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### **Ancient Philosophy's Search for the Logos and John's Gospel**

"The most incomprehensible thing about the universe is that it is comprehensible" - Einstein.

Eva Brann, in her work, *The Logos of Heraclitus*, says that Philosophy begins with the two concepts of *Logos*<sup>1</sup> and being (*ontos*). Brann's thesis seems essentially correct, but one could make the slightly stronger claim that philosophy begins with wondering about the causal connection between *Logos* and being. The argument of this paper is that Philosophy begins as the search for the *Logos*, but that the search is incomplete until the Prologue to John the Apostle's Gospel. The search for the *Logos* is a search for an explanation of the fit between thinking (or reason) and being. The first philosophers assume an isomorphism between thinking and being, and then they wonder why and how such an isomorphism exists. The explanation of the *Logos*, as isomorphism between reason and being, is incomplete until the Apostle John introduces the element of Christian Theism and the Trinity. John's Prologue provides the most comprehensive explanation of the *Logos*. Where previous searches for the explanation for the fit between thinking and being came short and resulted in skepticism, John's Gospel successfully explains the isomorphism and provides the key to grasping Truth. His description of the *Logos* is clear, simple, elegant, and full. Where previous

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<sup>1</sup> Sometimes "*Logos*" is capitalized, sometimes it is not. Deciding whether to use "*Logos*" or "*logos*" is a judgment call based upon context.

philosophers were groping the dark to understand the *Logos*, John's revelation is illuminating. Because of its clear explanation of the *Logos*, and the *Logos* being a fundamental feature of philosophy, John's Gospel continues to have implications for doing philosophy today.

"*Logos*" is multifaceted in meaning that grows and changes over time picking up applications and nuances as philosophers pursue with wonder the relationship between thinking and the world. The first philosophers all recognize an isomorphism between reason (in man)<sup>2</sup> and being in the world. Yet, none acknowledge the being of the God of theism. The failure to connect thinking with the being of God will be a source of skepticism in philosophy until John's Gospel supplies the connection between reason, being, and the being of God. Philosophy begins with the search for the *Logos* and the question: Why is the world comprehensible? What is the nature of what can be known and what is the nature of the knower? Philosophy begins with this wondering.

The original meaning of *logos*, frequently used by Homer, is "collecting and laying down" and "giving an account,"<sup>3</sup> as in telling and relating a tale. Early use of *logos* is associated with speaking, arguing, thinking, reasoning, and writing.<sup>4</sup> In these early uses, *logos* is the "vehicle of human rationality."<sup>5</sup> *Logos* is often viewed as "thought itself as well as the utterance that tells it."<sup>6</sup> *Logos* relates terms and relates magnitudes (*ratios*).<sup>7</sup> Early usage provide a sense of *logos* as the relation between reason and

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<sup>2</sup> The use of "man" is meant to convey universal humanity as has been used historically.

<sup>3</sup> Brann, Eva. *The Logos of Heraclitus*. (Philadelphia: Paul Dry Books, 2011), p.10.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

words. What is assumed is that thoughts are about being and thoughts are expressed by speech. Thus, *logos* mediates or relates being via speech. *Logos* relates thoughts in my mind to the mind of another via words. *Logos* in early usage is reason (in the mind) giving an account of being via speech or writing, mediating meaning to the reason of others.

Brann calls Pythagoras (570 - 495 BCE) a “mathematical-philosopher,” reserving first “philosopher-philosopher” for Heraclitus (535 - 475 BCE). She strongly believes that Heraclitus was taught, either directly or indirectly, by Pythagoras and that Heraclitus’ view of *logos* advances some Pythagorean assumptions. The Pythagorean philosophy consists in a “trinity of the cosmological principles Monad, Dyad, and Harmony, which corresponds on the moral and intellectual level to the trinity of Truth, Goodness, and Beauty. The principle of Harmony, immanent in the universe, was responsible for the proportional (*analogia*) relation (*logos*) of one thing to the other.”<sup>8</sup> Monad (one) represents unity, Dyad (many) diversity, and Harmony is the “relationship (the *ratio*, *logos*, in proportion, *analogia*) of one thing to another.” This relation is “particularly represented by the proportion between numbers, geometrical figures, or tones in the musical scale.”<sup>9</sup> Harmony, or *logos*, is immanent in nature and is the bond between the one (Monad) and the many (Dyad). For Pythagoras, the *logos* is an immanent principle that may be apprehended analogically via the senses. Brann says, “the deliverances of

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<sup>8</sup> Hillar, Marian. *From Logos to Trinity: The Evolution of Religious Beliefs from Pythagoras to Tertullian*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), p. 7.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.

our senses are expressible through the *logoi* of our minds.”<sup>10</sup> There is a harmonious fit between mind and world, that is, reason is ontological.

The question arises, how do the *logoi* in our minds relate to the “original sensory events?”<sup>11</sup> The Pythagoreans realized that the events of sensory experience could only be related to the sensory world via analogy. They are led to resolve “this dilemma by their difficult doctrine that the sense-world *was* numerical and was *constituted of* numbers and number-relations.”<sup>12</sup> The problem for the Pythagoreans seems to be the same that will trouble other pre-Socratic philosophers: Beginning with the assumptions of materialism and empiricism leads to an inability to explain how or why there is a fit between reason and being. The materialist-empiricist foundation is not adequate to rationally justify why there is a *logos*. Why is there a *ratio*? Why is there harmony? Pythagoras answers these questions by reducing matter to number.

Heraclitus, assuming the fit between mind and world, explains the fit, not numerically, but by means of Fire.<sup>13</sup> Brann argues that Heraclitus’ Fire is an analogy, or *analogia*, ratio-relation or proportion, which is *logos* or *logoi*. Heraclitus thinks all is material and in chaotic flux. This flux is brought to order by means of antagonistic opposition. The opposition is ordered via the *Logos*-Fire. Heraclitus builds upon the *ratio*-relation of Pythagoras. He affirms a fit between all minds (the common) and the world. He thinks the *logos* is common to all men, but that men consistently fail to see the *logos*. Brann conjectures:

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<sup>10</sup> Brann, p. 33.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 33.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

That in pondering what makes the multifarious world one, he began to think about relationality itself and to consider that a *logos* might fill the bill who was all at once the relater of all relations, beyond and within them, a maker of the world-order and himself in that order, a world-governor, and also the world — a doer, a sayer, and perhaps himself a listener.<sup>14</sup>

It also seems that the “non-sensory *logoi* govern the sensory world.”<sup>15</sup> To summarize: *Logos* for Heraclitus is the harmony between thinking and being. There are non-sensory *logoi* that govern the sensible world. The cosmos is governed by Thinking itself, which is fundamentally rational, measurable, capable of *ratio*-relations, and common to all men, but men are deaf to the *logos*.<sup>16</sup>

Heraclitus sees deficiencies with those who went before him in attempting to ground the *logos* in mythological and technical terms that ultimately fail to explain causation.<sup>17</sup> Yet, Heraclitus’ philosophy of the *logos* raises similar questions. Is the *logos* an immanent self-governing principle of the world? If so, how did the *logos* come to be in the world? Or is the *logos* a transcendent externally governing divine and personal intelligent being? Brann asks: “Is this Wisdom a ‘what’ or a ‘who?’”<sup>18</sup> Does the *logos* operate as impersonal law organizing the material world? What is the origin of this ratio-relation that provides rational order? Or does the *logos* have another kind of substance? Is *logos* spirit ordering matter? Heraclitus is ambivalent as to whether *logos* is immanent or transcendent, personal or impersonal, matter or spirit.

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 42.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 43.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., p. 46.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

Protagoras (490-420 BCE), a Sophist expressing skepticism regarding the nature of reality after the failures of first philosophy to ground the *logos* in the material world gets associated with the Heraclitian flux doctrine by later philosophers Plato and Aristotle. Only fragments of Protagoras' work remain. The third fragment from Protagoras concerns the *logoi*. In this fragment he says: "There are two opposing arguments (*logoi*) concerning everything."<sup>19</sup> Edward Schiappa, in his analysis of the "two-*logoi*" fragment says: "the important idea of the fragment is that there are two *logoi* in opposition about every "thing."<sup>20</sup> He argues that Protagoras advances the Heraclitian flux doctrine with this "two-*logoi*" statement. He notes that "Sextus [Empiricus] reports that Protagoras held that "the reasons [*logoi*] of all the appearances [*phainomenon*] subsist in the matter." The two-*logoi*, on Schiappa's interpretation makes the statement more about metaphysics than about there being two sides to every argument as in a debate. Schiappa makes the case that Plato, in the *Theaetetus* must have had a similar understanding of Protagoras advancing a Heraclitian metaphysical position and says "when Plato discussed Protagoras' theory of knowledge in the *Theaetetus*, he cited Heraclitus (as well as Empedocles) as someone who would agree with the notion that "if you speak of something as big, it will also appear small; if you speak of it as heavy, it will also appear light; and similarly everything." Given the quote from Plato, and the connection Schiappa makes between the thinking of Heraclitus and that of Protagoras,

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<sup>19</sup> Cohen, S. Marc., Patricia Curd, and C. D. C. Reeve. *Readings in Ancient Greek Philosophy: From Thales to Aristotle*. (Indianapolis: Hackett Pub., 1995), p. 75.

<sup>20</sup> Schiappa, Edward. *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric*. (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), p. 89.

the two-*logoi* fragment may be speaking of the relativity of our perception of the physical world.

The two-*logoi* fragment may be taken as either 1) there are two accounts of every position, or 2) metaphysically, there are two oppositional sides to every thing.

Schiappa takes the latter reading, and states that with the two-*logoi* fragment:

Heraclitus' opposites in Protagoras' use began to be treated in noncompositional manner, in terms of contrariety and contradiction rather than as strictly opposing forces of nature. Put differently, nature began to be viewed in more abstract logical patterns such as "as-P" and "as-not-P" seeing opposites as essentially linguistic (*logoi*) was a necessary step to a more abstract conceptualization to their being seen as attributes that can be predicated with respect to "things."<sup>21</sup>

Schiappa seems to suggest that Protagoras' version of the flux doctrine allows for abstract logic to develop. Whereas Pythagoras and Heraclitus were noticing causal laws in nature connected to *logos*, perhaps Protagoras is noticing causal laws in thinking "p" and "non-p." Aristotle will develop the logical aspect of *logos* later. Protagoras' two-*logoi* advances our understanding of *logos* in moving us towards abstract conceptualization, but he also leaves us with more questions. If all is flux and there are two oppositional sides to every thing (p and not-p) do these things in flux have any fixed or permanent being? If humans are part of the flux, is there a fixed knower? Do sensations give knowledge of anything if all is flux? Does our language name what *is*? Is language

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

relative to our perception? Does Protagoras' view suggest nominalism? How does reason apply to being given the flux doctrine?

Plato (429 - 348 BCE) directly addresses these questions in the dialogue *Theaetetus*. In this dialogue, Socrates sees the problem of the first philosophers, particularly Heraclitus, and how these problems result in the skepticism and relativism of Protagoras. Socrates locates the problem of first philosophy in the assumptions of materialism and empiricism. If all matter is in motion, then there is no thing that is permanent. If no thing is permanent, then no thing is fixed and knowable. Furthermore, there is no permanent knower. This is the heart of the skepticism of the Sophists and Protagoras' seeming relativism.

Socrates responds to the metaphysical problem of the flux doctrine by positing a permanence in man via the soul (which has reason, emotion, and will) and by positing permanence in being via the Forms. Socrates responds to the epistemological problems of the flux doctrine (and materialism-empiricism) by defining knowledge as true opinion tied down with a *logos*, or an account. This *logos*-account is by reason and argument that rules out logical impossibilities and arrives at certainty. Knowledge of reality is by means of *logos*. *Logos* is gained primarily through dialogue - the exchange of reasons between persons through speech. Truth (the way the world *is*) is mediated to people by *logos*. Socratic *logos* is dedicated to truth, and truth is clear not hidden.<sup>22</sup> The problem with the materialist-empiricist philosophers prior to Socrates is that they attempted to gain knowledge immediately, directly, by means of the senses. Socrates advances our

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<sup>22</sup> Sallis, John. *Being and Logos: The Way of Platonic Dialogue*. (Atlantic Highlands: Humanities Press International, Inc., 1975), p. 31.

understanding of *logos* by developing its mediating aspect. The senses give us what appears, *logos* mediates what *is*. John Sallis brings out the mediating aspect of *logos* through examining Plato's dialogue *Phaedo* lines 99d-100a<sup>23</sup>:

“After this, then, when I had failed in investigating beings ... I decided that I must be careful not to suffer the misfortune which happens to people who look at and study the sun during an eclipse. For some of them ruin their eyesight unless they look at its image ... in water or something of the sort. I thought of that danger, and I was afraid my soul would be blinded if I looked at things ... with my eyes and tried to grasp them with any of my senses. So I thought I must have recourse to *logoi* and examine in them the truth of beings....”<sup>24</sup>

In this section of the *Phaedo*, Socrates explains to his interlocutor why he left the study of the Physicists (materialist-empiricists) and set out on a “second voyage” through dialogue. In this quote light is that by which we see, but we don't look directly at the source of light or we will be blinded. Sallis says there are two courses leading to blindness in the quote:

One such course is only hinted at through the analogy Socrates uses, namely, that course on which one would so elevate his vision as to seek to look directly at the sun, that is, at what makes it possible for things to be visible, or, more fundamentally, at what lets things be manifest as such ... it is primarily the light and not its source that is available to one's view.<sup>25</sup>

Sallis goes on to say that:

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<sup>23</sup> See also the Allegory of the Sun in *Republic* 506c5 - 507e3.

<sup>24</sup> Sallis, p. 40-41.

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 41.

The primary reference of Socrates' statement is, however, not to a course on which one would gaze at the sun but to a course on which one would remain completely attached to the visible things and would attempt to grasp them by the senses alone, oblivious to that source and even that illumination that lets them be manifest. Here too is blindness.<sup>26</sup>

Immediate knowledge is impossible. Direct illumination, as in mystical experience, and immediate contact with sensory data both fail to deliver knowledge, but rather end in blindness. The only way to have knowledge is mediation through the *logos*. *Logos* is like light. Light is mediator between the sun and the things illuminated. *Logos* is to reason what the sun is to the eyes. *Logos* is that by which we understand being. *Logos* makes manifest (to the understanding) what *is*.<sup>27</sup> Speaking (*logos*) makes manifest what is inward in thought.<sup>28</sup> *Logos* makes manifest what *is*, and what *is* is Truth. *Logos* brings Truth to light.<sup>29</sup> Socrates addresses the problems of first-Philosophy by bringing in permanent soul in humans and permanent forms to order being. The dualism of Plato answers some of the problems of first-Philosophy, but it raises new questions: If matter is eternal, is it self-maintaining? Is Plato's Demiurge personal? Is it eternal or created? What is the ontological nature of the forms?

Aristotle (384 - 322 BCE) attempts to answer some of the objections to Platonic dualism by proposing a dependent dualism and eliminating the Forms as independent realities apart from the material world. Spirit is pure actuality and matter is pure

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<sup>26</sup> Ibid., p. 41.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., p. 50.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 54.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., p. 57.

potentiality. The cosmos is formed by pure actuality — the Unmoved Mover, who is spirit — actualizing pure potentiality (matter without form). The Unmoved Mover gives form to pure potentiality.<sup>30</sup> The formal cause is one sense of *logos* for Aristotle. Omer Aygun notes that *Logos* has been under-appreciated in Aristotle, and that there have been scant studies on his understanding of *logos* because, contrary to previous philosophers, *logos* is mundane in Aristotle. Aygun finds four senses of *logos* in Aristotle: it is a standard, a ratio, reason, and speech. Human beings alone have *logos* as reason and speech. All of nature has *logos* as standard and ratio.

Socrates describes thinking as dialogue (*logos*) with oneself and was looking for *logoi* that would tie down true opinion and deliver certainty. Aristotle extends this dialogue/ discourse with nature and with the social and political worlds. Dialogue provides principles which are probable or “more than likely” but not certain. This dialogue with nature is a kind of Socratic dialectic, an interrogation and questioning that yields probabilistic principles — or the *logos* — by which nature operates. This is science. The dialectical method may also be applied to Ethics in order to discover the *logos*, or principles, of social and political order. We see in this dialectical approach of Socrates-Plato-Aristotle a method by which man engages his mind (reason) to what appears (senses, opinions) in a questioning and interrogation until he figures out what it *is* — its nature, its *logos*. The *logos* in man identifies the *logos* in the world. Yet, how is this possible? What is the origin of this fit of *logos* in the mind with *logos* in the world?

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<sup>30</sup> Gangadean, Surrendra. *Philosophical Foundation: A Critical Analysis of Basic Beliefs*. (Lanham: University Press of America, 2008), p. 94.

Aygun says that *logos* for Aristotle is not divine. Aristotle preserves “*nous*” for the divine.<sup>31</sup> Stoic philosophers (330’s BCE - 30’s CE), on the other hand, will call the *Logos*, or the Word, divine. Stoic philosophy covers approximately 300 years, and views about the *logos* vary from philosopher to philosopher within the Stoic camp, but Marian Hillar provides us with a summary of what may be gleaned from Stoic philosophy with respect to the *logos*. Hillar notes that *logos* is “the power or principle that shapes and creates all things from itself ... [and] is immanent in the existing world.”<sup>32</sup> For something to exist, in Stoic metaphysics, it must have a body. Mind is corporeal in Stoicism. *Logos* is analogous with *pnuma*, heat or breath, by which things are alive. *Pneuma* “became the vehicle of the *logos*”<sup>33</sup> for the Stoics. The *Logos* is “the Soul of the world, Mind and Nature, Nature, God. Nature is an artistic or creative fire, and thus God is the seminal *Logos* of the universe.”<sup>34</sup> Hillar says that:

The *pneuma*, though corporeal, is not matter itself. *Pneuma*, unlike other elements, pervades the universe and establishes the individual parts of it. It gives coherence and holds together other elements, unites the center of the universe with its circumference, and prevents the universe from collapsing under the heavy pull of its heavy constituents.<sup>35</sup>

There is a moral aspect to *logos* that manifests as “Natural law, Necessity, and Destiny. It functions at the macrocosmic and microcosmic levels as God, Providence, Craftsman,

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<sup>31</sup> Aygun, Omer. *The Middle Included: Logos in Aristotle*. (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2017), p. 209.

<sup>32</sup> Hillar, p. 34.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

and the “right reason” at the moral level.”<sup>36</sup> Lastly, *logos* is the “particular nature *physis*, “ or soul of a thing. The human soul is an “offshoot” of the divine *logos*.”<sup>37</sup> The *logos* for the Stoics appears to be largely impersonal, immanent, and though not identical with matter is an aspect of the material world. The *logos* is in the mind, in the world, and is divine. What does it mean for the *logos* to be divine? Is it spirit (but all that exists has a body)? Is it personal?

Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE - 50 CE) is a transitional figure between the Hellenic and Christian worlds. He is a Jewish philosopher who attempts to synthesize Judaism, Stoicism, Aristotelian Logic and Ethics, and Pythagoreanism. Hillar says:

Philo's doctrine of the Logos is blurred by his mystical and religious vision, but his Logos is clearly the second individual in one God as a hypostatization of God's Creative Power, Wisdom. The supreme is God and next is Wisdom or the Logos of God ... Earthly wisdom is but a copy of this celestial Wisdom ... This Logos is apportioned into an infinite number of parts in humans; thus, we impart the divine Logos. As a result, we acquire some likeness to the Father and the Creator of all.

The Logos is the Bond of the universe and mediator extended in nature. The Father eternally begat the Logos and constituted it as an unbreakable bond of the universe that produces harmony. The Logos, mediating between God and the world, is neither uncreated as God nor created as men. So, in Philo's view, the Father is the supreme Being and the Logos, as his chief messenger, stands

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 34.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid., p. 35.

between Creator and creature. The Logos is an ambassador and suppliant, neither unbegotten nor begotten as are sensible things.<sup>38</sup>

Philo's conception of *logos* is multifaceted. His metaphysics is theistic but verges on pantheism. His epistemology tends to be mystical and fideistic. He advances the search for the *Logos* beyond his predecessors by grounding the *logos* in a personal God. The Father God eternally begat the *Logos* in Philo's philosophy. In addition, the *Logos* is mediator between God and the World, and between the Creator and creature. Philo's philosophy moves us closer to John's Prologue. Hillar thinks John's Gospel borrows from Philo and other Hellenistic philosophers' view of the *Logos*. It will take an examination of John's Prologue to see what Philo has missed and why Hiller cannot be correct about John's *Logos* doctrine. Prior to moving on to the Prologue, let us wrap up the ancient philosophers search for the *logos*.

The era of first philosophy ends with skepticism and Sophism due to the failure to adequately ground the *logos*. Skepticism follows upon the inability of the Academics and Peripatetics to ground the *logos* (either in the Forms or in the world via causes). The Stoics are skeptics, sharing similar materialist-empiricist assumptions of the first philosophers. Philo's mysticism is fideistic and does not provide objective knowledge of *logos* or being. What began as the search for the Truth, knowledge of ultimate reality, ends in skepticism for philosophy up to John the Apostle's day. The skepticism is a result of epistemological and metaphysical assumptions that do not accord with the *Logos*. *Logos* cannot be grasped merely by the senses (Socrates blindness), nor can it

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<sup>38</sup> Hillar, p. 69-70.

be seen directly (Philo's mystical vision is Socrates other source of blindness). The *Logos* also cannot be merely material (as Socrates shows in the *Theaetetus*). What can we take from the first philosopher's search for the Truth?

The first philosophers, in the search for the *Logos*, are discovering truth. They discover truth in just the way one would expect — by means of wondering about the world and reasoning to the cause of its comprehensibility. Truth is truth no matter its source, but our grasp of truth may be incomplete. John's account gives a more complete account of the truth about the *Logos*. It also leaves us room for an ever deepening understanding of that Truth. The history of philosophy is a story of partial truths often ending in the dead end roads of skepticism and fideism. Partial truths are partially satisfying, but it is Truth in its fullness that is ultimately satisfying. Philosophy is the search for Truth and begins with the twin concepts of *logos* and *ontos* — reason and being — the first philosophers believed there is an isomorphism between thought and being. This was half of the truth. John's Gospel provides the fullness of Truth by grounding the *Logos* in the being of God.

John the Apostle's Gospel (6 - 100 CE), particularly the Prologue, may be viewed as a response to the philosophical search for the *Logos*. John's account of *Logos* not only assumes that reason is ontological, but he also assumes a theistic, Trinitarian, view of God. This combination supplies what is missing in the previous philosophies.

Surrendra Gangadean, in his *The Word of God*<sup>39</sup>, recognizes a seven-fold doctrine of

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<sup>39</sup> Gangadean, Surrendra. *The Word of God: The Logos is Truth*. Logos Paper #30, 2016. Accessed 4/9/2018: <http://thelogospapers.com/30-the-word-of-god-the-logos-is-truth/> .

the *Logos* in John's Gospel. We will examine each aspect, connecting each to the prior search. In doing so, we will see how John's *Logos* doctrine advances our understanding of *Logos* beyond what has gone before. Keeping in mind the original sense of *logos* as "relating," and as Socrates' "mediating" light, we can see in each sense of *Logos* in the Prologue, that the *Logos* is mediator. John's focus, as the previous search, is on Truth. The Word/ *Logos* is Truth. Truth is rational, cognitive (propositional), mediated, corresponds with reality (*analogia*), and is revealed by God (intentionally, necessarily, and exclusively).

John's Gospel is universal in its audience. The Prologue sets the stage for doing philosophy through understanding the *Logos* as Creator, the *Logos* in man as reason, and the *Logos* is in the created order through natural and moral law. These topics are in the realm of general revelation, and in this respect, Heraclitus was right, the *Logos* is common to all men, and Socrates is correct, the *Logos* is not hidden. Because the *Logos* is in man as reason, and in the world as natural and moral law, man can infer from the things that are made the *Logos* as Creator. But, as Heraclitus noticed, though the *Logos* is common, men are blind to the *Logos*. The history of philosophy shows that mistaken assumptions about the nature of reality is the source of this blindness to the *Logos*. The *Logos* comes to man through the prophets, the written *Logos*, and ultimately comes incarnate to redeem man from his spiritual blindness. John's *Logos* doctrine thus sets the stage for doing theology as well as doing philosophy.

John 1: 1 says “In the beginning was the [*Logos*], and the [*Logos*] was with God, and the [*Logos*] was God. He was with God in the beginning.”<sup>40</sup> The *Logos* is eternal, was with God in the beginning, and thus is Creator. All things are made through the *Logos* (John 1:3). The *Logos* is personal, and is the second person of the Trinity. In contrast, the first philosophers thought matter was eternal. Matter alone could not ground the *Logos*. Socrates-Plato-Aristotle thought matter and spirit were both eternal but failed to ground the *Logos*. The Stoics returned to materialism (and resulting skepticism), which again resulted in the failure to ground the *Logos*. John grounds the *Logos* in the being of God.

John 1:4 says “In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.” The *Logos* is in man as light — that by which we understand meaning and see truth — the light is reason. Almost all of the ancient Greeks would acknowledge the *logos* in man as reason. Heraclitus saw (though dimly) that the *logos* is clear and common to all men (light), but men were blind to the *logos* (darkness). Socrates gave us the analogy of light and sight. Reason is that by which we understand. In Christian theism, the *Logos* is in human beings as made in the image of God. Gangadean says: “The life of the Word is the light of men.”<sup>41</sup> God has created man such that men can understand the revelation of God in the created order and in the scriptures. The light of man is later called “the light of nature.” This is general revelation and philosophy.

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<sup>40</sup> All scriptural references are from Holy Bible. *New International Version*. (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1984).

<sup>41</sup> Gangadean, *Logos Paper*

John 1:10 says: “He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him.” The *Logos* is common to all, but all do not see the *Logos*. Gangadean interprets this passage to mean that “The Word of God is revealed in all his works of creation and providence. The whole earth is full of his glory. Yet no one seeks and no one understands what is clear about God.”<sup>42</sup> *The Logos* is in the world as the natures of things and as the moral law by which men live. Almost all of the Greeks saw the *logos* in the world, as well as the fit between man’s reason and the world. Yet none of them connected the *Logos* to God the Creator. Given the Biblical worldview of Creation-Fall-Redemption, this is not surprising but is part of the fallen condition of man. Worldly philosophy is affected by the fall.

John 1:11 says: “He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him” and again, John 1:6 “There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe.” His own were the chosen people of God. John was the last in a long line of prophets bringing the spoken word of God. The *Logos* is the Word of God spoken and then written as scripture, as special revelation, redemptive revelation. Gangadean says that “The Word of God came to the covenant people of God in history through the prophets. The prophets were not received, but their word became Scripture, the Word of God written.”<sup>43</sup> The Greeks recognize *logos* as both spoken and written speech, but they could not anticipate the redemptive revelation given by God to the Hebrew prophets. In this respect, John’s Gospel provides something unique and far beyond

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid.

what the ancients understood regarding the *Logos*. The redemptive revelation of God — God’s self-revelation known through divine transmission — written as scripture, is the *Logos* of God that is the basis of Theology.

John 1:14 says: “The [*Logos*] became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.” Gangadean says of this passage that the *Logos* “is the lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. He is the risen Lord who rules to make God known.”<sup>44</sup> The *Logos* is incarnate — as Christ — who rules and redeems by means of Truth. This is the truly unique revelation of the Christian scriptures. It comes as the fulfillment of the promise of the Hebrew Scriptures after the creation and fall. God himself comes in the flesh to reveal the truth of God’s infinite justice and mercy. The *Logos* incarnate comes to redeem mankind, to make all things new, and to fill everything in every way. This is the truth that is only known by God in Christian revelation.

John 16:13 says that “he [the *Logos*] will guide you into all Truth.” Gangadean says that: “Christ the Lord sends the Spirit to lead the Church into all Truth.” This truth is “the historically cumulative insight summed up in the Church’s Creed and Confessions is the holy, catholic and apostolic faith, the basis of the unity of the faith for all who believe.”<sup>45</sup> The *Logos* is leading the Church into all Truth via the Spirit of Truth.

Lastly, 1 Peter 1:23 and John 17:17 affirm the truth that the *Logos* is leading each believer, via restoration through the Spirit, to the full use of reason in order to

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<sup>44</sup> Ibid.

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

understand Truth. 1 Peter 1:23 says: “For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable, through the living and enduring word [*Logos*] of God. The *Logos* is the life of man through spiritual rebirth. Again, John 17:17: “Sanctify them by the truth; your word [*Logos*] is truth.” Those who have been justified are sanctified by the truth of God, which is the *Logos* of God in all of its fullness. Gangadean says: “The Word of God is in each believer by the work of the Holy Spirit. Each believer is born again by the living Word of God .... Each believer is sanctified by the Truth. The Word of God (the *Logos*) is Truth ....<sup>46</sup> The *Logos* of God is robust and life giving. The *Logos* is common and clear to all men (Romans 1:20), but men in their unbelief rejected the *Logos* at every level. Yet, the *Logos* is full of Grace and Truth and does not leave man in his fallen condition but restores him to the use of reason and the light of Truth. Let us use John’s Gospel as a guide for doing philosophy. He shows us how the mind of man is well suited to understand the nature of the revelation of the *Logos* in the world as created, and the *Logos* in the scriptures as the means of redemption. The *Logos* is Truth in its fullness and man was made for knowledge of the *Logos* in its fullness. The *Logos* is the source of light and life.

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<sup>46</sup> Ibid.

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