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ABSTRACT

The Logos
in John’s Gospel prologue
at the Holy Fathers, church Writers and contemporary authors

PhD CONDUCTOR

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THESIS PLAN

INTRODUCTION

PART ONE – THE SPECIFICS OF JOHN’S GOSPEL

I. Chapter I - *Introduction to John’s Gospel*

1. Fourth Gospel author
2. Date and place of composition of the fourth Gospel writing
3. Purpose and first recipients of the Gospel
4. Gospel’s Language and style
5. Authenticity of the Gospel

II. Chapter II - *Testimonies and plans of John’s Gospel*

1. Indirect Testimonies of the Christian tradition
2. Direct Testimonies of Tradition about the origin of the fourth Gospel
3. John’s Gospel plans

PART II – THE LOGOS, WORD OF GOD

I. Chapter I – *The Logos in the Old Testament and in the ancient philosophers thinking*

1. *The Logos* in the minds of the ancient philosophers
2. *The Logos* in the Old Testament

II. Chapter II – *The Logos in John's Gospel Prologue about the Holy Fathers, Ecclesiastical Writers and contemporary authors*

1. *“In the beginning was the Word...”*(John I, 1)
2. *“He was with God in the beginning”* (John I, 2)
3. *“Through him all things were made”* (John I, 3)
4. *“In Him was life and the life was the light of the people”* (John I, 4)
5. *“And that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it”* (John I, 5)
6. *“Sent was a man from God; his name was John”* (John I, 6)

7. *“He came as a witness, to testify concerning the Light, so that through him all might believe” (John I, 7)*
8. *He himself was not the light, he came only to testify about the light” (John I, 8)*
9. *“The Word was the true Light, Which enlightens every man that comes into world” (John I, 9)*
10. *“In the world He was and the world through Him was made, but the world did not know Him” (John I, 10)*
 - 10.1. *“In the world He was and the world through Him was made”*
 - 10.2. *“but the world did not know Him”*
11. *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him” (John I, 11)*
12. *“But to the many that have received Him, which believe in His name, gave power to them so to become the sons of God” (John I, 12)*
13. *“Which not of blood, nor of lust nor of the will of man, but of God were born” (John I, 13)*
14. *And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us and We have seen His glory, glory as of the One Born from the Father, full of grace and truth” (John I, 14)*
 - 14.1. *The Godly Logos – “And the Word became flesh”*
 - 14.2. *The personal coming of the Logos into the world – “and Has dwelt among us”*
 - 14.3. *Glory to the incarnated Logos – “And we beheld His glory, glory as of the One - Born of the Father, full of grace and truth”*
15. *“John was testifying about Him and shouted, saying: He was of whom I said: He who comes after me was before me, because he was before me.” (John I, 15)*
16. *“And of His fullness we all have received, and grace upon grace” (John I, 16)*
17. *“For the law was given by Moses, and the grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” (John I, 17)*
18. *“No one has ever seen God; the One and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made Him known” (John I, 18)*

CONCLUSIONS

REFERENCES

KEY WORDD: Logos, Word of God, Reason, Life, Light, Incarnation, One Born, Revelation

INTRODUCTION

In this paper I sought to highlight the role, but especially the work of the Logos in the world. About the Logos St. John the Evangelist speaks in the beautiful Gospel of the night of the Resurrection, which starts saying: "In the beginning was the Word..." (John I, 1). In this first chapter, St. John the Evangelist speaks of God's Word which is from eternally from God.

St. John knew this term of Logos from the Greek philosophy, but also from Philo of Alexandria. Logos was a familiar term for St. John, so he does not give us other explanations about the Word who was known to his contemporaries.

"Logos" – "Λόγος" - originates in ancient Greece. General speaking it is translated as *word, talk, speech, statement, argument, reason, intellect*. Hence, the term does not have a clear understanding, of independence, which makes its translation to depend on the context in which it is used but also of the one who uses it, because the philosophers that have made use of the "logos", have subjectified its meaning after everyone's ideological coloration.

The paper is structured in two parts:

- Part one – The specifics of John's Gospel, comprising two chapters: *Introduction to John's Gospel and testimonies and plans of John's Gospel*, has an introductory and contextualization function.

- Part two - The Logos, Word of God, containing two chapters: *The Logos in the Old Testament and in the ancient philosophers thoughts* and *The Logos in John's Gospel prologue at the Holy Fathers, Ecclesiastical writers and contemporary authors*, seeks effective treatment of the doctoral research subject.

Part one – The specifics of the John's Gospel

I. Chapter I - Introduction to John's Gospel

1. Fourth Gospel author

The author of the fourth Gospel was one of the 12 apostles, because only they attended at the Last Supper and only one of them would have been able to render in detail the lecture given by the Savior on this occasion. From the content of the Gospel we learn that the author was one of the apostles whom the Lord loved in particular. The beloved disciple "at the Last Supper rested

his head on the Savior's chest (John XIII, 23), witnessed the crucifixion of the Lord and to him the Saviour entrusted his mother to care for her (XIX, 26).”¹

In the New Testament we find enough data about the Apostle John, about his call to apostleship with his brother Jacob. Their father was called Zebedee and he was a fisherman, coming from one of the cities situated on the Sea of Galilee. John and his brother Jacob are often called in the Holy Gospels with the name "sons of Zebedee", as we find in Mark 10, 35: “And they came to him Jacob and John, the sons of Zebedee”. Their mother was called Salome and she witnessed the crucifixion of Jesus. Also she, with the myrrh-bearing women, came early on the Holy Resurrection Sunday morning to anoint the body of Christ but found the tomb empty. An angel has proclaimed that the Lord has risen, as Apostle Mark indicates in Chapter 16, 1-2: “And after the pass of Saturday, Mary Magdalene the mother of Jacob, and Salome bought spices to come and anoint Him. And early in the morning, on the first day of the week (Sunday), as the sun was rising, they came to the tomb.”

From the Holy Gospels we find that St. John together with his brother Jacob and Peter, were part of the closest disciples group of the Savior, being witnesses to the resurrection of Jairus' daughter, of the Transfiguration of the Lord, and at the prayer from the garden of Gethsemane, as Apostle Mark mentions in Chapter 14, 33: “And he took with him Peter and Jacob and John”. St. John the Evangelist and his brother Jacob were called by Jesus “Boanerges”, i.e. sons of thunder, and this because of the character, but also of their temperament which was impetuous. Then at the Last Supper, he is the one who bowed his head on the breast of Christ, he being “the disciple whom Jesus loved”, as St. John the Evangelist mentions in Chapter 13, 23: “And at the table was leaning on Jesus' bosom one of his disciples, whom Jesus loved.” And also St. John the Evangelist was beside Calvary Cross, together with the Mother of God who was entrusted by the Savior as recorded in John 19, 26-27: “Jesus seeing standing beside his mother and the disciple whom he loved (**τόν μαθηθὴν ὃν ἠγάπα**), says to his mother: Woman, behold thy son; then he said to the disciple: Behold thy mother. And from that hour the disciple took her to his house.” (John 19, 26-27)”.²

¹ *Studiul Noului Testament* , pentru Institutele teologice ,ediția a treia . EIBMBOR- București 1983 pag.92

² Diacon Haralambie Roventă, *Originea și valoarea istorică a Evangheliei după Ioan* , București Tipografia Cărților Bisericești, 1928, pag.20

As St. Irenaeus mentions but also Clement of Alexandria, the St. Apostle John lived during the reign of the Emperor Trajan up (98-117), therefore we can conclude that the “Fourth Gospel was written between the years 90-100.”³

2. Date and place of composition of the fourth Gospel writing

Regarding the writing of the Holy Gospel’s date, some commentators and critics such as Bisping, Calmes, Zahn, and others believe that the Gospel was written between the years 80-90. Others, like Vigouroux or B. Weis date it as written between the years 90-100. Others such as the Harnack as well as Lietzman fix as the date of writing between the years 80-110 years. So without specifying the exact date, we can place the writing of the Gospel at the end of the first century or around the year 100.⁴ The place of the Gospel’s writing is accepted as being Ephesus, although St. Ephrem the Syrian says it would have been written at Antioch in Syria.

3. Purpose and first recipients of the Gospel

This Gospel was written for the Christians who were weak in faith, and some did not believe that Jesus Christ came with the body to live with us and among us, and through His activity to save us. It is true that all three Gospels shew us about the humanity and divinity of the Savior, and prove this in their stories “but the Gospel of John makes out of this goal the principal purpose itself and the feature of the entire book in a way entirely new, with a similar thought of the eagle’s ascension in the blue sky and in a way that is totally of his own”.⁵ In his Gospel he focuses especially on the deity of Christ, who was made flesh for us and through which “we have seen His glory, glory as of One Born from the Father full of grace and truth” (John I, 14).

4. Gospel’s Language and style

This Holy Gospel is written in Greek, although the author does not make use of all the Greek language’s wealth, but the spirit in which it is written is Hebrew. Some authors as Burney and Torrey, to explain the language and the fourth Gospel’s style characteristics, argued that it would be a mistranslation of an Aramaic original. But the characteristic of the language used in the Gospel is explained “only through the Aramaic influence spoken upon the author of the Gospel.”⁶

³ Pr.prof.Dr.Vasile Mihoc-*Sfânta Evanghelie de la Ioan, introduce și comentariu*-Editura Teofania , Sibiu , 2003,pag. 28

⁴ *Studiul Noului Testament*, , pag. 93-94

⁵ Pr. Al. I. Ciurea, *Despre Evanghelia lui Ioan* , în *Glasul Bisericii*,anul XXIII ,nr. 7-8, iulie-august 1964, pag, 661

⁶ *Studiul Noului Testament*, pag. 95

5. Authenticity of the Gospel

Regarding the authenticity of the Holy Gospel, in Chapter XXI, verse 24, it is stated that “the Disciple whom Jesus loved is the man who wrote these”, namely the Gospel and therefore also Chapter XXI. So all these considerations reinforce our belief that this chapter was written by the apostle, who hides under anonymity using the expression “disciple whom Jesus loved” and it is none other than the apostle John”.⁷

Chapter II - Testimonies and plans of John’s Gospel

1. Indirect Testimonies of the Christian tradition

Given that in the tradition we find historical value data, we will find two kinds of evidence on the origin of the Fourth Gospel, namely:

a) Some that show us that the Holy Gospel has been known and has been cited with the beginning of the second century.

b) Other testimonies that are clearer and more valuable, they also inform us in a truthful way about the origin of the Gospel “telling us exactly who is the author, and also other information about the circumstances of the composition.”⁸

St. Ignatius of Antioch or Theophilus, who was martyred around the year 107 or 110, presents in his writings a great similarity with St. John, but although he did not directly cite them, however, it can be seen that he has imprinted the teachings and the spirit of those writings. Then St. Polycarp of Smyrna, in his second Epistle to the Philippians (VII, 1), he quotes John’s Ist Epistle (4, 2-3) which is akin to the fourth Gospel, being as an introduction to it. A clearer allusion to the Gospel of John, we can find also at St. Justin the Martyr and Philosopher, in his first Apology, written around the year 150, but also in the “Dialogue with Tryphon the Jew, which dates back to around the year 160”.⁹

2. Direct Testimonies of Tradition about the origin of the fourth Gospel

The theological value of the Gospel lies in the spiritual perspective on the *identity between the historic Jesus Christ and the Savior of the Christian Church*. The continuity between the incarnated Jesus Christ and Jesus Christ present in the Church’s mysteries are revealed, in a special

⁷ *Ibidem*, pag.97

⁸ Diacon Haralambie Roventă, *op. cit.*, pag. 32-33

⁹ Pr.prof.Dr.Vasile Mihoc, *op.cit.*, pag. 12

way, in particular, in the promise of the Holy Ghost, in the parting Lecture and Its work in the Church.¹⁰

For us, Christians, the main source of the Trinity knowledge, is none other than the Prologue of John's Gospel and therefore the author of this amazing texts received in the Orthodox tradition the name of St. John the Theologian. From the first verse of the Prologue, the Father is called God, Christ is called the Word and the Word, in this beginning, that here has no temporal sense, is in the same time, God.

3. Plans of the Gospel

The plans proposed for the Gospel of John are, as numerous as are different. In the paper, I presented two different plans:

- ❖ “Plan A - which has the merit to highlight the extraordinary theology richness of the Gospel.
- ❖ Plan B - which highlights better the chronological frame of Jesus Christ’s progress work”¹¹.

We can say that the Prologue of John's Gospel “was compared with the texts of the book *Wisdom of Jesus Sirach*, who praises Wisdom in the Chapter 24, which identifies with the law. Regarding the Prologue’s text comments, their number is very large, interpreters practicing two main approach types of the text. Some of them, choosing the historical-critical method, search the text’s sources, the primitive anthem. The others, beginning from the text that we have in the Holy Scripture, wish, through structural analysis, to highlight the unitary structure of the hymn.”¹²

Part II – The Logos, Word of God

Chapter I – The Logos in the Old Testament and in the ancient philosophers thinking

1. The Logos in the minds of the ancient philosophers

One of the philosophers who spoke and wrote about the logos was Heraclitus. Heraclitus's conception about Logos, as an universal reason of the world, has influenced over time the thinking of other Christian philosophers, and St. Justin the Martyr places him alongside the philosopher

¹⁰ Pr. prof. univ. dr. Stelian Tofană, *Evanghelia după Ioan*, pag.11, în <http://www.scribd.com/doc/176955924/Evanghelia-dupa-Ioan>, *Introducere în studiul Noului Testament*, vol.III, *Evangheliile după Luca și Ioan. Problema sinoptică*, Presa universitară clujeană, Cluj Napoca, 2001

¹¹ Pr.Prof.Dr.Vasile Mihoc „*Sfânta Evanghelie de la Ioan-introducere și comentariu* , Vol.I ,Editura Teofania , Sibiu , 2003 , pag. 34-35

¹² Pr. conf. dr. Ioan CHIRILĂ-*Sofia și Logos sau despre dialogul dintre cei doi Iisus: Hristos și Ben Sirah*, sursa: <http://www.crestinortodox.ro/religie/sofia-logos-despre-dialogul-dintre-doi-iisus-hristos-ben-sirah-69478.html>

Socrates, and the Orthodox painters paint him on the exterior walls of the churches “as a harbinger of the Incarnated Logos”.¹³ Apart from Heraclitus have talked about the Logos also the philosophers Socrates, Plato, the stoics Plotinus and Aristotle, but especially Philo (Philon) the Jew or Philo of Alexandria.

We can say in the ones presented that in the Greek philosophy are observed two directions of orientation, regarding the concept of Logos, i.e. “a direction to the original Logos, in which the whole existence is ideally reabsorbed, and a direction toward the final Logos, located in the infinite, towards which the whole existence aspire effectively, without ever reaching it. Thus the Logos appears as a source of existence and at the same time as a measure of it, measure that prints to the existence a precise steering of continuous development, which aims to achieve the infinite”.¹⁴

2. The Logos in the Old Testament

In the Pentateuch as also in the prophetic Books we cannot talk about a coherent speech about Logos. But if we examine the didactic-poetry Books, in terms of their fundamental semantics, we can talk more easily of their engagement in a logos dimension. In these books, we find the speech about Logos, and this brings a personal character to the Logos, and about the word also said the divine prophet David “Forever, O Lord, Thy Word remain in heaven.” (Ps.118, 89). And the word of which the Psalmist David talks about, is not an impersonal Word, but the personal Word.

In conclusion, these prophetic books can be considered as a last step of the Logos’s revelation before His Incarnation. And “the whole Old Testament represents a preparation of humanity for the Incarnation, preparation perfectly prepared and completed by the prophets”.¹⁵

Chapter II – The Logos in John's Gospel Prologue about the Holy Fathers, Ecclesiastical Writers and contemporary authors

St. Polycarp of Smyrna had anathematized those who do not believe in the Incarnation of the Logos, who came for us. We meet the theology of the Logos at the Apologists, and especially at Justin, Hippolytus of Rome and Tertullian. The Apologists did not take the idea of the Logos from profane Greek philosophy, but they have moved from the Logos of Philo the Alexandrian,

¹³ Diac.Prof.Dr.Nicolae Balca-*Istoria Filozofiei Antice*- EIMBOR București, 1982, pag. 39

¹⁴ Pr. Drd. Sterea Tache, *Teologia Logosului la sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul* ,în Studii Teologice seria II-a –anul XXIX- Nr. 5-8, mai-octombrie 1977, București, pag. 517

¹⁵ Pr. prof. univ. dr. Ioan Chirilă , *Logos-loghia Vechiului Testament*, în Pr. Prof. Dr.Nicolae Neaga, *Hristos în Vechiul Testament* ,Editura Renașterea,Cluj-Napoca 2004, pag. 29

which was seen as an intermediary between God and matter, to “the Logos of St. John the Evangelist, which is the Son of the Incarnated God. The Apologists, therefore create a history of the Logos, taking into account all the previous philosophical elements of this problem”.¹⁶

In this sense, St. Justin the Martyr and Philosopher is recognized for the theology made for the Logos. He uses many terms from the Holy Scripture to describe Christ. Then in the Origen, it is stated the full humanity and divinity of Christ, and he says that from the union of the Logos with the human nature is borne the God-Man, and also Origen speaks about the qualities communication, in the person of Jesus Christ the Savior.

In the center of St. Athanasius work lies the second Person of the Holy Trinity, of the Logos who comes into this world to renew the building, which is bearing the consequences of falling into the ancestral sin, through much more acts of salvation: through the Incarnation, through the life with His teachings and miracles, through His sacrifice on the Cross and His resurrection from the dead.

In the theology of St. Maximus the Confessor, Christ is seen as being the Creator, a Way as a Providentially God, but also as an End of the ages. St. Maximus speaks of the Logos and shows that the whole creation has its foundation in a rationality that it finds its roots in the divine Logos, in a supreme Reason, which is the second Person of the Holy Trinity. All the reasons of things that compile the universe seen and unseen flow from the Logos through the uncreated divine energies and go back to the Logos. The Logos centrality in creation is emphasized by St. Maximus the Confessor when he says that “the many reasons are one and the one are many”.¹⁷

St. Cyril of Alexandria made a comprehensive review in his work entitled “Commentary of the Gospel of St. John”. In this regard, St. Cyril of Alexandria states that through the word “great mystery”, we must understand that the Logos or the Word of God the Father Has incarnated and became man, without ceasing to be God.

1. St. Evangelist John begins his Gospel with these words ***“In the beginning was the Word and the Word was at God and God was the Word”*** (verse 1). With these words he shows us the

¹⁶ Preot lector universitar Nechita Runcan, *Istoria Literaturii Patristice din perioada persecuțiilor anticeștine*, Editura Europolis, Constanța-1999, pag. 108

¹⁷ Pr.Prof.Dr.Dumitru Ghe. Popescu –*Teologie si cultură* , EIBMBOR ,Bucuresti , 1993 ,pag.25, apud. Sfântul Maxim Mărturisitorul-*Ambigua-P.G.,91,col.1081* , C

first union of God with time – which is the expression of movement and change. St. John the Evangelist calls the Son of God – LOGOS – Λόγος, the Word.

The phrase “at the beginning” evokes the beginning, which transcends time, the relationship beginning of the Logos with God. Here St. John the Evangelist describes the eternal presence of the Logos in God. He already thinks of the Logos that will already incarnate, because the revelation of the Logos which became flesh is only the reflection here on earth of the life from God. The historical beginning of the revelation, which will be about in verse 3, is the manifestation of another absolute beginning of life in God.

The eternal existence of the Logos turns out from the imperfect verb “to be”: “At the beginning was the Word”. The Logos is only mentioned in two passages of the Prologue, John I, 1 and I, 14.

St. John the Evangelist explains who This Word is: “the Word was at God and God was the Word” (John 1, 3). So, the Word was at God, which He was from eternity, because at God there is neither the beginning nor the end and thus is highlighted the personal distinction between the Father and the Word, together with the Holy Spirit who exists since eternity.

2. Verse 2 – “He was with God in the beginning” (John I, 2) is closely related to the first verse and therefore here is no longer used the word “Λόγος” with which has ended the first verse but it is replaced by “οὗτος” - this, which refers to the Logos. So the second verse does not tell us anything new compared to the first verse, but he is a summary of it.

3. If in the verses one and two the Apostle and Evangelist John contemplates the relationship of the Word with God, in verse three – **“Through him all things were made...” (John I, 3)**, he refers to the relationship between the Logos and Creation and introduces here a new verb, *egéneto* - which comes from the verb *gínesthai* which means *to be made*. And the Evangelist tells us further *that all were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made from what were made*” (John I, 3). Therefore “in verse 3, we have a doctrine about the Logos, to which is awarded the creation and for this to be assigned, it had to exist before the creation. In this verse as in the previous ones, it is about the «pre-existing Logos», and not just about a name given to the historical person of Jesus.”¹⁸

¹⁸ Pr.Sofron Vlad, *Prologul Evangheliei a IV-a –studiu critic exegetic*, Cluj, 1937, pag. 27

4. Regarding **the fourth verse** – *“In Him was life and the life was the light of the people” (John I, 4)*, Father Sofron Vlad in the book *“The fourth Gospel’s Prologue”* states that this verse is divided into two: 4a and 4b.

“In verse 4 a) the Word **αὐτό** again in this verse refers to «Logos asarcos», just like **δι’ αὐτοῦ** from verse 3. After what in the verse 3 it is said that all creatures were made through «Logos», in verse 4 - a, in connection with verse 3 and with reference to what was said there it shows us, that it was possible based on the fact, that in Him (Logos) exists life in general, unlike the creatures, which have not life inside them but receive it from the Creator. If in the verse 4 - a «the Logos» is characterized in his being, unlike the creatures, in verse 4 - b «the Logos» is characterized in relation to the creatures.”¹⁹

5. We note that in verse 4 we were showed that the spiritual life of the Logos in general is a light for humanity, and in **verse 5** – *“And that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it” (John I, 5)* represents a breakthrough in the progress of ideas, because it is showed to us the action of light towards the world but also the world’s response to this light.

In this verse 5, we find a contrast between light and darkness. The darkness here is not a cosmic principle, but through the dark are shown the sins of men. Therefore the word “**φῶς**” should be understood in the moral order, namely in the illumination action of the Logos in the spiritual order. Through the verb “**φαίνει**” - “lights”, it is shown this continuing action of the Word which enlightens.

The meaning of this verse 5 which is enriched with the elements of verses 3-5 is this one: the world (v.3), but also the people (v.4), which exists through Logos is in the darkness (v.5b), if they do not place themselves under the illumination action of the Logos.

6. The work of St. John the Baptist, is surprised by the Evangelist short and comprehensive, by these words **“Sent was a man from God; his name was John. He came as a witness, to testify concerning the Light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light, he came only to testify about the light.” (John 1, 6-8)**

St. John the Evangelist, after saying in its call what is most important and necessary to know the Word – God, following the order and his subject’s course, speaks to us about the Forerunner and the Baptist who was supposed to proclaim the Word, (**verse 6**) and was called John as him.

¹⁹ *Ibidem* , pag. 29

After the first verses (1-5) was highlighted the pre-existence Logos alongside God and His role in the created world, in the verses 6, 7, 8, St. John the Evangelist “introduces the historical person of John the Baptist, focusing on the last prophet’s mission «sent by God» to «testify concerning the light»”.²⁰

7. In verse 7 – ***“He came as a witness, to testify concerning the Light, so that through him all might believe”*** – are shown three different things. In the first part are presented in general the mission of St. John the Baptist, in the second part we are introduced to the subject of his mission, and in the third part of the verse is presented the purpose of his sermon. St John's role was to testify about the light. Because the Baptist is presented as a witness to the light, we are shown in what way must be seen the word **φῶς** – **“light”**. This word can only be interpreted only in a spiritual sense. As the morning dawn announces the sunrise that will appear, so St. John through the personal testimony had to announce the man who would come after him.

8. In verse 8 - ***He himself was not the light, he came only to testify about the light*** – The Holy Evangelist confirms to us by a negation, what he stated in the seventh verse, namely, that St. John the Baptist came to be a testify to the light, without being himself the true light. This is expressed also in the Gospel, where John is called by the term **“λυχνος”** (Heb. John, 5, 35). Therefore St. John the Baptist is presented only as a means of light, and not as **“φῶς”**, i.e. light itself. Verse 8 is most closely related to the preceding verse, precisely through the word **“φῶς”**, that connects also with the following verse and the “importance the Evangelist gives, right in the Prologue, to the testimony of St. John the Baptist is explained by the fact that the author of the Gospel himself was a disciple of St. John the Baptist, and thus valued properly the testimony of his former teacher”.²¹

9. St. Apostle John after the verse 8, denied that John was the light, in relation with the idea of light continues his thinking also in verse 9 – ***“The Word was the true Light, Which enlightens every man that comes into world”*** - making of this idea, the subject of the verse. If in verse 8 “he has put at the beginning of the sentence the negation “was not”, now he begins the verse 9 with **“ἦν”** = “was” and continues letting to follow the subject **τὸ φῶς**, which determines it much closer through that, stating «it was the true» «light» and that enlightens all men.”²² This verse 9, presents

²⁰ Lector Dr. Constantin Preda „, *Cartea neamului lui Iisus Hristos* " EIBMBOR, București-2006, pag. 49

²¹ Pr. Sofron Vlad, *op.cit.*, pag. 32-33

²² *Ibidem*, pag. 34

a translation issue. The expression “that comes into the world”, from the end of the verse, refers to “every man” - so it's about “every man, that cometh into the world” as is given the text in a normal way - or it refers to the “Light” from the beginning of the verse. But grammatically, both translations are possible. Given the context, it should be favored the second translation: “It was the true Light which comes into the world (and) that enlightens every man.” And according to this translation, the text refers to the incarnation of the Light. Then in the next verse (10), we are told that the Light was present in the world; and this presence requires advance notification of His coming into the world.

10. In this **verse 10** – *“In the world He was and the world through Him was made, but the world did not know Him”* - we have three short sentences that link by **καί**. In these three sentences as in verse 1, it is repeated the same subject. There the subject was “Logos”, here is “Kósmos”. At the Synoptic this word is used about 15 times, while in the Gospel of St. Apostle John we can see it about 78 times.

We can notice that the Evangelist begins the verse 10 with the word that ended the previous verse, namely that word **κόσμος**. Therefore it is somehow kept the link with the preceding verse. But the verse 10 finds itself in strong link with verse 11. And this phrase “in the world He was”, shows us the mysterious presence of the Logos in creation, because together with the call to existence, all of those that exist received also the reason of how to exist from God. The word *world* it is often seen at St. John. In general in the fourth Gospel through the word “*world*” it is called the world of men, who reject Christ and His teachings and the apostles. It is the avid world fallen in the bondage of the sin. The central idea of this verse is that the Logos came to the world he created, and yet the world at which Christ came did not know Him (v.10).

11. Commenting verse 11 – *“He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him”* - father Stăniloae says that there are two senses in his wording:

1. “His” are created and sustained by Him and through Him.
2. “He came to His own” means that he took our human nature. But this means that “had something in Him close to us, fact showed in that we are made after His image.”²³

Logos, came into his own, namely he came into this world. He came to bestow his blessings and his gifts upon his own. And although he came to their benefit, to make them well, those who

²³ Pr.Conf.Dr. Citirigă Vasile , *Antropologia hristologică în Teologia ortodoxă*-vol.1 , ediția a II-a , Editura Europolis , Constanta ,2006, pag. 75, apud. Pr.Prof.D.Stăniloae, în colecția P.S.B., vol.39, nota 449, pag.262

he came to did not receive him, but in the contrary, they rejected him. And they were not satisfied only with this; but after they drew him out of the vineyard, they killed him (Mt. 21, 39).

And after all this “he did not exclude them from repentance; but promised that if, after a deed so ugly and dark, they wanted to wash their sins, by believing in him, would have made them equal to those who have not done anything similar, and even their most devoted friends.”²⁴

12. By coming into the world, the Son of God, became man, and gave power to those who united with Him so they can also be sons of God, after grace - **Verse 12** - *“But to the many that have received Him, which believe in His name, gave power to them so to become the sons of God.”* Israel was first prepared by patriarchs, then through the Law of Moses and the Prophets of the Old Testament, so the first should receive this quality, of being the first born. Because he knew God as being a Person. But they not receiving Christ as the Son of God, the quality of the sons of God went to some of the nations that received him.

The Evangelist John “in this verse shows us, that after the majority refused receiving the “Word”, yet there were some which received It. In this verse the subject is changing, it is no longer “asarcos Logos” as in the first verses, or “ensarcos Logos” as in the verses 9-11, but here the subject is **ὁσολ**, which refers to the faithful. This word cannot restrict only to the faithful of the Hebrews, but also takes into account those among the pagans, who believed in the Savior.”²⁵

13. In the **Verse 13** – *“Which not of blood, nor of lust nor of the will of man, but of God were born”* – we have a triple negation: “which not of blood, nor of lust, nor the will of man” and this not only serves to emphasize that it's the birth from God but is also a clear reference to the Church's faith clearly expressed in Mt. 1 18,20 and 25 and Lk. 1, 35 regarding the divine Christ's birth of the Virgin Mary. How Christ was born, by the will of God and through the work of the Holy Spirit, so they are born all the Christians to a new life in Christ through baptism, as the singing says “for all of you who were baptized into Christ, have clothed yourselves with Christ” (Divine Sacraments of Baptism). Through the faith in Christ men were called at the state of sons of God by grace, and in Christ they stripped of their own natures, and being adorned like a garment of grace of the One that honors them, they ascend to the superior dignity towards the human nature.

²⁴ Colecția Ortodoxia Românească, *Comentar la Evanghelia de la Ioan*, colecția Migne-vol.8, Paris, 1865, traducere din limba franceză, de diacon Gheorghe Băbuț, Ediția a 2-a, Editată de Mănăstirea „Portărița” Satu Mare, anul 2005, pag. 50

²⁵ Pr.Sofron Vlad, *op.cit*, pag 37.

Because in this gracious state they are not anymore sons of the body, but rather, born of God by grace.

14. Verse 14 is a comprehensive verse: *“And the Word became flesh and made His dwelling among us and We have seen His glory, glory as of the One Born from the Father, full of grace and truth”*, in which there are talks about: the Godly Logos, The personal coming of the Logos in the world and the Glory of the Incarnated Logos.

With the reference to the personal coming of the Logos in the world, the Evangelist expresses as follows: **“Και ο Λόγος σαρκί εγενετο”** – *“And the Word was made flesh”*. Being the real Son of God, He became the Son of man, so to make the men sons of God.

By this statement: **“Και ο Λόγος σαρκί εγενετο”** – *“And the Word became flesh”* (John 1, 14) – the Evangelist distinguishes his teaching from all the other false doctrines that were in circulation in his time. When he says **“Λόγος”**, he expresses the eternity, the divinity and infinity, but while referring to the word **“σαρκί”**, by this he expresses time, which is limited and transitory. When the apostle John says **“ο Λόγος σαρκί εγενετο”** – he unites these two extremes, time and eternity.

Only this coming in the flesh of the Son of God, showed the people that God, Who is love, can defeat death. In the second sentence which also connects with the first one through **“Και”** we are told that the Incarnated Logos dwelt among us, namely that he came in a maximum approach to the people. And the verb **“Εσκηνωσεν”** reminds us of the indwelling of Yahweh in the Spirit Tabernacle or in the Temple of Jerusalem. This indwelling of the Logos was made in the Savior’s body. The word **“ἡμιν”**, shows us that the Gospel’s author is still among those whom between the Logos appeared in flesh, which says: *“And we beheld His glory”*. Therefore, the author of the Gospel, already from the Prologue states that he was a disciple of the Savior. And names Him **“Μονογενοῦς”**, namely the *One Born* as was named by the Father Himself, at His Baptism, when he was named as being *“His beloved Son”* (Mt. 3, 17), having this meaning of Unique Son.

14.1. The Godly Logos – “And the Word became flesh”

“The Logos has manifested in the world and through Logos the whole existence is a partaker of God”.²⁶ This intimate relationship of the Logos with the world manifests through and with His

²⁶ Prof. S.L.Epifanovici , *Σφântul Maxim Mărturisitorul și teologia bizantină* , *Studiu teologic*, traducere din limba rusă de Pr. Marcel Corja ,Editura EVANGHELISMOS ,București-2009, pag.86, nota313, apud. Ambigua, P G. 91, 1081 A,f. 123a, 124b

energies or small Logos- *λόγοι*. Beginning from the creation of the world out of nothing through Logos which is eternally from the Father, in the Holy Spirit, St. Athanasius the Great but also St. Maximus the Confessor beating the irreducible opposition between the intelligible and sensible world have shown for the first time, that even in cosmological terms, these two worlds that are different from each other, they are nevertheless united by a rational and harmonious order of creation, which has its source in the Logos of the Father through the Holy Spirit.

Saint Athanasius the Great stresses that the divine Logos, through whom all things were created, manifests his powers everywhere and nothing remains empty of His presence, because he lights up all the visible and invisible and keep them gathered, forming a single harmonious order of all creation, and he himself remains unmoved, but moves freely all of them after the Father's goodwill.

On the scriptural and patristic basis, the father teacher Dumitru Stăniloae highlights the concept of Christ's centrality, at the Mission and Evangelism Conference of the World Council of Churches, which was held at the Holy Monastery of Cernica, in 1974, where have participated the theologians N. Nissiotis and J. Mayendorff. On this occasion, the father "revealed that three are the personal forces of the Father that work in creation for its unification.

1) The first is the divine Logos, present in the things reason's symphony and in the virtual symphony of human reasons.

2) The second is the incarnated Logos, present after a more intimate model, without being fully updated, in the bosom of humanity, as a central divine-human Hypostasis.

3) The third spiritualize and unifying force is the Holy Spirit, who spiritually reborn us in Christ, as One who does not separate of Christ and leads us all to Christ"²⁷.

Through His incarnation, God's revelation is complete, it is cosmic and available in all creation's dimensions, and worldwide. All those that are were filled with the knowledge of God. In this regard, His body was not for Himself a limitation, but was a body of revelation and activity. His presence in flesh does not prevent Him to be everywhere at the same time. He moves His body at the same time, but also the entire universe, by His power and Spirit. To the extent that He is content by everything, to the same extent He contains all things in Him, being "present in creation, yet he is

²⁷ Pr.Prof.Dr. Dumitru Popescu , Membru de onoare al Academiei Române , *Iisus Hristos Pantocrator* , EIBMBOR, București-2005 pag,189, apud. Pr.Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae , " *La centralité du Christ dans la théologie, dans la spiritualité et dans la mission de l'Eglise*" , în *Contacts*, Paris, nr.92, 1975, p.448

not from the creation; He contains everything, remaining the uncontainable; He is the universe's source of life, present in everything, yet he exceeds everything".²⁸

With His coming in flesh, Christ, though man, He gave through His words and actions all the evidence that He is at the same time God. People could still doubt the prophecies of a prophet or another, that to him God proclaimed His will. Because through the prophet, God spoke inside of one man. But now comes and speaks and works the Incarnated Son of God, in ways that go beyond human powers. In Christ, God descends in maximum approach to the people and makes from our humanity His own humanity. And this humanity is raised in Him to a maximum in God, and is worthy by God to be His humanity.

Saint Athanasius the Great speaking of the incarnated Word says "The incorporeal, incorruptible and immaterial Word of God comes to our side, not being far neither forward. For any part of creation did not remain empty by Him. He fills all everywhere, while being with His Father. But descends coming with His love of people and His appearing."²⁹

St. John Damascene, in "Dogmatica" presents this when he says: "the word of God was in all and above all, even when He was in the womb of the Blessed Mother of God. In her He was the energy of the incarnation. Therefore He incarnated, taking from her the first fruits of our leaven, animated body with a rational and thinker soul. Therefore the very subsistence of God's Word was made the body of subsistence, and subsistence of Word, which was before simpler has become composed. Composed of two perfect natures, from the Godhead and humanity. It has both the ownership and determining feature of the divine being of the Word of God, according to which it differs from the Father and the Spirit, as the characteristic and decisive qualities of the body, under which differs of the mother and the other people. It has then also the characteristics of the Divine nature, according to which it is united with the Father and the Spirit, and the qualities of the human nature, under which it is united with his Mother and us. Moreover, it differs from the Father and

²⁸ Pr. Prof. Dr. Ion Bria, *Iisus Hristos – Dumnezeu Mântuitorul. Hristologia*, în *Studii Teologice*, seria a II-A, Anul XLIII, Nr. 2, Martie –Aprilie, 1991, București pag.20

²⁹ *Sfinții Părinți despre nașterea și întruparea Cuvântului* /Sf.Ioan Gură de Aur, Sf. Teofilact al Bulgariei, Sf. Grigorie de la Nazianz; ed. Îngrijită de Florin Stuparu.- București : Editura Sophia ; Alexandria: Cartea Ortodoxă, 2007 pag.162-163

the Spirit, of his Mother and us, through that in the same time is both God and man. For we know that it is the most special acquiring of Christ's subsistence".³⁰

14.2. The personal coming of the Logos into the world – “and Has dwelt among us”

The Evangelist, after saying in the preceding verses, all that could have been to say more beautiful and uplifting about the people that only through the faith in the Person of Jesus Christ – The Incarnated, they were raised to the dignity of sons of God by grace, now he states what he already wanted to say but hinted it from verse 5, namely the personal coming of the Logos into the world. The Evangelist expresses this by saying that the Logos became flesh “καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο”, “Being the true Son of God, became the Son of Man, to make the people sons of God”.³¹

Commenting on this verse, Father Iustin Popovici teaches us that “the whole Gospel of heaven and earth consists of these four words: “The Logos became flesh”. Apart from it, and without it there is another good news for man, not in this world nor in the other. Here there is something of eternal need for our human existence in all worlds. The only joy news for the material, in all its forms. From the toughest and dense material of the diamond, to the finest and invisible electron and photon”.³²

The term used by St. John the Evangelist is even more significant, σὰρξ meaning in fact *meat*. Through this verse begins therefore the stewardship which is personal to the Son, the One Who enters the world's history. Or more clearly said, “God became man so that man could deify himself”. We find this sentence three times at St. Irenaeus; but it is also found at St. Athanasius and ends up as a leitmotif for the theologians of all time. The Word, at the fullness of time, descends to the man, because through Him, the man should ascend to God. And He dwelt among us, namely lived between us the people. “The Word dwelt among us, i.e. he took our nature”.³³

³⁰ Sf. Ioan Damaschin , *Dogmatica* , Ediția a III-a, traducere de Pr. D. Fecioru , Editura Scripta , București-1993 , pag. 107

³¹ Pr.Sofron Vlad , *Prologul Evangheliei a IV-a –studiu critic exegetic* ,Cluj , 1937 , pag.39, nota 1- Sf. I. Chrisostom: Omilia XI , 1, pag.161 traducerea Jeannin

³² Arhimandritul Iustin Popovici , *Omul și Dumnezeu-Om ,Abisurile și culmile filozofiei* , Studiu introductiv și traducere : Pr. Prof. Ioan Ică și diac. Ioan .I Ică jr.,Prefață : prof. Ioannis N. Karmiris, Postfață: Panayotis Nellas , Editura DEISIS Sibiu 1997, pag 56

³³ Ioan Scotus Eriugena , *Comentariu la Evanghelia lui Ioan*,ediție bilingvă, editura Polirom 2009, pag 21.

14.3. Glory to the incarnated Logos – “*And we beheld His glory, glory as of the One - Born of the Father, full of grace and truth*”

This glory of God is present even from the birth. And we read at St. Luke the Evangelist that around the shepherds near Bethlehem “shines the glory of the Lord”, who sang “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favor rests” (Luke II, 14). Because also in the Resurrection and Ascension and at the Father’s right hand stay, the glory of the Lord is at the same time the brightness of His divine power and the wearing of cross.

Our Lord Jesus Christ comes to earth, to make us partakers to see not only His earthly glory, but also the heavenly one. Wherefore He said: “I want where I am, to be together with Me also those who You have given to Me, to see My glory which You have given to me.” (John 17, 24) Blessed but, also a thousand times happier those who will have the honor to see this glory, because of it speaks about the prophet when he says: “For the unbelievers will be taken, so as not to see the glory of God. (Is. 26, 10, 70)”.³⁴ The title “Monogenes” (One-Born) of this verse 14 expresses an ontological identity relationship between the Father and Son and it is used to distinguish the Born Son of the adopted one. In conclusion, this verse 14, is the culmination point of the prologue and represents the central event of human history.

15. In verse 15, “*John was testifying about Him and shouted, saying: He was of whom I said: He who comes after me was before me, because he was before me.*” With these words St. John the Baptist says: “He who comes after me was before me”, and necessarily adds: “because he was before me” (firstborn towards me). By this he shows us His ancient glory and that He was before all, states that He existed from the heavens, as God by nature. “Jesus said to them: Very truly I say to you: before Abraham was born, I am”. (John 8, 58)

16. In verse 16 – “*And of His fullness we all have received, and grace upon grace*” - Holy Evangelist John, proves through these words the truth of St. John the Baptist testimony and makes clear the proof of our overcoming by our Savior and that He is ontologically higher than all creation, in His glory. Father Stăniloae in an explanatory note says: “If the Evangelist said a little earlier that Christ was, as one born of the Father, “full of grace and truth”, here he gives the testimony of John about this fullness, but also about that from this fullness we have all received

³⁴ Colecția, Ortodoxia Românească, *Comentar la Evanghelia de la Ioan*, colecția Migne-vol.8, Paris, 1865, traducere din limba franceză, de diacon Gheorghe Băbuș, Ediția a 2-a, Editată de Mănăstirea „Portărița” Satu Mare, 2005, pag.

“grace upon grace”. And explaining this fullness, the Evangelist relates it specifically to all the goodies. The fullness is the infinity in all. In nothing the incarnated Son of God has no need and ability to move forward. It overcomes every edge. Only from this fullness can also the creatures receive endless the goodness of creatures. And in fact it must exist somewhere this fullness of all existing goodness. And it must be experienced personal to produce a true joy, so as to be a truly fullness. Someone must enjoy this fullness”.³⁵

17. In verse 17 – “For the law was given by Moses, and the grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.” – the “truth” must be understood as God's perfect revelation. In this verse, the Holy Evangelist pronounces for the first the name of Jesus Christ, who is none other, than the Logos who became Body. The name of Logos, from here and on will not be any more used, because the Gospel's subject is the historical person of the Savior. The truth is a whole existence. But this whole existence is perfect and without flaws and the source of existence is God. His Son, who carries into him from forever the reasons of all, came into Person to us and has united with Himself also the reasons which He gave the created existence. Through this came also all the love and all His grace to all people.

In Christianity, the Truth is not a notion of philosophy, a nice theory, a teaching, or a system of doctrines, but it is alive divine-human Hypostasis – the historical Jesus Christ (John 14, 6). Before the Christ's coming, people were just making a previous idea about the Truth, but didn't have it. Once with the entry of Christ in history, as the Logos of incarnated God, the Divine Truth plenary enters in this world.

18. St. Cyril, commenting on verse 18 – “No one has ever seen God; the One and only Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, has made Him known” - underlines that only to the Son the Father is seen by nature, so that no one should assume that we can see the divine nature.

But there is the question why in the Old Testament and New Testament is often red that God has revealed to the people, either visible to the bodily eyes, or unseen in the prophetic visions, and in the Gospel of John it is stated: “No one has ever seen God” (John 1, 18). If this is said only about the Father namely that nobody saw Him, the objection is easily solved, because it is understood that the Son's people and the Holy Spirit have appeared many times, and therefore

³⁵ PSB 40, Sfântul Chiril al Alexandriei, *Scrieri partea a treia, Despre Sfânta Treime*, traducere, introducere și note de Pr. Prof. Dr. Dumitru Stăniloae, Membru al Academiei Române, EIBMBOR-București, 1994, Pag. 119, nota 204

only the Father is hidden to any eyes. The basic idea of verse 18, is that God cannot be seen in his being.

But what does this phrase mean: “*Who is at the Father’s bosom or Father’s bosoms?* One thing is the bosom of the Father and another thing is the One – Born Son of the Father? Not another, but the One-Born Son is the Father’s bosom. The Son is called “bosom” of the Father because has “insinuated” the Father into the world”.³⁶ “The game of words belongs to Eriugena: “insinuated” in the world by Christ, the Father becomes knowable.”³⁷

So the one that is the God of nature, spends in the bosom of the Father and therefore only He alone can reveal Him to us in the most perfect way and he is made known to us of course only by that, as how much we humans are able to understand and receive this revelation.

CONCLUSIONS

Finally, we can highlight in a few ideas the depicted conclusions. First, the Logos of God is the creator of man, but also of the cosmos. This Logos, which St. John the Evangelist identifies it with the Son of God, has an eternal existence. This notion of Logos is known by the philosophy even before the Christianity. About this Logos have spoken some of the antiquity’s philosophers, among which we can mention Heraclitus, Plato, Socrates and also Philo of Alexandria, who prepared in time the people to receive, accept and know the word of a supreme Reason. Because of the fact that Christ Has incarnated in a historical person this Greek conception is outdated.

Through His coming in the world, the Logos is the mediator in creation: “Through Him all things were made” (John 1, 3) and also He is the Creator Logos. St. Maximus the Confessor and also other Holy Fathers speak of the pre-existing *logoi* in the Person of the Son which then creates the world. After the fall in the sin, the man broke off the life-giving grace of God, making the whole creature suffer. And God, in His infinite love, did not want His creatures to be wasted in death, in destruction, therefore, in His foreknowledge He ordained before the ages that the same Logos through which all were created, to restore the man who was created “in his own image”. (Genesis 1, 27)

³⁶ Ioan Scotus Eriugena , *Comentariu la Evanghelia lui Ioan*, ediție bilingvă, ed. Polirom 2009, pag. 39

³⁷ *Ibidem*, pag. 39, vezi nota 54, pag. 236

In the Logos was the life and also the light “that enlightens every man that cometh into the world” (John 1, 9). Through this Logos the world was created. From this perspective we can say that the world is a translation of the Word’s language in a creative way, it is a form of the Logos communication, but also an image of the Incarnation of Logos. Through the acceptance of the Logos of the human nature, He recapitulated all the people and those who willingly receive this grace “who believe in His name, gave them power to become children of God” (John 1, 12), means sons by grace, and not by being.

In the fullness of time (Galatians IV, 4), God sends His Son into the world, which not only came to the human but He Himself became a man, “Was made flesh (**σὰρξ ἐγένετο**)”. Even St. John the Evangelist stresses upon this aspect stating this word **σὰρξ** - meat, namely not flesh (in Greek **σώμα**). The Son of God became the Son of Virgin Mary, Has Incarnated from the Holy Spirit, and became man, for us and for our salvation as we confess in the Creed.

By His coming in the world, through his Incarnation, the Logos preaches the truth, makes miracles, dies on the cross and raises to save the creation and especially his dearest creature, the man. He is the one who overcomes death, giving life to the world, He is the one who sanctifies it, deifies her so she can be capable of eternity. Through His saving work, He, the image of the Father, restores the image of God in man, and therefore prepares the way for the commission and gracious deification of the man.

In the end, we say that the Logos is the Word of God, which remains the same, yesterday, today and forever, unchanged, after the word of the Savior: “The Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words, shall not pass away.” (Matthew 24, 35)

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