

That You May Continue to Believe...



AN EXPOSITION OF THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

Prologue to the Gospel of John John 1:1-18

Last week in our introduction, I repeated comments from Calvin, Luther and others that spoke to the fact that John is quite different than the other three gospels. I thought that prior to digging into the text this morning, I might flesh out for you exactly what Calvin, Luther and others meant when they spoke of John as being “**different**”.

Let me remind you of one of Luther’s quotes:

John writes very little about the works of Christ, but very much about His preaching, while the other Evangelists write much of His works and little of His preaching; therefore John’s Gospel is the one, tender, true chief Gospel, far, far to be preferred to the other three and placed high above them.¹

Now my doctrine of Scripture won’t allow me to say that. But I understand exactly what Luther means. What he meant is this. John’s Gospel is more theologically developed. In John, there is less emphasis on the miracles of Jesus than on His words. That is not to say that there are no miracles in John. The miracles that are included in John’s Gospel are some of the most extraordinary

ever performed by our Lord. But John is not concerned with the miracles in and of themselves. He is really concerned with what the miracles mean.² John doesn't "pile up" miracles like the other gospels. Instead, John focuses on the quality and depth of the particular miracles he does use. Let me see if I can illustrate what I mean.

In Matthew's Gospel, there are 28 chapters and 22 miracles not counting the resurrection. That means there is one miracle every 1.2 chapters. Luke's Gospel is similar. It has 24 chapters and includes 21 miracles. That equals one miracle every 1.1 chapters. Mark's Gospel is the shortest with only 16 chapters but it contains 22 miracles, which means there is more than one miracle per chapter. John's Gospel on the other hand has 21 chapters and only 8 miracles, which means there is only one miracle every 2.6 chapters. Another way to say is that Matthew and Luke have twice as many miracles per chapter as John and Mark has three times as many miracles as John.³

Now, I don't know what conclusion you draw from that information but it tells me that John had a different purpose in mind than the other Gospel writers.⁴ Part of that purpose can be further explained by comparing the amount of space given to a particular miracle and the amount of space given to the speech or proclamation associated with that miracle.⁵ Let me explain what I mean.

In John 6:1-13, the Apostle John records the story of the Feeding of the 5,000. In telling the story John uses 13 verses. After telling the story of the feeding of the 5,000 Jesus explains the significance of what happened in a discourse that takes 43 verses. It's a discourse you know well. In fact, it is often called the "**Bread of Life**" discourse. It includes memorable lines like,

^{NIV} **John 6:33...**For the **bread** of God is he who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world."

^{NIV} **John 6:35...**Then Jesus declared, "**I am the bread of life. He who comes to me will never go hungry, and he who believes in me will never be thirsty.**"

^{NIV} **John 6:48..."I am the bread of life."**

^{NIV} **John 6:51..."I am the living bread that came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever. This bread is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world."**

Now in contrast, Matthew relates the same miracle in only seven verses and makes no comment as to its significance.⁶ Mark tells the same story in eleven verses without interpreting it.⁷ Luke doesn't interpret the miracle either and in fact only takes six verses to relate the whole story.⁸

Now let me be clear about this. That does not mean John got it right and the other gospel writers got it wrong. But it does certainly mean that John had a different purpose than the other writers.

John does same kind of thing in chapters 8 and 9. In chapter 8:12 Jesus begins a discourse in which he says...

^{NIV} **John 8:12..."I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life."**

That discourse goes on for some 53 verses where it finally ends with Jesus saying...

^{NIV} **John 9:5..."While I am in the world, I am the light of the world."**

When the discourse ends, Jesus performs a miracle that vindicates everything He said in the discourse. You will know, of course, that that miracle was the healing of the man born blind. It is a miracle that actually takes only two verses to recount. Immediately following that miracle, however, there arises a conflict where the significance of the miracle turns into a running debate between the man born blind, his parents and the Pharisees and that debate goes on for another 30 verses.

Now, here's the point I want to make. In John, the miracles are important but they are important because they attest to the words of Jesus. They affirm what He says. The miracles are signs of authentication.⁹

Somewhat related to that is the overall structure of the book. Most scholars see the book as being made up of four parts:

The Prologue (introduction)...John 1:1-18

The Book of Signs...John 1:19-12:50

The Book of Glory...John 13:1-20:31¹⁰

The Epilogue (conclusion)...John 21:1-25

Obviously, the Book of Signs is the portion of the gospel that contains most of Jesus' miracles.¹¹ Some scholars further divide what we are going to call the Book of Glory into two parts: (1) the Upper Room Discourse 13:1-17:26 and (2) the Passion Narrative 18:1-20:31¹². But I think for our purposes I want to keep the simpler arrangement.

Now, let me relate just two other facts. First, let me explain how the miracles are spread over the Gospel of John. The prologue contains no miracles. The Book of Sign contains 7 miracles and at the end of the Book of Signs there is a conclusion by the author. The Book of Glory contains no miracles (except the resurrection) and at the end of the Book of Glory there is a conclusion by the author. The Epilogue contains only one miracle (the draught of fishes).

Secondly, of the eight miracles that John records, 5 are completely unique to John.¹³ That is, they occur nowhere in the other Gospels. We'll talk more about that as we get into the passages where the signs occur. **My point and this bears repeating is that in John the miracles are important but they are important because they attest to the words of Jesus.**

Now having said all that, let's turn finally to the Prologue of the Gospel of John, John 1:1-18. Follow along with me as I read it

^{NIV} **John 1:1**...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶ There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹ The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹² Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God. ¹⁴ The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵ John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, "This was

he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.'" ¹⁶ From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Now, I want to talk at length about these verses but even before I get into any detail I want to remind you once again of what is meant by chiasm or chiastic structure. Essentially what it means is that parts of a piece of literature or put together in such a way the order of the first part is reversed in the second part.

chiasmus [ky-AZ-mus] (plural -mi), a figure of speech by which the order of the terms in the first of two parallel clauses is reversed in the second.¹⁴

Perhaps the best way to define a chiasm
is to show you one in the flesh;
once you've see one standing proud and bare,
you can define it as you wish.

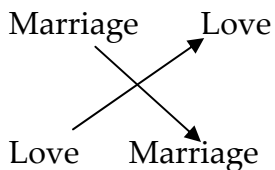
Here's one by Ben Franklin:

**"When I was young and had time to read
I had no books.
Now that I am old and have the books,
I have no time to read."**¹⁵

Do you see how the ideas in the first two phrases are repeated in the last two phrases but reversed? They go like this....read:**books**; **books**:read. Or you could say they go like this...**time-read**: have no books; have books: **no time-read**. Don't spend an inordinate amount of time trying to figure it all out. The point I am trying to get you to see is that what order of the words in the first half is reversed in the second half. Do you see that? Here's another one by Franklin:

Where there is a marriage
without love
there will be a love
without marriage.¹⁶

Do you see the reversal of the words? The order goes marriage: love; love: marriage. Now the reason its called a chiasm is pretty simple. In Greek the letter c looks like an English X. When you draw these parts out on a piece of paper and connect them they also make an X or a c like this.



That's the whole idea in a nutshell.

Now the point I want to make is this. In New Testament times, this was a fairly common literary device. It was used because it helped people to be able to remember lengthy stories or poems. We don't use this method much any more and when we do it sounds wonderfully clever and poetic. I am thinking in particular about Kennedy's famous inauguration speech. I'm sure you know the one that I mean.

And so, my fellow Americans,
ask not what your country can do for you;
ask what you can do for your country.¹⁷

Anyway, I am making the point that in New Testament times this was a fairly common literary device. In fact, it was often used to make an emphatic point,

especially if the chiasm had an odd number of elements in it. You see when that happened whatever was in the center of the chiasm reflected the emphasis of the chiasm. Let me illustrate what I mean by messing with Franklin's quote a little bit.

Where there is a marriage
without love
you had better beware or...
there will be a love
without marriage.¹⁸

Now you can see from that, that the emphasis winds up in the middle and is the point that catches you attention both because of its location and because it is not parallel to anything else in the passage. This particular kind of five-member chiastic structure¹⁹ (or perhaps seven-member chiastic structure) is the kind that is used throughout the Gospel of John and when you find chiasm in John if you go to the center of the chiasm you will find the emphasis that John was trying to make in that section.

What I want to do for the next few minutes is work through the structure of John 1:1-18 in a way that will help you begin to see the chiastic structure of the section and also help you to see the principal emphasis of the prologue. Now let's look at the text together. In fact let's look at the first five verses together.

^{NIV} **John 1:1**...In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ² He was with God in the beginning. ³ Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴ In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

Now let's stop right there.

Who's the "word"?

Of course, the Word²⁰ is Jesus.

What does the author say about Jesus?

He says the Word was pre-existent.

That means that the Word has always been.

He was in the beginning with God.

What else do you see? Obviously, there is something regarding his identification.

That is, it tells you who he was. John also includes the fact that the Word was with God but we'll come back to term that is used there a minute.

Now, let's see what we have so far.

He was pre-existent.

He was God.²¹

He was with the Father, in a relationship, a clear Trinitarian idea, in that He is not the Father but He is God.

Looking further, we see that the Word reveals; that is, He came to communicate.

Now, look at verse 3.

NIV John 1:3...Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.

What does it contain?

It contains the idea of “creatorship”. The Word is set forth as the creator. The verse tells us that things came to be through Him, through the Word. But it’s really even more emphatic than that isn’t it? It is not just that He created something. Rather, it’s that He created all that is and that nothing that has been created was created apart from Him.

When we look at verses 4 and 5, we find the result of His “coming” and His “creating”. Do you see it there? It says that when He came He was not comprehended? In other words, He came but they (whoever they are) didn’t understand the thrust of who He was. The whole section is characterized by the theme of “incomprehension”. The darkness did not comprehend Him.

^{NIV} **John 1:4**...In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵ The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.

So, if I really wanted to summarize everything in this section, would it be fair for me to do so by saying something like, **“Through the pre-existent Word, the one with God, everything came to be and yet He was not comprehended.**

Now I want you to skip down to verse 16-18.

^{NIV} **John 1:16**... From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷ For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸ No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

Now you ought to notice that in this section it starts off by saying that we all have received something.

What was it we received?

We received one blessing after another.

Now this is parallel to something men received back in verses 4 and 5.

What was it they received?

They received light.

But did they get it there?

No, of course, they did not.

But here in 16-18, did we get it? Did we get the blessing? Did we receive it?

Yes, we did.

Now what exactly was it we received? Look at verse 17. It says there that something came to be through Jesus Christ. Doesn't that sound familiar? What was it that came to be through Him?

Grace and truth came to be through Him.

Now look at verse 18. What does Jesus do concerning the Father?

He makes Him known.

Think back to the verse 5 verses. What do words do?

They make things known.

Now, one last question, **"Where was Jesus?"** He was in the bosom of the Father.

Does that sound like a relationship to you?

How did John describe that relationship in verses 1-5? He said He was with the Father. Which sounds more endearing to you **“with”** or **“in the bosom?”**

Let me see now. Could we summarize what we know from verses 16-18 this way? **“Through the pre-existent Word, the one with God, grace and truth came to be and we did receive it.**

Now let’s look at verses 6-8.

^{NIV} **John 1:6...**There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷ He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸ He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.

Who is introduced there?

Obviously, it is John the Baptist who is introduced.

What does it say about him?

It says he’s a witness.

How does it clarify his role?

It clarifies his role by saying, **“He was not the light.”**

Now would be fair for me to summarize this part as **“John came as a witness”**?

All right let’s look down at verse 15.

^{NIV} **John 1:15...**John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, **“This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’”**

What does it say about John there? It says, **“He’s a witness.”** What does he witness to? He witnesses to Jesus’ preeminence.

Now would be fair for me to summarize this part as **“John came as a witness”**?

Now, do you see how this is working? Do you see how the ideas match up? It may not be exact word for word linkage, although in Greek it is much closer than it is in English. Still its easy to see when someone points it out don’t you think?

Now let’s do the two hardest sections. Let’s look first at verses 9-11.

^{NIV} **John 1:9**...The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰ He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹ He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him.

I want to do this quickly.

Where was this **“true light”** coming to?

It was coming to the world.

What was unique about His coming into the world?

It is unusual because He made the world but the world didn’t even recognize Him.

How did it turn out?

They rejected Him.

Now would be fair for me to summarize this part as **“The true light was rejected”**?

Now look at verse 14.

^{NIV} **John 1:14**...The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.

What does it say about the word?

Did He come into the world?

Yes, He made His dwelling among us.

How did that turn out?

We beheld His glory.

Is that accepting or rejecting?

It is clearly an allusion to accepting Him.

Now would be fair for me to summarize this part as **“The true light was accepted”**?

Where am I getting the idea of light?

I am getting it from the word **“glory”**.

Finally let's look at the centerpiece of the chiasm, verses 12-13.²²

^{NIV} **John 1:12...** Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God-- ¹³ children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.

What happens to those that receive Him?

He gives the right or the authority to become the children of God.

How does someone receive Him?

They believe in Him.

When they believe in Him what happens?

They are born of God.

Is it an issue of bloodline? **No.**

Is it an issue of human desire or lust? **No.**

Is it determined by the desire or will of men? **No.**

Brothers and sisters, these verses make up *the* point of the prologue and *the* point of the whole book and it is a great mystery. He came to His own and they didn't receive Him but as many as did receive Him to them He gave the right or He gave the power to become the children of God, even to those who believe on His name.

That is the crux of the matter, right there. That is the issue with which these people struggled. They had made a profession in Jesus but that was not an easy thing to do. What I suggested last week and what I'm going to suggest in our study is that the Gospel of John Jews were being tempted in the face of intense pressure, to forsake their Christian profession and return to the synagogue. John

addressed his gospel to those who were wrestling with that temptation in order to encourage them to stay true to their profession of faith in Christ. Now think about it, **“Is it easy for you to be a believer?”**

Of course, it's not easy to believe. Have you ever seen anybody die and come back to life? Did you ever see it personally? Do you just accept that because someone told you that is what happened? Doesn't it seem rationally a little hard to swallow? Now back up just a bit. What if it was based on someone you have heard stories about? It is not easy to believe. What if your profession of belief in this person who claimed to be the Son of God was really tested? I mean think about it have you ever met anyone who claimed to be the Son of God?²³

In John there was a group of people who had accepted this incredible claim and who had believed that Jesus was the Son of God. They believed that he had been crucified and had died and was buried and had risen again but they were facing tremendous pressure both from the religious community within their synagogue's and from their families and from their friends and that is tough. That is tough to deal with.

I remember when I was in Bible College, there was a young man who was Jewish. Somewhere along the way, the Spirit of God had regenerated his heart and turned him to faith in Jesus. Now this young man was an ardent evangelist; he was a tremendous scholar in that circle. You would have thought that his parents would have been proud of him for his academic and spiritual zeal. But you know what, they weren't. They cast him out of their home. They cast him out of their family. They actually held a funeral service for him. As far as they were concerned, he was dead...dead and gone.

Brothers and sisters that is the kind of pressure the first readers of John's Gospel were under. So John wrote to encourage them that those who believed by reminding them that they were in fact the children of God. He was telling them, **"Don't forget who you are in the midst of this."** He was offering them great comfort, great consolation, great challenge. He was saying, **"Don't give up."**

In fact, if you look right prior to verse 11 he reminded them of the fact that others had given up. There he said, **"They rejected Him."** But here he reminds them concerning what happened to those that believed, **"They became the children of God."**

You see the prologue foreshadows what is going to happen in the Gospel of John. Remember, I told you that the book was made up of four parts: the Prologue, the Epilogue, the Book of Signs and the Book of Glory. Do you remember that I told you at the end of the Book of Signs there was a conclusion? It's in John 12:37.

^{NIV} **John 12:37**...Even after Jesus had done all these miraculous signs in their presence, they still would not believe in him.

But the Book of Glory also had summary to it. It occurs in John 20:31.

^{NIV} **John 20:31**...But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.

Do you see how that makes the structure of the book exactly the same as that of the Prologue? You see John is trying to encourage these dear brothers and sisters, who are under so much pressure, to keep on believing. He does that through the

structure of the book but he also does that through the use of vocabulary. It seems to me that there are two great concepts here in the prologue and they are referred to by using two very common words in an uncommon way. The words are translated by **“was”** and by **“become”**, in Greek they are **“h=n”** and **“evge,neto”**.

The concepts they represent are the ideas of **“being”** and **“becoming”**. They are used repeatedly. The mystery that John discusses is that which was in the realm of **“was”** or **“being”** crossed over into the realm of **“becoming”** and what was the result of that remarkable event.²⁴

Let's do it like this.

John is going to use the word **“was”** to represent one realm.²⁵ It is the realm of **“was”** or of **“being”**. It is not the realm of the **“uncreated.”** It is the realm of the things that have always been. There is, of course, the other realm of which certain things belong to the realm of **“becoming”**.²⁶ Now there is great gulf between these two things. What are some of the things that were in the realm of **“was”**?

Look at the first verse.

Notice it is of this realm. He was. It is used three times in the first verse and it describes three different aspects.

In the beginning was the word (existence)

And the word was with God (relationship)

And the word was God (attribute)

“**Was**” was used three times in the first verse to describe the “**Word**”, that is Jesus Christ. In verse 4, there is a summary.

The same was in the beginning with God.

Now what belongs to the realm of becoming? Things that once were not but have become. Look at verse 3.

Through him all things were made. (the idea of became or created)
without him nothing was made (became)
that has been made (became)

The same idea is also used in verse 6.

There came a man who was sent from God...

Literally it could be translated, “**There became a man from God.**” So John is a human witness that became. Jesus is in stark contrast to John. Jesus is not of the “**becoming**” realm. He is of the realm of the “**was**”. But that is the great mystery that is being discussed in this chapter and that is linked to the chiastic centerpiece (12-13). The key words of vocabulary that are used to talk about the one who was in the category of the “**was**”, the Word, crossed over to become a part of this realm here. How is that possible? How can He who always was. How can He who was in the beginning before there even was a beginning have a beginning? Do you see that? Isn’t that incredible? It is a mystery. So John talks about this mystery using these words.

So let’s work our way through the text a little bit.

You find in verse 6, the word **“become.”**

In verse 8, He uses the word **“was”** in a negative context.

He was not the light. In other words, John is not of the **“was”** realm. John is of the **“become”** realm. It’s the only time the word is used in reference to John and it is used negatively. He was not the light.

Now in verse 10, there is something unusual. You have both words occur in the same verse.

He was in the world. What happened? That which was of the realm of **“was”** has come into the world. He has **“become”**. Now if you look down through there it says that the world was made or **“became”** through Him.

Think about the mystery of what he has just said. **“He who ‘was’ that caused this to ‘become’ has ‘become’ a part of this.”** Do you see that? That is profound; it is a great mystery and he centerpieces it in verse 10 when he brings the two terms together.

Now the great mystery of all of this is that which **“was”** moved into the realm of the **“becoming”**. The mystery that he talks about here goes back up to that which was and he makes the statement all of a sudden, **“That which was has become a part of that which he made in verse...3.”** Now how did this occur? Well, go to verse 14. What does it say there? **“The word became flesh.”** Again, it’s the same idea. The Word, which always **“was”**, has **“become”** a part of the world that

“became” because he spoke it into existence. Can you get that? Can you get that?
I can’t?

But you know what? It is not terribly important that we get how this all occurred. What is important is that we get the point. The result of what occurred. The result is this...verses 12-13.

Now as many as received him, to them he gave the right to what...to become the children of God.

He uses the word for **“become”** and this is what he is saying by using the vocabulary this way.

That which **“was”** came into the realm of that which was **“becoming”** so that those of us who are part of the realm of **“becoming”** might be able to have a relationship with him that **“was”**. He uses the word become.

We became in creation, back up in verse 3. All things came into being through him. But that wasn’t good enough. In other words, the work that God did as Creator, that Jesus the Word did as Creator was good. But because of man’s sin and unbelief something else had to happen. His work was not finished. All things came into being through Him including us physically but here the Word, became a part of Creation.

He did not have to become a part of the creation to have the creation exist. He spoke the word and it occurred. But he came into the creation, the **“was”** into the **“becoming”**, in order to accomplish something greater than the physical

creation. He takes those of us who are part of this world and transforms us and we become something that is not natural to this realm. We become related to this realm of the “**was**” through Jesus Christ. All who believe have the power to “**become**” the children of God. That’s his point. And he very carefully weaves the vocabulary and the structure together to make this point. It is brilliantly done.

As you work your way through the rest of the text you begin to see the result. We become the children of God but there is something more than that. He uses a contrast in verse 17...

Grace and truth were realized, or became, through Jesus Christ. They came into existence. How? Through Jesus Christ in contrast to the law of Moses.

Do you see what has happened? Jesus, the Word, was and caused all things to become. Because of our relationship to Him we become children of God. Grace and truth are ours through Jesus Christ because He caused them to become. He caused them to exist. It is not just the physical creation, though that is an important point. It is grace and truth that exist and are knowable because of Jesus Christ. John concludes the section by explaining how that that which is incomprehensible became comprehensible.

^{NIV} **John 1:18**...No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known.

This extraordinary person, the Word, has come into the world that he created and though he was not recognized and was, in fact, rejected by the very one that should have received Him, He has provided for those that believe in Him the

right, the authority, the power to come into a relationship with the Him and with the Father who sent Him. When we are discouraged we turn to Him and Him alone because He has bridged the path to God.

¹ Martin Luther, *Works of Martin Luther with Introductions and Notes*, Volume 6. Preface to the New Testament taken from the 1522 Edition from, (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg Press), 443-4

² Marianne Meye Thompson, "John" in *A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible*, ed. Leland Ryken and Tremper Longman III (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishers, 1993), 412. She writes: "Interspersed throughout the gospel are various signs (miracles) that Jesus did (Brown; Dodd; Smalley; Wead). While the other gospels recount numerous miracles, John tells but a few. But precisely because they are few in number, the miracles become an even more important structural feature in John. Often the miracles in John are paired with a discourse in which Jesus expounds on the miracle, elaborating it in such a way that it becomes a symbolic pointer (hence, "sign") to who Jesus is."

³ It may be helpful to see how and what I counted as miraculous. Note the appendix, "Miracles in John".

⁴ C.K. Barrett, *The Gospel According to John: An Introduction with Notes and Commentary on the Greek Text*, (London: S.P.C.K, 1967), 62. "It would not be impossible for the casual reader of the synoptic gospels to pick out from them miracle narratives which he could regard simply as the work of a strolling magician.' It would be much more difficult to do this in the fourth gospel. With the miracles, as with other elements of the tradition, John has seized the Christological interpretation which is implicit in the Synoptics, clarified it, and stamped it upon the material in such a way that the reader is not allowed to escape it. The miracles of this gospel are a function of its Christology. Rightly to understand them is to apprehend Christ by faith (10.38; 14.11)."

⁵ B.L. Blackburn, "Miracles and Miracle Stories" in *Dictionary of Jesus and the Gospels: A Compendium of Contemporary Biblical Scholarship*, ed. Joel B. Green, Scot McKnight and I. Howard Marshall (Downers Grove, Illinois: Intervarsity Press, 1992) 555. Blackburn's article is very helpful. He notes both the number of miracles (though his count is different than mine) and the importance related to the different number of miracles cited.

⁶ **Matthew 14:14**...When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them and healed their sick. ¹⁵ As evening approached, the disciples came to him and said, "This is a remote place, and it's already getting late. Send the crowds away, so they can go to the villages and buy themselves some food." ¹⁶ Jesus replied, "They do not need to go away. You give them something to eat." ¹⁷ "We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish," they answered. ¹⁸ "Bring them here to me," he said. ¹⁹ And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people. ²⁰ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over. ²¹ The number of those who ate was about five thousand men, besides women and children

⁷ **Mark 6:34**...When Jesus landed and saw a large crowd, he had compassion on them, because they were like sheep without a shepherd. So he began teaching them many things. ³⁵ By this time it was late in the day, so his disciples came to him. "This is a remote place," they said, "and it's already very late. ³⁶ Send the people away so they can go to the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat." ³⁷ But he answered, "You give them something to eat." They said to him, "That would take eight months of a man's wages! Are we to go and spend that much on bread and give it to them to eat?" ³⁸ "How many loaves do you have?" he asked. "Go and see." When they found out, they said, "Five-- and two fish." ³⁹ Then Jesus directed them to have all the people sit down in groups on the green grass. ⁴⁰ So they sat down in groups of hundreds and fifties. ⁴¹ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to his disciples to set before the people. He also divided the two fish among them all. ⁴² They all ate and were satisfied, ⁴³ and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces of bread and fish. ⁴⁴ The number of the men who had eaten was five thousand.

⁸ **Luke 9:12**...Late in the afternoon the Twelve came to him and said, "Send the crowd away so they can go to the surrounding villages and countryside and find food and lodging, because we are in a remote place here." ¹³ He replied, "You give them something to eat." They answered, "We have only five loaves of bread and two fish-- unless we go and buy food for all this crowd." ¹⁴ (About five thousand men were there.) But he said to his disciples, "Have them sit down in groups of about fifty each." ¹⁵ The disciples did so, and everybody sat down. ¹⁶ Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke them. Then he gave them to the disciples to set before the people. ¹⁷ They all ate and were satisfied, and the disciples picked up twelve basketfuls of broken pieces that were left over.

⁹ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel*. (Cambridge University Press: Cambridge, 1998), 445. Of course, some scholars go way too far in their understanding of such an emphasis. C.H. Dodd for example does not seem to have any problem saying that the evangelist simply creatively reinterpreted historical events. My understanding is different. I would say that the Holy Spirit simply revealed to the evangelist the truth of what certain historical events meant. Perhaps, the best way for you to see the difference is to read Dodd's own words. "This use of freely composed speeches to elucidate the significance of events does not in itself impugn the historical character of the narrative in the Fourth Gospel, any more than in Thucydides or Tacitus. There is however good reason to suspect that in some cases and in some respects the narratives which provide the setting for such speeches may have been molded by the ideas which they are made to illustrate. We may perhaps express the evangelist's attitude to history in this way. He accepts without qualification the general tradition of the ministry, death and resurrection of Jesus, as it was expressed in the apostolic preaching, and entered into the earliest confessions of faith; and he is concerned to affirm with all emphasis the historical actuality of the facts which it transmitted. He has meditated deeply upon the meaning of the Gospel story, taken as a whole. He then turns back upon the details of the story, and seeks in each particular incident the meaning of the whole, expressing that meaning partly by the way in which he reports the facts, partly by the order in which they are placed, and partly through carefully composed discourses and dialogues."

In seeking to interpret the facts he records, the Fourth Evangelist is not necessarily exceeding the limits proper to history. For it is the function of the historian, as distinct from the chronicler, to expose the course of events as an intelligible process, in which the human spirit interacts with its environment; and that means, both to envisage events as arising (on the one side) out of human thoughts and motives, and to make perceptible and intelligible the influence they in turn exert on the thoughts and motives of men, through which fresh events are prepared.

¹⁰ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John*, AB 29 (Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1966), cxxxviii-cxxxix. As far as I can tell the phrase, “Book of Glory” was made popular by Raymond Brown. Brown is a catholic scholar attributed with writing what may be the best commentary available on John.

¹¹ Brown, cxxxix.

¹² Daniel B. Wallace, *The Gospel of John: Introduction, Argument, Outline*, (Taken from the <http://www.bible.org> article), 12.

¹³ Blackburn, 555. Blackburn says probably only four are unique.

¹⁴ J.A. Cuddon, *Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982), 138.

¹⁵ <http://www.chiasmus.com/mastersofchiasmus.shtml>. Taken from the section on Ben Franklin

¹⁶ Ibid

¹⁷ Ibid, See section on Kennedy.

¹⁸ My apologies to BF.

¹⁹ Peter Ellis, *The Genius of John*, (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1984), 10. Ellis’ book is absolutely stellar but like most really good books is out of print. I should add that while I adopt Ellis’ premise concerning the purpose of the Gospel of John many scholars do not. I should add that Ellis’ case is very convincing and it is a case built both upon structure and literary analysis.

²⁰ F.F. Bruce, *The Gospel & Epistles of John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing, 1983), 29. “There is a famous passage in Goethe’s *Faust* where Faust grapples with the translation of this clause, attempting to hit on the *mot juste* for *logos*, until at last he thinks he has found it: ‘Im Anfang war die Tat’ — ‘In the beginning was the deed, the action’. And while this is not the whole meaning, it is part of it. If we understand *logos* in this prologue as ‘word in action’ we may begin to do it justice.”

²¹ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary*, (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 33. “There is therefore no talk of subordination; the status of the *λογος* is one of equality with God: he was God. For it cannot be taken as meaning: he was a god, a divine being, as if *θεος* were a generic concept such as *ανθρωπος* or animal, so that there could be two divine beings, either in the naive

polytheistic sense, or in the sense of the Gnostic idea of emanation. This is clearly out of the question, because in the phrase *ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν* which both precedes and follows *καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* the word *θεός* is intended in its strict monotheistic sense; furthermore, what comes afterwards shows that all polytheistic conceptions and emanationist theories are foreign to the text. And one can hardly translate “of divine being”, “of the divine species”; for in that case, why was not *θεῖος* used?” (Bultmann may not have believed what the text said but it sure looks like he knew what it said.)

²² Even D.A. Carson who is not chiasmically inclined sees this as the most believable structure of the prologue of John. Cf. D.A. Carson, *The Gospel According to John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1991), 113. “The structure of the Prologue is also disputed. Of the large number of proposals advanced by various writers, one of the most believable ~though still not entirely free of difficulty) is the large chiasm put forward by Culpepper. If one begins with both ends of the Prologue and works toward the middle, then at certain levels 1:1-2 parallels 1:18, 1:3 parallels 1:17, 1:4-5 parallels 1:16, 1:6-8 parallels 1:15, 1:9-10 parallels 1:14, 1:11 parallels 1:13, 1:12a parallels 1:12c, making 1:12b (‘he gave them the right to become children of God’) the ‘pivot’ on which the chiasm turns, the center of attention. If the Prologue focuses on God’s self-disclosure in the Word who becomes flesh (1:14) and thereby reveals glory and makes God known (1:18), it also introduces us to the result of this gracious revelation: certain people and not others become children of God. The rest of the Gospel is much concerned to spell out who the real children of God are, who truly are the children of Abraham, which people receive the Spirit and are born again.”

²³ This section is a word for word quote from Larry Danner’s lesson when we tag-team taught John in 1994.

²⁴ Thanks again to Danner. Let me go ahead and say this up front. We share the same opinion and view on everything in John. If he held a different view, I would adopt his view without so much as a question. Let me just say I could footnote virtually every thought back to him. I am not a very original thinker.

²⁵B.F. Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans, 1954), 2. “Was... The verb *was* does not express a completed past, but rather a continuous state. The imperfect tense of the original suggests in this relation, as far as human language can do so, the notion of absolute, supra-temporal, existence.”

²⁶ Westcott, 4. “Literally, *became* (*γίνομαι*). Creation itself is represented as a “becoming” in contrast with the “being” emphasized before. The same contrast recurs in vv. 6, 9. Three distinct words are used in the New Testament to convey the conception of creation, (1) to create (*κτίζειν*) and (2) to make (*ποιεῖν*), in reference to the Creator and (3) to become (*γίνομαι*) in reference to that which is created. The first word (Rev. iv. 11, x. 6; Col. i. 16, &c.) suggests the idea of design, plan, purpose; the second (Rev. xiv.7; Mark x. 6, &c.), of an actual result or object produced (comp. Eph. ii. 10); the third, of the law fulfilled in the production of the object. The use of “become” in vv. 14, 17 brings out its force as expressive of the unfolding of a divine order.”