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The agency of the Logos-Huios: exploring the influence of Deut 18:15-22 on the prologue of the Fourth Gospel

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GEORGE FOX UNIVERSITY

THE AGENCY OF THE ΛΟΓΟΣ-ΥΙΟΣ: EXPLORING THE
INFLUENCE OF DEUT 18:15–22 ON THE PROLOGUE
OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF
GEORGE FOX EVANGELICAL SEMINARY
IN CANDIDACY FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS (THEOLOGICAL STUDIES)

BY
JOHNDAVE C. MEDINA

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DECEMBER 2011

**THESIS
ACCEPTANCE CERTIFICATE**

JOHNDAVE C. MEDINA

DATE: DECEMBER 12, 2011

TITLE:

**THE AGENCY OF THE LOGOS-SON:
EXPLORING THE INFLUENCE OF
DEUTERONOMY 18:15-22 ON
THE PROLOGUE OF THE FOURTH GOSPEL**

**WE THE UNDERSIGNED CERTIFY THAT WE HAVE READ
THIS PROJECT AND APPROVE IT AS ADEQUATE IN
SCOPE AND QUALITY TO COMPLETE THE REQUIREMENTS
FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF ARTS,
THEOLOGICAL STUDIES**

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12/12/11

PAUL ANDERSON

Kent L. Yinger

12/12/11

KENT L. YINGER



**GEORGE FOX
EVANGELICAL
SEMINARY**

To my family, teachers, and friends

τοῦτο ἐστὶν τὸ ἔργον τοῦ θεοῦ, ἵνα πιστεύητε εἰς ὃν ἀπέστειλεν ἐκεῖνος

—Ἰησοῦς Χριστός (Ἰωάννης 6:29)

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AB	Anchor Bible
ACCSNT	Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: New Testament
ATJ	<i>Ashland Theological Journal</i>
ATR	<i>Anglican Theological Review</i>
BBET	Beiträge zur biblischen Exegese und Theologie
BDAG	Bauer, W., F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich. <i>A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature</i> . 3d ed. Chicago, 2000
Ber.	<i>Berakot</i>
BETL	Bibliotheca ephemeridum theologiarum louvaniensium
BHS	<i>Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia</i> . Edited by K. Elliger and W. Rudolph. Stuttgart, 1983
BLG	Biblical Languages: Greek
B. Meši‘a	<i>Baba Meši‘a</i>
B. Qam.	<i>Baba Qamma</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
CSR	<i>Christian Scholar’s Review</i>
ECC	Eerdmans Critical Commentary
‘Erub.	<i>‘Erubin</i>
Gen. Rab.	<i>Genesis Rabbah</i>
Giṭ.	<i>Gittin</i>
Ḥag.	<i>Ḥagigah</i>
HTR	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
IRT	Issues in Religion and Theology
JBL	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
Joüon	Joüon, P. <i>A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew</i> . Translated and revised by T. Muraoka. <i>Subsidia biblica</i> 27. Rome, 2008
JQR	<i>Jewish Quarterly Review</i>
JTS	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
JSNTSup	Journal for the Studies of the New Testament: Supplement Series
L&N	<i>Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains</i> . Edited by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida. 2d ed. New York, 1989
LNTS	Library of New Testament Studies
Mek.	<i>Mekilta</i>

NA ²⁷	E. Nestle. <i>Novum Testamentum Graece</i> . Edited by K. Aland. 27th ed. Stuttgart, 1993
NICNT	New International Commentary on the New Testament
NIDB	<i>The New Interpreter's Dictionary of the Bible</i> . Edited by K. D. Sakenfeld, S. E. Balentine, K.-J. J. Kuan, E. Schuller, B. K. Blount, J. B. Green, and P. Perkins. 5 vols. Nashville: Abingdon, 2006–2009
NovT	<i>Novum Testamentum</i>
NovTSup	Supplements to Novum Testamentum
NTOA	Novum Testamentum et Orbis Antiquus
NTS	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
Qidd.	<i>Qiddušin</i>
SBG	Studies in Biblical Greek
SBS	Stuttgarter Bibelstudien
SBT	Studies in Biblical Theology
SBLSCS	Society of Biblical Literature Septuagint and Cognate Studies Series
SNTSMS	Society of New Testament Studies Monograph Series
SP	Sacra pagina
TDNT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</i> . Edited by G. Kittel and G. Friedrich. Translated by G. W. Bromiley. 10 vols. Grand Rapids, 1964–1976
TDOT	<i>Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament</i> . Edited by G. J. Botterwick, H. Ringgren, and H.-J. Fabry. Translated by J. T. Willis, G. W. Bromiley, D. E. Green, and D. W. Stott. 15 vols. Grand Rapids, 1974–2006
Ter.	<i>Terumot</i>
VC	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament

EDITORIAL METHOD

With permission, this Master of Arts thesis has departed from Kate L. Turabian, *A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations* (rev. Wayne C. Booth et al.; 7th ed.; Chicago: Chicago University Press, 2007), the standard style manual used at George Fox Evangelical Seminary. Instead, this thesis was written under the guidelines of Patrick H. Alexander, John F. Kutsko, James D. Ernest, Shirley Decker-Lucke, and David L. Petersen, *The SBL Handbook of Style: For Ancient Near Eastern, Biblical, and Early Christian Studies* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1999; hereafter, *SBL Handbook*). Where *SBL Handbook* was incomplete in its citations or did not address a particular aspect of style, the most recent edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* (16th ed.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010) was consulted.

All translations from Hebrew, Greek, and German are the author's own. These languages appear according to the specifications in *SBL Handbook*. In addition, the Hebrew text follows the latest edition of *BHS*; for the Greek passages, Alfred Rahlfs, *Septuaginta* (ed. Robert Hanhart; 2d ed.; Stuttgart: Deutsche Gesellschaft, 2006) and NA²⁷ serve as the texts for the Tanak and the New Testament, respectively. Quotations from texts published in Germany and United Kingdom appear as they do in the original sources.

ABSTRACT

This study explores the influence of the Jewish agency principle found in Deut 18:15–22 on the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1–18). Seeking to answer the question of the Prologue's background, this study examines the scholarly treatments of agency in the Fourth Gospel, and the agency motif in both Deut 18 and the Prologue.

The agency in the Fourth Gospel is similar, if not identical, to the principle of agency in Jewish law that an agent is representative of the principal in every way. This agency motif is applied to Moses as he represents יהוה to the Pharaoh and the Israelites. This motif is also found in the Fourth Gospel where it is applied to the Son to describe the Father-Son relationship: the Son as the Father's agent represents the Father fully.

This study affirms that the prophet-like-Moses agency motif influences the Prologue, evidenced by the comparisons between Jesus and Moses. Jesus fulfills the prophetic role of Moses, yet because of his identity as the *λόγος-υἱός* supersedes Moses.

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

The Fourth Gospel and Its Prologue

From ancient times, the Fourth Gospel¹ has been the topic of numerous discussions. The theological and Christological debates of the fourth and fifth centuries owed much to the Gospel of John. Regarding the Arian controversy, T. E. Pollard observes:

At the turn of this century, F. C. Conybeare, in a review of Alfred Loisy's *Le quatrième évangile*, wrote: "If Athanasius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, Arius would never have been confuted." That is however only part of the truth, for it would also be true to say that if Arius had not had the Fourth Gospel to draw texts from, he would not have needed confuting.²

The central debate at the time indirectly referenced concepts present in the Prologue of John: the eternal preexistence of the Son, his divinity, and the nature of God.³ That the Fourth Gospel was the subject of many commentaries, beginning from the third cent., indicates its ever-present popularity in and influence upon Christian theology.⁴

In recent time, the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel has been given considerable attention. Many characteristics make John's Prologue unique. With the emergence of modern critical methods of examining ancient texts, the Prologue has come under the

¹ Throughout this work, the terms *Fourth Gospel*, *Gospel of John*, and *John's Gospel* will be used interchangeably. Furthermore, the term *John* used in isolation will refer either to the Gospel or to the author(s).

² T. E. Pollard, *Johannine Christology and the Early Church* (SNTSMS 13; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 3.

³ For the way in which God's impassibility was one of the factors in the background of the Arian controversy, see Roger E. Olson, *The Story of Christian Theology: Twenty Centuries of Tradition & Reform* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 1999), 143–44.

⁴ For a comprehensive comm. on the Fourth Gospel derived from the writings of the church fathers, see Joel C. Elowsky and Thomas C. Oden, eds., *John 1–10* (ACCSNT 4A; Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2006), esp. 1–57.

scrutiny of form, redaction, and source criticisms. The Prologue in its rhythmic structure and resembles ancient poetic works. The similarities between the Prologue and ancient poetry and hymns hint at an underlying source upon which the author of the Prologue had relied. The appearances of John the Baptist (John 1:6–8, 15) are less poetic in form and this suggests that these are insertions and that the Prologue was edited.

Numerous scholars believe that the Fourth Gospel was composed in stages, resulting in multiple editions. Rudolf Bultmann posits that behind the Fourth Gospel lay three different sources and that during the composition of the Fourth Gospel the text became disordered.⁵ If the text was disordered in the process of its composition, then a previous edition, the original, can be implied. For Bultmann, the Prologue originally belonged to an *Offenbarungsredenquelle*. Raymond E. Brown initially posits that the Fourth Gospel developed in five stages, producing “two editions” and then undergoing a “final redaction.”⁶ After being pressed by numbers of scholars, he later simplifies the compositional theory to three stages.⁷ In both theories, the Prologue is inserted at the final redaction. Paul N. Anderson, building on the work of Barnabas Lindars, posits two editions of the Fourth Gospel, situating the Prologue at the finalization of the second edition.⁸ Via a complex set of criteria, Urban C. von Wahlde posits three editions and locates the Prologue as part of the third.⁹

⁵ Rudolf Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (ed. Rupert William Noel Hoare and John K. Riches; trans. George R. Beasley-Murray; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1971), 220.

⁶ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel according to John: I–XII* (vol. 1; AB 29; Garden City: Doubleday, 1966), xxxix.

⁷ The first theory of the Fourth Gospel’s composition is found in Brown, *John*, xxxiv–xxxvi. The revised theory is found in Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (ed. Francis J. Moloney; New York: Doubleday, 2003), 62–86. Many tie the background of the Prologue and the Fourth Gospel to the situations of the Johannine community. Helpful in this area is Raymond E. Brown, *The Community of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Paulist Press, 1979).

⁸ Paul N. Anderson, “The Having-Sent-Me-Father: Aspects of Agency, Encounter, and Irony in the Johannine Father-Son Relationship,” *Semeia* 85 (1999): 33–57, esp. 47 n. 15.

⁹ A synopsis of his compositional theory can be found at Urban C. von Wahlde, *The Gospel and Letters of John* (2 vols.; ECC; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 1:50–55. An informative outline is found in the table of contents at von Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 1:x–xxx.

The self-contained character of the Prologue suggests that the Prologue was a separate composition, fashioned likely after the writing of primary body of the Gospel. The approaches to the Prologue's background tend to focus on external and extrabibl. sources and backgrounds, yet these need not be implied. Following the observations in recent scholarship, this study will examine how the Jewish agency motif, derived from the Jewish law of agency, as found in Deut 18:15–22 influences the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel.

Why a Study on Agency and the Prologue?

The Jewish law of agency is based on the tenet that an agent is as the sender.¹⁰ This is a principle found throughout Jewish law and scriptures and is based upon the שליח, the one appointed to carry out a mission or task. Nowhere in the NT is this theme clearer and more present than in the Fourth Gospel. For instance, the Son is sent by the Father (John 5:23, 36–37; 6:44, 57; 8:16, 18, 42; 10:36; 12:49; 14:24; 17:21, 25; 20:21), the Holy Spirit is sent by the Father and the Son (14:26; 15:26), John the Baptist is sent from God (1:6), as are the disciples by Jesus (20:21). This observation raises the question of the relationship of Jewish agency to the Prologue, an issue that has little been observed, much less explored.

Another point that so raises the question of the relationship between agency and Prologue of the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1–18) is the origin of the latter. The uniqueness of the Prologue, and that of its form and language, is attributed to its background, which many modern scholars believe to be some written source. Many also agree that the Prologue is a later addition to John and that it was added during the finalization of the Gospel. The background to the Fourth Gospel, however, need not be a literary source. Craig A. Evans's study indicates that the background to the Prologue is multifaceted, drawing upon themes found in Jewish literature.¹¹ The background to the Prologue, then, could be derived from a

¹⁰ This is explored in ch. 2.

¹¹ See Craig A. Evans, *Word and Glory: On the Exegetical and Theological Background of John's Prologue* (JSNTSup 158; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993).

literary-cultural motif rather than a literary source. The dominance of the agency motif throughout the Fourth Gospel suggest also the exploration of the Prologue and its relationship to John's Gospel.

Something must be said here about the community aspect of the Prologue. Rudolf Bultmann, as well as others, plausibly identifies the speaker of first-person plural pronouns and verbs as the community.¹² The content of the communal statements indicates a reflective element of continued experience with Christ both as he lived on the earth and after his ascension. As Edward Schillebeeckx states, "The community lives from the abundance of grace in Jesus and will *continue to live* by it day by day."¹³ The presence of the communal statements in the Prologue suggests that the Prologue was developed posteriorly to the Gospel, particularly as the community experienced Christ through the narrative of the body of the Gospel and then through subsequent encounters with the Holy Spirit.¹⁴ Accordingly, if this assessment about the community is correct, then the agency motif that permeates the Fourth Gospel did not refer to something abstract, but was an agency embodied in Christ and was experienced as he revealed himself to be one with the Father. The relationship between the Fourth Gospel and the Prologue, then, is found in the community members, of whom at least one was a composer of the latter and was influenced by the agency theme in the narrative, in addition to the ongoing agency in which believers participated, being prompted by the Holy Spirit. Agency thus ought to be considered as a dominant and influential motif throughout the Fourth Gospel as a whole.

The question of the connection between agency and the Prologue is further bolstered by the recent interest in scholarship on Jewish agency in the Fourth Gospel. The important work of Jan-Adolf Böhner is the first full-length treatment of the agency motif in

¹² Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 14.

¹³ Edward Schillebeeckx, *Christ: The Experience of Jesus as Lord* (trans. John Bowden; New York: Crossroad, 1989), 364.

¹⁴ Paul N. Anderson, *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel: An Introduction to John* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2011), 178.

the Fourth Gospel.¹⁵ Major works on the Christology of the Gospel of John, on its theol., and on its Prologue have referenced *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium* since it appeared.¹⁶ Although not all who cite him agree, the number of interactions with Bühner suggest that his work on this topic is considered valuable.¹⁷

Previous Approaches to the Background of the Prologue

Since the publication of Bultmann's commentary on the Fourth Gospel, many scholars in the field of biblical studies have attempted to discern the background of the Gospel of John,

¹⁵ Jan-Adolf Bühner, *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium: Die kultur- und religionsgeschichtlichen Grundlagen der johanneischen Sendungschristologie sowie ihre traditionsgeschichtliche Entwicklung* (WUNT 2/2; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1977).

¹⁶ Ernst Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium: Ein Kommentar* (ed. Ulrich Busse; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1980); James D. G. Dunn, "Let John be John: A Gospel for Its Time," in *Das Evangelium und die Evangelien: Vorträge vom Tübinger Symposium 1982* (ed. Peter Stuhlmacher; WUNT 28; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1983), 309–39; Anthony E. Harvey, "Christ as Agent," in *The Glory of Christ in the New Testament: Studies in Christology: In Memory of George Bradford Caird* (ed. Lincoln D. Hurst and Nicholas T. Wright; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987; repr., Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2006), 239–50; John Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1991); George R. Beasley-Murray, "The Mission of the Logos-Son," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (ed. Franz van Segbroeck et al.; BETL C; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 1855–68; Marinus de Jonge, "Christology and Theology in the Context of Early Christian Eschatology Particularly in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Four Gospels 1992: Festschrift Frans Neirynck* (ed. Franz van Segbroeck et al.; BETL C; Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1992), 1835–53; William R. G. Loader, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Structure and Issues* (2d ed.; BBET 23; Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 1992); Evans, *Word and Glory*; Rudolf Schnackenburg, *Jesus in the Gospels: A Biblical Christology* (trans. O. C. Dean Jr.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Ben Witherington, *John's Wisdom: A Commentary on the Fourth Gospel* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1995); Peder Borgen, "The Gospel of John and Hellenism: Some Observations," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Carl Clifton Black; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 98–123; James D. G. Dunn, *Christology in the Making: A New Testament Inquiry into the Origins of the Doctrine of the Incarnation* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1996); Paul W. Meyer, "The Father': The Presentation of God in the Fourth Gospel," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Carl Clifton Black; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 255–73; Marianne Meye Thompson, "The Historical Jesus and the Johannine Christ," in *Exploring the Gospel of John: In Honor of D. Moody Smith* (ed. R. Alan Culpepper and Carl Clifton Black; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996), 21–42; Jey J. Kanagaraj, "Mysticism" in *The Gospel of John: An Inquiry into Its Background* (JSNTSup 158; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1998); Francis J. Moloney, *The Gospel of John* (SP 4; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 1998); James F. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology: Legitimation and Development in Johannine Christology* (SNTSMS 111; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001); Brown, *Introduction to the Gospel of John*; Daniel Rathnakara Sadananda, *The Johannine Exegesis of God: An Exploration into the Johannine Understanding of God* (BZNW 121; Berlin: de Gruyter, 2004); Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*.

¹⁷ From the above note, those who find Bühner helpful are Harvey, Beasley-Murray, Evans, and Borgen. Unfavorable toward Bühner is Dunn and less directly Meyer. Kanagaraj disagrees with Bühner over mysticism, not agency.

particularly the origin of the Johannine Prologue. These attempts were in part a reaction to Bultmann's creative source hypothesis.

The source hypothesis began in "The History of Religions Background of the Prologue to the Gospel of John,"¹⁸ an article, published many years before his commentary, where Bultmann suggests a pre-Christian origin to the Prologue. He asserts, "The Prologue *builds upon an earlier written source (Vorlage)*."¹⁹ Like many scholars before and after him, Bultmann understands this source to be dependent upon Hellenistic Jewish wisdom speculation, specifically from the Alexandrian school.²⁰ Early on, he posits a Jewish background to John's Prologue. Where he stands in contrast to later scholarship is on the origin of the Wisdom speculation. For Bultmann, "the Logos speculation of Alexandrian Judaism belongs to the context of the speculation of hellenistic Egypt, in whose adaptation of the old Egyptian theogony the Logos plays a special role, one influenced by Stoic thinking, as a cosmic power,"²¹ and "the general outlook of the Prologue is that of Near Eastern theories concerning a revelation goddess embodied on earth in her emissaries."²² Thus, Bultmann believes that the Prologue's background, although Jewish, is ultimately rooted in Eastern Gnostic thought.

In *The Gospel of John*, Bultmann carries this hypothesis further. He postulates that the Prologue was derived from a revelation-discourse hymn based upon the Gnostic Redeemer myth of early oriental Gnosticism and appropriated by the first-century Baptist community.²³ Bultmann goes on to place the Prologue as the introductory material of the

¹⁸ Rudolf Bultmann, "The History of Religions Background of the Prologue to the Gospel of John," in *The Interpretation of John* (ed. John Ashton; IRT 9; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 18–35.

¹⁹ Bultmann, "History of Religions Background," 20.

²⁰ Bultmann, "History of Religions Background," 27. In the appendix on the Logos in her monograph, Elizabeth Harris, *Prologue and Gospel: The Theology of the Fourth Evangelist* (JSNTSup 107; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), 198, follows Bultmann here.

²¹ Bultmann, "History of Religions Background," 27.

²² Bultmann, "History of Religions Background," 31. This conclusion is repeated again in Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 23–24.

²³ Bultmann, "History of Religions Background," 17–18, 24–31.

Offenbarungsredenquelle, a set of poetic *Offenbarungsreden* discourses that appear in the Fourth Gospel primarily as Jesus' words.²⁴

Many note, however, that the *Offenbarungsredenquelle* hypothesis was not widely received.²⁵ Yet, Bultmann's identification of the background of the Prologue as Gnosticism appears to have had enough influence on later scholarship that the conversation about the Gnostic origins of the Gospel of John was renewed, especially with discovery of the Nag Hammadi and Qumran texts.²⁶ Today, however, only few scholars maintain a Gnostic influence on the Prologue,²⁷ although the conversation over Gnosticism and the Prologue is not completely dead.

Among recent scholars, the prevalent theories on the Prologue's origins can be classified in the following ways: (1) the Prologue is based on a Christian hymn, (2) the

²⁴ According to Dwight Moody Smith Jr., *The Composition and Order of the Fourth Gospel: Bultmann's Literary Theory* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1965), 5–8, Bultmann's criteria are derived from the analysis of the Prologue.

²⁵ Howard M. Teeple, *The Literary Origin of the Gospel of John* (Evanston: Religion and Ethics Institute, 1974), 43–44, 129; Robert Kysar, *The Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel: An Examination of Contemporary Scholarship* (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1975), 14–15; Evans, *Word and Glory*, 14. An analysis of Bultmann's method and criteria is found in Smith, *Composition and Order*, esp. 1–34, which includes a reconstruction of the *Offenbarungsreden*.

²⁶ For a discussion on the Nag Hammadi texts, see Evans, *Word and Glory*, 16–18. For a discussion on the Qumran texts, see Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel*, 103.

²⁷ Of the most recent studies on the Nag Hammadi texts and the Johannine Prologue, none argue for dependence either way. Nicola Frances Denzey, "Genesis Tradition in Conflict?: The Use of Some Exegetical Traditions in the *Trimorphic Protennoia* and the Johannine Prologue," *VC* 55 (2001): 20–44, esp. 22, wishes to avoid connecting the *Trimorphic Protennoia* (NHC XII,1) and the Prologue to Gnosticism but rather to see them as "salvation myth[s] based upon a specific, traditional way of reading Genesis 1." Denzey argues instead that both are based on readings of different Genesis traditions. Paul-Hubert Poirier, "The *Trimorphic Protennoia* (NHC XII,1) and the Johannine Prologue: A Reconsideration," in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; NovTSup 132; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 93–103, esp. 102, believes the *Trim. Prot.* to be a polemic against the Johannine Logos. Anne Pasquier, "Influence and Interpretation of the Gospel of John in Ancient Christianity," in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; NovTSup 132; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 211–31, esp. 221–24, understands *Eugnostos V* as having borrowed from and interpreted the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. Perhaps the only exception is John D. John D. Turner, "The Johannine Legacy: The Gospel and *Apocryphon* of John," in *The Legacy of John: Second-Century Reception of the Fourth Gospel* (ed. Tuomas Rasimus; NovTSup 132; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 2010), 105–44, esp. 105, 130, 141–3, who adds that the Prologue and Pronoia monologue of the *Apocryphon of John* may have been contemporaneous documents, both having been developed out of "non-Christian baptismal sectarian movements [Johannine Christianity and Sethian Gnosticism] that became Christianized during the second half of the first century and gradually came to sustain an increasingly polemical relationship to one another throughout the second century." According to Turner, the schism mentioned in 1 John possibly produced a faction with "ultra-high Christological thinking" with whom the Sethians sided.

Prologue is based on a non-Christian hymn,²⁸ (3) the Prologue is based a composition of the Jewish Wisdom tradition that has been reworked by a Johannine author or redactor,²⁹ and (4) the Prologue is a composition of the Johannine community, or was based on a “hymn of the Johannine church.”³⁰ Those who hold to a non-Christian hymnic origin of the Prologue tend to belong to the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* and advocate a Gnostic origin, but the such a position is now a minority one.

Of the groups just mentioned, the prevailing view on the Prologue’s origin is that the Prologue is a restating of or is influenced by Jewish Wisdom tradition.³¹ The earliest proponents of this position were reacting against Bultmann’s source theory.³² They advanced a reworked Christian hymnic source that was developed out of the Jewish Wisdom tradition.³³ A number of recent comms. and monographs notice the likelihood for a Jewish Wisdom background behind the Prologue. Craig S. Keener hesitates to identify the Prologue’s background with certainty, but he allows that the likeliest background to the *λόγος* is the Jewish view of Word-Wisdom-Torah.³⁴ Although von Wahlde does not think that the Wisdom tradition itself influences the Prologue, he acknowledges that “the author was acquainted with and indebted to a number of concepts common to that perspective” and that John 1:1a was “within the context of Jewish Wisdom speculation.”³⁵ The recent

²⁸ Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 353.

²⁹ John Painter, “Christology and the History of the Johannine Community in the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel,” *NTS* 30 (1984): 460–74.

³⁰ Brown, *John*, 20. Sadananda, *Exegesis*, 155, groups Brown with those who “believe that the hymn behind the Prologue was a pre-Johannine Christian hymn,” but appears to read Brown incorrectly.

³¹ Jarl E. Fossum, *The Image of the Invisible God: Essays on the Influence of Jewish Mysticism on Early Christology* (NTOA 30; Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1995), 109, affirms this: “Since the works of Rendel Harris and Bultmann, it has become customary to construe the Prologue to the Fourth Gospel in terms of Sophianology.”

³² One of these was Erich Fascher whose argument against Bultmann can be found in Kysar, *Fourth Evangelist and His Gospel*, 111. In the introduction of his monograph, Evans, *Word and Glory*, 14 n. 2, highlights scholars that had promptly rejected Bultmann’s proposals.

³³ Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 83.

³⁴ Craig S. Keener, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (2 vols.; Peabody: Hendrickson, 2003), 1:350–63.

³⁵ Wahlde, *Gospel and Letters of John*, 2:26, 28.

monographs by Sadananda and Peter M. Philipps note contemporary works that link the *λόγος* with Wisdom in Jewish poetic texts.³⁶

Another view on the background of John 1:1–18 is that the Prologue is an exposition on Gen 1. Those who advocate for this view hold by virtue of the shared phrases and ideas between John 1:1–5 and Gen 1:1–5 that the former is an interpretation of the latter. John 1:6–18, then, contains and expands upon the terms found in John 1:1–5, making the later part of the Prologue an interpretation of the first. This view was first suggested by Peder Borgen and was followed and built upon most recently by Daniel Boyarin.³⁷ Evans accepts Borgen’s reading of the Prologue, which is used to highlight the contrast between Jesus and Moses.³⁸

Schillebeeckx offers an altogether different understanding of the Prologue’s background: the crises reflected in 1 John that the Johannine community faced.³⁹

Elizabeth Harris surveys a number of other positions in her monograph.⁴⁰ The importance of her survey, and the one in this study reveals that a lack of authoritative consensus on the Prologue’s background is evident. This allows for a new approach that will be presented below.

³⁶ Sadananda, *Exegesis*, 164 n. 37; Peter M. Philipps, *The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel: A Sequential Reading* (LNTS 294; London: T&T Clark, 2006), 118 n. 180.

³⁷ Peder Borgen, “Observations on the Targumic Character of the Prologue of John,” *NTS* 16 (1970): 288–95; Daniel Boyarin, “The Gospel of the *Memra*: Jewish Binitarianism and the Prologue of John,” *HTR* 94 (2001): 243–84. Masanobu Endo, *Creation and Christology: A Study on the Johannine Prologue in the Light of Early Jewish Creation Accounts* (WUNT 2/149; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 2002), devotes a full-length treatment to this topic. Against the midrashic interpretation, particularly that of Boyarin, Matthew Gordley, “The Johannine Prologue and Jewish Didactic Hymn Traditions: A New Case for Reading the Prologue as a Hymn,” *JBL* 128 (2009): 781–802, argues that the Johannine Prologue is rooted in Jewish instructional hymns.

³⁸ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 131.

³⁹ Schillebeeckx, *Christ*, 354–55.

⁴⁰ See Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 18–25.

A New Approach

Already mentioned is the assertion of Bultmann in his commentary on the Fourth Gospel that the unity of the Father and the Son and thus the sending of Jesus are derived from Gnostic myth.⁴¹ Gnostic influence extends not only to the Prologue, but is prevalent even in the body of the Fourth Gospel. The sayings of Jesus that are interspersed throughout the narrative speeches in the Fourth Gospel come from the Gnostic *Offenbarungsredenquelle*, of which the Prologue is the introduction. A number of scholars, however, have shown Bultmann's Gnostic background hypothesis to be inadequate.⁴²

In the essay "The Having-Sent-Me Father," Paul N. Anderson treats the agency motif as the background behind the Prologue. In that it compares Jesus and Moses and expresses through the agency motif the Father-Son relationship in the body of the Fourth Gospel, Anderson considers the Prologue to be connected with Deut 18:15–22.⁴³ He places the *λόγος* theol. of the Prologue within the Jesus-Moses contrast, and sees the Christological motif of *φῶς* as a form of revelatory agency.

In *The Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, Anderson holds in response to the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* that John's *λόγος* theol. is derived from the agency motif found in the Fourth Gospel: "Jesus' agency from the Father became recast in the form of a Logos theol. within the worship life of Johannine Christianity."⁴⁴ Anderson finds the background of the agency of Jesus in the deuteronomic prophet-like-Moses, and argues that this agency is the basis of the Prologue. In the Prologue, the Jewish Mosaic agent motif was packaged in a manner more receptive to a Hellenistic audience.

⁴¹ For example, Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 18–25.

⁴² The rejection of the *Offenbarungsredenquelle* is thoroughly documented in Smith, *Composition and Order*, 57–110. Although the disproving of the *Offenbarungsredenquelle* does not automatically disprove a Gnostic background to the Fourth Gospel, the *Offenbarungsredenquelle* appears to have been tied closely to Gnosticism. Decisive works against a Gnostic background to the Fourth Gospel are Evans, *Word and Glory*; Paul N. Anderson, *The Christology of the Fourth Gospel: Its Unity and Disunity in the Light of John 6* (Eugene, Ore.: Wipf & Stock, 2010).

⁴³ Anderson, "Having-Sent-Me-Father," 42–44.

⁴⁴ Anderson, *Riddles of the Fourth Gospel*, 133, 181.

The Aim of This Study

Now that some of the scholarly proposals to the Prologue's background have been identified and the result is that the common view in scholarship is that the Prologue's background is primarily Jewish, the question can be clarified: what is the primary background to the Prologue? A number of scholars hold that the Prologue is built upon a Jewish Wisdom hymn that is grounded in the Tanak and in biblical and rabbinic Jewish texts, but is this sufficient to account for the Christology of the Prologue? This study argues that it is not. Although a Jewish Wisdom hymn could account for the *λόγος* theol. of John 1:1–5 alone, it is not sufficient to account for the Christology of the entire Prologue, particularly the declarations of the incarnation of the *λόγος* and of the *λόγος* as the *μονογενής παρὰ πατρός*. Neither is the Jewish Wisdom hymn the only viable option; the view is still common that the *λόγος* concept, the central theme of the Prologue, is Hellenistic in origin.

Following Anderson, this study therefore asserts that the Prologue's theol. and Christology are derived from the Jewish law of agency, specifically the prophet-like-Moses agency scheme within the *הל"ש* model. With a desire to communicate to both Jewish and Hellenistic spheres, the one who crafted the Prologue restated the agency theme with terminology familiar to both. Thus, *λόγος* as the prominent theme of the Prologue need not have been derived exclusively from Jewish Wisdom and/or Targumic texts, but rather from the Mosaic *הל"ש* agency motif.

This proposal will be explored throughout the rest of this work. The approach is primarily redaction-critical⁴⁵ exegesis, focusing on the background and linguistic elements of the text. It is also a *Regligionsgeschichtlich* approach. This choice of exegetical analysis is not an attempt to ignore other critical methods. This study generally accepts the conclusions of mainstream scholarship in other areas of biblical criticism that pertain to the Fourth Gospel.

⁴⁵ The definition follows the one found in Millard J. Erickson, *Christian Theology* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids: Baker, 1998), 88: "Redaction criticism is a study of the activity of the biblical authors in shaping, modifying, or even creating material for the final product which they wrote."

In ch. 2 the concept of agency in the Fourth Gospel and scholarly treatments of agency therein will be examined. An attempt will be made to categorize the various treatments of agency and to present a brief evaluation of each. The chapter will seek to investigate the questions: What is the Jewish law of agency? How does agency appear in the Fourth Gospel? What are the explanations to the background of John's agency motif?

The central issue in ch. 3 will be the agency motif in Deut 18:15–22. The chapter will treat the agency motif in both Deut 18 and how that motif is present in the body of the Fourth Gospel. The focus will be upon the prophet-like-Moses: How is this prophet like Moses? What does the text say about this prophet? How does the prophet-like-Moses appear in the Fourth Gospel?

The concentration of ch. 4 will be on the Prologue itself. The study will examine the text of the Prologue to ascertain if the Mosaic agency background is feasible. How is the λόγος like Moses? Is the agency of the λόγος present and how does it appear in the Fourth Gospel?

The final chapter will present the conclusion of this study and its implications. It will summarize the investigation, present ways forward, and draw implications.

Christology or Theology?

A larger question that must be addressed is whether this is a study of Christology or theology.⁴⁶ The question as it pertains to the Gospel of John is subtle but important. Christology in general is the study of the person and the work of Jesus Christ. Theology proper is the study of God. On the one hand, the λόγος is declared to be God (John 1:1); on the other hand, that same λόγος “became flesh” (1:14). Thus, the Prologue is both theological and Christological. The study of the λόγος is both the study of God and of Christ. In a narrowly defined work such as this, the focus is inherently limited. This study

⁴⁶ Attempting to address the concern of the Fourth Gospel on this question, Charles Kingsley Barrett, “Christocentric or Theocentric?: Observations on the Theological Method of the Fourth Gospel,” in *Essays on John* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1982), 1–18, ends on the side of theology.

will focus on the Christology of the Prologue, rather than its theology. Although the Prologue contains theological statements, the approach to the law of agency in this work is ultimately upon the person of Christ in relationship to the Father. Agency in the Gospel of John has to do with the Father-Son relationship. Even though the Father is unambiguously God and agency is therefore a category that may be used to express theol., the relationship is primarily Christological in that the relationship expressed in the Fourth Gospel is about the *identity* of the Son.⁴⁷ As James D. G. Dunn observes, “The stated aim of the Gospel as it now stands gives first place to Christological claims.”⁴⁸

The limiting of agency to Christology, however, in no way ignores theol.—one informs the other. Dunn makes note of this and spells out clearly the relationship between Christology and theol.: the primary debate that the Fourth Evangelist sought to address by applying the Wisdom motif to Jesus (Christology) was the issue of monotheism (theol.).⁴⁹ In ancient Jewish thought, Wisdom was equated with God; for the Fourth Evangelist to equate another with Wisdom was to retain monotheism, albeit in a way expressed anew.⁵⁰ Hence, when one speaks of Christology in the Fourth Gospel, one at the same time speaks of theol.⁵¹ Yet, despite the overlap between Christology and theol., the focus in this work is primarily on the agency motif as it relates to the Fourth Gospel’s Christology. As Marinus

⁴⁷ As will be seen, because the identity of the Son is defined in his relationship to the Father, and the agency motif is the basis for the Prologue, the Logos and the Son are synonymous terms in the Fourth Gospel.

⁴⁸ Dunn, “Let John be John,” 317.

⁴⁹ Dunn, “Let John be John,” 335.

⁵⁰ In the quest for the historical Jesus, modern scholarship has tended to ignore the Gospel of John as a viable source for historical Jesus studies. Scholars in the past half cent. have emerged, however, who have challenged the consensus and argued for the historical reliability of the Fourth Gospel, esp. as John pertains to the ministry of Jesus. The theologizing of the Fourth Evangelist cannot be denied, but neither can that of the other Synoptic Evangelists. Because other NT documents and early Christian writings display a radical monotheism, the Fourth Evangelist cannot be accused of distorting monotheism in order to include Jesus Christ. For a strong argument on the inclusion of Jesus Christ into the divine identity of יהוה, see Richard Bauckham, *Jesus and the God of Israel: God Crucified and Other Studies on the New Testament’s Christology of Divine Identity* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008).

⁵¹ Appropriate is the term *theo-centric Christology* as coined by Sadananda, *Exegesis*, 280.

de Jonge observes, the sending motif “speaks about God and the Son in one breath, combining theology and christology.”⁵²

⁵² Jonge, “Christology and Theology in the Context of Early Christian Eschatology Particularly in the Fourth Gospel,” 1844.

CHAPTER 2 AGENCY IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL

Recent scholars have detected an agency motif in the Fourth Gospel. The purpose of this chapter is to survey some of the major scholarly literature on the Jewish law of agency. The first part will be a brief treatment of the agency principle. The agency motif within the Fourth Gospel will be examined second. Finally, the scholarly treatments will be surveyed.

The Principle of Agency in Jewish Law

Israel Herbert Levinthal's article "The Jewish Law of Agency" is the classic work in the twentieth century on agency in Jewish law and will serve as the foundation for this section.⁵³ Levinthal situates the law of agency in its legal context by tracing the history of Jewish law.⁵⁴ He notes that all matters of ancient Jewish law, whether criminal or civil, revolved around the Scriptures. The former largely preserved its Mosaic character, but the latter developed in accordance with the "life, conditions, usages, and rules of conduct according to the age."⁵⁵ The law of agency developed as a civil law during a time of commercial activity, and being applied to a variety of situations, was expressed in distinct ways. The later development of the law of agency does not suggest, however, that agency has no scriptural basis; on the contrary, the Jewish agency law originates in the pages of the Pentateuch.

⁵³ Israel Herbert Levinthal, "The Jewish Law of Agency," *JQR* NS 12 (1922): 117–91.

⁵⁴ Levinthal, "Jewish Law of Agency," 120. This is contrary to Walter Schmithals, *The Office of Apostle in the Early Church* (trans. John E. Steely; Nashville: Abingdon, 1969), 106, who offers that the שליח has no connection to the religious aspect of Jewish law.

⁵⁵ Levinthal, "Jewish Law of Agency," 122.

According to Levinthal, the rabbis held that the law of agency must originate in the Torah.⁵⁶ In the writings of the rabbis is found the core principle of Jewish agency: כמותו אדם של שלוחו (m. Ber. 5:5). Looking to the Pentateuch, the rabbis draw this tenet from ושלחה (Deut 24:1). Although ושלחה appears in a discourse on divorce, the significant point that divorce can be executed through an agent makes ושלחה fundamental to agency. The שליח principle expresses the authority of a representative. The one who is שליח is an authorized agent who functions like the principal in every way.⁵⁷

Agency in the Fourth Gospel

One of the noticeable themes in the Fourth Gospel is the sending of the Son. Of all the Gospels, John uses some form of the terms πέμπω and ἀποστέλλω a total of sixty times, compared to the twenty-four uses in Matthew, the twenty-one in Mark, and the thirty-six in Luke. In reference to the sending of the Son, μέμπω and ἀποστέλλω are used in John forty-one times, in Matthew twice, in Mark once, and in Luke three. The numerous usages of μέμπω and ἀποστέλλω in the Fourth Gospel applied to the Son suggest that the sending of the Son is a prominent theme.

The Son is the Father's agent in the following ways: to save others (3:17), to declare what the Father has said (3:34; 8:26; 12:49; 14:24), to do the Father's will (4:34; 5:30; 6:38), to appoint others as agents (4:38; 17:18; 20:21), to bring honor to the Father (5:23), to give life (5:24; 6:57), to judge in the stead of the Father (5:30; 8:16), to do the works of the Father (5:36; 9:4), to raise up those drawn to the Son by the Father (6:39, 44), to reveal the teaching of the Father (7:16), to bring glory to the Father (7:18), to bring others

⁵⁶ Levinthal, "Jewish Law of Agency," 135.

⁵⁷ Isaac Herzog, *The Main Institutions of Jewish Law: The Law of Obligations* (vol. 2; London: Soncino, 1980), 141-42, discusses Maimonides who held to the personification of the principal in the agent. Herzog does not see a difference between the Maimonides's position on agency and that of others who understood the agent to be simply the agent's instrument: "the agent is not the mere instrument or hand (*yad*), to use the technical expression, of the principal but actually takes his place." Peder Borgen, "God's Agent in the Fourth Gospel," in *The Interpretation of John* (ed. John Ashton; IRT 9; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1986), 67-78, esp. 68, draws attention to juridical mysticism in which agency goes beyond functionality.

to belief in the Father (11:42; 12:44), to manifest the Father (12:45), to bring others to receive the Father (13:20), to send the Holy Spirit (15:16; 16:7), to reveal the Father that others may know him (17:3), and to bring others to know that the Son was sent by the Father (17:23).

The Son thus represents the Father, revealing the Father to humanity and leading the way to the Father. The Father sends the Son, making him his representative agent (חֲלִיפָא) on earth. The Son has the prerogatives of the Father: salvation, giving of life, judgment, and resurrecting the dead.

The theme of the sending of the Son as God's agent is accepted by most scholars. No agreement exists, however, as to how to classify the agency motif as it appears in the Fourth Gospel. The next section classifies and examines modern scholars' treatments of the agency motif in John.

Explanations to the Background of Johannine Agency

Gnosticism

Rudolf Bultmann (1971)

After having introduced the notion in his article that the Prologue was derived from Gnosticism, Bultmann in his commentary proceeds to connect the Fourth Gospel as a whole to Gnosticism.⁵⁸ Not only are the revelation sayings Gnostic, but so is John's Christology.⁵⁹ The uses of ἀποστέλλω in John cannot be traced back to the Tanak because "this is not the normal OT expression for the appearance of the divine emissaries (prophets)."⁶⁰ Instead, the Fourth Gospel's sending language is used primarily of Jesus, the Revealer. Because of the disparity between the commissioning language in the Tanak and

⁵⁸ See pp. 20–21 for a summary of Bultmann's article and commentary.

⁵⁹ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 8.

⁶⁰ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 50 n. 3.

the NT, Bultmann suggests that “we must look rather to Gnostic language, which corresponds to the notion of revelation.”⁶¹

The *λόγος* concept is also informed by Gnosticism. Bultmann believes the Fourth Evangelist retains this Gnosticism, for Jesus, the incarnate *λόγος*, is presented “in the terminology of Gnostic mythology as the Gospel develops.”⁶² In the Fourth Gospel’s presentation of Jesus, the Gnostic terminology is retained because the Prologue is part of an *Offenbarungsredenquelle*, a Gnostic-influenced document that consisted of revelatory sayings. These sayings account for the speeches in the Johannine narrative and for the words of Jesus.

Rabbinic Judaism

Jan-Adolf Bühner (1977)

Perhaps the most significant work to date on agency in the Fourth Gospel is Jan-Adolf Bühner’s diss., *Der Gesandte und sein Weg im 4. Evangelium*. Bühner proposes that the agency model in the Fourth Gospel was derived from Oriental and Hellenistic concepts of agency that were mediated through rabbinic Judaism.⁶³ Even though “die wesentlichen Elemente sowohl der gnostischen Gesandten-Mythologie als auch der johanneischen Botenchristologie unabhängig voneinander auf ein kulturgeschichtlich im orientalischen und hellenistischen Raum landläufig verbreitetes Botenverständnis zurückweisen,”⁶⁴ Bühner rejects a Gnostic origin to the Fourth Gospel on the basis that “sowohl der Prophet als auch der himmlische Gottesbote, der מלאך, im rabbinischen Judentum und seinem Umfeld als שְׁלוּכֵינַן Gottes verstanden wurden.”⁶⁵

⁶¹ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 50 n. 3.

⁶² Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 28.

⁶³ Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 423–24.

⁶⁴ Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 423.

⁶⁵ Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 424.

Bühner understands the agency motif not to have been present early in the Fourth Gospel. The sending schema found in John was one that was appropriated later from sources outside of but not unfamiliar to the Johannine community and developed theologically by the author: “Die Aufnahme des juristischen Sendungsverständnisses in die Christologie wurzelt offenbar in einer einheitlich durchgeführten Traditionsumarbeitung, die als solche nicht am Anfang, sondern eher am Ende der johanneischen Traditionsgeschichte steht.”⁶⁶ Thus, the Christological agency motif of the Fourth Gospel was not something that the Johannine author had in mind at the early stages of the Gospel’s composition, but was a later addition.

Bühner is correct to call attention to the Jewish background of the sending motif. His insight into the importing and later inclusion of the Jewish sending motif into the Fourth Gospel substantiates the idea that the Fourth Gospel was composed in stages and that certain parts are earlier than others.

Moses Traditions

Wayne A. Meeks (1967)

An in-depth study on the background to the prophetic and kingship motifs in the Fourth Gospel, *The Prophet-King* examines “the way in which the motifs represented by the two terms ‘prophet’ and ‘king’ in the Fourth Gospel not only are interrelated, but interpret each other.”⁶⁷ After conducting an extensive analysis of the Johannine text, Wayne A. Meeks concludes that the prophet-king terminology is associated with Moses traditions. These traditions are then examined within the various Jewish sources for an understanding of how Moses is portrayed as prophet and king. Lastly, having concluded that “the Moses traditions

⁶⁶ Bühner, *Der Gesandte*, 424.

⁶⁷ Wayne A. Meeks, *The Prophet-King: Moses Traditions and the Johannine Christology* (NovTSup 14; Leiden: E. J. Brill, 1967), 1.

do offer an adequate background for the prophetic-royal christology of John,⁶⁸ Meeks examines the Fourth Gospel for any Moses traditions.

Meeks draws attention to the similarities of Jesus' agency with that of Moses.⁶⁹ Both are appointed with a form of ἀποστέλλω, used in the LXX to translate the Heb. שלח. Their agencies are prophetic and the signs they do are meant to elicit belief. Furthermore, the name, works and will, words, and glory that Jesus seeks are not his own, but are those of God, the one who sends him. Jesus thus typifies the maxim of agency: כמותו אדם של שליחו. Meeks points out that in the sacred texts of the Samaritans, to believe in Moses ultimately meant to believe in God.⁷⁰ As with Moses, God's name is revealed through Jesus.

The relationship between the agencies of Jesus Christ and Moses is concentrated in John 5:19–47 and John 17. The former can be understood in three parts: the works of the agent are those of the sender (5:19–29), the agent's witness does not come from the agent's self but originates in the sender (vv. 30–40), and the sender's glory is the only glory sought (vv. 41–44). The latter is Jesus' affirmation that the mission as given by the sender is completed faithfully. These aspects parallel the prophetic and apostolic functions of Moses as God's agent to Israel.

Meeks concludes that the presentation of Jesus in the Fourth Gospel is not that Jesus simply replaces Moses but that he goes beyond him: "The thesis advocated here is not that the fourth evangelist wished to depict Jesus as a 'new Moses.' ... Rather it is to be assumed that he regarded Jesus as greater than Moses."⁷¹ Meeks marshals abundant evidence from a plethora of sources that Jesus is not to be understood simply as the prophet-like-Moses, but the prophet who surpasses Moses.

⁶⁸ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 287.

⁶⁹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 301–5.

⁷⁰ See Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 238–41.

⁷¹ Meeks, *Prophet-King*, 319.

Meeks, however, may be overstating the case. To say that Jesus is “greater than Moses,” although true, removes the force of Jesus’ fulfillment of the prophet-like-Moses. Jesus truly does both: he fulfills the prophet-like-Moses in every instance and at the same time is greater than Moses.

Craig A. Evans (1993)

In *Word and Glory*, the Jewish law of agency is placed within the broader Moses tradition of the Tanak.⁷² Moses is God’s שליח sent to Pharaoh and the Israelites.⁷³ Drawing primarily from Exodus and Deuteronomy, Evans observes six features of agency⁷⁴ and thoroughly demonstrates the ways in which Moses and Jesus realize these characteristics. From Bühner’s work, Evans notes four rabbinic and four Sam. passages that speak of Moses as שליח.⁷⁵ In the Sam. literature, Moses is directly called שליח twice.

Evans finds these Mosaic parallels in the Fourth Gospel: Like Moses, (1) Jesus is consistently said to be sent by God and in 13:16 may possibly be called שליח, (2) Jesus and his works are validated by God because God is with him, (3) through Jesus’ name the Father will do whatever the disciples ask, (4) belief in Jesus is equivalent to belief in God, (5) the words of Jesus are the words of God, (6) and in Jesus the works of God are manifest.⁷⁶ Concludes Evans: “Like Moses, Jesus is presented as God’s ‘agent’, a *shaliach* who speaks and acts with God’s authority. But unlike Moses, Jesus is the *shaliach par excellence*, in whom God’s Word, Torah, Wisdom and Glory have taken up residence and are revealed.”⁷⁷

⁷² See Evans, *Word and Glory*, 135–44.

⁷³ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 137.

⁷⁴ These features are that God’s agents (1) are to operate in God’s name and authority; (2) are to proclaim God’s words; (3) present God’s commands in digest form; (4) are in the closest possible way associated with God; (5) are expected to authenticate their agency with signs; and (6) are met with opposition. See Evans, *Word and Glory*, 137–41.

⁷⁵ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 142–43.

⁷⁶ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 143–44.

⁷⁷ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 145. Deeming that “Evans shows convincingly that even in the Johannine Prologue we have clear connections with Deut 18:15–19,” Anderson, “Having-Sent-Me-Father,” 43, cites this

The implications of Evan's study do not go far enough. Evans appears to read the Prologue in a way where the its construction began with the appropriating and situating of λόγος in relation to creation, moved to a midrashic interpretation of λόγος, then finished with comparison of the incarnate λόγος to the Sinai tradition. Rather, given the influence of the Mosaic חִלְשׁ model throughout the Fourth Gospel, instead of reading the Prologue in a way where "Genesis 1–2 clearly underlies the first half of the Prologue,"⁷⁸ the entire Prologue may well be read with the Mosaic agency model in mind.

Paul N. Anderson (2008)

In the article "On Guessing Points and Naming Stars,"⁷⁹ Paul N. Anderson applies what he considers are four epistemological origins of John's Christology to the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel. These origins are the agency motif of Deut 18,⁸⁰ the dialectical thinking of the Fourth Evangelist, the Johannine situation, and literary devices to engage the audience.⁸¹ The complexity of the background to the Prologue indicates that the best approach to interpreting the Prologue is a dialogical one, taking into consideration literary and historical factors.

Anderson observes that among the theological and Christological tensions of the Prologue stands the Father-Son relationship, which "was first a factor of the Johannine agency schema,"⁸² the Prophet-like Moses schema. The Word-Light-Son is the agent who, as one identical with the Father in respect to essence and works, reveals the nature of the

statement of Evans. However, Evans appears not to offer a definite connection; at the very least, Evans makes the Jesus-Moses connection in the last part of the Prologue.

⁷⁸ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 100.

⁷⁹ Paul N. Anderson, "On Guessing Points and Naming Stars: Epistemological Origins of John's Christological Tensions," in *The Gospel of John and Christian Theology* (ed. Richard Bauckham and Carl Mosser; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008), 311–45.

⁸⁰ Another interpreter that deserves mention in regard to this point is Thomas Francis Glasson, *Moses in the Fourth Gospel* (SBT 40; Naperville, Ill.: Alec R. Allenson, 1963), esp. 27–32.

⁸¹ Anderson, "On Guessing Points and Naming Stars," 322–27.

⁸² Anderson, "On Guessing Points and Naming Stars," 343.

Father. With the accountability in mind that the audience has to the coming Mosaic prophet, those who respond are given the privilege of becoming children of God. The mission of the Son is affirmed by the community in its testimony to its encounter with the revealed glory of the incarnate *λόγος*.

Anderson makes a strong point when he says that “the combining of creation, redemption, and revelation motifs into the representative aspects of the Son’s agency from the Father serves as the backbone of the Johannine divine-human dialogue.”⁸³ Throughout the body of the Gospel, the agency of the Son is clearly connected to these motifs. Yet, how these motifs are connected to deuteronomic agency motif is unclear. Put another way, is a more direct connection between the Prologue and Deut 18:15–22 evident, and if so, does the deuteronomic agency schema alone account for the agency motif of the Prologue or does the agency schema, or even the Prophet-like-Moses motif itself, draw from the broader Moses tradition?

Sonship Traditions

Helen S. Friend (1990)

In her article “Like Father, Like Son,” Helen S. Friend focuses on the particular aspect of Jewish agency where a son functions as an agent.⁸⁴ Drawing from the Talmudic literature, Friend articulates the rabbinic agency principle in terms of sonship agency:

Many of the citations in the Talmud refer to the agent, servant, and son together (Baba Mezia 96a). If the agent is as the one who sent him, how much more so would the son of the household be as the father who sent him.⁸⁵

⁸³ Anderson, “On Guessing Points and Naming Stars,” 333.

⁸⁴ Helen S. Friend, “Like Father, Like Son: A Discussion of the Concept of Agency in Halakah and John,” *ATJ* 22 (1990): 18–28, esp. 21–22.

⁸⁵ Friend, “Like Father, Like Son,” 21.

Instead of a servant, the principal's son is preferable as an agent. Thus, "the son of the household is, in the Jewish view, the most fully qualified agent. The Son of God is the perfect agent."⁸⁶

Unlike most commentators on agency in the Fourth Gospel, Friend does not limit Jewish agency to functionality. She argues that agency is ontological: "Instead of the agent having merely a legal or task likeness to the sender, he additionally has an inherited likeness—a likeness of natures or being."⁸⁷ Although the Jew mind perhaps did not think of an agency with the notion of ontology, Friend's observation can be supported from the Fourth Gospel. The idea of an agency of ontology, however, is not explicit in the rabbinic literature.

When the emphasis on the Father-Son relationship in the Fourth Gospel is considered, Friend's stating of agency in terms of sonship is the strength of this work. The problem is that a sonship agency is not clearly in view. Friend does little to support her idea, and she does not further explain it. Furthermore, *B. Meši'a* 96a, which Friend cites, has no indication of the son of the household acting as an agent.⁸⁸ Friend does offer extensive references to the agency principle in rabbinic literature and soundly argues for the earliness of הלכה agency.⁸⁹

⁸⁶ Friend, "Like Father, Like Son," 22.

⁸⁷ Friend, "Like Father, Like Son," 21.

⁸⁸ Friend is not without support from the rabbinic literature. In *b. Git.* 66a, a question on whether a son ever functions as an agent highlights a possible debate about sonship agency at the time. In unequivocal language, the son-as-agent is confirmed by Raba.

⁸⁹ The argument is found in Friend, "Like Father, Like Son," 25–28.

George R. Beasley-Murray (1992)

The essay “The Mission of the Logos-Son” focuses on the messenger aspect of Jesus’ mission.⁹⁰ Drawing from Bühner, George R. Beasley-Murray points out three components of the ancient messenger, which in Jewish law are implied in the main tenet of Jewish agency.⁹¹ In the Fourth Gospel, the Son as God’s messenger bears a message, performs the works of the assigned mission, and returns to the Father. In the Fourth Gospel, the messenger activity rests primarily with *the Son* (absolute form).

Beasley-Murray inquires about the model by which Jesus’ mission was understood. He suggests the model is not derived from the Prophet-like-Moses motif but from the sending of the Son as a heavenly being from God as messenger.⁹² Beasley-Murray does not deny the prophetic agency motif as an influence on the Johannine sending motif, but for him it is of secondary importance. One reason is that the sending of the prophets is insufficient to describe the sending of the Son: “The former is a man thrust forth with a commission from God, the latter is (to adapt the Pauline expression) ‘the Man from heaven.’”⁹³ The portrayal of Jesus goes beyond the model of a prophet to highlight one who preexisted and was united with God and was sent to earth to reveal the Father.

The model of the Son’s mission is to be understood in light of the *λόγος*. Beasley-Murray believes that “the Prologue may be seen as *an anticipatory description of the Mission of the Logos-Son to the World*.”⁹⁴ The *λόγος* in both preexistent and incarnate forms is revealer of God to creation and mediator of God’s qualities, character, and activity to effect the new creation.

⁹⁰ “These included three simple but fundamental procedures: (a) the giving of news by the person who sent the messenger; (b) the carrying out of the task by the one sent; (c) the return of the messenger to the person who sent him for the purpose of report.” Beasley-Murray, “Mission of the Logos-Son,” 1856.

⁹¹ See pp. 29–30.

⁹² Beasley-Murray, “Mission of the Logos-Son,” 1864–65.

⁹³ Beasley-Murray, “Mission of the Logos-Son,” 1865.

⁹⁴ Beasley-Murray, “Mission of the Logos-Son,” 1867.

Beasley-Murray notes the contrast between Jesus and Moses, but minimizes the influence of the Prophet-like-Moses schema. He then allows that the idea of “Prophet Redeemer” serves as the model of the Son’s mission. Does Beasley-Murray wish to elevate the sending motif as the primary background to the Fourth Evangelist’s Christology and relegate the Mosaic prophet model to a role that only supports it? If so, Beasley-Murray appears to offer a contradiction here. Perhaps the Mosaic agency motif may be retained without diminishing its function as background to the sending of the Son and without denying that the Son’s sending also transcends the prophetic agency schema.

Mystical Traditions

Peder Borgen (1968/1997)

In an article on agency in the Fourth Gospel,⁹⁵ Peder Borgen, under his discussion of the Jewish agency law, takes up the principles of הלכה. The law of agency is characterized by a few elements⁹⁶ and is primarily juridical. Borgen notes that among Jewish mystics agency was developed further into a juridical mysticism that makes the agent “a person identical with the sender.”⁹⁷ In all aspects, the identities of the principal and the agent are bound together: “Thus not only his authority and his function are derived from the sender, but also his qualities. *Qiddushin* 43a formulates this mysticism in the following way: the agent ranks as his master’s own person.”⁹⁸ Agency in this case is focused on person and not solely function.

⁹⁵ Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 67–78.

⁹⁶ These are (1) the basic principle that states the likeness of the agent with the sender, (2) the subordination of the agent to the sender, (3) the agent’s particular assignment, (4) the legal aspect of the agent’s mission, (5) the return of the agent to the principal, (6) and the idea that agents can appoint their own agents. Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 68–72.

⁹⁷ Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 68.

⁹⁸ Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 68.

Borgen draws heavily from rabbinic literature. The question of whether the agency material in the rabbinic literature is a later development or reflects centuries of traditions is valid here. Borgen notes the heavy parallels between the concepts found in the rabbis and those found in the Fourth Gospel and even in the Synoptics, suggesting that the rabbis were appropriating traditional elements of agency rather than constructing new understandings of agency.⁹⁹

Borgen further suggests that agency principles may be found in mystical Judaism, particularly early Merkebah mysticism,¹⁰⁰ and that this mysticism is part of the background to the Fourth Gospel. Borgen also believes that Philo, having been “influenced by early Merkabah mysticism,” is a helpful figure with whom to compare the Fourth Gospel in order to demonstrate some influence of Merkebah agency in the Fourth Gospel.¹⁰¹ Philo and John have in common “the heavenly figure who sees God (Israel)” and ascent-descent motifs.¹⁰² Early Merkebah mysticism supplies the Fourth Gospel with the motif of heavenly agency.

Furthermore, Merkabah mysticism accounts for John’s *λόγος* concept, if John was indeed influenced by Philo. Borgen makes particular note of the similarities between the *λόγος* of John and that of Philo: both refer to the *λόγος* as *son* and as *God*. The primary difference between John and Philo, however, is that the former applies הלכה agency to the heavenly agent. Even if John relied upon Philo for the *λόγος* concept, הלכה agency principles, and not Merkebah mysticism, best serve as the background for Johannine agency.

Borgen’s observations on and comparison of rabbinic literature and the Johannine texts are the strongest points of this work. The mystical-הלכה agency best accounts for the

⁹⁹ Parallels to the Fourth Gospel are found in (1’) *Sipre; Qidd.* 43a (cf. John 12:44; 13:20; also 5:23; 12:45; 14:9; 15:23); (2’) *Gen. Rab.* 78 (cf. 13:16); (3’) *’Erub.* 31b–32a; *Qidd.* 2:4; *Ter.* 4:4 (cf. 6: 38), (4’) *B. Qam.* 70a (cf. 12:31–32); (5’) *Ḥag.* 76d; *Mek.* 12:1 (cf. 13:3); and (6’) *Qidd.* 41a (cf. 17:16; 20:21).

¹⁰⁰ Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 73. Borgen praises G. D. Scholem for his work on Merkabah mysticism and for pointing out “its halakhic character.”

¹⁰¹ Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 73.

¹⁰² Borgen, “God’s Agent,” 75.

entire agency motif in John. The particular emphasis on Merkebah mysticism as background to the Johannine sending motif appears to be weaker than focusing on the הלכה principles.

Jey J. Kanagaraj (1998)

Picking up on the early Christian writers' characterization of the Fourth Gospel as "mystical," Jey J. Karangaraj seeks to understand the type of mysticism in John. He concludes that the mysticism of the Fourth Gospel is the "Merkabah mysticism that was familiar in the late first century."¹⁰³

Karangaraj frames his discussion of the Son's agency as a mission of revelation of God.¹⁰⁴ Karangaraj rejects the שליח principle as the background of the sending motif, faulting it for its primarily legal character.¹⁰⁵ The sending motif in John is derived primarily from Merkabah mysticism, although the use of Synoptic and Pauline sending motifs is possible.¹⁰⁶ Kanagaraj takes up Borgen's hypothesis that the John uses the agency motif of early Merkabah mysticism, rather than the הלכה agency principle.

The primary theme that ties the elements of "witnessing, judgment, and eternal life"¹⁰⁷ of the Son's mission is the revealing of the Father. The background to the Son's mission is possibly a primitive sending concept, like that found in earlier Christian literature. John adapts this earlier motif and modifies it with his own theol. as a corrective to Jewish mystics. The three aforementioned themes indicate that the mission of the Son is to confront them with a genuine revelation of the Father. John's polemic is to persuade Jewish mystics to belief in Jesus as the Christ.

¹⁰³ Kanagaraj, "Mysticism", 311.

¹⁰⁴ Kanagaraj, "Mysticism", 248–63.

¹⁰⁵ Kanagaraj, "Mysticism", 258–59.

¹⁰⁶ Kanagaraj, "Mysticism", 260, 262.

¹⁰⁷ Kanagaraj, "Mysticism", 251.

Opposing Views

Elizabeth Harris (1994)

In her monograph *Prologue and Gospel*, Elizabeth Harris does not believe that the שליח agency motif could account for Jesus' mission.¹⁰⁸ Harris reasons that the ancient Jews never had within their belief system the idea that God sends the eternally existent Son into the world as a genuine human being in order to restore intimate relationship between God and humanity. The portrayal in the Fourth Gospel of the sending of the Son as an act of God's love is at odds with the Jewish שליח because in Jewish law a son is never used as an agent, but only as a representative in a transaction.¹⁰⁹ Moreover, the Son cannot be an agent because the Son cannot lose his status as a son, but the שליח, upon the closure of the transaction, loses her or his status as an agent.

Neither does Harris believe that the שליח motif can be the background to the Prologue.¹¹⁰ One reason is that the John the Baptist's witness in the Prologue, which Harris argues spans vv. 15–18,¹¹¹ is neither confessional nor juridical, but theological. The שליח is a term limited to commercial usage¹¹² and thus is inadequate to convey the theological statements in the Johannine narrative. The witness of John the Baptist in the Prologue better speaks to the mission and origins of Jesus Christ.¹¹³

Harris raises respectable objections to the שליח motif as background to the Fourth Gospel. Yet, Harris fails to provide evidence to substantiate her point. Her argument from silence, although worthy of consideration, lacks in comparison to the many Mosaic and הלכה parallels in the Fourth Gospel that scholars have pointed out.

¹⁰⁸ Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 45.

¹⁰⁹ Harris on this point contradicts Friend.

¹¹⁰ Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 45.

¹¹¹ Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 35.

¹¹² Schmithals, *Office of Apostle in the Early Church*, 106, limits the function of the שליח to the legal realm. Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 314, denies that שליח need have any religious usage.

¹¹³ Harris, *Prologue and Gospel*, 59–62.

Paul W. Meyer (1996)

In his article “The Father,”¹¹⁴ Paul W. Meyer seeks to reevaluate in the Fourth Gospel the relationship between theol. and Christology, particularly the Fourth Gospel’s presentations of the Father and of the Son.¹¹⁵ Meyer contends that the theol. of the Fourth Gospel is not expressed through the author’s Christological focus on the Son, but is conveyed through the term *Father*.

Inadequate for Meyer is the extensive focus on the backdrop of Jesus as *Gesandte* over the usage of the sending motif within the Fourth Gospel itself.¹¹⁶ Instead, the primary focus of the sending motif in John is upon the *ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ*, which, according to Bultmann, is “God’s name.”¹¹⁷ To identify various sending traditions in Jewish literature from which the Fourth Gospel derived its language about the sending of the Son is lacking:

What is involved in this rather extensive literature is a search for the juridical background that will make intelligible the notion of a divine envoy who does not merely bring information but who mediates a fully authentic and genuine encounter with the God who “sent” him, and nothing less than that. At the same time, however, certain “subordinationist” connotations continue for some to cling to the very notion of an envoy or emissary that is “sent” and so seem to make it irreconcilable with the evangelist’s claims for the unity of the Father and the Son.¹¹⁸

Meyer thus perceives the deriving of the sending concept from extra-Johannine sources as deficient. This view is a result of Meyer’s desire to read the Fourth Gospel’s Christology and theol. separately.¹¹⁹

¹¹⁴ Meyer, “The Father,” 255–73.

¹¹⁵ Meyer, “The Father,” 258.

¹¹⁶ Meyer, “The Father,” 261–62.

¹¹⁷ Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament* (vol. 1; trans. Kendrick Grobel; London: SCM, 1958), 34.

¹¹⁸ Meyer, “The Father,” 261. Mark L. Appold, *The Oneness Motif in the Fourth Gospel: Motif Analysis and Exegetical Probe into the Theology of John* (WUNT 2/1; Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr, 1976), 20–22, is in basic agreement that the sending motif of the Fourth Gospel is not a sufficient background for the Father-Son unity.

¹¹⁹ For a response to the issue of Christology vs. theol., see pp. 26–28.

The sending language has less to do with Christology and more to do with theol. That is, the locus of the sending motif is not the Son but the Father. Meyer contends that the language about the Father can be separated from the language about the Son and that the Fourth Evangelist does not use the terms in conjunction.¹²⁰ God is presented as the sending Father. Thus, “the sending language serves to legitimate and authorize the identity, the mission, and the claims of Jesus as the saving event.”¹²¹ The sending language is not connected to Jewish agency principles, but is used to legitimate the mission of Jesus.

Meyer’s limiting of the Jewish law of agency to its strictly legal background is perhaps too strict. Many of the examples of agency in the rabbinic writings are legal in sense, but are also religious. For example, a priest may appoint an agent to perform a religious duty (*B. Qam.* 110a), or the congregation may appoint an agent in the reading of the תפלה (*m. Ber.* 34b). The sending language, then, need not be read through a juridical lens. Instead, if the sending language is read as religious language, this may inform the use of expressions like *Lamb of God* (John 1:29, 36).

Furthermore, the sending language of the Fourth Gospel is also found in the Synoptics, in particular the parable of the vineyard owner in Matthew and Luke. The similarity of language points to an underlying sonship agency motif familiar to Jewish thought. The appointing of a son as an agent is found in *b. Git* 66a and affirms a sonship agency tradition.

Findings

The above survey highlights the general view of scholarship on the agency of the Fourth Gospel. The theme of agency in the Fourth Gospel itself is clear, but scholars are divided on the type of agency present. The scholars who disagree raise valid objections to agency in the Fourth Gospel but are overly rigid in their understanding of agency as a strictly legal

¹²⁰ Meyer, “The Father,” 263–64.

¹²¹ Meyer, “The Father,” 265.

concept. Neither the Gospels nor the rabbinic literature treat the agency concept in such a strict manner. On the contrary, agency is also applied to religious and familial matters.

The greatest deficiency that this chapter reveals is that of the scholars surveyed, only three explicitly connect the agency of the Son with the Prologue: Bultmann, Beasley-Murray, and Anderson. Yet, these scholars appear to have their shortcomings. Bultmann's connection between Prologue and agency by a Gnostic revelation-sayings source is lacking, evidenced by little support for Gnostic background today. For Beasley-Murray, the *λόγος* concept serves as part of the background the Son's agency, but the connection is unclear: Beasley-Murray diminishes the influence of prophetic agency schema and with what appears to be backward reasoning believes the *λόγος* concept influences the Prophet-Redeemer model. Anderson connects the agency of the Son in the Prologue to the deuteronomic Prophet-like-Moses motif mediated through the body of the Fourth Gospel. Yet, this connection appears to be less explicit.

The study now moves to examining deuteronomic agency in Deut 18 and in the Fourth Gospel. This exploration will consist of textual analysis and the presentation of the Mosaic agent in the Fourth Gospel.

CHAPTER 3 DEUTERONOMIC AGENCY

As was seen in the previous chapter, the scholarly consensus on the agency features in the Fourth Gospel is clear, even if scholars understand the background differently. Following Anderson's observations, the aim of this chapter examines Deut 18:5–22 for its agency motif through grammatical observations and word studies. Both the MT and the LXX, given its importance in the first century, will be covered here.¹²² Particular attention will be given to where the LXX differs from the MT.

This chapter begins with an examination of the prophet-like-Moses in Deut 18:15–22. The second part of this chapter will investigate the prophet-like-Moses motif in the Fourth Gospel.

Agency in Deut 18:15–22

Deuteronomy 18:15–22 is replete with an agency motif. The agency idea is seen in the request of the Israelites for an intermediary lest the Israelites “hear the voice of יהוה my Lord” (18:16). Their request is honored with the promise to “raise up” a prophet like Moses from among the Israelites (18:15, 18). The function of the Moses-like prophet is to “speak the words of יהוה” (18:18). John H. Sailhamer highlights the Moses-like prophet's commissioning:

The historical basis of the office is Israel's request for *a mediator* at Sinai. Fearing to stand in God's presence, the people asked *Moses to go before the Lord and return God's words* to them. Thus the prophet was to be “like Moses.” This

¹²² This is indicated by the large number of direct quotations from the LXX in the NT.

suggests that the office of the prophet was to play an important role in the further history of God's dealings with Israel.¹²³

The prophet acts as mediating agent between God and the people, and like Moses, conveys whatever God speaks.

Deut 18:15, 18

	MT	LXX
18:15	נביא מקרִבֵּךְ מֵאַחֶיךָ כִּמְנֵי יְקִים לְךָ יְהוָה אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲלִיּוֹ תִשְׁמְעוּן	προφήτην ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν σου ὡς ἐμὲ ἀναστήσει σοι κύριος ὁ θεός σου, αὐτοῦ ἀκούσεσθε
18:18	נביא אקים להם מקרב אחיהם כמוך ונתתי דברי בפיו ודבר את כל־אשר אצונו	προφήτην ἀναστήσω αὐτοῖς ἐκ τῶν ἀδελφῶν αὐτῶν ὥσπερ σὲ καὶ δώσω τὸ ῥῆμά μου ἐν τῷ στόματι αὐτοῦ, καὶ λαλήσει αὐτοῖς καθότι ἂν ἐντείλωμαι αὐτῷ

The placement of נביא is emphatic: “The *affected* object can be put at the beginning for the sake of emphasis.”¹²⁴ The LXX retains the emphatic placement. Deuteronomy 13:1–5 (13:2–6 MT), another section referring to prophets, follows the usual word order in Hebrew. The particular placement in Deut 18:15, 18 suggests that special attention is to be given to the qualifications of the coming prophet-like-Moses.

The coming prophet will be “raised up” (יקים) by יהוה (18:15, 18). In Deuteronomy, when קום in the *hiʿpil* form carries a theological sense, it is most often used in connection with the establishment of a covenant (8:18; 9:5; 28:9; 29:13; 31:16)¹²⁵ and with prophets (18:15, 18). This might suggest that יהוה intends to establish the law through the prophets—the establishment of the covenant is the mission of the prophet. As U.

¹²³ John H. Sailhamer, *The Pentateuch as Narrative: A Biblical-Theological Commentary* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1992), 456. Emphasis added.

¹²⁴ Joüon, 548.

¹²⁵ For a helpful discussion of קום and covenant, see Johann Gamberoni, “קום,” *TDOT* 12:589–612, esp. 599–600.

Rüterswörden observes, “The distinction between the prophetic word and the proclamation of the law is erased.”¹²⁶ In the Tanak, *covenant* and *law* are often associated with one another. For example, “the oaths of the covenant” are said to be “written in this law” (Deut 29:20), the written law is placed beside the ark of the covenant (Deut 31:26), and prophets bring the accusation that the law and covenant have been broken (Hos 8:1; Mal 2:8). The most explicit connection between covenant and law is found in Psalms: “They did not keep the law of God, but in his law they refused to walk” (78:10). Thus, the prophet is raised up to confirm the law, and in doing so, the prophet also affirms the covenant.

In contrast, the false prophet of Deut 13:1–5 (13:2–6 MT) will *גתן אליך אות* and *קום*. That these prophets comes from other gods is likely, yet the text portrays these actions as being done out of the prophet’s own initiative. Whereas the true prophet is raised up by *יהוה*, the false prophet simply appears. The genuine prophet’s commission from *יהוה* stands in distinction to the appearance of the false prophet whose commission is not explicitly mentioned. The distinction between the true and the false prophet goes even further: *יהוה* gives the true prophet what to speak but the false prophet gives signs and words intended to cause the people to fall away (13:1–3 [13:2–4 MT]). The true prophet’s ministry is authenticated but the false prophet authenticates oneself.

Deut 18:18

The prophet-like-Moses “will speak” the words of *יהוה*. The use of *דבר* implies the formal commissioning of the prophet to be the spokesperson of *יהוה*.¹²⁷ Sailhammer notes: “Because the prophet spoke on God’s behalf, his words were to be taken as the final authority.”¹²⁸ The recipients are to (*שמעי*) to what the prophet speaks, and in listening, the

¹²⁶ Udo Rüterswörden, “שמע,” *TDOT* 15:253–79, esp. 265.

¹²⁷ Jan Bergman, Heiner Lutzmann, and Werner H. Schmidt, “דבר,” *TDOT* 3:84–125, esp. 100.

¹²⁸ Sailhamer, *Pentateuch as Narrative*, 456.

implication is that the hearers will respond.¹²⁹ The voice of Moses was the voice of יהוה.¹³⁰

Rüterswörden stresses that

as the speaker of Deuteronomy, Moses uses the expression *qôl yhw̄h*; this is how God communicates. The words of Moses are thus characterized (substantially, not formally) as the words of God. It is therefore clear how the same expression can also be placed in the mouth of the prophets: in the Dtr view they are the incumbents of the Mosaic prophetic office. Therefore they are authorized to speak in the fashion.¹³¹

To respond to Moses's voice is to respond to the voice of the one who sent him, and the same response to the coming prophet's voice is expected. John Goldingay observes in Exod 4 that the people responded to God through Moses by believing.¹³²

The noun דבר, essential to the prophet's mission, is translated in the LXX in two ways: λόγος and ῥῆμα. Throughout the LXX, both words possess a substantial range of meaning, but perhaps should be understood best as "full synonyms." Λόγος and ῥῆμα are explicitly interchangeable in the LXX version of Exodus: καὶ διηγησατο [Μωυσῆς] τῷ λαῷ πάντα τὰ ῥήματα τοῦ θεοῦ . . . ἀπεκρίθη δὲ πᾶς ὁ λαὸς φωνῇ μιᾷ λέγοντες Πάντας τοὺς λόγους, οὓς ἐλάλησεν κύριος, ποιήσομεν καὶ ἀκουσόμεθα (24:3); καὶ εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσῆν Γράψον σεαυτῷ τὰ ῥήματα ταῦτα· ἐπὶ γὰρ τῶν τούτων τέθειμαί σοι διαθήκην καὶ τῷ Ἰσραὴλ (34:27).

In 18:18, the significant difference between *word* in the MT and the LXX is their grammatical number: דברי (pl.) vs. τὸ ῥημά (sg.). Additionally, the prophet is not to speak כל-אשר אצונו but instead καθότι ἂν ἐντείλωμαι αὐτῷ. In the LXX, the emphasis is on "the norm of the transmission of God's word over against MT's content of that transmission."¹³³

The LXX thus accentuates the role of the prophet.

¹²⁹ Rüterswörden, *TDOT* 15:266. The idea is not merely to hear but to heed.

¹³⁰ John Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel* (vol. 1 of *Old Testament Theology*; Grand Rapids: InterVarsity, 2003), 434.

¹³¹ Rüterswörden, *TDOT* 15:275.

¹³² Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel*, 434.

¹³³ John William Wevers, *Notes on the Greek Text of Deuteronomy* (SBLSCS 39; Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1995), 303.

Deut 18:19–22

	MT	LXX
18:19	והיה האיש אשר לא־ישמע לא־דברי אשר ידבר בשמי אנכי אדרש מעמו	καὶ ὁ ἄνθρωπος, ὃς ἐὰν μὴ ἀκούσῃ ὅσα ἐὰν λαλήσῃ ὁ προφήτης ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου, ἐγὼ ἐκδικήσω ἐξ αὐτοῦ
18:20	אך הנביא אשר יזיד לדבר דבר בשמי את אשר לא־צויתיו לדבר ואשר ידבר בשם אלהים אחרים	πλὴν ὁ προφήτης, ὃς ἂν ἀσβήσῃ λαλήσαι ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματί μου ῥῆμα, ὃ οὐ προσέταξα λαλήσαι, καὶ ὃς ἂν λαλήσῃ ἐπ' ὀνόματι θεῶν ἐτέρων, ἀποθανεῖται ὁ προφήτης ἐκεῖνος
18:21	וכי תאמר בלבבך איכה נדע את־הדבר אשר לא־דברו יהוה	ἐὰν δὲ εἴπῃς ἐν τῇ καρδίᾳ σου Πῶς γνωσόμεθα τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ οὐκ ἐλάλησεν κύριος;
18:22	אשר ידבר הנביא בשם יהוה ולא־יהיה הדבר ולא יבוא הוא הדבר אשר לא־דברו יהוה בזדון דברו הנביא לא תנור ממנו	ὅσα ἐὰν λαλήσῃ ὁ προφήτης ἐπὶ τῷ ὀνόματι κυρίου, καὶ μὴ γένηται τὸ ῥῆμα καὶ μὴ συμβῆ, τοῦτο τὸ ῥῆμα, ὃ οὐκ ἐλάλησεν κύριος· ἐν ἀσεβείᾳ ἐλάλησεν ὁ προφήτης ἐκεῖνος, οὐκ ἀφέξεσθε αὐτοῦ

Some LXX manuscripts render דבר־י in v. 19 as τῶν λόγων αὐτοῦ. Comments Wevers: “What the Lord spoke in v. 18 is τὸ ῥῆμα, but now it is the words of the prophet, and so the pl. λόγων is used.” The idea that the prophet’s words are God’s words is once again emphasized.

In the same way that Moses spoke as a prophet בשם of יהוה (Exod 5:23), so will the true prophet speak in that name. The phrase בשמי should be understood to communicate the idea of representation: “It is clear that *bešēm* with the piel of *dbar* means ‘on behalf of.’”¹³⁴ Like Moses, the prophet will be God’s representative. The prophet speaks on behalf of God. Because the true prophet speaks only God’s words, the people are not to respond to the false prophet who speaks בזדון, indicating that the words of the false prophet are not from יהוה.

The term זדון carries the idea of pride. The presumptuous prophet is prideful, acting against the authority of God as the source of true prophecy. The test of whether a prophet is

¹³⁴ Wevers, *Greek Text of Deuteronomy*, 304.

genuine is the whether the prophecy comes to pass. This, however, is not the only qualification: if a prophet's word comes to pass but encourages the people to turn away from יהוה then the prophet is false. With regard to the coming prophet, however, the text appears to assume that the prophecies will not fail.

The Prophet-like-Moses and Mosaic Agency in the Fourth Gospel

Many of the narratives in the Fourth Gospel are centered on an expected prophet. The first concerns whether John the Baptist is this prophet. Some translators have understood the scribes and Levites' questioning of John the Baptist to be concerned with whether John is "a prophet" (John 1:21, 25), but the definite article is present in the Greek text. The article is generally used to specify.¹³⁵ In John 4, Jesus is portrayed as a prophet. In John 6 and 7, the people who saw the signs and heard Jesus' words began to acknowledge Jesus as *ὁ προφήτης*.

If Bultmann's reading of John 6 as an insertion is correct that John 7 originally followed John 5, then the portrayal of Jesus as the prophet-like-Moses is likely. The final narrative of John 5 closes with the statement that Moses had written of Christ. The themes of belief and witness also appear at the end of John 5. John 7 begins with these same themes and moves into a discourse with references to Jesus' sending. Moses again is referenced, this time as giver of the law, and the title of *ὁ προφήτης* is again ascribed to Christ. Although "the introduction of Moses into the dialogue presents Jesus' teaching in continuity with that of Moses,"¹³⁶ of interest is the author's downplaying of Moses at John 7:22 and the ascription to Jesus not only of *ὁ προφήτης* but also *ὁ χριστός*, indicating Jesus' superiority to Moses.

Moses is mentioned twelve times in the body of the Fourth Gospel. The actions associated with him are his writing concerning Christ (John 1:46; 5:46), and his giving of the

¹³⁵ Daniel B. Wallace, *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1996), 217–18, categorizes the use of the article in John 1:21 as anaphoric. This use falls under the broader category of "individualizing article."

¹³⁶ Stan Harstine, *Moses as a Character in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of Ancient Reading Techniques* (JSNTSup 229; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 2002), 66.

Law and circumcision (7:19, 22). In Second Temple Jewish literature, Moses is given a place of prominence. His functions are “to authorize the law, to authenticate religious activity, to serve as an exemplar for piety, and to stand as the prophet par excellence.”¹³⁷ In these roles, Moses is mediator between God and the people.

Like Moses, the Johannine Jesus also authorizes the law, the law of “grace and truth” (John 1:17). The cleansing of the temple in John 2:13–22 substantiates Jesus’ religious and devotional standing as at least equal with the prominent figure of the Tanak. As mentioned, “the prophet” is ascribed to Jesus and suggests that Christ is at least like—but certainly no less than—Moses. The similarities between Jesus and Moses and the heightening of Jesus over Moses indicate that Jesus is to be viewed as fulfilling the role of the deuteronomic agent.

Other indicators of the Mosaic prophet-agent in the Fourth Gospel are the accusations against Jesus by the religious leaders. As Anderson points out, the religious leaders charge Jesus with speaking and acting presumptuously.¹³⁸

As the prophet, Jesus is like Moses and fulfills the role of the Mosaic prophet in the following ways: Jesus is “raised up” in that he seeks to reestablish the relationship between God and the world, Jesus does not come and work out of his own initiative, Jesus speaks the words of God in such a way that the response to his words are not to him but to God, and all that Jesus speaks come to pass.

Findings

The investigation of the prophetic agency of Moses and the coming prophet connects Jesus with the role of the deuteronomic prophet in the Fourth Gospel. The Fourth Gospel highlights the role of Jesus as the prophet. As the prophet, Jesus meets and exceeds the role of Moses as mediator and representative.

¹³⁷ Harstine, *Moses*, 126.

¹³⁸ Anderson, “Having-Sent-Me-Father,” 39.

Although the analysis has focused primarily on deuteronomic agency, it has also resorted to references to Moses outside of Deut 18. This suggests two implications: (1) a broader knowledge of Moses must be in place to understand how the prophet-like-Moses fulfills the roles of Moses, or (2) the agency motif in Deuteronomy is sufficient for the agency motif in John but the deuteronomic agency motif itself may be too limited to account for any agency in the Prologue. This appears to be the case for Anderson's thorough outline of Deut 18 themes in John where only few references to the Prologue appear.¹³⁹

Looking particularly for Mosaic prophet connections, the study now proceeds to examine the Prologue of John for the prophet-like-Moses motif.

¹³⁹ Anderson, "Having-Sent-Me-Father," 38–40.

CHAPTER 4
AGENCY IN THE PROLOGUE
JOHN 1:1–18

Having examined the agency motif in Deut 18 and in the body of the Fourth Gospel, the study will now move to the Prologue itself. The focus will be upon the agency motif within the Prologue. Except where necessary, the concern will not be with the structure of the Prologue, its chronological features, or textual variants. Because the agency of the Son is the sole focus, the passages on John the Baptist will be omitted (1:6–8, 15).

In the essay “The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos,” Ed L. Miller argues that the λόγος concept in the Fourth Gospel is not derived from sources outside of the Fourth Gospel itself.¹⁴⁰ Miller’s observation can be applied to the themes of the Prologue, and his logic to the themes within the Prologue, its major theme being the prophet-like-Moses motif.¹⁴¹

In addition to examining the Prologue text, this chapter will also examine how λόγος functions as a motif of agency. The section will draw from the Jewish and Hellenistic background of λόγος.

The Prologue

John 1:1–3

- v. 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.
- v. 2 οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν.
- v. 3 πάντα δι’ αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν

John 1:1–3 announces the precreation state and agency of the λόγος. Aside from the continual existence of the λόγος in the beginning, the λόγος exists with God and as God, which indicates

¹⁴⁰ Ed L. Miller, “The Johannine Origins of the Johannine Logos,” *JBL* 112 (1993): 445–57.

¹⁴¹ Juan Peter Miranda, *Die Sendung Jesu im vierten Evangelium: Religions- und theologiegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zu den Sendungsformeln* (SBS 87; Stuttgart: Katolisches Bibelwerk, 1977), esp. 39–45, identifies a broad prophetic agency background to the Fourth Gospel.

the Godhood and personality of the λόγος. The λόγος is not an impersonal entity but a personal being, fully possessing the qualities of ὁ θεός.

The idea that καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος identifies λόγος as θεός qualitatively has been challenged in recent time by some scholars, viz., Jason David BeDuhn. In his book *Truth in Translation*, BeDuhn seeks to assess the biases and inaccuracies in nine modern English translations.¹⁴² In particular, he devotes an entire chapter to the translation of θεός in John 1:1. BeDuhn asserts that because of the theological bias of the translators, beginning with the translators of the King James Version, θεός has been wrongly translated. Laying out the problem, BeDuhn explains:

If John had wanted to say “the Word was God,” as so many English translations have it, he could have very easily done so by simply adding the definite article “the” (*ho*) to the word “god” (*theos*), making it “the god” and therefore “God.” He could have simply written *ho logos en ho theos* (word-for-word: “the word was the god”), or *ho logos ho theos en* (word-for-word: “the word the god was”). But he didn’t. If John didn’t, why do the translators?¹⁴³

BeDuhn then interacts with two arguments supporting the translation “the Word was God”: an argument from word order and Colwell’s rule. BeDuhn shows both to be inadequate justifications of the long-established translation of John 1:1c.¹⁴⁴

BeDuhn proposes that the proper translation of the anarthrous θεός is “a god.”¹⁴⁵ He supports this translation with a few considerations. Firstly is the case that anarthrous nouns in the nominative case are understood to be indefinite: “In Greek, if you leave off the article from *theos* in a sentence like the one in John 1:1c, then your readers will assume you mean ‘a god.’”¹⁴⁶ Secondly, that θεός in 1:1c lacks the definite article distinguishes it from the articular θεός in John

¹⁴² Jason David BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation: Accuracy and Bias in English Translations of the New Testament* (Lanham, Md.: University Press, 2003), 27.

¹⁴³ BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation*, 115–16.

¹⁴⁴ BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation*, 116–20.

¹⁴⁵ BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation*, 115.

¹⁴⁶ BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation*, 115.

1:1b. Lastly, citing Philip B. Harner's study "Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns,"¹⁴⁷ BeDuhn believes that anarthrous θεός of 1:1c is best understood as qualitative.¹⁴⁸ Qualitative nouns, the category under which the anarthrous theos falls, require the indefinite article in English translation in order to communicate the most accurate meaning from Greek to English.¹⁴⁹

As formidable as it may appear, BeDuhn's argument suffers from a primary problem: his translation of anarthrous nouns as primarily indefinite is too rigid. BeDuhn appears to overlook that an anarthrous noun can be understood to have a definite sense. The clearest example where an anarthrous noun carries a definite sense is John 1:18 where θεόν lacks the definite article. As Daniel B. Wallace observes:

"It is not necessary for a noun to have the article in order for it to be definite. But conversely, a noun *cannot* be *indefinite* when it has the article. Thus it *may* be definite without the article, and it *must* be definite with the article."¹⁵⁰

Herbert Weir Smyth also notices a similar use of the article in classical Greek and points out that "words denoting persons, when they are used of a class, may omit the article."¹⁵¹

The preexistent state of the λόγος is emphasized in John 1:2: οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. A comparative allusion to Moses may already be present here. This is possible, for Harstine observes that Moses "functions to affirm Jesus as the Logos creator of 1.1–5."¹⁵² BDAG defines

¹⁴⁷ Philip B. Harner, "Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1," *JBL* 92 (1973): 75–87.

¹⁴⁸ BeDuhn, *Truth in Translation*, 121–24.

¹⁴⁹ BeDuhn believes that the most accurate expression of the anarthrous θεός in English is "divine," but because θεός is anarthrous, it is to be translated with as "a god."

¹⁵⁰ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 243. Specifically concerning preverbal predicate nominatives, Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 263, observes that "anarthrous *pre-verbal* predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*definite* range, while anarthrous *post-verbal* predicate nominatives usually fall within the qualitative-*indefinite* range. Hence, so Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 269: John 1:1c, as an anarthrous preverbal predicate nominative, is most likely qualitative.

¹⁵¹ Herbert Weir Smyth, *Greek Grammar* (rev. Gordon M. Messing; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1984), 289.

¹⁵² Harstine, *Moses*, 48.

πρός in John 1:1 as to “be (in company) with someone.”¹⁵³ Wallace notes that in conj. with a stative verb, πρὸς takes on a stative sense.¹⁵⁴ Thus, Wallace’s English gloss for πρὸς is similar to that of BDAG.¹⁵⁵ A deeper nuance may yet be obtained. Stanley E. Porter understands πρὸς to have the idea of “face-to-face presence.”¹⁵⁶ Drawing from Louw and Nida, Phillips offers this perspective: “And the Logos was turned towards God.”¹⁵⁷ If Porter’s and Phillips’s understanding are accurate, then the statement of 1:1b likely recalls Moses’ face-to-face relationship with God (Exod 33:11; Deut 34:10) and places the λόγος-θεός relationship at a precreation level. Those audience of the Fourth Gospel who were familiar with the biblical accounts of Moses may even recall that Moses looked away from יהוה in the burning bush: ἀπέστρεψεν δὲ Μωυσῆς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ (Exod 3:6). Evans notes that “God promises to be ‘with Moses’ (§3), which is commonly said of and by Jesus in the Fourth Gospel,”¹⁵⁸ but the Prologue reveals that the preexistent Jesus was first with God, and hence, takes priority over Moses.

John 1:3 is the first explicit notion of agency in the Prologue. The agency of the λόγος is specified by the preposition διὰ, used to denote personal agency here.¹⁵⁹ In the Prologue, διὰ is used primarily with personal agents: λόγος (1:7, 10), and Moses and Jesus (1:17). Beyond the Prologue, every occurrence of Jesus’ use of διὰ refers to his role as an agent in salvation (3:17; 10:9) and in coming to the Father (14:6).

¹⁵³ See BDAG, 873–75, esp. 875.

¹⁵⁴ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 358–60.

¹⁵⁵ Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 380.

¹⁵⁶ Stanley E. Porter, *Idioms of the Greek New Testament* (BLG 2; Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1999), 173.

¹⁵⁷ Phillips, *Prologue of the Fourth Gospel*, 152.

¹⁵⁸ Evans, *Word and Glory*, 143.

¹⁵⁹ See BDAG, 223–25, esp. 225.

The connection between 1:1 and 1:3 adds ontology to the category of agency.¹⁶⁰ When 1:3 is read, *καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* should not be forgotten. The *λόγος*, who is identified as having all the qualities of *θεός*, is the one by whom all things were created. This coincides with the law of agency that for an agent to be like the principal, the agent must also be personal.¹⁶¹

John 1:4–5

- v. 4 ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.
v. 5 καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν.

The *ζωή* of John 1:4 has a couple of possible backgrounds: the creation account of Gen 1 or the narrative of Deut 30. The former is often ruled out on the basis that *ζωή* always refers to eternal life in the Johannine writings, not temporal life as it is commonly understood to mean in the creation account.¹⁶² If a Moses agency motif is in view in the Prologue, then Deuteronomy would be the more likely background.

In Deut 30:15, Moses places before the nation of Israel *ζωήν*, which is associated with the commandment to love *יהוה* without reservation (Deut 30:10, 16). Sailhamer believes that Deut 30 is concerned with the Israel's future and the establishment of the new covenant. The covenant given at Sinai is distinguished from the covenant of life, which is near to the Israelites; the former is given by the meditation of Moses. The new covenant is simply near to all and did not require

¹⁶⁰ Philip G. Davis, "Divine Agents, Mediators, and New Testament Christology," *JTS* (1994): 479–503, esp. 481, admonishes the reader to think of divine agency in terms of function. McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 119 n. 2, also prioritizes functionality over ontology. However, to stress solely functional agency is less persuasive when the connection between John 1:1 and 1:3 is considered. In addition, George R. Beasley-Murray, *John* (WBC 36; Waco: Word Books, 1987), lxxxiv, makes clear that the Christological expression of the relationship between the Father and the Son in the Fourth Gospel is not merely functional. He points out that the audience of the Gospel, as it encounters statements of the Son's obedience to the Father, must keep in mind statements that place the Son on the same level as God (1:1, 18). Ashton, *Understanding the Fourth Gospel*, 219, allows for a development in the understand of agency that eventually embraced ontology.

¹⁶¹ See Friend, "Like Father, Like Son." Herzog, *Main Institutions of Jewish Law*, 152, reminds one that principal and agent are distinct, and that both are persons: "A fundamental point in agency ... is the principle that not only must the principal have the general power of appointing an agent, but he must be able to carry out himself that particular transaction for which he appoints the agent." Although the term *persons* is not mentioned here, that persons is referenced is clear.

¹⁶² Brown, *John*, 7; J. Ramsey Michaels, *The Gospel of John* (NICNT; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2010), 54. This is one point that is difficult to reconcile for those who hold that the Prologue is an exposition on Genesis.

Moses' intercessory activity. Thus, when the Prologue states that the ζωή was in the λόγος, what is probably implied is a contrast between Moses who must receive τὸ ῥῆμα before he could set ζωήν before the Israelites and the λόγος who possess ζωή already. Although in Deuteronomy the ζωή is related to τὸ ῥῆμα, it is related to the λόγος in the Fourth Gospel, indicating the supremacy of the one who is λόγος against the one who must first receive τὸ ῥῆμα.

John 1:5 mentions σκοτία. This is generally a foreign concept to the Tanak, but is prevalent in the Fourth Gospel. The φῶς-σκοτία contrast is found most explicitly in John 3:19; 8:12; 12:35, 46. All four references occur within the midst of passages with prominent sending motifs. The verse in John 3 occurs within a discourse that includes Moses' lifting up of the serpent (3:14) and God's sending of the Son (3:17). In John 8, Jesus, in referencing ὁ πέμψας με πατήρ (8:16, 18), defends his testimony that he as the φῶς overcomes darkness.

John 12:35 appears to have in the background Numbers 14 in addition to Isaiah. In Numbers 14 are mentions of disbelief and signs, with complaints against Moses and Aaron as its background (14:2):

And all the congregation said to stone them [Moses and Aaron] with stones.
 And the glory of יהוה was seen in the tent of the meeting place by all the children of Israel. And יהוה said to Moses, "For how long will this people despise me?
 And for how long will they continue not to believe in me, even with all the signs that I have done in their midst?" (Num 14:10, 11)

John 12:37 speaks of the peoples' disbelief despite the signs they saw and occurs in the immediate context of Jesus' discourse on his being the light of the world in John 12:35. The second discourse on the light of the world is found amidst the discourse of Jesus' mission as being sent from the Father (12:49). Jesus' mission includes what to say and speak.

When the background to the φῶς-σκοτία contrast is examined from the body of the Fourth Gospel, the sending motif and the Mosaic background becomes clear. Thus, 1:5 is a statement that expresses a particular aspect of the agency of the φῶς.

John 1:9

v. 9 Ἦὼ τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

John 1:9 is an important verse for the present discussion of agency. Before moving forward, however, the grammatical problem must be addressed. The antecedent of the phrase ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον is ambiguous, and consequently, the question arises: does the phrase refer to τὸ φῶς or τὸ ἄνθρώπων? J. Ramsey Michaels believes that ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον refers to the latter. The following is the crux of his argument:

In our translation, the participle “coming” or “who comes” (*erchomenon*) is taken with the phrase that immediately precedes it, “every human being,” yielding a redundant yet quite idiomatic expression, “every human being who comes into the world” (compare KJV). The phrase is idiomatic because “all who come into the world” was a common expression in rabbinic literature for “everyone,” but more redundant than the rabbinic expression in that the latter did not include the word “man” or “human being.” The redundant language seems intended simply to recall “the light of humans” (v. 4), now further defined as the light shining on “every human being.”¹⁶³

Michaels relies primarily upon a rabbinic idiom and the designation of φῶς earlier in the Prologue.¹⁶⁴ Whether the idiom is common to a later rabbinic thought is unclear. In addition, the designation of φῶς as “the light of humanity” in v. 4 does not sufficiently justify Michaels’s argument.

A better understanding of ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον, however, may be gained by examining the various forms of the phrase in the Gospel. It is found four other times in the Fourth Gospel. In John 3:19, ἐρχόμενος is in the pf. indic. form and φῶς is the subj.: τὸ φῶς ἐλήλυθεν εἰς τὸν κόσμος. The idea in this clause is parallel to that in 3:17 where God sent the Son εἰς τὸν κόσμον, making τὸ φῶς and ὁ υἱός synonymous. Michaels rightly understands the verb

¹⁶³ Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 61–62.

¹⁶⁴ As will be shown below, Michaels does not rely solely upon these two points, but his further points are hardly stronger than the two mentioned here.

ἐλήλυθεν to signify “an accomplished event, not a process,”¹⁶⁵ yet the Prologue’s author could have used the pres. ptc. as an historic present.¹⁶⁶ In addition, John 12:46 has a φῶς-σκοτία contrast, which suggests that the ptc. phrase of 1:9 is to be understood as an historic present.¹⁶⁷

The next two instances are John 6:14; 16:28. In John 6:14 is found: ὁ προφήτης ὁ ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον. Here ὁ προφήτης is used in reference to Jesus, and within the context of John 6, puts Jesus in the light of the Moses-like prophet. In John 16:28, Jesus refers to his heavenly origins and with the same language in 3:19 his coming into the world. Like in the other citations, Jesus is the one who is ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον.

In John 18:37, Jesus uses language similar to 3:19 and 16:28 in reference to his witness to truth: ἐλήλυθα εἰς τὸν κόσμον, ἵνα μαρτυρήσω τῇ ἀληθείᾳ. This is reminiscent of the statement in 1:9 that ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν. Bultmann connects ἀλήθεια with its Hellenistic usage, in which it speaks of “divine reality.”¹⁶⁸ Therefore, the divine φῶς is qualified to witness to the divine reality. Michaels observes that “being ‘born’ and ‘coming into the world’ are equivalent expressions,”¹⁶⁹ but “born” could be read with reference to Jesus’ status as king, and “have come into the world” with reference to “witnessing to the truth.” Thus, with the consideration in mind that the Prologue was a reflective document on the body of the Fourth Gospel,¹⁷⁰ and that in the Fourth Gospel ἐρχόμενος εἰς τὸν κόσμον always has Christ as its subj., the likeliest sense of 1:9 is that it refers to Jesus in his preexistence as λόγος-φῶς.¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁵ Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 62 n. 17. Constantine R. Campbell, *Verbal Aspect, the Indicative Mood, and Narrative* (SBG 13; New York: Peter Lang, 2007), 209–10, argues that the pf. indic., like the pres., is impf. in aspect and occurs in discourse to denote the nearness of the author to the event.

¹⁶⁶ Stanley E. Porter, *Verbal Aspect in the Greek of the New Testament, with Reference to Tense and Mood* (SBG 1; New York: Peter Lang, 1993), 196. In 1:9 in view of the continuing effect of the φῶς is denoted by the pf. in 3:17. Wallace, *Greek Grammar*, 574–80, has two semantic categories of the pf. indic. that emphasize the present state. The pf. ἐλήλυθεν could be understood here as emphasizing the coming state of the φῶς. See Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 245–90, esp. 251–59.

¹⁶⁷ Campbell, *Verbal Aspect*, 66.

¹⁶⁸ Bultmann, *Gospel of John*, 53 n. 1.

¹⁶⁹ Michaels, *Gospel of John*, 63.

¹⁷⁰ See pp. 18–18.

¹⁷¹ Porter, *Verbal Aspect*, 460, holds that 1:9 is a periphrastic construction. Herman Ridderbos, “The Structure and Scope of the Prologue to the Gospel of John,” *NovT* 8 (1966): 180–201, esp. 189–91, takes the φῶς

As a revelatory term, φῶς expresses agency of the λόγος. Kanagaraj connects the function of φῶς with the manifestation of δόξα and spiritual sight.¹⁷² Another connection may be made with sending: the φῶς φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον and ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. The idea of φωτίζω is continuous shining or revealing. The use of the pres. tense may indicate that the φῶς never ceases to shine or reveal, even in the incarnation.

John 1:10–13

- v. 10 ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω.
 v. 11 εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.
 v. 12 ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ,
 v. 13 οἱ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν.

John 1:10 presents the work of the λόγος incarnated, but does so in a general way as compared to 1:14 where the incarnation is specific.

The statement in John 1:11 that εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν is reminiscent of Moses coming to Israel: “It is ... as a prophet/messenger sent by Yhwh that he [Moses] comes to his own people (Ex 3:13–15).”¹⁷³ The passage from Exodus clearly portrays the sending of Moses to the Israelites with forms of the words πῶς and ἀποστέλλω. Furthermore, just as the Israelites were reluctant to believe Moses (Exod 5:21; 6:9), so was the λόγος-φῶς rejected: καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον.

John 1:12 speaks of those who ἔλαβον the λόγος and πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ. Another comparative allusion to Moses, which recalls the hearing of Moses's words and their belief as a response, may function as the background here.¹⁷⁴ If so, this verse has in mind the prophet-like-Moses agency motif.

as the light that appeared in Christ in the incarnation. Ridderbos, however, does not adequately explain how 1:9 cannot be understood in the sense of preexistence.

¹⁷² Kanagaraj, *“Mysticism”*, 283–85.

¹⁷³ Goldingay, *Israel's Gospel*, 433.

¹⁷⁴ See p. 50.

John 1:13 expresses the source of the birth in 1:12. The ones who believe in his name are born ἐκ θεοῦ. This may recall 1:1 where the λόγος is said to be θεός. On the other hand, this verse may emphasize the mission of the λόγος: to give to believers power to become children of God. Just as the new birth finds its source in θεός, so does the mission of the λόγος come from God. Moreover, when vv. 12–13 are read together, the λόγος as the authorized agent of θεός becomes clear: θεός is the source of the new birth and the λόγος is authorized to effect this birth.

John 1:14, 16–18

- v. 14 Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας.
- v. 16 ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος·
- v. 17 ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο.
- v. 18 Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

John 1:14 clearly draws from the tabernacle narratives of Exodus. Forms of σκηνώω, δόξα, and πληρώω are used in both Exodus and John. These shared themes point back to an underlying Moses tradition that the Johannine narrative is recalling.

Σκηνή, the noun form of σκηνώω, is used of the tabernacle in Exodus. In John, ἐσκηνωσεν appears to be used of dwelling. The clause σὰρξ ἐγένετο conveys the means by which the λόγος dwelled among the people. In Exodus, the δόξα of הויה filled the tabernacle. In John, the δόξα of the λόγος is visible: ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξα αὐτοῦ. On the one hand, the λόγος is πλήρης like the tabernacle. On the other hand, the λόγος is πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. In John, δόξα and χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας are equated.

That the λόγος is full of χάρις may indicate a comparison with Moses. Moses entreats הויה many times with עֲנֵנִי בְּרַחֲמֶיךָ אֱלֹהֵי מִצְרָיִם (εἰ εὐρηκα χάριν ἐναντίον/ἐνώπιόν σου; Exod 33:13; 34:9). Possessing χάρις, the incarnate λόγος is the prophet-like-Moses. However, being πλήρης χάριτος, the λόγος surpasses Moses.

A Sinaitic connection may also be made here. The term χάρις is thought to be derived from the Hebrew חַסֵּד. However, in the LXX, חַסֵּד is often rendered ἔλεος. Most commentators

believe that this rendition is true in earlier texts, but that later texts render $\tau\sigma\pi$ as $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$. Brown presents a strong argument for the translation of $\tau\sigma\pi$ as $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$.¹⁷⁵ Thus, $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ και $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ is possibly the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew חַסְדִּים $\tau\sigma\pi$. These attributes are ascribed to $\eta\eta\eta$ in the Pentateuch as in Gen 24:27, but $\eta\eta\eta$ uses it as a self-description in Exod 34:6.

The first indication that the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is also the Son is found in the term $\mu\omicron\nu\omicron\gamma\epsilon\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$. It is often understood to mean “one of a kind” but may also be understood in the sense of “only begotten.” Thus, the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is the only begotten Son who functions as an agent.

Mosaic agency is in the background of John 1:16. Louw and Nida suggest a connection between $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\beta\omicron\nu$ and belief: “to come to believe something and act in accordance with such a belief.”¹⁷⁶ This recalls the passages in Exodus and Deuteronomy where the Israelites believe and respond consistently with their faith. In a sense, the Israelites $\acute{\epsilon}\lambda\alpha\beta\omicron\nu$ Moses when they believed.

The incarnated $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ is further depicted as an agent of $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$. The phrase $\pi\alpha\rho\acute{\alpha}$ $\pi\alpha\tau\rho\acute{\omicron}\varsigma$ indicates that the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ comes from the Father and possesses the same glory. The Father is the source of the mission of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$ and also the source of the visible $\delta\acute{o}\xi\alpha$ in Jesus Christ, a glory possessed by both the Father and Christ by their virtue of being $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\varsigma$.

In John 1:17 are two agents: Moses and Jesus. As in 1:3, the preposition $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ is used as a marker of agency. The nested placement of the phrases $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ Μωϋσέως and $\delta\iota\acute{\alpha}$ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ between their respective subjects and verbs allows no ambiguity with regard to the agents. The verb $\acute{\epsilon}\delta\acute{o}\theta\eta$ is used of Moses and indicates that the $\nu\acute{o}\mu\omicron\varsigma$ did not originate with Moses, but originated with someone else who then gave it through Moses. In contrast, Jesus Christ was not given $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\varsigma$ and $\acute{\alpha}\lambda\eta\theta\epsilon\iota\alpha$ to pass onto others as if he did not possess it himself at some point, but Christ himself being $\pi\lambda\eta\rho\acute{\eta}\varsigma$ $\chi\acute{\alpha}\rho\iota\tau\omicron\varsigma$ mediates it. Thus, Jesus’ Moses-like agency and his superiority to Moses is shown here.

In John 1:18, the clause $\theta\epsilon\acute{o}\nu$ $\acute{\omicron}\delta\delta\epsilon\iota\varsigma$ $\acute{\epsilon}\acute{\omega}\rho\alpha\kappa\epsilon\nu$ $\pi\acute{\omega}\tau\omicron\tau\epsilon$ follows the Moses-Jesus contrast of v. 17 and likely recalls Moses’ request to see God the Father. The point of the Prologue here is

¹⁷⁵ Brown, *John*, 14.

¹⁷⁶ See L&N, §31.50, 372.

that not even Moses saw God.¹⁷⁷ The noun θεὸν is anarthrous, which most likely refers not to the person of God, but to God in essential form as spirit. The placement of θεὸν is emphatic.

The author once again decides to refer to μονογενῆς, but this time as μονογενῆς θεός. Although a textual variant is present here, this reading likely is the original because of its complexity. The use of μονογενῆς and the reference to the Father in the same verse recalls sonship and perhaps expands upon v. 16. The term ἐξηγήσατο has the idea of revealing something clearly. The revelatory activity ascribed to μονογενῆς θεός connotes the agency of the one and only Son.

Λόγος as an Agency Motif

The Prologue equates λόγος with ζῶη and φῶς, revelatory and agency concepts. The sequence of the Prologue, whether chronological or not, presents the λόγος as μονόγενης, a term generally applied to a firstborn son. The motif of ζῶη as revelatory is found in 1 John, which is often thought to have been composed before the final form of the Prologue. The ζῶη was ἐφανερώθη and like the λόγος was πρὸς τὸν πατέρα. Considering the connections between the ζῶη and the λόγος and the similar language used to describe their state with God, they should likely be understood as synonymous. Φῶς-as-a-revelatory-concept has already been discussed.¹⁷⁸

That λόγος is connected with two revelatory motifs suggests that λόγος itself is to be viewed as a revelatory and agency concept. As mentioned, John 1:3 expresses the agency of the λόγος in the creation of the world. The λόγος also connotes agency in its function as mediator between God and the world. From the perspective of 1 John, ὁ θεός φῶς ἐστίν (1 John 1:5); the φῶς is mediated by the λόγος.

The understanding of λόγος as a mediating principle emphasizes agency in both Jewish and Hellenistic thought.¹⁷⁹ With regard to the former, λόγος (דבר) in the Tanak comes to the

¹⁷⁷ McGrath, *John's Apologetic Christology*, 156.

¹⁷⁸ See p. 62.

¹⁷⁹ For arguments that emphasize the Jewish background, see Brown, *John*, 519–24; David A. Reed, “How Semitic was John?: Rethinking the Hellenistic Background to John 1:1,” *ATR* 85 (2003): 709–26. Favoring the Hellenistic background is Charles H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge: Cambridge

prophets. Although the prophets convey the *λόγος* to their audiences, the *λόγος*, not יהוה comes. יהוה is thus mediated to the prophets through the *λόγος*.

As to the latter, the religious and philosophical background of *λόγος* may be helpful here. Philo, the philosophical-religious writer living during the time of Christ and the early church, sees *λόγος* as an intermediary between God and creation. Some understand Philo to have synthesized Judaism and Hellenism: “It is clear that he attempted to import the Greek Logos speculation into Judaism.”¹⁸⁰ A clean divide, however, cannot be made between the two in the Second Temple period.¹⁸¹ The *λόγος* concept of the Middle Platonism in Philo’s time could have been shared by both Jews and Hellenists. Put more directly:

It becomes, in the light of the centrality of such mediation by the Logos for Philo’s theology, less and less plausible to speak of Philo as having been influenced by Middle Platonism. Instead, insofar as the Logos theology ... is intrinsic to Middle Platonism, that form of “Hellenistic” philosophy may simply be the Judaism of Philo and his fellows.¹⁸²

Instead of synthesizing Jewish and Hellenistic thought, Philo may have taken a concept shared in Jewish and Hellenistic worldviews and found texts in the Tanak that elucidate it. In pre-Socratic Greek philosophy, the *λόγος* was the spoken declaration of the cosmic-metaphysical reality through which that reality is revealed.¹⁸³ Miller finds seven points of similarity between the *λόγος* of Heraclitus and that of John. Miller, however, dismisses Heraclitus’s influence on John.¹⁸⁴ Yet, if

University Press, 1968), 263–85. Martin Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism: Studies in Their Encounter in Palestine during the Early Hellenistic Period* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1974), 153–75, points out the Hellenistic influence on Jewish Wisdom speculation, which as noted in chapter 1 is thought by many to have influenced the *λόγος* doctrine of the Johannine Prologue. For the connection between *word* and *agency*, see Paul N. Anderson, “Word,” *NIDB* 5:893–98.

¹⁸⁰ Robert L. Duncan, “The Logos: From Sophocles to the Gospel of John,” *CSR* 9 (1979): 121–30, esp. 127.

¹⁸¹ See Hengel, *Judaism and Hellenism*, esp. 103–6.

¹⁸² Boyarin, “*Memra*,” 251.

¹⁸³ Ed L. Miller, “The Logos of Heraclitus: Updating the Report,” *HTR* 74 (1981): 161–76, esp. 172. Here Miller argues against Glasson who has dismissed the possibility that Heraclitus’ *λόγος* could stand in the background of the Johannine Prologue.

¹⁸⁴ Miller, “Logos of Heraclitus,” 174–76.

the similarities do indicate that Heraclitus' understanding influenced the author of the Fourth Gospel to some degree, the closest similarity would be the *λόγος* as the mediating entity of the universal law.¹⁸⁵

Findings

The Prologue appears to contain Mosaic comparisons earlier in the text than most have observed.¹⁸⁶ This comparison means that the *λόγος* is to be taken as a personal entity instead of an abstract concept or a personification. If the Prologue is influenced by the agency motif of Deut 18, then the author is likely seeking to establish comparisons with Jesus and Moses from the onset of the Prologue in order to indicate that Jesus is at the very least like Moses. The Prologue communicates the equality of *λόγος* with Moses by alluding to the broader Sinaitic tradition in which Moses is found and comparing them within that context. Both the *λόγος* and Moses accomplish their prophetic roles through mediation. The Prologue, however, elevates the *λόγος* to a mediator beyond Moses' prophetic status as the one whose source is the Father and who mediates direct access to the Father.¹⁸⁷

As John is reread again and again by the community, the connection between the *λόγος* and the Son becomes clear. The Prologue serves to introduce the Son as the Father's preexistent agent who was active before creation and in creation.

¹⁸⁵ Miller argues this but does not list this among his seven observations. His argument for it is strong.

¹⁸⁶ Recall that Evans sees the comparison to Moses only in the last five verses of the Prologue.

¹⁸⁷ This elevation of the *λόγος* could be because of the Johannine author's tendency to adopt and develop motifs, as suggested by Bühner. See p. 32.

CHAPTER 5 CONCLUSION AND WAYS FORWARD

Having completed the examination of the relevant scholarship, motifs, and texts, the study now moves to the conclusion and implications. The first part is a summary of the past four chapters. The second presents ways forward by addressing the question of the Prologue's relationship to the rest of the Fourth Gospel. The final chapter examines implications from the thesis, particularly literary, theological, and practical areas.

Summary

To recall, the questions were laid out: What is the origin of the Prologue? What is the primary motif behind the Prologue? The conclusion of a number of contemporary scholars that an agency motif is prevalent in the background of the Fourth Gospel is accepted. The agency motif is best understood as based on the Jewish law of agency for a couple of reasons: (1) the Tanak and rabbinic literature attest to the agency law as a prevalent for the Jewish worldview, and (2) the agency motif undergirds the Fourth Gospel as a major motif. Thus, the *religionsgeschichtliche Schule* hypothesis that the Prologue was based on a Gnostic Redeemer myth appears inadequate. Within scholarship, however, is the lack of authoritative consensus on the Prologue's background, except that its background is primarily Jewish in nature. If the background to the Prologue is founded upon the Jewish worldview, which explanation of agency best serves as the background?

The hypothesis of this study was that the Prologue was influenced by the Jewish law of agency, which is present as a primary motif—even the *leitmotiv*—in the body of the Fourth Gospel. This study assumed with the majority of scholarship that the Prologue was a later addition to the Fourth Gospel, possibly added at the Gospel's finalization. The primary motif of the Prologue is the *λόγος* theological Christology, which is an expression of הלכה Mosaic agency and an intercultural term that would speak to both Jews and Hellenists.

A number of recent scholars have observed allusions to Moses in the body of the Gospel. These scholars identify the agency of Moses as a primary theme. Jesus is contrasted to Moses and thus fulfills the role of the coming prophet-like-Moses. Hence, the prophet-like-Moses is one of the primary themes of the Fourth Gospel and as such influenced the Prologue's development. Of those who find Moses allusions in the body of John, few connect the Mosaic agency with the Prologue.

Others detect in the Fourth Gospel a sonship agency, which is derived from the rabbinic literature. The agency motif in the Fourth Gospel is drawn from the idea that the son of the household is the preferred agent to carry out the father's affairs. This form of agency is the ideal model upon which to develop the Son's agency in the Fourth Gospel.

The mystical Jewish tradition is another option for the background of Johannine agency. The tradition draws from the Jewish *הלכה* and applies it to a heavenly figure who reveals God. Merkabah mysticism to some degree possibly lies in the background of the Johannine agency; if this is so, it is primarily behind the *λόγος* and *φῶς* motifs. The agency of Jewish mysticism, however, is largely indistinguishable from other agency forms. The non-unique character of Jewish mysticism agency allows one to follow other understandings of agency that better articulate the Johannine agency motif.

The study examined Deut 18:15–22 for the Mosaic agency motif and found it thoroughly expresses an agency motif. The primary issues explored were the characteristics of the prophet-like-Moses, the similarities between this prophet and Moses, and the appearance of the prophet-like-Moses motif in the Fourth Gospel. To answer satisfactorily, one must take into account writings on Moses within as well as without Deuteronomy. First, Moses is specifically said to carry a prophetic ministry (Deut 18:15; 34:10; Sir 46:1). Moses' prophetic role can be assumed to have taken effect at the beginning of his ministry. As a prophet, Moses is sent as God's representative to Pharaoh and to the Israelites (3:10–18). The prophet-like-Moses also represents God to the people, to the extent that to respond to the prophet is to respond to God.

John 1:1–18 contains an agency motif that primarily contrasts Jesus and Moses. The Prologue contains markers of agency as indicated by the preposition *διά*, used of *ὁ λόγος*, *Μωϋσῆς*, and *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός*. *Διά* is a marker of *personal* agency, which requires that *λόγος*, *Μωϋσῆς*, and *Ἰησοῦς Χριστός* be persons. The personhood of *λόγος* is stated through being identified with *θεός*. John 1:1–3 recalls the close relationship between *πῶς* and Moses, but places the *λόγος-ὁ θεός* relationship at an otherworldly level. Verses 4–5 speak of *λόγος* as *φῶς*, contrasting the superiority over Moses and the mission into the *σκοτία*. Verse 9 expresses the movement of the preincarnate *λόγος* as *φῶς* into the world, expressing the agency of the *λόγος* not only in the creation of the world but also agency within it. Verses 10–13 move to the incarnate activity of the *λόγος-φῶς* and express the relationship to creation and would serve to recall for those familiar with Moses the rejection of Moses. Verse 14 expresses the incarnation of the *λόγος* from the perspective of those who, in contrast to the world, know him. The clearest contrast between the *λόγος* and Moses appears here: the *λόγος* and Moses have *χάρις* in common, but the fullness of *χάρις* places the *λόγος* beyond Moses; the Christ himself mediates *χάρις καὶ ἀλήθεια*; and the *λόγος* is the Son of the Father.

Ways Forward

Now that the findings and position of this study have been summarized, the rest of this conclusion will present ways forward. The primary focus here is the relationship and function of the Prologue to the rest of the Fourth Gospel.

In the introduction, the question was raised of the relationship of the Prologue to the Gospel. The study followed the assumption that the Prologue was a reflective piece that incorporated reflection upon both the body of the Fourth Gospel and the continued experience with Christ. This places the Prologue under the following question: Is the Prologue an introduction, a response, or both? This study has answered that the Prologue is both. Thus, what ways do the answers to this question influence one's reading of the Prologue and the Fourth Gospel?

The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel challenges those seeking to understand the Fourth Gospel on its own terms to understand the Fourth Gospel's complex background. Important to this understanding is knowledge of the Tanak and of the Jesus traditions held by the early church community. That the Fourth Gospel draws heavily from the Tanak is virtually undisputed. The Torah was given a place of primacy, with Moses as its central figure. In its allusions to Moses throughout, the Prologue forces those who are familiar with Torah to recall the Moses traditions and challenges those unfamiliar with Torah to become acquainted with it.

As an introduction, the Prologue prepares the audience for the major themes of the Gospel. Introduced are preexistence and incarnation; *λόγος*, *ζωή*, and *φῶς*; rejection and reception; and Moses and Jesus. The Prologue also prepares the reader to understand Jesus in the context of his divine identity, which places him on the same level as the Father, and to understand his relationship to the Father as one who mediates *ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια*. Jesus is precisely like the Father because he has the same *θεός* qualities; Jesus' relationship to the Father as the Son who is sent into the world is why he can mediate the Father to humanity.

As a response, the Prologue affirms the reiterates the agency of Jesus in terms to which a non-Jewish audience would be receptive. The term *λόγος* has long been recognized as a multivalent term because of its long history. The first usage of *λόγος* was by Heraclitus. The term took on its own meaning with Sophocles and the Stoics. The Greek background would be the most familiar to the Hellenistic audience of John. With Philo's extensive use of *λόγος*, the term would carry a certain sense to Hellenistic Jews, and possibly to Palestinian Jews. Those Jews who had extensive familiarity with the Tanak would recognize the *λόγος* against background of Gen 1, in which God's creative act is through speech; the Aram. Tgs, in which the *מִמְרָא* is portrayed as a distinct entity from *יְהוָה*;¹⁸⁸ and Prov 8:22–30, where *חַכְמָה* was brought forth before and present with God at creation. Jesus comes as the Son sent from God to redeem both Jew and Gentile.

As second way to view the Prologue as a response to the Gospel is to see the Prologue as making explicit for the Fourth Gospel those themes found in the epistolary literature. Similar to

¹⁸⁸ Boyarin, "Memra," 254–55.

the Prologue in that they are Christological and hymnic pieces are Col 1:15–20 and Heb 1:1–4. The similarities between these and the Prologue are (1) creation through the *λόγος* or *υἱός*, (2) preexistence, (3) incarnation, and (4) declaring or revealing of God. The declaring of God may be seen in Christ's being the *εἰκὼν* (Col 1:15) and *χαρακτήρ* of God (Heb 1:3) and his *ἐχρηγήσατο* of the Father (John 1:18). Between the Prologue and Colossians, another similarity is the mention of *πλήρωμα* ("fullness"). Hebrews speaks of the *ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης* (Heb 1:3) and is similar to the statement in John that *ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός* (John 1:14). Furthermore, Hebrews also establishes the Son as the creator and as one who surpasses Moses. When it is understood this way, the Prologue stands as a piece that seeks to voice the Fourth Gospel's solidarity with the rest of NT literature.

The Prologue of the Fourth Gospel challenges those seeking to understand the Fourth Gospel on its own terms to discern the Fourth Gospel's complex background. Important to this discernment is knowledge of the Tanak, in its Heb., Aram., and Greek forms.

All that has been said about the Prologue as a response and introduction suggests that the Fourth Gospel be read as a living text that continues to reveal and mediate the Father through the Son and the Spirit. The agency motif prevalent in the Prologue speaks of encounter with the Son who was sent into the world and continues to be in the world. In other words, the Son can be and is to be encountered in the present age. The agency motif of the working of the Father through the Son prepares the audience to anticipate a continued agency in the Spirit. In the encounter with the Spirit, one encounters the Son, who leads the way to the Father.

Finally, the Prologue as both a response and an introduction to the Fourth Gospel illuminates the purpose of the book as found more fully. John 20:31 is chiasmic, the central element being *Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ*. This may be the intended focus, because throughout the Prologue *ὁ υἱός* is implied in *ὁ λόγος*.

In addition, and perhaps just as importantly, two *ἵνα* clauses that both contain a form of *πιστεύω* surround the central element. The second clause places *πιστεύοντες ζώην* in an emphatic position. The concepts of belief and life are noticeable in the Prologue as those who receive

Christ. Thus, by communicating the mission of the Son, the agency motif expresses the purpose of the book: the Son, who is the Messiah, the Son of God, comes to give life to those who believe in him. Those who are recipients of the Fourth Gospel are to respond with faith.

Implications

The agency of Jesus is expressed in the prophet-like-Moses חִלִּישׁ motif. This motif is inclusive of the idea of Moses-as- חִלִּישׁ . Thus, because Jesus fulfills the role of prophet-like-Moses, the theme of חִלִּישׁ is in the foreground. This use of agency in the Fourth Gospel addresses issues of the Prologue's source and the way the audience is to understand its own mission.

First, the agency motif as background to the Johannine Prologue lessens the probability of an underlying hymnic source. More likely, rather, is that Prologue is a product of its author. The evidence for this is the poetic structure of the sayings of Jesus. Although Bultmann may not necessarily be correct when he infers an underlying *Offenbarungsredenquelle*, his observations on the poetic form of Jesus' sayings are helpful; even if Bultmann has misidentified some sayings of Jesus as poetic when they are not, the sayings that are more poetic point to an author familiar with ancient poetry. Thus, a common author, school, or community could be behind the occasionally similar forms of the Prologue and Jesus' sayings.

Next, John draws from and reinterprets traditions as he is informed in encounter with Christ. Genesis 1 is often thought to stand behind the Prologue. The influence is clear, but as others have cautioned, the absolute use of λόγος does not appear in Genesis. John's use of λόγος is more than a restating of καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεός ($\text{וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים}$ MT), but is a reinterpretation of the creation account of Gen 1. Yet, John does not depart from the fundamental idea that God was the one who created the world. Instead, the λόγος who created all things is θεός . Therefore, the biblical texts are subject to new expression that retains the essential idea of the text. The way the Tanak is used in the NT highlights this reinterpretation.¹⁸⁹

¹⁸⁹ Studies in Second Temple Judaism has shown that Jewish thought was not static but fluid and in development. Haenchen, *Das Johannesevangelium*, 107, observes this in the Fourth Gospel: "Diese Wendung vom Gesandten Gottes, die weit über den jüdischen Begriff des ‚maschlichach' hinausgeht, ist die kennzeichnendste

Additionally, the revelation of the Father through Christ in light of the agency motif also goes beyond the apparently revelation of יהוה as a singular person in the Tanak. The Jewish law of agency required a principal and a personal agent. John's encounter with the λόγος who is distinct from the Father yet shares in the same divine qualities is, in addition to the motif in the Gospel at large, a possible factor for the use of the Jewish law of agency to describe the Father-Son relationship. Thus, Jesus' statement that εἰ ἐγνώκατέ με, καὶ τὸν πατέρα μου γνώσεσθε καὶ ἀπ' ἄρτι γινώσκετε αὐτὸν καὶ ἐωράκατε αὐτόν (John 14:7) need not mean that Jesus and the Father are the same person. In light of the Jewish law of agency, to see the agent is to see the principal, but this requires two persons: the principal and the agent.

Lastly, the פִּלְשׁ motif influences the audience's understanding of mission. The Fourth Gospel's agency the Son's representation of the Father and the Spirit's representation both the Son and the Father empowers the recipients to be representative agents of God. The Prologue states that those who received the λόγος were given the ability to be children of God—just as Jesus Christ is the Son of the Father. The empowerment comes through the receiving of the Spirit: to receive the Spirit is to receive Christ and ultimately to receive the Father. Although Christ has a unique place as savior, life-giver, judge, etc. in relation to the Father, the audiences who receive the λόγος share in the continued ministry of Christ to bear the good news of the Father's love for the world.

christologische Formel des vierten Evangeliums." Dunn, *Christology in the Making*, 245, believes that the Prologue consists of a synthesis of λόγος and υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ Christologies.

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