political reasons it could well have been that **the Geneva Bible would have been the Authorized Version** of the time with its rendering of **the three occurrences of autos in John 1:3, 4 were rendered as "it."**

Moreover, rather than the KJV it was the Geneva Bible that the Pilgrims took with them when the Mayflower set sail from Plymouth for America on September 6, 1620.

### **CONCLUSION REGARDING THE TRANSLATION OF JOHN 1:1-4**

In relation to the different renderings of John 1:1-4, all the translations from William Tyndale's NT through to the Geneva Bible render these verses in showing that "the word" is not a person but is neuter as shown by the Greek word *auto* being rendered as "it" rather than "he." For example the original of William Tyndale's *The New Testament*, 1534 reads as:

- ❖ "In the begynnyge was the worde, and the worde was with God, and the worde was god. **The same** was in the begynnyge with god. All thinges were made **by it**, and **without it**, was made nothinge that was made. **In** it was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darcknes but the darcknes comprehended it not"

William Wittingham's **Geneva New Testament** of 1557 reads as:

- ❖ “In the beginning was the worde, and the worde was with God, and that worde was God. **The same** was in the begynnyng with God. Althinges were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkness, and the darknes comprehended it not”

NOTE: On the Geneva Bible. org website it states: ““Not to be confused with ‘The 1599 Geneva Study Bible’ on [www.Crosswalk.com](http://www.Crosswalk.com) which is not even a Geneva translation.”” This uses the rendering “him.”

So it is reasonably evident that:

- The line of Bible translations that were more directly from Tyndale and Wittingham (all directly from the Greek) render John 1:1-4 as showing that the “logos” was neuter and so not a second person, whereas;
- The line of Bibles somewhat less directly from Tyndale and more from the Bishop’s Bible and with a degree of influence from the Catholic Latin Vulgate with its abundance of errors and slants, via the Rheims NT, do not give this understanding.

So flying in the face of all the usages of the word “logos” as neuter throughout the Scriptures, church authorities have implanted Justin Martyr’s pagan Greek concept into John 1:1 and so making the massive assumption that it reads:

‘In the beginning was Jesus and Jesus was with God and Jesus was God.’ *But this really means:*

‘In the beginning was Jesus and Jesus was with the Father and **Jesus was the Father.**’

### 1 JOHN 1:1-3 AS COMMENTARY ON THE PROLOGUE

A great help to our understanding of John 1:1-4 is found in the prologue of John’s first letter which is a partial commentary on the prologue of his Gospel. From 1 John 1:1-3 we learn that, ‘the word’ is God’s *promise of eternal life* or immortality plan. So this impersonal promise, declared purpose or revelation is:

- ❖ “...**what** was from the beginning, **what** we have heard, **what** we have seen...*concerning* the word of life...and the life was manifested.”

Emeritus professor of Divinity James Dunn comments that:

The subject of which 1 John 1:1-3 speaks is not Christ...but ‘that which concerns the word of life (the relative pronouns are neuter not masculine); and what ‘was manifested’ is not Christ or the word, but life, ‘the eternal life which was with the Father’. In other words, it is clearly the content of the message which is in view, not the person as such.

### THE SETTING OF “IN THE BEGINNING” IN JOHN 1:1

John 1 begins with the words “*En arche en ho logos*” – “in the beginning was the word.” The way the phrase “in the beginning” is used in the New Testament always refers to a point of time. Bauer’s Gk-Eng Lexicon defines *arche* as “a point of time at the beginning of a duration.” Examples are:

- ❖ “...just as those who **from the beginning** were eyewitnesses” (Luke 1:2 ESV).
- ❖ ““Moses permitted you to divorce...But it was not like that **from the beginning**” (*Matt. 19:8 HCSB*).
- ❖ “For Jesus knew **from the beginning** who they were who did not believe, and who it was that would betray Him” (*John 6:64 NASU*).

- ❖ “What was **from the beginning**, what we have heard...concerning the Word of Life”  
(1John 1:1 NASU).
- ❖ “For this is the message which you have heard **from the beginning**, that we should love one another” (1John 3:11 NASU).

All of these instances indicate a point of time when something starts. With that in mind one must then determine from the context when the particular point of time was in the above cases. In the above examples the relevant “beginnings” were: when Adam and Eve were brought together, when Jesus began his ministry, and when he chose his disciples. So for John 1:1 the point of time spoken of must be determined according to the overall context of the usage of the term “the word” in the Scriptures. These show that “the word” already existed prior to God’s arranging of the creation when He “said, ‘Let there be...’” and whatever feature then came into existence i.e. “the beginning.” Therefore, the earlier information shows that ‘the word of revelation’ or ‘the expression of God’s purpose’ already existed before the Genesis creation. John 1:14 when “the word became a human” is a stage further on from John 1:1 and so putting “the beginning” prior to that and so most likely at or prior to the Genesis creation.

#### WHAT DOES “WAS WITH GOD” (Gk *pros ton theon*) MEAN?

According to Bauer’s Greek-English lexicon the preposition *pros* with the accusative (as in John 1:1, 2) is a marker of movement or orientation toward someone/something: It variously can mean:

toward, towards, to,

near, at, during,

aiming at, striving toward,

against, for,

**to indicate a connection by marking a point of reference**, with reference to/regard to (**about**, because of, with respect to, which concerns, which belongs to, what makes for, in accordance with, in order to, for the purpose of),

in adverbial expressions (“tends toward” Jas. 5:4)

by, at, near.

To all of these meanings Thayer’s lexicon adds the definition “pertaining to.” And various translations render *pros* with the accusative as: **Concerning**, as respects, pertaining to, of, even to. Furthermore, the Greek word generally rendered as ‘with’ is *para* and not *pros*. So one wonders why almost all translations of John 1:1, 2 render *pros ton theon* as: “the Word was with God” when, in fact, the word ‘with’ is barely one of the lexical definitions. Such a practice would seem to be because of tradition. In contrast, for about 70 times, the LXX renders *pros ton theon* as “to God.” Also there are 18 further occurrences of *pros ton theon* in the Christians Scriptures, the great majority of which are translated as: “to God,” “toward God,” “related to God” or “pertaining to God.” For example a great number of translations render the phrase *pros ton theon* in **Hebrews 5:2** as: “**pertaining to God...**” (NASB); “**in relation to God...**” (ESV); “**related to God...**” (NIV). (Similarly in Heb. 2:17 and Rom. 15:17). The same or similar phrases are used in a number of other texts. And Bauer’s choice of phrase for Romans 15:17 is “that which concerns God” in its rendering of *ta pros ton theon*.

So there is no grammatical or contextual reason why some of these and other definitions of *pros ton theon* are not appropriate for John 1:1. So combining this fact with the translation of *logos* as ‘**the expression of divine purpose**’ gives the following possible renderings:

1. “the expression of divine purpose was **concerning** God and what God was the expression of divine purpose was. This was in the beginning **pertaining to** God” or
2. “the expression of divine purpose was **related to** God and what God was the expression of divine purpose was. This was in the beginning **with respect to** God” or:

3. “the expression of divine purpose was **about** God and what God was the expression of the true purpose was. This was in the beginning **applicable to** God.”

THE TRANSLATION ISSUE OF “AND THE LOGOS WAS GOD”/  
“AND THE LOGOS WAS A GOD”

Please see STUDY 7, THE PROBLEM OF TRINITARIAN TRANSLATION and Volume 4, STUDY 23, EXAMINING THE NEW WORLD TRANSLATION concerning the fact that the second word *theos* in John 1:1 is anarthrous.

WHAT THE PHRASE “AND GOD WAS THE LOGOS” PROVES

The whole sentence being:

“In the beginning was the logos and the logos was concerning **the God and God** was the logos.”

This linking of the second occurrence of the word “God” with “the God” by the word “and” shows that the passage is speaking of **one and the same person - God**. There is no second person – either a so-called ‘God the Son’ or ‘a god’ in the form of an archangel.

WHAT DOES “THE WORD BECAME FLESH” MEAN?

J.A.T. Robinson explains John 1:14:

What I believe John is saying is that the Word, which was God in his self-revelation and expression, was embodied totally in and as a human being, became a person, was personalized not just personified. But that the Logos came into existence or expression as a person does **not mean that it was a person before**. In terms of the later distinction, it was not that the Logos was hypostatic (a person or hypostasis) and then assumed an impersonal human nature, but that the Logos was anhypostatic until the Word of God finally came to self-expression not merely in nature and in a people but in an individual historic person, and thus *became* hypostatic. *The Priority of John*, pp. 380-381.

So rather than being a sentient person “the word” in John 1:1 was the complete index of God’s mind in action. So when John 1:1 speaks of “**the word**” it was not at that time “the Son” until John 1:14 when “the word **became** flesh.”

TRANSLATION AND COMMENTS ON JOHN’S PROLOGUE

Occasionally Bible writers wrote applying a double meaning to certain phrases - *a double-entendre*, which is a figure of speech called *amphibologia*, and is explained in the primary work *Figures of Speech Used in the Bible* by E.W. Bullinger. This was evidently the technique used by John in the beginning of his prologue, where he uses the Genesis ‘creation of order’ as a basis for a treatise on the Good news of the New Creation.

*THE EXPRESSION OF DIVINE PURPOSE CREATES EVERYTHING*

*FIRST POETIC STROPHE* - (verses 1-2)

*Verses 1-2:*

◆“In the beginning there was the expression of the purpose (Gk *logos*), and the expression of the purpose was about God, and the expression of the purpose was what God was. <sup>2</sup>This was about God in the beginning.

**SECOND POETIC STROPHE** - (verses 3–5)

Verse 3:

◆ “Everything [*of the Genesis and New creations*] came to be through **it** [*the expression of the true purpose*], and without **it** nothing came to be that has come to be.”

Although John is referring to the original creation in quoting the Genesis 1:1 phrase “in the beginning,” he is also using it as a way of introducing fundamentals of **the New Creation** which becomes entirely the subject from verse 4 forward (also see vs. 13). However, it can be seen from how other NT writers and John himself used the word “beginning,” according to context, that John’s prologue is also not primarily a treatise on the Genesis creation:

- ❖ “[The] *beginning* of **the good news** about Jesus Christ” (*Mark 1:1*).
- ❖ “...just as those who from [the] *beginning* became **eyewitnesses** and attendants of the message delivered these to us” (*Luke 1:2*).
- ❖ “For from [the] *beginning* Jesus knew who were the **ones not believing** and who was the one that would **betray** him” (*John 6:64*).

*Clearly this is a reference back to the beginning of the time Jesus was able to assess Judas’s motives long after he had chosen him.*

- ❖ “...because you have **been with me** from *the beginning*” (*John 15:27*. NWT is not literal here, but brings out the meaning).

*They clearly were not with Jesus from the beginning of the universe.*

- ❖ “But when I started to speak, the **holy spirit fell upon** them just as it did also upon us in [the] *beginning*” (*Acts 11:15*).

*This is a reference back to the similar event at Pentecost and so refers to the beginning of the Christian Congregation.*

- ❖ “As for YOU, let **that which YOU have heard** from [the] *beginning* remain in YOU. If that which YOU have heard from [the] *beginning* remains in YOU, YOU will also abide in union with the Son and in union with the Father” (*1 John 2:24*).

So although John is referencing the Genesis creation it is only as a basis to tell the same story as the other Gospel and letter writers i.e. the beginning of the good news of Jesus Christ from the 1<sup>st</sup> century. In fact, John states that the purpose of his Gospel is that: “that YOU may believe that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God,” (John 20:31). Commenting on John 1:1 Professor F.F. Bruce stated that:

It is not by accident that the Gospel begins with the same phrase as the Book of Genesis. In Genesis 1:1, ‘In the beginning’ introduces the story of the old creation; here it introduces the story of **the new creation**.

*The Gospels and Epistles of John*, p. 28.

NOTE: This use of *logos* is the same as the descriptions of God’s word as His agent in the Genesis creation (*Gen. 1: 3; Ps. 33:6; Isa. 55:11; 2 Peter 3:5*). It is also similar to the descriptions of spirit, power, and wisdom as His agents of creation (*Job 33:4; Jer. 10:12*), none of which are persons.

**THE TREATISE IS NOW ENTIRELY ABOUT THE NEW CREATION**

Verses 4-5

◆ “In **it** was life [*immortality of the coming age*] and the life was **the light** of men. **The light** [*God’s revealed truth*] shines in *the darkness* (*of lies from Satan in Eden*), and the darkness did not obliterate **it** [*Gen. 3:15 and onward*].”

Commenting on John 1:4, 5, F.F. Bruce stated that:

In the first creation, 'darkness was upon the face of the deep' (Gen 1:2) until God called light into being, so **the new creation** (in which the Word of God is agent as effectively as in the earlier one) involves the banishing of spiritual darkness by the light which shines in the Word.

*The Gospels and Epistles of John*, p. 33.

So through the expression of His purpose God brings about His revealed truth [**The light**] that leads to immortal life in the age to come:

❖ “And this is the message which we have heard from him...that **God is light** and there is **no darkness** at all in union with him” (1 John 1:5).

So **the light** at this point (verse 5) of the prologue is clearly impersonal, the pronoun **it** having been used. This indicates that “*the logos*” is also impersonal at this stage of the prologue. Next “the light” is shown to become embodied in Jesus; and later in the prologue “*the logos*” is also shown to become embodied in Jesus.

#### THE REVEALING OF JESUS WHO WOULD EMBODY THE TRUE LIGHT

##### FIRST PROSE SECTION—(verses 6-9)

Verses 6 and 7:

◆ “There came a man sent from God whose name was John...in order to bear witness about **the light** [to be embodied in Jesus]...”

Verse 8: “He was not the light but he came to testify about **the light.**”

Verse 9: “**That**, was the **true light** which is enlightening every man coming into the world” (see the structure in the Greek and the NKJV).

According to the *Word Biblical Commentary* the phrase “*every man coming into the world*” was “a common phrase among Jews.” Less likely is the common rendering of: “*That was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.*”

NOTE: The NWT wrongly adds “*was about to.*” (See KIT interlinear).

Because John sets verses 6-9 as prose at this point he has altered the sense of the remaining poetry which was about the expression of the divine purpose. He thereby gives the first hint that the climax will be about the expression of divine purpose becoming enfleshed, and which then gives out the true light. These statements about the true light begin leading toward the eventual embodiment of “*the logos*” and the light in Jesus (vs. 14) – a human. (Matt. 4:16; John 3:19, 8:12).

#### THE EXPRESSION OF THE TRUE PURPOSE BECOMES EMBODIED IN JESUS

##### THIRD POETIC STROPHE - (verses 10-12b)

Verse 10:

◆ “He [*Jesus*] was in the world (*of humanity* — Gk *kosmos*), and the world [*in his time*] came to be through him but the world did not acknowledge him.”

David J. Ellis comments on the phrase “the world *came to be* through him” in verse 10:

This applies to that part of creation (cf. v.v3) which is capable of making a sensible response. The world (Gk *kosmos*) is the world of people, especially those who, in this gospel, are confronted with the truth of Christ. *New International Bible Commentary*, p. 1233.

So the phrase: “the world *came to be* through him,” concerns the world of humanity (Gk. *kosmos*), rather than the physical planet, according to the context. Because Jesus “was in the world” it was

evidently **the world of his own time** and place that “*came to be* through him.” So by his life of sacrifice Jesus gave that world the opportunity to be reconciled to God and become part of the new creation. However, most of that “*world did not acknowledge him*” i.e. it rejected him in about AD 30-33. This simply cannot be a jumping back to verse 1 and so interpreted to mean that Jesus was the agent of the creation of the universe because only Jehovah with no help whatsoever did that (Isa. 44:24).

*HOW THE WORLD “CAME TO BE THROUGH HIM”*

Verses 11, 12a and b NAB:

◆ “He [*Jesus*] came to what was his own [*Israel*], but his own people did not accept him. But to those [*enlightened men*], who did accept him he gave the right to become children of God...”

*THE SECOND PROSE SECTION* – (verses 12c-13)

Verses 12 c and 13:

◆ “...to those who believe in his name, [*having God’s authority*] who were (or “was”) born not by natural generation nor by human choice nor by a man’s decision but of God” [i.e. “born from above”] (NAB).

This is the completing of creation when those who accepted Jesus became the first of the **children of God - the new creation** from a new birth and therefore they “*came to be through him.*”

*FORTH (LAST) POETIC STROPHE* - (verses 14 and 16)

Verse 14:

◆ “And **the expression of divine purpose** became human and tabernacled [*as the new mode of God’s presence and the bearer of the New Torah*] among us, and we saw **his** [*Jesus as ‘the expression of the divine purpose’*], glory, glory as of a unique one from a father (a metaphor), full of divine favour and truth.

Verse 16:

◆ ... From his fullness we have all received, grace [*verse 17 shows this to be truth through Jesus leading to the New Covenant*] in place of grace [*the Old Torah which fades after it is fulfilled*].” *The NIV* has “one blessing after another” and *the NJB* has “one gift replacing another.”

So Jesus is *the logos* or *expression of the true purpose* made into flesh. He was never that *expression* before his being flesh. In *Christology in the Making* James Dunn notes that:

it is only with verse 14 that we can speak of the **personal** Logos. Prior to verse 14 we are in the same realm as pre-Christian talk of Wisdom and Logos...dealing with personifications rather than persons, personified actions of God rather than an individual divine being as such. p. 243.

Also Kuschel notes that:

Only from v.10 on may one speak of the Logos ensarkos. But it is v.14 which first makes unmistakably clear in ‘Christian’ terms that ‘the word became flesh’ and thus identifies the Logos asarkos with a **specific person**... *Born Before all Time?*, p.381.

Just as John, in verse 10, had shown that God’s *light* was now embodied in a human, he completes his thoughts concerning God’s *expression of His purpose* by showing that it, too, was now embodied in a human.

*THE THIRD PROSE SECTION* - (verse 15)

◆ “John bore witness to him and cried out, saying, ‘This was he of whom I said, “The one coming after me has advanced in front of me, because he **ranks ahead of me.**”’

**THE FINAL PROSE SECTION** - (verses 17-18)

◆ "...because while *the law* [*Old Torah*] was given through Moses, gracious favour and *truth* [*New Torah*] came through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The unique Son, who is closest to the Father's heart, he has explained Him."

## CONCLUSION

In his prologue John is demonstrating how God, through Jesus, completes his creation as **the New Creation**. However, perhaps the most helpful points are the understanding that the term *word* is inadequate to express the meaning of *logos*, but rather combines thought, expression and action. Additionally, the larger part of the prologue is poetry which indicates a strong likelihood of a metaphorical interpretation of personification as in its parallel passage of Proverbs 8. Furthermore, Kuschel states that: "The prologue intrinsically has a dynamic movement and determines its own focal point. It begins universally and ends in a concrete way." (*Born Before all Time?* p. 382). This really makes it impossible to jump back to any earlier stage of the prologue. Such forward movement in the poem strongly indicates that Jesus is what "the word" became only from verse 14 and making it impossible for there to have been a pre-existent person in John 1:1 who then became Jesus.

### APPENDIX 1:

#### WATCHTOWER CONTRADICTION OF ITS OWN TEACHING

From The New Schaff Herzog Encyclopaedia the *Trinity* brochure published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) gives a quotation on page 11 that is used by them to condemn Platonism. The Encyclopaedia states:

**The doctrines of the Logos** and the trinity received their shape from Greek Fathers, who...were much influenced...by the Platonic philosophy...That errors and corruptions crept into the Church from this source cannot be denied.

Yet the Logos doctrine is exactly what the WBTS of the Jehovah's Witnesses teaches when it teaches that a pre-existent Jesus was the logos in John 1:1.

### APPENDIX 2:

#### THE ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS OF JOHN 1:1-4 WHICH SHOW THAT "THE WORD" IS NOT A PERSON

NOTE: The earlier translations do not have spelling mistakes. This was the spelling of the day.

1. "In the begynnyge was the **worde**, and the worde was with God, and the **worde** was god. The same was in the begynnyge with god. All thinges were made **by it**, and **without it**, was made nothings that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darcknes but the darcknes comprehended it not" (William Tyndale, *The New Testament*, 1534).
2. "In the begynnyge was the **worde**, and the word was with God, and the **worde** was God. The same was in the begynnyge wyth God. All thynge were made **by it** and **without it** was made nothyng that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in the darknes, but the darknes comprehended it not" (Matthews' Bible, *The Byble, that is to saye, all the holy Scripture: in whych are contayned the olde and new Testamente, truly and purely translated into English, and nowe lately with greate industry and diligence recognised*. London: John Daye and William Seres, 1537).

3. “In the begynnynge was the worde, and the worde was wyth God; and God was the worde. The same was in the begynnynge wyth God. All thynges were made **by it**, and **wythout it**, was made nothyng that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in darcknes, and the darcknes comprehended it not” (Great Bible, *The Byble in Englyshe, that is to saye the Content of al the holy Scrypture, both of the olde, and newe Testament*, London: Edward Whitchurche, 1539).
4. “In the begynnynge was the worde, and the word was with God, and God was the worde. The same was in the begynnynge with God. All thynges were made **by it**, and **wythoute it** was made nothyng that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the lyght of men, and the lyght shyneth in darkenes, and the darkenes comprehended it not” (Richard Taverner, *The Epistles and Gospelles with a brief Postyl upon the same*. London: Richard Bankes, 1540).
5. “In the beginning was the word, and the worde was with God, and that worde was God. The same was in the begynnynge with God. Althynges were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was lyfe, and the lyfe was the light of men. And the light shineth in darkeness, and the darknes comprehended it not” (William Whittingham, *The Newe Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Conferred Diligently with the Greke, and Best Approved Translation*, Geneva: Conrad Badius, 1557).
6. “In the beginning was the Worde, and the Worde was with God and that Worde was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was lif, and the lif was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkenes, and the darkenes comprehended it not” (Geneva Bible, *The Bible and Holy Scriptures conteyned in the Olde and Newe Testament*, Geneva: Rouland Hall, 1560).
7. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was that Word. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it**, was made nothing that was made. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darknesse, and the darknesse comprehendeth it not” (Bishops’ Bible, *The Holie Bible*, London: Richard Jugge, 1568).
8. “In the beginning was that Word, and that Word was with God, and that Word was God. This same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was made nothing that was made. **In it** was life, and that life was the light of men. And that light shineth in the darknes, and the darknesse comprehended it not” (Lawrence Tomson, *The New Testament of Our Lord Jesus Christ, Translated out of Greeke by Theod. Beza*, London: Robert Barker, 1607).
9. “Before the Creation of the World, **Reason** did exist, for **Reason was then in God**; indeed was God himself, it not being possible for God to be **without it**. Reason, I say, did exist in God before the Creation of the World, every portion of which was created with the greatest Reason; nor can any thing be produc’d that has been made **without it**. In this Reason alone, formerly resided the perfect Knowledg of the way that leads to everlasting Life; which it was impossible for men to find out otherways than as enlighten’d by this knowledg, made in some measure partakers of it, and under the guidance of it, as it had been a most glorious Light preceding, and pointing out the way they were to follow. But this Light has since been brought down to men, has shin’d among ’em many Years, and continues to direct the Ignorant in the way to Life, tho’ most neglect the use of it, and chuse to wander on still in the darkness of their Ignorance” (John LeClerc, *The Harmony of the Evangelists*, London: Samuel Buckley, 1701).

10. “The word was in the beginning; and the word was with God, and the word was God; (the word was with God in the beginning). Through **the same** all things were made, and **without the same** was not made even one thing that was made. **In the same** was life, and that life was the light of human beings; and the light shineth on the darkness, yet the darkness apprehended it not” (Mortimer, *Divers Parts of the Holy Scriptures Done into English*, London: T. Piety, 1761).
11. “In the beginning was **Wisdom**, and Wisdom was with God, and Wisdom was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** was nothing made. What was made, had life in it, and this life was the light of men; and this light shineth in darkness, and the darkness hindered it not” (Gilbert Wakefield, *A Translation of the New Testament*, London: Philanthropic Press, 1791).
12. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**, and **without it** not a single creature was made. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in darkness; but the darkness admitted it not” (Alexander Campbell, *The Sacred Writings of the Apostles and Evangelists of Jesus Christ, Commonly Styled the New Testament, Translated from the Original Greek*, Buffalo, Brooke County, VA: Alexander Campbell, 1826).
13. “In the beginning existed the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the commencement with God. All things were formed **by it**, and **without it** not even one thing was made, which has existed. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in darkness, and the darkness did not overpower it” (Rodolphus Dickinson, *A New and Corrected Version of the New Testament; or, a Minute Revision, and Professed Translation of the Original Histories, Memoirs, Letters, Prophecies, and Other Productions of the Evangelists and Apostles*, Boston: Lilly, Wait, Colman and Holden, 1833).
14. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. This was in the beginning with God. All things were made **by it**; and **without it** nothing was made that was made. **In it** was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shone in the darkness; and the darkness did not admit it” (David Barnard, *The Holy Bible; Being the English Version of the Old and New Testaments, Made by Order of King James I, Carefully Revised and Amended, by Several Biblical Scholars*. Mannsville, NY: D.S. Dean and Rhodes Barker, 1847).
15. “In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God. This was in the Beginning with God. **Through it** every thing was done; and **without it** not even one thing was done, which has been done. **In it** was life; and the Life was the Light of Men. And the Light shone in the Darkness, and the Darkness apprehended it not” (Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott: Containing the Original Greek Text of What Is Commonly Styled the New Testament*, New York: Fowler and Wells, 1864).
16. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and God was the Word. This was in the beginning with God. All things **through it** arose into being, and **without it** arose not even one thing which has arisen. **In it** is Life, and the Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines on, in the Darkness; and the Darkness did not apprehend it” (Nathaniel S. Folsom, *The Four Gospels: Translated from the Greek Text of Tischendorf*, Boston: A. Williams, 1869).
17. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was with God in the (first) beginning. All things were made **through it**, and **without it** was not any one thing made. What hath been made **by means of it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shineth in the darkness; and the darkness perceived it not” (Samuel Sharpe, *The Holy Bible, Being a Revision of the Authorised English Version*, London: Williams and Norgate, 1898).

18. "In the beginning was **Thought**, and Thought was with God, and Thought was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Thought. In Thought was life; and that life was the light of men. There was the true light coming into the world which lights every man. It was in the world, and the world came into being through it, but the world did not recognise it" (Richard A. Armstrong, *The Trinity and the Incarnation*, Boston: American Unitarian Association, 1904).
19. "**The Love Thought** was the beginning. In the very beginning **it** was with the Father of Love and **it** was the Father of Love. All things were made **by the Love Thought** and **without it** was not anything made that ever was made. **In it** was Life and the Life was the Light of men. The Light shone in darkness and the darkness has never been able to overcome it, or even to comprehend it" (Dwight Goddard, *The Good News of a Spiritual Realm*, New York: Fleming H. Revell, 1916).
20. "In original being the Word, or **GOD-Idea** existed; and the GOD-Idea existed in at-one-ment with GOD; and the GOD-Idea was GOD-manifest. The same existed in original being, at-one with GOD. All things came into being in this **GOD-conception**, and **apart from it** came not anything into being that came into being. In the GOD-Idea Life, GOD, was manifest, and Life, GOD, was the Light of men. And the Light shineth in darkness; but the darkness comprehendeth it not" (Arthur E. Overbury, *The People's New Testament (New Covenant) Scriptural Writings Translated from the Meta-Physical Standpoint*, Monrovia, CA: Arthur E. Overbury, 1925).
21. "In the beginning was **the word**, and the word was toward God, and God was the word. This was in the beginning toward God. All came into being **through it**, and **apart from it** not even one thing came into being which has come into being. **In it** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light is appearing in the darkness, and the darkness grasped it not" (A.E. Knoch, *The Sacred Scriptures: Concordant Literal New Testament*, Canyon Country, CA: Concordant Publishing Concern, 1926).
22. "In the Beginning there existed the **Divine Reason**, and the **Divine Reason** was with God, and the **Divine Reason** was God. This **Divine Reason** at the Beginning was in closest relation with God. Through the Divine Reason all things came into being; and **apart therefrom** there was not brought into being even a single thing which has come to exist. **In the Divine Reason** there subsisted Life; and that Life was the spiritual Light of mankind. And the Light shone, and still shines, in the spiritual Darkness, and the Darkness has not overpowered it" (G.W. Wade, *The Documents of the New Testament Translated and Historically Arranged with Critical Introductions*, London: Thomas Murby, 1934).
23. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was a god [*this translation is incorrect*]. This was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being through the Word, and **without it** nothing created sprang into existence. **In it** is life, and that life was the light of mankind. The light shines in the realm of darkness, but the darkness would have not of it" (Johannes Greber, *The New Testament: A New Translation and Explanation Based on the Oldest Manuscripts*, New York: John Felsberg, 1937).
24. "In the beginning was the everlasting Word, and the everlasting Word was with God, and of god-like nature was the everlasting Word. Hence **it** was in the beginning with God. By **its** activity all things came into being and naught that exists came apart from **its** activity" (Martin Dibelius, *The Message of Jesus Christ, Translated by Frederick C. Grant*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939).
25. "In the beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. And the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. Through **its** agency all things came to be, and **apart from it** hath not one thing come to be. What came to be **in it** was Life, and the Life was the light of men, and the

light shineth in the darkness, and the darkness did not absorb it” (William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury, *Readings in St. John’s Gospel*, London: Macmillan, 1939).

26. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a God [*this rendering is incorrect*]. In the beginning This Word was with God. All was done **through It**, and **without It** not even one thing was done. **In It** was life, and the life was the light of men. And the Light shone in darkness, and darkness apprehended It not” (James L. Tomanek, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Anointed*. Pocatello, ID: 1958).
27. “In the very beginning was the Word. God made all things, nothing has ever existed, or will ever exist, except it be made by God. **Within the Word** was life and this life became the Light for man. The Light shone, but man, in his ignorance, would not fully understand it” (Andrew Edington, *The Word Made Fresh*, Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1976).
28. “Before God did owt else e ad summat ter say. It wus is last werd. Ony **it come first**. An **it summed up** is ole attitude to evrythink. Now dis werd wus wid God. Fact **it wus** part’n parcil uv im. So at start uv evrythink an a long time fore man was akshully made, God’s werd to men wus ready an waitin. Evrythink there is wus made by this werd. E wus God’s one an ony contractor for de ole Universe job. Nowt at all was ever got made sept through this d’partm’nt uv God, wot we call is ‘werd.’ Now just becus dis werd is part uv God issel, all God’s life is in im. An dis life is de light what shines on evrybody. Dis is de light wot evrybody needs. So one day dis light come an shone in de dark around ere. An it proved summat fer keeps. Dare just isn’t enough darkness in de world ter put it out” (Dick Williams and Frank Shaw, *The Gospels in Scouse*, London: White Lion, 1977).
29. “In the Beginning was the Word. And the Word was with God. So the Word was divine. It was in the Beginning with God. **By it** everything had being. And **without it** nothing had being. What had being **by it** was Life. And Life was the Light of men. And the Light shines in the Darkness. And the Darkness could not suppress it” (Hugh J. Schonfield, *The Original New Testament, Edited and Translated from the Greek by the Jewish Historian of Christian Beginnings*, San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1985).
30. “In the beginning was the purpose, **the purpose in the mind of God**, the purpose which was God’s own being” G. B. Caird, *New Testament Theology*.
31. “In the beginning was **the Plan**, God’s Plan, divine!! Everything took shape **through it**, nothing **without it!! It** brought life and light for all, shining in the dark, never overcome!! **It** entered the world **it** had planned, yet the world refused to know!! God’s own people refused!! But all who accepted, who trusted, could become God’s children, not born in a woman’s blood, not conceived by any man, but born of God!! ... And the Plan became flesh...” *David L. Edwards* (a Trinitarian).
32. “In the beginning was **the plan of Yahweh**, and the plan was with Yahweh, and the plan was Yahweh’s. The same plan was in the beginning with Yahweh. All things were done **according to it**, and **without it** nothing was done, that was done. **In this plan** was life, and that life was the light to mankind. Now that light shines in the darkness, but the darkness does not take hold of it” (Yisrayl Hawkins, *The Book of Yahweh: The Holy Scriptures*, Abilene: House of Yahweh, 1987).
33. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was toward God, and God was what the Word was. It was with God in the beginning. All things happened **through it**, and not one thing that has happened, happened **without it**. **Within it** there was Life, and the Life was the light of the world. And in the darkness the light is shining, and the darkness never got hold of it” (Andy Gaus, *The Unvarnished New Testament*, Grand Rapids: Phanes Press, 1991).

34. “In the beginning there was **the divine word and wisdom**. **The divine word and wisdom** was there with God, and **it was what God was**. **It was** there with God, from the beginning. Everything came to be **by means of it**; nothing that exists came to be without **its agency**. **In it** was life, and this life was the light of humanity. Light was shining in darkness, and darkness did not master it” (Robert J. Miller, *The Complete Gospels: Annotated Scholars Version*, Sonoma, CA: Polebridge Press, 1992).
35. “In the beginning there was the **divine word and wisdom**. The divine word and wisdom was there with God, and **it** was what God was. **It** was there with God from the beginning. Everything came to be by means **of it**; nothing that exists came to be without **its** agency. In **it** was life, and this life was the light of humanity. Light was shining in darkness, and darkness did not master it” (Robert W. Funk, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus*, New York: Macmillan, 1993).
36. “In the beginning was **the message**, and the message was directed toward God, and ‘God’ the message was. The same one was directed toward God in the beginning. **Through it**, all things were done. And **without it** nothing was done. What has been done **in it** was life. And the life was the Light of humanity. And the light shone in the darkness. But the darkness did not understand it” (Frank Daniels, *The Four Gospels: A Non-Ecclesiastical New Testament*, 1996).
37. “In the beginning was the Word,  
The Word that was with God,  
God in the beginning was,  
All things **through God** were made.  
**Without God** was not any thing Made that yet was made.  
In God was life, and life was light,  
And light all things displayed.  
And the life that was the light Shines in the darkness yet;  
And darkness has not overcome  
What the light has lit.” (Jabez L. VanCleeef, *Gospels in Verse*, Xlibris, 1999).
38. “Nothing but God, and **all that He means**, existed in the beginning of absolutely everything. There was no possible way to separate God from **His meaning, for only by His meaning can He be identified as God**. **God’s intentions and purposes existed with Him from the very beginning of everything**. God, through **His intentions and purposes**, created everything that has, or has had, existence in all of time. The essence and meaning of life, itself, was in God, and in all that He means and intends. Out of all that makes Him God, and gives Him meaning, came the gift of enlightenment to the human beings that He created. Into the lonely world, where God had never shown Himself to His creation, He projected Himself in human form, to be the light to humanity that no one could extinguish” (B.E. Junkins, *A Fresh Parenthetical Version of the New Testament*, New York: University Press of America, 2002).
39. “In the beginning there was God’s **Grand Design, the declaration of His intention and Purpose**, and that declaration was with God as His project, and **it** was fully expressive of God Himself. This was with God in the beginning. Everything came into being **through it**, and **without it** nothing of what came into being existed. **In it** there was life and that life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness and the darkness does not overwhelm it” (Anthony Buzzard, 2004).

#### AMBIGUOUS VERSIONS

There are also a number of translations that by rendering the Greek pronoun *auto* (usually rendered grammatically as “it”) with the noun “Word” could be interpreted as either involving a second person or not doing so. The following are examples of these:

- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things were made **by the Word**, and apart from the Word nothing came into being. In the Word was life, and that life was the light of all people. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not grasped it” (*The New Testament of the Inclusive Language Bible*. Notre Dame, IN: Cross Cultural Publications, 1994).
- “In the beginning there was the Word; the Word was in God’s presence, and the Word was God. The Word was present to God from the beginning. **Through the Word** all things came into being, and apart from the Word nothing came into being that has come into being. In the Word was life, and that life was humanity’s light – a Light that shines in the darkness, a Light that the darkness has never overtaken” (*The Inclusive New Testament*, Brentwood, MD: Priests for Equality, 1994).
- “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was in the beginning with God. All things came into being **through the Word**, and without the Word not one thing came into being. What has come into being in the Word was life, and the life was the light of all people. The light shines in the deepest night, and the night did not overcome it” (Victor Roland Gold, *The New Testament and Psalms: An Inclusive Version*, New York: Oxford University Press, 1995).

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