

Use of Allusion and Chiasm in John's Prologue to Promote a Persuasive Agenda

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Abstract

The literary technique in John 1:1-18 develops the persuasive concerns of the author. While numerous scholars point out the poetic quality of the text in suggesting an early hymn source for the passage, a smaller volume of work addresses the chiasmic structure of the whole. Viewing the entire passage as conceptually chiasmic reveals a balanced text dominated in the initial half by allusion to Genesis and a metaphor of light, followed in the latter half by allusion to Exodus and the concept of glory. The pivot of the chiasm highlights the results of belief. Chiasmic parallels draw attention to five concerns in line with the author's agenda to bring about belief in Jesus Christ. Recognizing the developed concerns in these introductory verses of John suggests direction for continued study in the gospel.

Key Words: Chiasm, allusion, parallelism, persuasion, light, glory, belief, John, gospel

1. Introduction

The Gospel of John attempts to persuade the reader to believe. The author clearly expresses his intention, writing, "these [signs] have been written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in his name" (John 20:31). Even though the author describes here his intent as persuasive, identifying the gospel's genre presents an elusive challenge to scholars who recognize elements of biography, narrative, theology and history. In whatever way the gospel may eventually be categorized, the first eighteen verses stand apart from the record of signs, speeches and dialogue encountered in the bulk of the work. The "rhythmical prose"¹ of the gospel's introduction possibly reveals the existence of an earlier Christian hymn²

¹ Carson, 1991: 112.

² Beasley-Murray, 2002: 3. Gordley provides a defense for recognizing the source of the prologue as didactic hymn (Gordley, 2009: 175).

taken over and employed by John³ as a prologue to his work. With literary skill in the use of allusion, metaphor and structure John uses his prologue to introduce major themes developed throughout the gospel. The first half of the prologue is dominated by an allusion to Genesis and the metaphoric image of light. The second half of the prologue is dominated by an allusion to Exodus and the concept of glory. These two halves of the prologue parallel one another in a chiasmic structure. This article determines to draw out the author's persuasive agenda by investigating first the development of the light image, then considering the chiasmic structure of the text and concluding with an examination of the glory concept.

2. Light as a Unifying Metaphor in the First Half of John's Prologue

The first words of John reach back to the ancient Jewish proclamation, "In the beginning ... the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep ... then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:1-3, NASB).⁴ The concepts of beginning, God, word, creation and light solidify John's allusion to Genesis. The allusion invokes a silent, black night, into which a spoken word releases piercing light. The word unleashes creative power. John's word⁵ is personified; not spoken by God, but existing with God. Creation, life and light proceed from the personified word. The word, who was with God in the beginning, will be identified as the light who comes into the world through a shift in identification that allows John to develop the light metaphor in John 1:4-11.

The Genesis allusion provides the initial context for the light metaphor, suggesting to the consciousness of the reader light newly shining in a formerly lightless universe. In John 1:4 life is in the word and somehow that life is the light of men. At this point the way John intends to use the light metaphor is undefined. The meaning is unclear. In describing the struggle between light and darkness, John uses the Greek word *καταλαμβάνω* which means literally "to overcome" and figuratively "to

³ Authorship of the Gospel of John is a debated topic. Reference in this article to John as the author is based on the direct indication of an implied author in John 21:24. The gospel refers to the author as the "beloved disciple," a first-hand witness of Jesus. Bauckham recognizes the author as John the Elder (Bauckham, 2007: 82). Carson makes the case for John the son of Zebedee (Carson, 1991: 68-81). Reference to John as the implied author, is an acknowledgment that the argument of real authorship is beyond the scope of this article.

⁴ All Scripture references are taken from the *New American Standard Bible* (Lockman Foundation, 1995).

⁵ Beasley-Murray calls the use of "word" (*λόγος*) by John in the prologue "a master-stroke of communication to the world of his day" (Beasley-Murray, 2002: lxvi), describing the familiarity of both Hebrew and Greek readers with some awareness of "word" as a theological or philosophical concept. While recognizing the importance of the concept to the prologue, discussion of the meaning of "word" is beyond the scope of this article.

understand”. Which meaning does John intend? Is the reader to imagine a power struggle with darkness failing to ultimately extinguish the light? Or is the reader to perceive a failure in the mind of darkness to understand and accept what the light reveals?

If failure to comprehend is the correct meaning, darkness must represent something that has cognizance, such as a person or group of persons, whether human or spiritual. The best test of John’s intended meaning comes from his usage of light and darkness in the gospel. Jesus will testify of himself, “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). John adds meaning to Jesus’ metaphorical use of light through narrative. In the passage following his self-proclamation, Jesus dialogues with religious leaders in the presence of a crowd with the result that “many came to believe in him” (John 8:30). By the end of the chapter, however, the crowd has accused Jesus of being demon-possessed and begun to pick up stones to stone him. It would seem that the light of the world has failed to bring about understanding in the crowd. Is this a representation of darkness overcoming light or darkness not understanding light? The comparison continues in the following chapter. Jesus again declares, “I am the light of the world” (John 9:5) and again John provides the reader with a telling narrative. In this case Jesus heals a man born blind, a man literally living in darkness. Religious leaders dismiss the miracle and try to turn the blind man against Jesus. The chapter ends ironically with the blind man seeing Jesus and the religious leaders being declared blind. If John is showing that darkness does not understand light, then the religious leaders must be equated with darkness. If John is showing that darkness does not overcome the light, then the blind man is an example of light’s victory.

In direct reference to darkness, Jesus says, “he who follows me will not walk in darkness” (John 8:12) and “he who walks in the darkness does not see where he goes” (John 12:35). In these references John does not represent darkness as the human beings or demonic forces opposing Jesus. Rather, darkness describes a state of existence that affects human ability to recognize the truth about Jesus. The religious leaders were unable to understand, not because they are darkness, but because they walk in a state of darkness. If darkness is a state of being then it is unlikely that John communicates in 1:5 that the darkness does not understand. John pictures darkness as a force that resists the revelatory power of the light, but in the end this darkness does not successfully

overcome the light.⁶ Though John primarily communicates that the darkness does not overcome the light, the secondary meaning of understanding hints at the nature of the power struggle. As a personified moral state, darkness resists the light's effort to enlighten by trapping the human mind in shadowy gloom. Darkness strives to overcome by obscuring a right understanding of the light.

In John 1:6 the writer introduces John the Baptist as a foil to the light.⁷ The role of John the Baptist is to reveal truth about Jesus as a witness. Later in the gospel Jesus says that John the Baptist served as a lamp, providing light until his own coming (John 5:35). Because John the Baptist functioned in a revelatory role, he could be mistakenly understood as the writer's referent for the light metaphor. The author makes clear, however, that John the Baptist is not the light being described here.

John develops the identity of the light in verses 9 through 11. The light will come into the world and perform a revelatory role as the one who "enlightens every man." John links the light to the word as the one through whom the world is made (John 1:3, 10). The light will be resisted by the world and by those who are his own, suggesting the work of darkness which fights to keep the light at bay. The rejection of the light by the world creates tension with the previous claim that darkness does not overcome the light. John assures the reader in 1:12-13 that the rejection of the light is not total. Some will believe and be born to new life. The initial allusion to Genesis created an image of word and light that John personified. As light pierced into the universe at creation, so also a new light has entered the world piercing the darkness that binds human beings, pointing the way to a new, familial relationship with God.

3. The Chiastic Structure of John's Prologue

The linear development of John 1:1-13 breaks in John 1:14 with the shift back from light to word and the shocking statement that the word which made everything also became flesh. Oddly, John then makes a repetitive reference to the witness of John the Baptists in verse 15. The writer had already established John as a witness in John 1:6-8. The second reference does add new information regarding the witness, but the reference feels misplaced because of the distance from the earlier reference and because it breaks up the flow of thought regarding grace and truth that occurs in verses 14, 16 and 17. Since verse 14 would flow nicely into verse 16, the question naturally arises,

⁶ Carson, 1991: 119-120, 138. See also, Beasley-Murray, 2002: 11.

⁷ Carson, 1991: 113.

“Why quote the Baptist here?” The repetition of the Baptist provides a clue to the nature of John’s structure.

Following up this interesting textual clue reveals further parallels in the prologue well explained by a chiastic⁸ arrangement of the text. Both Old Testament and New Testament authors employ chiastic parallelism. An author produces a chiastic arrangement by paralleling the first item with the last item, the second item with the second to last item, the third item with the third to last item and so on. A chiastic structure is not limited by the number of parallel elements and may contain an unparalleled pivot point in the middle of the structure. Chiastic structure is also not limited to a particular Biblical genre.⁹

Paul’s chiasm in Romans 10:9-10 provides a useful example through the clear parallelism of identical words (confess, mouth, believe, heart) that point to an unparalleled middle phrase (you shall be saved). Chiastic structure may be lost in translation from the original Greek when meaning is better communicated through an adjustment of the word order. The following example maintains the order of the significant words in Paul’s Greek.

A That if you confess
B with your mouth Jesus as Lord
C and believe
D in your heart that God raised Him from the dead,
E you shall be saved
D’ for with the heart
C’ man believes resulting in righteousness
B’ and with the mouth
A’ he confesses, resulting in salvation.¹⁰

Turning again to John’s prologue, a chiastic example appears immediately. The following is a rough translation of John 1:1-2 that maintains the author’s Greek word

⁸ Lund, 1930: 74-93. The explanation of chiasm presented here follows Lund. Lund argues that the use of chiastic structure is a Hebrew influence on New Testament literature (ibid. 91-92). Frank Moore Cross has shown the presence of chiasm to extend beyond the Old Testament, being employed in Ugarit poetry contemporary with early Hebrew literature (Cross, 1974: 1-15).

⁹ The flood story of Genesis 6:9-9:19 provides an example of chiastic structure in the narrative genre that artistically ascends with the rise of the waters to the midpoint of 8:1 with God’s remembrance of Noah before descending again with the lowering of the waters (Wenham, 1998: 156). Jeremiah 20:7-18 serves as an example in prophetic literature with a midpoint of praise in 12-13 being sandwiched between deep angst. See Psalm 145:2 for a poetic example.

¹⁰ Šarić provides a Croatian translation that keeps the Greek word order for Romans 10:9-10. (Šarić, I. E.: *Biblija, Sveto pismo Staroga i Novoga zavjeta*. Hrvatsko biblijsko društvo, Zagreb 2010.)

order. This chiasmic pattern links each line together by repeating the final word of the line at the beginning of the next line.¹¹

A In the beginning was the word

B and the word was with God

B' and God was the word.

A' He was in the beginning with God

John Staley recognizes this use of chiasm in the first lines of the prologue as an invitation to consider whether the author will repeat this type of arrangement.¹² Combining this micro example of chiasm in the first two verses with the macro clue of repetition regarding John the Baptist's witness, the reader becomes justified in searching for parallel stanzas that create an arrangement for the whole of the prologue. The following division of the text agrees with the chiasmic structure identified by Staley.¹³

A With God and Making God Known (Nature and Role)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life, and the life was the Light of men. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it (John 1:1-5).

B Witness of John the Baptist (Witness)

There came a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to testify about the Light, so that all might believe through him. He was not the Light, but he came to testify about the Light (John 1:6-8).

C Coming into the World (Mode and Response)

There was the true Light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and those who were His own did not receive Him (John 1:9-11).

¹¹ Staley, 1986: 243.

¹² Staley, 1986: 243-244. See also, Culpepper, 1980: 10.

¹³ Staley, 1986: 245-246. Culpepper provides a history of the chiasmic treatment of John 1:1-18 (Culpepper, 1980: 2-6), arriving at a 15 point chiasm that divides the text with more detail than Staley. While Culpepper is able to draw out more parallels, his chiasm breaks apart the text at two critical points. First, he fails to link the revelatory role of Jesus in 1:5 and 1:18, and second, he breaks apart the 1, 2, 1', 2' structure of 1:12-13 (Culpepper, 1980: 16). By placing 1:12-13 at the center of the chiasm, the structure provided here agrees with Culpepper's primary thesis regarding the importance of the term τέκνα θεοῦ, while maintaining the parallel between "children of God" in 1:12 and "born of God" in 1:13. Beasley-Murray resists accepting the prologue as chiasmic based on arguments against Culpepper (Beasley-Murray, 2002: 4). Staley's division of the text, however, seems to overcome Beasley-Murray's objections.

D Result of Belief in His Name (Response and Result)

1 *But as many as received Him,*

2 *to them He gave the right to become children of God,*

1' *even to those who believe in His name,*

2' *who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God.* (John 1:12-13).¹⁴

C' Coming into the World (Mode and Response)

And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth (John 1:14).

B' Witness of John the Baptist (Witness)

John testified about Him and cried out, saying, "This was He of whom I said, 'He who comes after me has a higher rank than I, for He existed before me' " (John 1:15).

A' With God and Making God known (Nature and Role)

For of His fullness we have all received, and grace upon grace. For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time; the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, He has explained Him (John 1:16-18).

Recognition of John's structure affirms five concerns related to John's persuasive agenda. Each of these concerns is developed in the first half of the chiasm with the aid of the Genesis allusion and light metaphor and then emphasized through repetition in the second half of the chiastic structure. The concerns may be categorized as (1) the nature of Jesus Christ, (2) the revelatory role of Jesus Christ, (3) the mode by which this role is accomplished, (4) the response of people to Jesus Christ, and (5) the result of responding positively to Jesus Christ.

Two word links and two conceptual links connect A with A'.¹⁵ (1) The word for God occurs 3 times in A, 2 times in D and 2 times in A', suggesting an A – D – A' link. The only other reference to God is in 1:6. (2) A and A' both contain words referring to eternal time, "in the beginning" and "at any time." More significantly, A and A' are linked conceptually, (3) addressing the nature of Jesus, particularly the fact that he is

¹⁴ Some scholars follow the Old Latin translation of "who was born", seeing this clause as a reference to the virgin birth of Christ. No Greek manuscripts, however, support this reading. The original most surely has in mind "who were born", referring to those who believe in Jesus (Carson, 1991: 138-139).

¹⁵ Culpepper, 1980: 10. The first three links for A and A' are shown by Culpepper.

with God, and (4) communicating the role Jesus executes in revealing God. Concerning the nature of the word in A, he is identified as God, has life in himself and has seen God. In A' he is said to have seen God, is referred to as the only begotten Son and is in the bosom of the Father. The nature of Jesus Christ is connected in both A and A' with his revelatory role. In A the metaphor of Jesus as light indicates this role, as implied through the struggle between light and darkness and later affirmed in verse 9 with the direct comment, "the light enlightens." In A' the description of Jesus as the Son who has seen God and is in the bosom of the Father¹⁶ indicates intimate knowledge by which he "explains"¹⁷ the Father. That Jesus reveals himself as benefactor to humankind is suggested in A through the declaration, "in him was life and that life was the light of men" (John 1:4) and in A' through the comment, "For of his fullness we have all received" (John 1:16).

References to (1) John the Baptist and to (2) witness link together B and B'. In John 5:34 Jesus will say that he does not need testimony from man. If Jesus is indeed God, then his testimony is valid apart from the Baptist. Still, John the Baptist is recognized in the gospel as a light, and though his testimony is not necessary, his testimony is considered important. Just as the revelatory work of Jesus leads people to belief, the testimony of the Baptist serves the same purpose (John 1:7). Reference to the witness of John the Baptist may also affirm the role the writer of the gospel sees himself serving, as a witness to the one whose witness stands for itself. Reference to the Baptist in the prologue also seems to create movement from the eternal time of A and A' to the temporal time of C and C' where the author proclaims Jesus as entering a moment of history.¹⁸

The link between C and C' holds together conceptually with (1) the coming of Jesus into the world as the light and as the word. John emphasizes that Jesus' mode of revelation consists of becoming human which is strikingly different from God's mode of revelation to Moses through the spoken word. C and C' also (2) indicate response to Jesus. In C human beings respond through rejection. In C' the author communicates

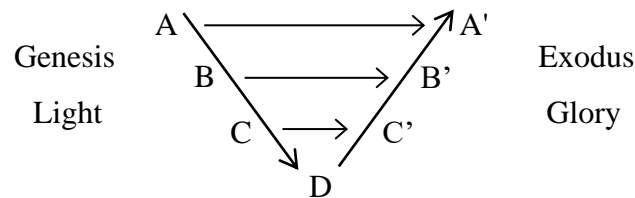
¹⁶ In the story of the last supper "the disciple Jesus loved" leans onto the chest of Jesus to receive knowledge concerning who will betray him (John 13:23-26). The story provides a parallel to recognizing the Son's place in the bosom of the Father as a place where intimate knowledge is received (Beasley-Murray, 2002: 4).

¹⁷ Defining the final verb of the prologue is not easy. Boismard defines ἐξηγήσατο as "to lead" (Boismard, 1957: 70). Carson calls this highly improbable, and suggests both the meaning of "made known" and "narrating." (Carson, 1991: 135). Harris prefers the meaning "to communicate divine things" because it works without the need of an object which is lacking in verse 18, and because it has a broad range of meaning that could cover both Jesus' words and actions (Harris, 1994: 114-115).

¹⁸ Carson, 1991: 113.

personal positive response by declaring, “we beheld his glory...full of grace and truth” (John 1:14).

The central point of the chiasm D, announces the result of receiving Jesus. The idea of knowing Jesus occurs in John 1:10, while receiving and believing are paralleled here in the central section in the lines marked 1 and 1'. Through the gospel John will develop the tension of whether a person truly knows, receives or believes in Jesus or whether the professed attachment to Jesus is only superficial.¹⁹ The author does not address here in the prologue the tension of superficial versus true belief. John simply declares the result of the one who believes through the parallel ideas in 2 and 2' of having the right to become children of God and being born of God. This new life through belief is the goal stated in John 20:31 toward which the author intends to persuade his readers.



The chiastic pattern of the prologue is further tied together through the two Old Testament allusions and through the light and glory motifs drawn from those allusions and applied to Jesus Christ. John uses the parallel pairs of his chiasm to conceptually develop his agenda.²⁰ A and A' both represent Jesus in an eternal state of being²¹ with A' developing further the ideas of Christ as God, Christ with God and Christ revealing God initiated in A. In A John introduces the word in special relationship to God. In A' he names Jesus and uses the familial terms father and son to deepen the intimacy in the relationship between word and God. In B John the Baptist is introduced as witness. B' provides actual content, quoting the witness of John the Baptist. C declares that the light has come into the world. C' goes much further declaring not only that the word has come into the world, but that the word has come into the world being made flesh. C' also indicates the name of the word as truth and grace.

¹⁹ See for example, Jesus' questioning of Nathanael's belief in John 1:50 and his reticence to entrust himself to those who believe in him in John 2:23-25 or the contrast in 4:39-45 between the Samaritans who truly received Jesus and the Galileans who received Jesus without really receiving him.

²⁰ Though Philippians 2:6-11 begins and ends similarly to John 1:1-18 with Jesus Christ existing as God, the Christ hymn in Philippians uses chiasm, not developmentally but chronologically, creating movement in time by showing Jesus as God, becoming man, dying on a cross, being exalted and established again as Lord. Gordley incorrectly considers John 1:1-18 also chronological, but this does not satisfactorily account for the emphasis of Christ's eternal relationship with God in A and A' nor for the repeated reference of John the Baptist (Gordley, 2009: 791).

²¹ Beasley-Murray, 2002: 4.

Though the middle point of the chiasm certainly should be understood as carefully chosen by the author,²² the center does not necessarily command lone privilege. John's retention of the name Jesus Christ until A' creates a sense of suspense revealed only at the end of the structure. The beginning and end may be recognized as sharing special importance with the center. The effect of John's A – D – A' structure may be intended to maintain a positive tension between the nature of Jesus Christ and the benefit that belief brings to human beings. A tension regarding the reward of belief arises from the motives of the one who believes. Is belief motivated out of admiration toward the one in whom a person believes or by a more mercenary motive to simply obtain the reward of belief? By beginning with the unique nature of Jesus as God, moving on to the reward of belief and then returning back to further elaborate on the nature of Jesus, John does not leave the reader with the idea that reward alone is the most important aspect of his agenda. Reward is related to the right recognition of the nature of Jesus. Thus, John's structure holds together in tension the relationship between the object of belief and the reward of belief. John works to maintain this tension through the gospel emphasizing both the glory of Christ and promise of eternal life to those who believe.

4. Glory as a Unifying Concept in the Second Half of John's Prologue

While allusion to Genesis and the light metaphor dominate the first half of the prologue's chiasm, John continues to promote his persuasive agenda in the second half through the concept of glory and an allusion to Exodus. At the pivot point of the structure in 1:12-13, John connects reception of Christ with belief in his name. John's readers would understand belief in the name to indicate belief in "the character of the person, or even in the person himself."²³ Reference to belief in the name also serves to subtly set up an allusion to one of the most important name stories in the Old Testament. Through John's use of the words dwelling, glory, grace, truth, law and Moses in verses 14 and 17, the reader is reminded of God's declaration of his name to Moses during a moment of national crisis. A summary of the Exodus story will help clarify how John establishes the allusion and how he uses the narrative to develop his representation of Jesus Christ.

²² Culpepper, 1980: 14.

²³ Carson, 1991: 125.

4.1 Glory and God's Name in the Exodus Narrative

In Genesis God promised to make Abraham a great nation and to give him a land. The narrative ends, however, with only a family, saved through the younger son Joseph, living in the foreign land of Egypt. A twist in the narrative takes place between Genesis and Exodus. The favored family at the end of Genesis has become an enslaved multitude by the start of Exodus. They are not a nation, but a people of slaves with no land, no law and, seemingly, no god. The Exodus narrative may be divided into three major sections, the rescue of Israel from Egypt, the establishment of covenant at Sinai and the indwelling of God in the tabernacle. God, the great king, desires a people with whom he will covenant and among whom he will make his dwelling place on earth. He had promised this people would be descendants of Abraham. God begins his rescue operation by selecting his spokesman Moses with a miraculous appearance as fire on a bush that is not burned up. God proclaims his name to Moses as Yahweh, which may be translated "I am." Moses travels back to Egypt and announces to Pharaoh Yahweh's command to, "Let my people go." Pharaoh tellingly responds, "Who is Yahweh that I should obey his voice to let Israel go" (Exodus 5:2)? Yahweh then reveals himself to Pharaoh by defeating all the powers of Egypt through ten plagues and by demolishing Egypt's chariot army in the middle of the Red Sea. Completing his rescue, God delivers Israel through the desert to Mount Sinai. Stage one of the narrative is completed with the rescue of Israel. In stage two God covenants with the nation in order to make Israel his special people. God appears again in fire but on an appropriately nation-sized mountain rather than an individual-sized bush. The people agree to the covenant, sacrifice is made to ratify the agreement, and Moses returns to the mountain to receive the plans for God's tabernacle. The narrative should come to an end with the return of Moses from the mountain and God taking up residence among the people in the tabernacle. Crisis, however, interrupts such a smooth ending, leading to a third part of the narrative that must now bring about resolution, either by the destruction or reconciliation of Israel.

The people of Israel initiate the crisis by breaking covenant with Yahweh through the making of a gold idol in his name. Returning during the idolatrous celebration Moses furiously breaks the tablets of revelation and destroys the idol. Incensed by the rebellion of Israel, God tells Moses he cannot dwell among Israel, declaring, "I will not go up in your midst, because you are an obstinate people, lest I destroy you on the way" (Exodus 33:3). This is the dilemma of the burning bush

introduced earlier in the narrative. How can fire remain on a bush without burning it up? How can a holy God dwell among a sinful people without destroying them? Moses pleads with God to keep his plan to dwell with his people, and God relents. Encouraged by the Lord's acquiescence, and possibly concerned with the potential consequences, Moses beseeches Yahweh, "I pray you, show me your glory" (Exodus 33:18)! Yahweh responds with the assurance that no human being can see his glory and live. Instead he consents to speak his glory to Moses by proclaiming his name.

Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, "The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth; who keeps lovingkindness for thousands, who forgives iniquity, transgression and sin; yet He will by no means leave the guilty unpunished, visiting the iniquity of fathers on the children and on the grandchildren to the third and fourth generations" (Exodus 34:6-7).

God's glory is not shown to Moses. God's glory is spoken to Moses as the character qualities inherent in his name. After proclaiming his glory to Moses in the form of his name, God re-establishes covenant with Israel. Moses then leads the people in the construction of the holy tabernacle. The Exodus narrative concludes in the last paragraph with the dramatic descent of God's shining glory onto the tabernacle as he takes up residence among his people in the form of cloud and fire.

Later Old Testament authors indicate the importance of the Exodus name narrative by alluding to Exodus 34:6 in order to communicate the character of God. In a song extoling the Lord as King, David declares, "The Lord is gracious and merciful; slow to anger and great in lovingkindness" (Psalm 145:8). David also refers to the gracious name of the Lord to begin a song of confession, "Be gracious to me, O God, according to your lovingkindness, according to the greatness of your compassion blot out my transgressions" (Psalm 51:1). Jonah produces an ironic allusion to Exodus 34:6 as a complaint that God might forgive Israel's enemies, saying, "for I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, and one who relents concerning calamity" (Jonah 4:2). These Old Testament writers display belief in God by applying to him the character qualities proclaimed in his name.

4.2. Glory and the Name of Jesus

After referring to belief in Jesus' name, John establishes clear links to the name narrative in Exodus through three allusions in 1:14. The first allusion comes from

John's curious choice of the word σκηνώω which means to dwell or take up residence and is derived from the Greek word for tent.²⁴ The word is not common in the New Testament, being used only three other times. To dwell in a tent is suggestive of God's choice to dwell in the tabernacle. Second, John claims directly that "we beheld his glory." Third, John says this glory is full of "grace and truth," appropriately translating the Hebrew for "lovingkindness and truth" found in Exodus 34:6.²⁵ Reference to law and Moses in John 1:17 and the comment in 1:18 that "no man has seen God at any time,"²⁶ solidify the author's intention to use the background context of Exodus in developing the glory of Jesus. The allusion paints in the background God's gracious agreement to reinstate covenant with Israel, the revelation of his glory to Moses through the declaration of his name, and his climatic dwelling among Israel in the holy tabernacle.

John initiates a striking comparison and contrast between the way glory came to Moses and how glory comes through Jesus Christ. The reference to glory, appearing first in C', is beheld in the word who has been made flesh. God did not come in the flesh to Moses. God spoke his glory to Moses after assuring Moses, "You cannot see My face, for no man can see Me and live" (Exodus 33:20). But now the word has become human, making it possible for people to see God's glory in the life of Jesus. In B', the witness of John the Baptist does not use the word glory, but does attribute glory status to Jesus Christ, proclaiming, "He who comes after me has a higher rank than I" (John 1:15). Likewise though John does not return to the word glory in A' he does communicate the glory name of Jesus in two different ways. "Grace for grace" in John 1:16 communicates contrast. One grace has given away or been replaced by another grace.²⁷ The grace shown to Israel and declared to Moses has given away to the grace that is now realized in the superior revelation of Jesus Christ made flesh. Jesus' glory is beheld as the one through whom "grace and truth were realized" (John 1:17), or in other

²⁴ Kittel, 1976: Vol. 7, 368.

²⁵ Carson, 1991: 129. Also, Kostenberger, 2004: 45 and Boismard, 1957: 54. Harris disagrees noting the LXX usage (Harris, 1994: 66).

²⁶ Exodus 33:20. That no one has ever seen God may seem contradictory to Exodus 33:11 which declares that Moses used to speak with God "face to face." Yet here again the nature and experience of Jesus is shown to be at a completely different level. Moses did not see the full glory of God, but a muted version, in contrast with Jesus who experienced close intimacy with the Father (Evans, 1993: 81).

²⁷ Modern translations of "grace upon grace" or "one blessing/gift after another" do not reflect any of the 20 other New Testament uses of the preposition ἀντί. Neither does the Septuagint in any of its 325 occurrences use ἀντί as the piling up of one thing upon another. Kostenberger comments in regard to the translation of χάριν ἀντί χάριτος, "There is no parallel to 'grace upon grace' in all of ancient Greek literature" (Kostenberger, 2004: 47). The meaning of ἀντί "should indicate either opposition or the substitution of one for another, but not accumulation" (Boismard, 1957: 60).

words, as the one in whom the name of God was realized. God spoke his glory to Moses, but John claims to have seen God's glory in the flesh.

The second attribution of the glory name in A' comes through the proclamation of the name Jesus Christ. The naming of Jesus Christ in John 1:17 carries significance beyond mere identification of a certain individual. The name Jesus means "Yahweh saves."²⁸ The label Christ is the Greek translation of the Hebrew word Messiah or anointed one.²⁹ The Messiah is the King who would come. So, the name Jesus Christ means something like "The King through whom Yahweh saves." Glory is rightly attributed to a king, especially to a king with the power to save. Jesus is declared the King of Israel in his first encounter with Nathanael in John 1:49 and, by the ironic insistence of Pilate, he is proclaimed the King of the Jews at his crucifixion in John 19:19. The word glory reoccurs nineteen times in the gospel text. The first occurrence after the prologue comes when Jesus performs his first sign, turning water into wine. Jesus is said to have manifested his glory (John 2:11). Glory appears again in connection to a miracle with the raising of Lazarus. In an ironic moment, religious leaders challenge the blind man healed by Jesus in chapter 9 to give glory by rejecting the Jesus who had healed him, saying, "Give glory to God; we know that this man is a sinner" (John 9:24). In a chapter that bridges the end of Jesus' public ministry and begins the week of his passion, glory is connected with his death as the hour "for the Son of Man to be glorified" (John 12:23). This same dialogue connects the idea of glory with the idea of Jesus being lifted up (John 12:32).³⁰ The phrase "lifted up" connects the glory due Jesus as a king with the irony that he will not be lifted up in glorious recognition, but lifted up physically in shame on a cross. And yet, the hour of his shame is also called the hour of his glory, when the nature of the God of grace and truth is supremely displayed. Jesus Christ, as the King who saves, is also the king who dies. John does not indicate in the prologue that the grace of Jesus leads to death, being content initially to establish Jesus' name as "grace and truth" and as "the King through

²⁸ The name Jesus or Joshua is a sentence name combining the Hebrew words for "Yahweh" and "to help" (Kittle, 1964: Vol. 3, 289).

²⁹ Morris, 1995: 99-100.

³⁰ The phrase "lifted up" occurs in John 3:14; 8:28 and 12:32. Jesus' first reference during his conversation with Nicodemus enigmatically compares his own lifting up with the story of the serpent lifted up on a pole in Numbers 21:9. In that narrative serpents had been used to punish the rebellion of Israel and the curse, that is the image of a serpent, was fixed to a pole. Whoever looked at the serpent was healed. In the same way, the statement of Jesus should be connected to his being lifted up on the cross as the curse of death that hovers over each human being with the implication that anyone who looks on him in faith is healed. The connection between "lifting up" and the crucifixion seems clear.

whom Yahweh saves,” without indicating the sacrifice that must be made to bring about the kind of salvation this king brings.

5. Conclusion

The prologue of John artistically sets up the author’s agenda with a chiasmic structure that lies hidden like the beams of a house. As Culpepper observes, “To have made the chiasmic structure more explicit would necessarily have made it more artificial.”³¹ Skillfully weaving together the New Covenant revelation of Jesus Christ through allusion to a rich Old Covenant context the author highlights the deity and incarnation of Jesus without artificially drawing attention to the carefully crafted structure of his text. Recognition of the structure serves to focus and develop themes already apparent. John will address each of these interrelated concerns, emphasized by the structure, in the gospel: (1) the nature of Jesus, (2) the revelatory role of Jesus, (3) the human mode of Jesus’ work to reveal, (4) the response of people to Jesus and (5) the result of responding to Jesus either negatively or positively. Recognition of these concerns in the prologue suggests the profitability of studying each theme further through the rest of the work. Such further study will encounter a genre shift. The didactic nature of the prologue which sets up the author’s concerns gives way in John 1:19 to a narrative style of journey, miracles, speeches, feasts and dialogue. Just as Jesus is represented as word and light in the prologue, the reader is invited in the gospel to hear the words of Jesus and to see his acts. These acts and words of Jesus are the witness of the author who intends, through his witness, to move readers to believe.

³¹ Culpepper, 1980: 17.

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