

The Gospel of John

WHEN ALL THINGS BEGAN,
the *Logos*¹ already was.

The *Logos* dwelt with God,
and what God was, the *Logos* was.

The *Logos*, then, was with God at the beginning,
and through him all things came to be;
no single thing was created without him.

All that came to be was alive with his life,²
and that life was the light of men.

The light shines on in the dark,
and the darkness has never mastered it.

There appeared a man named John, sent from God;
he came as a witness to testify to the light,
that all might become believers through him.

He was not himself the light;
he came to bear witness to the light.

The real light which enlightens every man
was even then coming into the world.³

He was in the world;⁴
 but the world, though it owed its being to him,
 did not recognize him.
 He entered his own realm,
 and his own would not receive him.
 But to all who did receive him,
 to those who have yielded him their allegiance,
 he gave the right to become children of God,
 not born of any human stock,
 or by the fleshly desire of a human father, but
 the offspring of God himself.
 So the *Logos* became flesh;
 he came to dwell among us,
 and we saw his glory,
 such glory as befits the Father's only Son,
 full of grace and truth.
 Here is John's testimony to him: he cried aloud,
 "This is the man I meant when I said,
 'He comes after me, but takes rank before me';
 for before I was born, he already was."
 Out of his full store we have all received grace
 upon grace;
 for while the Law was given through Moses,
 grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.
 No one has ever seen God;
 but God's only Son,
 he who is nearest to the Father's heart,
 he has made him known.⁵

FOOTNOTES

1. *Logos* is a Greek philosophical term that has no exact English translation. It means "ground", "plea", "opinion", "expectation", "word", "speech", "account", "reason", "proportion", and "discourse."
 - 1.1. *Heraclitus* (500 BCE): "a principle of order and knowledge."
 - 1.2. *Aristotle* (350 BCE): "reasoned discourse" or "the argument" in the field of rhetoric.
 - 1.3. *Stoicism* (300 BCE-300 CE): "active reason pervading and animating the Universe"; as the seminal *logos*: "the law of generation in the Universe, which is the principle of the active reason working in inanimate matter." A material conception, identified with God or Nature, possessed in portion by all humans.
 - 1.4. *Philo the Jewish philosopher* (30 CE): "the highest intermediary divine being or demiurge," necessary to bridge the gap between perfect God and imperfect material (Platonic distinction). "The first-born of God," "the *Logos* of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and prevents them from being dissolved and separated."
 - 1.5. *Plotinus* (250 CE): Neoplatonist who worked with a non-Christian hierarchical trinity concept that consisted of "The One", the "Spirit", and "Soul"—the One pours down reason (*logos*) from above and the Soul responds with love (*eros*) from below. Many Christian doctrines are indebted to neoplatonism through *Saint Augustine of Hippo* (400 CE).
2. *or* no single created thing came into being without him. There was life in him ...
3. *or* The light was in being, light absolute, enlightening every man born unto the world.
4. *or* The Word, then, was in the world.
5. *some witnesses read* but the only one, the one nearest to the Father's heart, has made him known; *others read* but the only one, himself God, the nearest to the Father's heart, has made him known.

Translation and notes from the New English Bible

