

# “Logos” in John’s Prologue

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**F**rom the earliest days of Christianity, the “Word” (Λόγος - Logos) in the prologue of John’s Gospel was universally understood as a proper name or title for the Son of God prior to His becoming Son of Man. John’s own disciple, Ignatius,<sup>1</sup> explained what John meant by this term.

*“Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. For the divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that **there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence**, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.”<sup>2</sup>*

The words, “Who is” requires that Logos is a person.<sup>3</sup> Also, the clause, “not proceeding forth from silence,” indicates that “Logos” was not merely a spoken word but a real Person, as the longer version of Ignatius’ letter clarifies.

*“... [T]here is one God, the Almighty, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, **who is His Word, not spoken, but essential. For He is not the voice of an articulate utterance, but a substance begotten by divine power**, who has in all things pleased Him that sent Him.”*

Justin Martyr, born shortly after John’s death, elaborates further:

*“But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, **being of old the Word**, and appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, **having become***

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<sup>1</sup> Ignatius was pastor of the assembly in Antioch, from which Paul had previously been sent out on his mission to the Gentiles. Ignatius himself was personally taught by John, the author of the Gospel of John. His genuine Epistles exist in a short and long version. The original was the shorter version, yet the longer version contains edits and additions from a time close to the original author.

<sup>2</sup> Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, ch. viii (short, original version)

<sup>3</sup> This is because the personal pronoun “who” has “Jesus Christ His Son” as its antecedent, and the verb “is” has “who” as its subject and “His eternal Word (Logos)” as the predicate nominative. Consequently, the sense is: Jesus Christ His Son is His eternal Word (Logos).

*man* for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, ‘And the Angel [Messenger] of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,’ yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, ‘Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me.’ And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, ‘No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him.’ The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, ***though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God***, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son.”<sup>4</sup>

Scores of similar examples can be produced from the century following John’s death showing that “Word” (Λόγος - Logos) of John’s prologue was always taken as a personal name or title for a divine, conscious Person who became flesh. There are no examples of any Christian writers contiguous with the time of the Apostles that understood “Logos” in John’s prologue in any other way. Thus, the preexistence of Christ was held by the earliest Christians, and was even attested by at least one writer who was personally instructed by the Apostle John who wrote the prologue.

Those who wish to deny the preexistence of the Son of God argue for what Ignatius specifically denied – that “Word” refers to something spoken and not to something of substance. Unitarian Anthony Buzzard goes one step further, making “Logos” an abstract “plan” in the mind of God.

*“Recent commentaries on John admit that despite long-standing tradition to the contrary, the term “word” in the famous prologue of John need not apply to the Son of God before He was born. Our translations imply belief in the traditional doctrine of incarnation by capitalizing “Word.” But what it was that became flesh in John 1:14? Was it a preexisting person? Or was it the self-expressive activity of God, the Father, **His eternal plan**? A plan may take flesh, for example, when the design in the architect’s mind finally takes shape as a house. What preexisted the visible bricks and mortar was the intention in the mind of the architect. Thus it is quite in order to read John 1:1-3a: “In*

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<sup>4</sup> Justin Martyr, First Apology, ch. lxiii

*the beginning was **the creative purpose of God**”; (just as wisdom was with God before creation, Prov. 8:30). “All things came into being through it.”<sup>5</sup>*

Mr. Buzzard’s reasoning here is flawed for three important reasons:

1. The English idiom, concerning an idea or plan “becoming flesh,” cannot be imposed upon the Greek language in which John wrote his Gospel. Unless clear examples from the Greek Scriptures or Greek literature can be produced where the concept of a plan becoming a reality can be expressed as that plan “becoming flesh” in Greek idiom, we should conclude that his reasoning has no basis. We cannot rightly impose a supposed English idiom or metaphor onto the Greek language or Scriptures. John’s readers had no concept of a much later English idiom and therefore could not have understood the clause “*became flesh*” in that way.

2. The definition of the Greek word λόγος (logos) is not “plan.” While it is true that this Greek noun includes the idea of something well thought out or reasoned, the core meaning is “message” (either spoken or written). The meaning of the word is **a concept articulated and communicated in a logical way by one person to another**. The noun λόγος is derived from the root verb, λέγω, which means to “tell” or to “communicate.”

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<sup>5</sup> Buzzard, Anthony F., *The Doctrine of the Trinity*, pp. 190-191. Mr. Buzzard has a footnote (19) attached to this passage that says, “... *Theophilus of Antioch’s understanding of the ‘logos’ as God’s plan, purpose, reason, and vision suggests as the translation of John 1:1, ‘The Vision was with God and the Vision was God.’*” However, Mr. Buzzard has misunderstood Theophilus and misrepresented him in an attempt to place his Unitarian view within the purview of early Christianity. Here is the passage that Mr. Buzzard referenced. “*God, then, **having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom before all things.** He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called “governing principle,” **because He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him. He, then, being Spirit of God, and governing principle, and Wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the prophets, and through them spoke** of the creation of the world and of all other things.” (Theophilus of Antioch, *To Autolycus*, Bk. I, ch. x). Since the one called “Word” and “Wisdom” was “begotten” by God, He is thereafter spoken of as a person who “spoke” and acted of His own volition. In Bk. II, ch. xxii of the same work, Theophilus wrote: “... **His Word, through whom He made all things, being His Power and His Wisdom, assuming the person of the Father and Lord of all, went to the garden in the person of God, and conversed with Adam.** For the divine writing itself teaches us that Adam said that he had heard the voice. But what else is this voice but **the Word of God, who is also His Son?** ... But when God wished to make all that He determined on, He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word [Reason], but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason. And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-hearing [inspired] men, one of whom, John, says, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,” showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, “The Word was God; all things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not one thing came into existence.” The Word, then, being God, and being naturally produced from God, whenever the Father of the universe wills, He sends Him to any place; and **He, coming, is both heard and seen, being sent by Him, and is found in a place.**” This is not an inanimate or abstract thing, but a conscious being.*

Mr. Buzzard’s interpretation completely removes the concept of “communication” on which this word was derived. The Greek noun which refers exclusively to the cognitive aspect of a devised plan (without the necessity of communication) is λογισμός<sup>6</sup> (logismos) – a computation, a reasoning, a devising. The Greek noun that refers to a finished plan or pattern (which is the sense Mr. Buzzard supposes) is the neuter noun – λόγιον (logion).<sup>7</sup> If John intended to point to reasoning or planning in the mind of God he would have used λογισμός. If he intended to portray a completed “plan” he would have used λόγιον. It is virtually impossible that John would have used the masculine noun λόγος since there was no one “in the beginning” to communicate such a plan to in the Unitarian model. The point is that John’s Greek-speaking readers would not understand λόγος in this context the way that Unitarians claim. It would either require a hearer of the alleged communication of such a plan (if John meant a spoken word), or else it must be a proper name for a Person.

3. Buzzard’s claim that *“it is quite in order to read John 1:1-3a: ‘In the beginning was the creative purpose of God ... All things came into being through it,’”* is simply false for another reason. He also left out what comes between these statements, *“and Logos was God.”* The masculine noun θεός (God) is a title, always referring to a specific person in Scripture, whether it is used of the one true God or of false gods. It is never used anywhere in an abstract or impersonal way, as if referring to divine qualities.

4. The appeal by Mr. Buzzard to Proverbs 8:30 where “Wisdom” was “begotten” and spoken of as a real Person in communion with God and His assistant in creation, is assumed to be an example of something abstract that was described by Solomon using personal language. However, both Jesus and Paul portrayed “Wisdom” in this passage as the Son of God. See: [http://www.4windsfellowships.net/articles/Proverbs\\_8.pdf](http://www.4windsfellowships.net/articles/Proverbs_8.pdf) Furthermore, it is not sound hermeneutics to dismiss an expression as a metaphor or allegory merely because the Bible contains metaphors and allegories. Mr. Buzzard needs to show why the term “Logos” must be a metaphor in this context, or at least show that “Logos” is used in other contexts (particularly by John) to mean this alleged “plan,” neither of which can be done. Just the opposite is the case, since John clearly used “Logos” as a proper name for the Son of God.<sup>8</sup>

Mr. Buzzard also has a footnote (#19) attached to the previous quotation that says, *“... Theophilus of Antioch’s understanding of the ‘logos’ as God’s plan, purpose, reason, and vision suggests as the translation of John 1:1, ‘The Vision was with God and the Vision was God.’”*

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<sup>6</sup> Examples in the LXX are: Psalm 32:10-11; Prov. 6:18; Prov. 15:22,26; Jer. 11:19; Ezek. 38:10; Dan. 11:24

<sup>7</sup> Examples in the LXX are: Psalm 119:41,50,123; Isa. 28:13. It is often rendered “oracle”

<sup>8</sup> Rev. 19:13

However, Mr. Buzzard has misrepresented Theophilus in his attempt to place the Unitarian view within the purview of early Christianity, and then used this misrepresentation as the basis for his translation of John 1:1. Here is the passage that Mr. Buzzard referenced in his footnote.

*“God, then, having His own Word internal within His own bowels, **begat Him, emitting Him along with His own Wisdom before all things.** He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called **“governing principle,”** because **He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him.** He, then, being Spirit of God, and governing principle, and Wisdom, and power of the highest, came down upon the prophets, and through them spoke of the creation of the world and of all other things.”<sup>9</sup>*

Since the one called “Word” and “Wisdom” was “begotten” by God and His companion in creation, He is thereafter spoken of as a person who “spoke” and acts of His own volition. In the same work, Theophilus wrote:

*“... His Word, through whom He made all things, being His Power and His Wisdom, assuming the person of the Father and Lord of all, **went to the garden in the person of God, and conversed with Adam. For the divine writing itself teaches us that Adam said that he had heard the voice. But what else is this voice but the Word of God, who is also His Son?** ... But when God wished to make all that He determined on, He begot this Word, uttered, the first-born of all creation, not Himself being emptied of the Word [Reason], but having begotten Reason, and always conversing with His Reason. And hence the holy writings teach us, and all the spirit-hearing [inspired] men, one of whom, **John, says, ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God,’ showing that at first God was alone, and the Word in Him. Then he says, ‘The Word was God; all things came into existence through Him; and apart from Him not one thing came into existence.’** The Word, then, being God, and being naturally produced from God, whenever the Father of the universe wills, He sends Him to any place; and He, coming, is both heard and seen, being sent by Him, and is found in a place.”<sup>10</sup>*

Theophilus did not describe Logos as an inanimate or abstract thing, but a conscious Person. His use of the term “begotten” means that Logos/Wisdom was brought forth out of God as the origination of a second divine Person.

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<sup>9</sup> Theophilus of Antioch, To Autolycus, Bk. I, ch. x

<sup>10</sup> Bk. II, ch. xxii

### Proof from the Grammar and Syntax of Verse 1

That Logos must be understood as a person and not an abstract “plan” is required by the Greek text itself. John wrote that Logos was **with God**, and Logos **was God**. The first clause, “Logos was with God” shows that Logos’s existence **was external to God**. The word translated “with” is the Greek preposition “πρὸς,”<sup>11</sup> which means “in company with” when used with stative verbs<sup>12</sup> rather than action verbs.<sup>13</sup> Thus, Logos was not merely in the mind of God, but was necessarily external to God, in the company or presence of God. The second clause, “and Logos was God,” is a predicate nominative (both nouns are in the nominative case separated by a verb of being). **The word “God” θεός is always a personal noun**. It is never used in an impersonal or abstract way. It is not an adjective or a possessive. Since “Logos was God,” and since “God” **always** describes a Person, **Logos must be a Person**. No inanimate or abstract thing can rightly be called “God.”

Mr. Buzzard tries hard to skirt the problem, writing:

*“The Word is not identical with God. It is distinguished from God in some sense by being ‘with Him.’ **The Word was not a second God**. If then, the Word is neither identical with God (how can it be if it is also ‘with God’?) nor an independent God, the phrase, ‘the Word was with God’ can only mean, as A. E. Harvey points out, ‘that the word was an expression or reflection of God (cf. Wisdom 7:25-6), that it was in some sense divine, ie, of God.’”<sup>14</sup>*

But if John meant that Logos was “of God” he would have used the possessive form, the genitive case – θεοῦ, “of God.” Or if John meant that Logos had certain divine qualities he would have written κατὰ θεόν (lit. “in accord with God”), an expression elsewhere translated “godly,” attributing certain divine qualities to another noun.<sup>15</sup> But neither of these are what John actually wrote! **He used the personal, masculine noun “God”** in the nominative case! Logos was God – a Person. There is no escaping this without violating the grammar.

Mr. Buzzard’s conclusion in the above quote is not driven by a proper handling of the Greek grammar and syntax, or even by considering the context. Rather, it is forced because of his own Unitarian presuppositions imposed upon John’s Gospel – **that there**

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<sup>11</sup> This preposition is usually used of persons.

<sup>12</sup> The verb here is “ἦν” (was) which is a stative verb.

<sup>13</sup> Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, p. 380

<sup>14</sup> Buzzard, pp. 191-200

<sup>15</sup> Cf. 2 Cor. 7:9,10,11

**cannot be two distinct individuals referred to by the title “God,” who can be in the company of one another.** His reasoning is as follows:

1. Logos cannot be identical to God because Logos is said to be distinct from God by the words “with God.” (This is true.)
2. Logos cannot be a distinct Person called “God” because that would make Him a “second God.” (This is a false presupposition that there cannot be two individuals both called “God” in the same passage.)
3. By eliminating #2, Mr. Buzzard is forced to take John’s statement **in a way that is grammatically incorrect**, interpreting the word “God” as an adjective or possessive instead of the personal noun and title that it is.

The real problem with Mr. Buzzard’s interpretation is his incorrect understanding of the personal noun “God,” and his unwillingness to accept the concept that another, besides the God who is Sovereign over all, can be properly called “God” even within the same contextual statement. Yet this underlying presupposition which drives Mr. Buzzard’s entire theology is demonstrably false, and John’s readers knew it well!

*Psalm 45:1-7*

*1 My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer. 2 You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever. 3 Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty. 4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things. 5 Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King’s enemies; The peoples fall under You. 6 Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom. 7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; **Therefore God, Your God**, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.*

This passage was quoted by Paul in Hebrews 1:8-9 and attributed to David’s speaking to the Son of God! David referred to two distinct individuals in this Psalm, both called “God” (θεὸς LXX). David called the Son “God” while at the same time distinguishing Him from “God, Your God” (the Son’s own God). John’s readers were intimately familiar with this Psalm. Furthermore, this Psalm begins in the LXX as follows: ἐξηρέυξατο ἡ καρδία μου **λόγον** ἀγαθόν, lit. “My heart has emitted excellent **Logos**.” The entire Psalm is about the Messiah, whom Paul identified as the “Son,” and is identified as a second “God.” This verse was repeatedly used by the earliest Christian writers as an example of “Logos” referring to the Son of God in the Old Testament, even

identifying the second “God” in Psalm 45:6 with “Logos” who is the second “God” in John 1:1! For example, Victorinus writes:

*“But the author of the whole creation is Jesus. His name is the Word; for thus His Father says: ‘My heart hath emitted **a good Word**’ [Psalm 45:1 LXX]. John the evangelist thus says: ‘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. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made [John 1:1-3].”<sup>16</sup>*

All this was considered part of the “mystery” or enigma which God had concealed in the Old Testament Scriptures specifically to hide it from Israel’s wicked rulers.<sup>17</sup>

What Unitarians like Mr. Buzzard fail to understand is that the term “God” is always a personal and relational term, just like “king,” “governor,” “ruler,” “master,” “father.” Relational terms define a personal relationship between persons, and are meaningless without such a relationship. Such terms do not indicate “kind” or species, ontological qualities. In order to call YHVH “God” we must understand that the term “God” means that He is the Sovereign over all of His subjects and creation. Thus, referring to someone by the term “God” requires that they have complete sovereignty over a dominion. In the above Psalm, David referred to the Son as “God” simply because He was alluding to His ultimate, promised position of sovereignty in His Kingdom when the Son of God will reign over the whole earth, including nature.<sup>18</sup> This is clearly expressed in the very next clause: “A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.” It is because the Father has declared that He will hand the reins of sole Sovereignty to His Son in the coming Kingdom<sup>19</sup> that David could refer to Him as “God.” David knew this well, because he recorded this eventual transfer of sovereignty from Father to Son was promised from the very beginning, when the Son was “begotten” on day one of creation.

*Psalm 2:7-9 LXX (My Translation)*

*6 But I have been made King by Him on Zion His holy mountain, 7 declaring the ordinance of the Lord: the Lord said to me, “**You are my Son, today have I begotten You.** 8 Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of*

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<sup>16</sup> Victorinus of Pettau (circa AD270), On the Creation of the World

<sup>17</sup> God has kept the identity of His Son concealed in Old Testament times because it was necessary to His purpose for the crucifixion (1 Cor. 2:6-8; Col. 2:2-3).

<sup>18</sup> Heb. 2:5-9

<sup>19</sup> See 1 Cor. 15:24-28

*the land for Your possession. 9 You will shepherd them with a rod of iron. You will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.*

Thus when the Father transfers full dominion of the whole earth to His Son, the Son will literally be “God” in relation to all mankind.

Paul referred to the Son as “*the first-produced of all creation*”<sup>20</sup> and “*The Beginning.*”<sup>21</sup> Jesus referred to Himself as “*the Beginning of the creation of God.*”<sup>22</sup> This is precisely what Psalm 2 teaches. On the very DAY that God “begat” His “only-begotten Son,” He communicated to Him His future role as “God” on Mount Zion in His future Kingdom. Mr. Buzzard’s mistake was eliminating the very thing that the Bible plainly states in the above Psalm. There are two Persons rightly called “God” in the Old Testament Scriptures, something well-known to John’s readers, both from the Psalm itself and from Paul’s quote of it in Hebrews! The One who spoke face to face with the patriarchs was “God” to them because He was the representative of the invisible “God.”<sup>23</sup>

In addition, John wrote in verse 18 that no man has seen God at any time, and that the Son has always been His intermediary and spokesman. Thus, when Moses wrote that “God” walked in Eden and communicated face to face with Adam, it was not “God” the Sovereign of all creation, but the one who was known to Adam face to face as “God.” Since John wrote that “Logos was God,” he meant that Logos appeared as “God” whenever the Scriptures say that “God” appeared to someone face to face as the Agent of His God.

By imposing his own (false) presupposition (that two distinct Persons cannot both be called by the title, “God” especially in the same context), Anthony Buzzard has eliminated what is plainly true and demonstrable. After eliminating the truth, he was forced to adopt an interpretation that is grammatically impossible – taking “God” in John 1:1 as an adjective instead of a personal noun. Unfortunately, he seems convincing to the English reader who is not capable of checking his interpretation and translation against the Greek text. This is in large part how Biblical Unitarianism is maintained and is sometimes successfully in convincing Trinitarians.

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<sup>20</sup> Col. 1:15 LGV

<sup>21</sup> Col. 1:18 LGV

<sup>22</sup> Rev. 3:14 LGV

<sup>23</sup> Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17; 1 Tim. 6:16; Heb. 11:27

### Proof from the Grammar and Syntax of Verses 10-12

Much of the debate concerning John 1 centers on the masculine personal pronouns (He, Him). Unitarians make much of the fact that these pronouns are required to be masculine simply because the noun “logos” is grammatically masculine. In Greek, a pronoun must match the number and gender of its referent. Therefore, if “logos” is not a proper noun (the name or title of a person), but is actually a non-personal, abstract thing, the required masculine pronouns should be understood in English as “it” rather than “Him.” While this is technically true, the opposite is also true. That is, if Logos was intended to be a proper noun, understood as a name or title of a Person (as the clause “*and Logos was God*” absolutely demands since “God” is a personal noun), then the masculine personal pronouns should properly be understood in English as “He / Him / His” and be translated that way. Therefore, the Unitarian argument regarding how to translate the pronouns is a logical fallacy, a red herring.

To settle this issue further, we need only consider verses 10-12.

*John 1:10-12*

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

There can be no doubt that all of the underlined pronouns (or third person verbs) refer to the same antecedent. Secondly, the same entity called “Logos” in verses 1-3 **must be the referent**. This is necessary because what was attributed to Logos in verse 3 (the Agent of the creation of all things) is here attributed to the one referred to by the masculine personal pronouns (He / Him / His). The clause, ὁ κόσμος δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (*the world was made through Him – vs. 10*), uses the third person masculine pronoun αὐτοῦ (Him). John wrote in verse 3 “*All things were made through Him (Logos), and without Him nothing was made that was made.*” The word “through” in both passages is the preposition διὰ (dia) in Greek. When this preposition takes an object in the genitive case it points to something accomplished through employing another as an agent.<sup>24</sup> Here is the following illustration of this, which has the same preposition, Jesus as the object, and God as the source.

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<sup>24</sup> Wallace, p. 368

*Acts 2:22 NKJV*

*22 “Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which **God did through Him** in your midst, as you yourselves also know*

The words translated “through Him” are δι’ αὐτοῦ, exactly the same as in the statement, “All things were made **through Him**” (Jn. 1:3) and “the world was made through Him” (Jn. 1:10), who is the same one in whose name we must believe (vs. 10-12). Was Jesus Himself present when God did all those miracles “through Him” as Peter declared? So too was the Word (Logos) present with God, who is called “God” because He has always been the “face of God” and the “image of God” to mankind.

Therefore, since nothing was made without employing “Logos” being present as God’s personal agent (vs. 3), and since verse 10 says that the world was made through “through Him,” the masculine personal pronoun αὐτοῦ (Him) in verse 10 **must refer to Logos** since He is the one previously said to be the agent of all created things in verse 3. Notice that the masculine personal pronouns (and third person verbs) continue to refer to the same referent (antecedent) throughout verses 10-12.

If we were to replace the pronouns that absolutely refer back to Logos with the name “Logos,” this is how the text would read. This is the correct sense.

*John 1:1-3,10-12*

*1 In the beginning was Logos, and Logos was with God, and Logos was God.*

*2 Logos was in the beginning with God.*

*3 **All things originated through Logos**, and without Logos, nothing originated which has originated. ...*

*10 Logos was in the world, and **the world originated through Logos** [see vs. 3], and the world did not know Logos.*

*11 Logos came to Logos’ own [things – neuter], and Logos’ own [people – masculine] did not receive Logos.*

*12 But as many as received Logos, to them Logos gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in **the name of Logos**.*

Now, consider the difficulties that emerge if we take the personal pronouns to refer to God’s master “Plan,” an abstract thing, as in Mr. Buzzard’s Unitarianism.

*John 1:10-12*

*10 The Plan was in the world, and the world was made through the Plan, and the world did not know the Plan.*

11 *The Plan came to the Plan’s own [things – neuter], and the Plan’s own [people – masculine] did not receive the Plan.*

12 *But as many as received the Plan, to them the Plan gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in the Plan’s name:*

So if Mr. Buzzard is correct, then people can only be saved by believing in the name of the “Plan.” Yet this is absurd for the following reasons: The term ἴδια (“own {things}”) indicates the things that are owned by this “Plan.” But can an abstract thing own anything? His “own things” refers to what was created through and promised to the “only-begotten Son.”<sup>25</sup> An abstract “plan” cannot have ownership of anything. Only actual persons can have ownership. “*He came to His own things*” is the correct translation. Likewise, οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν (His “own people” {lit. “the own people of Himself”}) indicates a people that were His by ownership. This clearly refers to Psalm 2, “*the nations as Your inheritance,*” of the Son! How can a “plan” own anything, never-mind own a class of people? Finally, the children of God are said to be those who “believe in the Plan’s name!” What name would that be? According to Peter, “*there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved,*”<sup>26</sup> and that is Jesus Christ!

Here is John’s own answer regarding what “name” those who are saved have believed: “*He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and His name is called Logos of God.*”<sup>27</sup> “Logos” is clearly a personal name or title for Jesus Christ by John’s own statement!

In an attempt to sidestep the obvious and essential connection of the masculine personal pronouns in verses 10-12 to “Logos” in verse 1, Anthony Buzzard offered his own translation which blatantly alters the text of John’s Gospel by creating a NEW antecedent for the masculine personal pronouns – the “Light himself.” Here is his translation of verses 6-10.

*“6 There came on the scene of history a man commissioned by God. His name was John. 7 This man came as a witness [a preacher of the Gospel of the Kingdom, Matt. 3:2] so that he might bear witness to the light and that everyone might believe through him. 8 He was not the Light himself, but he witnessed concerning the light. 9 This was the genuine light which enlightens every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world and the world came into existence through him, and the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own land and his own people did not accept him. 12 As many, however, as did*

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<sup>25</sup> Psalm 2:7-8

<sup>26</sup> Acts 4:12

<sup>27</sup> Rev. 19:13

*accept him, to these he gave the right to become children of God — namely the ones believing in his Gospel revelation, his religion.”<sup>28</sup>*

Mr. Buzzard has taken a non-personal, neuter noun (“light”) and turned it into a Person – Jesus. Notice that he capitalized “Light” in the underlined clause above, making it a proper noun (a name of a person), but did not capitalize “light” the other three times it appears in verses 7-9. This shows that he understood these other three occurrences to refer to “light” as something other than a person. John consistently used “light” as a metaphor for the revelation of the knowledge of God brought into the world by His Son. And this meaning can be found right in this very passage. John wrote in vs. 3 that life was in Logos, and this life **within Logos** was *“the light of men.”* Thus “light” was within Christ, not that “Light” is a proper name for Him. Notice also Jesus’ own words in John 3:19: *“And this is the condemnation, that light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”* It is quite clear that John consistently used “light” as a metaphor for the revealed knowledge of God, and never as a proper name.<sup>29</sup> It is nowhere capitalized (as a proper name) anywhere in the common English translations. Mr. Buzzard’s intent was apparently to introduce the human Jesus into the text in verse 8 in order to create an antecedent other than Logos for the masculine pronouns in verses 10-12. He accomplished this by capitalizing “Light” once **and adding the masculine personal pronoun, “himself.”** But he did not capitalize the other three occurrences of “light” because he was well aware that the word “light” in Greek is a neuter noun, not a masculine one. Therefore, the masculine personal pronouns in vss. 10-12 (He, Him) **cannot refer to “light” which is neuter** since in Greek the pronouns must agree in gender and number with their antecedent or referent. Only by adding to what the Greek says, introducing a different antecedent for the personal pronouns (He, Him) in vss. 10-12, could Mr. Buzzard alter the meaning of what John wrote for the English reader. But this does little to disguise the absurdity of this understanding of the Greek text.

The creation is attributed to “Logos” (vs. 3) as God’s agent, and also to Mr. Buzzard’s *“the Light Himself”* (whom he attempts to introduce as the human Jesus) as God’s agent in verse 10, using identical language!

Verse 3: All things δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (through Him originated)

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<sup>28</sup> Anthony Buzzard’s translation of John’s Gospel: <http://www.focusonthekingdom.org/John.htm>

<sup>29</sup> John 8:12 does not use “light” as a proper name for Jesus, but rather as a metaphor that is also applied to His disciples (Matt. 5:14). There are many such metaphors in John’s Gospel, such as “I am the bread of life” (John 6:35,48); “I am the door of the sheep” (John 10:7); “I am the resurrection and the life” (John 11:25); “I am the way, the truth and the life” (John 14:6); “I am the true vine” (John 15:1); none of which are proper names, but all are metaphors.

Verse 10: The world δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (through Him originated)

Thus, the same person in verse 1 is also identified in verses 10-12 by His critical part in creation using identical language! Mr. Buzzard’s translation implies that “Him” in verse 3 is not the same “Him” in verse 10, yet the language is identical, and the personal pronouns absolutely demand it! How could the world originate through a mere Man Jesus if He was not the same person present at creation?

Mr. Buzzard has misrepresented John’s Gospel in a way that might be acceptable English grammar, but rides roughshod over the Greek grammar. By capitalizing the word “Light” and adding the masculine pronoun “Himself,” Mr. Buzzard has made “Light” a proper name of a person (the human Jesus). By then adding “Himself” (a masculine term) he provided the means to make the masculine personal pronouns that follow (He, Him, His) refer to his fabricated new antecedent so that these personal pronouns need not point back to Logos. Instead they now all point back to “the Light Himself” inserted by Mr. Buzzard. It is one thing for an interpreter of the Scriptures to insert his preconceived ideas into his explanation of the text. It is quite another thing for him to significantly alter the text itself in order to make it appear that his interpretation is actually what the Apostle wrote. This kind of manipulation of the text ought to make one quake in fear of the judgment expressed for this very activity in John’s Revelation.<sup>30</sup>

But again, the masculine personal pronouns cannot have the word “light” as their antecedent in the Greek text because all third person pronouns must agree in number and gender with their antecedent. This is because a third-person pronoun’s *“gender and number are determined by its antecedent.”*<sup>31</sup> The word “light” φωτός (photos) is neuter in gender. But the pronouns in verses 10-12 are all masculine. But even if John had intended to portray “light” as a name or title for Jesus, he would be required by Greek grammar to put the pronouns in the neuter gender unless he had actually added the masculine word “himself” after “light” in order to provide a grammatically correct antecedent for the masculine pronouns that follow.

Furthermore, all throughout John’s Gospel, “light” is a metaphor for God’s revelation. It is never the proper name or title for Jesus.<sup>32</sup> While it is true that Jesus was the source of “light” (God’s revelation), He was not literally the “light.” Even in this immediate context it is clear that “light” cannot be referring to a person.

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<sup>30</sup> Rev. 22:18

<sup>31</sup> Mounce, William D., Basics of Biblical Greek, p. 101

<sup>32</sup> John 3:19-21

4 *In Him* was life, and the life was ***the light of men***.

5 And ***the light shines*** in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend ***it***.

“In Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ - masculine) must refer to Logos. “Light” was equated with “life,” which was said to be “in Him” (Logos). Notice in verse 5 that the pronoun “it” is neuter and has “light” as its antecedent. Again, the pronouns in verses 10-12 are all masculine. Nor can we claim that “light” is a metaphor for Jesus as in “*I am the light of the world.*”<sup>33</sup> The use of metaphor does not allow for the violation of the grammar. If John was referring to Jesus using “Light” as a proper noun, he then would have had to use all neuter pronouns in verses 10-12 or else he would have to add the word “Himself” in the Greek text as Mr. Buzzard has done in his English translation.

John’s Greek-speaking readers absolutely would NOT and could NOT understand John 1 as Unitarians attempt to explain it. It is utterly impossible. The only way to understand John’s prologue this way is to run roughshod over the grammar. Here is a correct translation of John’s prologue.

*John 1:1-18 LGV*<sup>34</sup>

1 *In the beginning was Logos, and Logos was with God, and Logos was God. 2 This one was in the beginning with God. 3 Everything originated through Him, and without Him nothing originated which has originated. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not take hold of it.*

6 *(A man arrived having been commissioned from God whose name was John. This one came for a witness, so that he should testify concerning the light 7 so that all may believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but [came] so that he should testify concerning the light, 9 that was the true light which enlightens every man coming into the world).*

10 *He was in the world, and the world originated through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came into His own [things], and His own [people] did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those believing unto the name of Him 13 who was Begotten, not out of bloods, nor out of the will of the flesh, nor out of the will of a man, but out of God. 14 And Logos became flesh, and sojourned among us, and we gazed upon His glory, glory as of the Only-Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.*

15 *(John testifies concerning Him, and has exclaimed, saying, “This was the one whom I said, ‘The one coming after me has originated before me,’ because He used to be before me”).*

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<sup>33</sup> John 8:12

<sup>34</sup> [www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV\\_John.pdf](http://www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV_John.pdf)

16 And out of the fullness of Him we have received, and grace for grace 17 (because the Law was given through Moses; [but] grace and truth originated through Jesus the Anointed). 18 No one has seen God at any time. The Only-Begotten Son, the one being unto the Father’s bosom, that one declared Him.

### John the Baptist’s Testimony to Jesus’ Origin before John was Born

In writing his Gospel, John often called witnesses to confirm the points he intended to make, especially quoting John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. In verse 15, John quoted John the Baptist in order to support his point about the preexistence of the Son as “Logos,” the agent of creation who “became flesh” as “the Only-begotten of the Father.”<sup>35</sup> John the Baptist said that Jesus “*has originated before me,*” and that Jesus “*used to be before me.*” Yet the synoptic Gospels record that John the Baptist’s mother was in her sixth month when Mary conceived.<sup>36</sup> Thus, John was six months older than Jesus in reference to human existence.

Let’s compare the LGV with Mr. Buzzard’s translation of John the Baptist’s words.

A. Buzzard: “The one coming after me has now moved ahead of me, because he always was my superior.”<sup>37</sup>

T. Warner: “The one coming after me has originated before me,’ because He used to be [exist] before me.”

The clause which I have translated “has originated before me” is ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν. The verb γέγονεν means “became,” having two possible nuances:

1. Something that came into existence for the first time, **originated**, as in vs. 3, “all things **originated** through Him.”
2. A transition from one state to another, as in vs. 14 “Logos **became** flesh.”

I have used the first possibility, but Mr. Buzzard has chosen the second possibility. Regarding the word ἔμπροσθέν which I translated “before” but Mr. Buzzard translated “ahead of,” either rendering is correct. However, notice John the Baptist’s further explanation using the same word: “I said, ‘I am not the Christ,’ but, ‘I have been sent **before** [ἔμπροσθεν] Him.”<sup>38</sup> That John did not mean “ahead of” in place or priority but rather in sequence is absolutely clear, otherwise this statement would indicate that John originally ranked higher than Jesus. Clearly, John’s meaning was that he preceded Jesus

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<sup>35</sup> Vs. 14

<sup>36</sup> Luke 1:26,36

<sup>37</sup> <http://www.focusonthekingdom.org/John.htm>

<sup>38</sup> John 3:28

in sequence as a forerunner to prepare the way before He arrived as prophesied by Malachi.<sup>39</sup> This was John’s further explanation about what he said in John 1:15. Therefore, ἔμπροσθέν must refer to “ahead of” or “before” **in sequence**, not in priority or rank.

The reason that most English translations render this clause differently than I have is because the translators were Trinitarians who do not believe that the Son of God had ANY “origin” in time. They also realized that John was older than Jesus. Therefore, translating this clause as referring to sequence would severely damage their Trinitarian presuppositions that Logos had no beginning or origin. So they were forced to take γέγονεν as “became” in the sense of transition rather than “originated.” However, when this bias is removed, the text reads very naturally as I have translated it with γέγονεν rendered “has originated” (perfect tense).

The last clause in verse 15 is πρῶτός μου ἦν “*He used to be before me.*” Mr. Buzzard has translated it “*he always was my superior.*” Yet in doing so, he has violated the grammar once again. The verb ἦν is the verb of being in the imperfect tense. The imperfect implies a situation in the past that used to exist over a period of time. It does not imply that the past situation was still current. Once again, Mr. Buzzard puts his own words in John’s mouth in order to change the meaning of what he actually wrote. Mr. Buzzard added the word “always” in order to lessen the problem for himself, making it appear that the situation described was timeless (contrary to the sense of the imperfect tense). He then takes πρῶτός to mean “superior” instead of “before” in sequence. Granted, “superior” is a possible interpretation. But the careful reader should notice that Mr. Buzzard’s translation creates a train wreck concerning the tenses of the two relevant verbs. If John the Baptist was saying that Jesus “*has now moved*” (perfect tense) into the superior position, how then can he say that He “*always was*” (imperfect tense) in the superior position? These two verb tenses are virtually opposite in force. The perfect tense refers to a present condition that is the result of a past action. But the imperfect tense implies a past situation that no longer exists! Thus, in Mr. Buzzard’s translation these two verbs collide with each other and turn John’s words into something unintelligible. Jesus could not “move ahead” (become superior in rank) in relation to John if He was “always” John’s “superior,” or more correctly, if He “used to be” John’s “superior.” Mr. Buzzard’s translation which attempts to deny the preexistence of Christ cannot be sustained in the Greek text of John’s prologue.

On the other hand, when we remove the Trinitarian bias against the Logos having an “origin” in time, and when we then translate this verse consistent with John’s usage of

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<sup>39</sup> Mal. 3:1

terminology, the LGV translation is perfectly accurate and natural. It is hard to escape the fact that John included the testimony of John the Baptist in order to support his thesis in this prologue, that Logos is Jesus and that He originated before John the Baptist because He was “*in the beginning with God.*” John simply called John the Baptist as a witness to this critical fact.

Finally, consider verse 18 which declares that no man has ever seen God. The words “at any time” cannot be limited to after Jesus’ birth in Bethlehem (as Unitarians try to limit them), but must go back to “*in the beginning.*” Consequently, John’s declaration that “*the only-begotten Son*” is the one who has made God known is set in juxtaposition to his preceding statement, that no one has seen God at any time (from the beginning). Consequently, the Son is the one who has made God known “*at any time*” (thus all time) which requires that we extend this all the way back to “*in the beginning.*” The Son, the “*only-begotten of the Father,*”<sup>40</sup> who is “*the first-produced of all creation,*”<sup>41</sup> and “*who is The Beginning,*”<sup>42</sup> and “*The Beginning of the creation of God,*”<sup>43</sup> is Logos who was “*in the beginning with God*” through whom all things were created.<sup>44</sup> We have therefore proven conclusively the following points:

1. Logos was indeed a second Person whom David acknowledged as “God.”
2. John tells us that Logos was a name or title for Jesus (Rev. 19:13)
3. The one in whose name we trust, who gives us the right to be called children of God, can grammatically only refer to the person called “Logos” in this context.
4. John the Baptist claimed that Jesus originated before him.
5. No one has ever seen the Father. The Son has been His personal emissary to mankind from “the beginning.”

Thus, all who are said to have seen God in the Old Testament have actually seen the Son as “God,” who is also called “*the Messenger of His Face*” (Isa. 63:9), “*the image of the invisible God,*” (Col. 1:15), and “*the brightness of His glory and the express image of His person*” (Heb. 1:3).

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<sup>40</sup> v. 14

<sup>41</sup> Col. 1:15 LGV

<sup>42</sup> Col. 1:18 LGV

<sup>43</sup> Rev. 3:14 LGV

<sup>44</sup> Col. 1:15-18 LGV