



## 20b. The *Logos* Hymn

The eagle is the symbol of John the Evangelist

“This is a Gospel designed to root the believer deeper in his faith . . . the Gospel wants to make this faith something alive . . . to bring life to the reader.” (Brown, *AB* 29, lxxviii)

## The *Logos* Hymn of the Prologue

- A poetic introduction in the form of a **hymn**
  - Poetic sections separated by prose asides or explanations
  - Originally by *John the Beloved* or *John the Baptist*?
    - See D&C 93:6-15 (rather prosaic)
    - As a probable disciple of John the Baptist, the Beloved Disciple may have heard, recorded, and perhaps revised or expanded a hymn of his earlier master
      - *Cf. Nephi's vision following his hearing Lehi's dream*
- Focuses on Jesus as **the Word** (Greek *logos*)
  - Semantically rich in Greek, it means “**word, expression, rational thought,**” etc.
    - Sc. The New Translation: “In the beginning the gospel was preached through the son. And the gospel was the word, and the word was with the Son, and the Son was with God, and the Son was of God.” (John 1:1 JST)
  - Just as words are the way people communicate with each other, **Jesus is the way that the Father communicates and interacts with his children**, linking the divine mind with the human
- In several poetic statements, the hymn establishes the following points:
  - **The preincarnate Word was divine**
  - **The Word** is the source of **Light and Life**
  - **The Light of the World** was not accepted by his own
  - **The Word** makes those who accept him sons of God
  - **The Word** become flesh and his glory was seen in witnesses
    - *Prose asides stress that first among these witnesses was John the Baptist*

## Poetic Statement 1 (John 1:1–2)

### The *Logos* Hymn

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

- John 1:1-5, “*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*” The same was in the beginning with God.
- **Premortality and divine status of the Word: *John has the highest Christology of the gospels***

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## Poetic Statement 2 (John 1:3–5)

### The *Logos* Hymn

All things were made by him;  
and without him was not any thing made that was made.

In him was life;  
and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness;  
and the darkness comprehended it not.

- “All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.
  - **Echoes of the language of creation in Genesis 1**
- *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.* And the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehendeth it not.”
  - Source of life and light
  - The darkness was not able to “grasp” (*katebalon*) the light, both “capture and hold” on the one hand and “understand” on the other

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## Prose Aside 1 (John 1:6–8)

### The *Logos* Hymn

There was **a man sent from God, whose name was John**.  
The same came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that  
all *men* through him might believe. **He was not that Light, but  
was sent to bear witness of that Light.**

- The **hymn format** seems to break whenever the subject moves from “**the Word**” to **John or mortal witnesses**
- D&C 93, the Lord’s own expansion on the *Logos* Hymn, stresses the role of John, presumably the Baptist and/or perhaps the Beloved
  - “And John saw and bore record of the fulness of my glory, and the fulness of John’s record is hereafter to be revealed. And he bore record, saying: ***I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was***; Therefore, in the beginning the Word was, for he was the Word, even the messenger of salvation—**The light and the Redeemer of the world**; the Spirit of truth, who came into the world, because the world was made by him, and **in him was the life of men and the light of men**. The worlds were made by him; men were made by him; all things were made by him, and through him, and of him.” (D&C 93:6–10)
    - “I saw his glory, that he was in the beginning, before the world was,” however, sounds much like **the Transfiguration**, which John the Beloved witnessed (cf. 2 Peter 1:16-18\_

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## Poetic Statement 3 (John 1:9–11)

### The *Logos* Hymn

**[He]** was the true Light,  
which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

**He was in the world,**  
and the world was made by him,  
and the world knew him not.

**He came unto his own,**  
and his own received him not.

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## The Light in the World

- “. . . the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” (1:9)
  - D&C 84:46, “And the Spirit giveth light to every man that cometh into the world; and the Spirit enlighteneth every man through the world, that hearkeneth to the voice of the Spirit.”
- “He was in the world, and the world was made by him . . .” (1:10)
  - Again stresses the Word’s role as **creator**
- “He came unto his own [*neut. pl.*, things, creations], and his own [*masc. pl.*, people] received him not . . .” (1:11)
  - “O how great is the nothingness of the children of men; yea, even they are less than the dust of the earth. For behold, the dust of the earth moveth hither and thither, to the dividing asunder, at the command of our great and everlasting God.” (Helaman 12:7-8)
  - The opposition to Jesus = frequently described as “the Jews” (*hoi Iudaioi*), often, but not always the Jewish leadership
    - Seems uncomfortable anti-Semitic
      - Some scholars explain it as a later development when the Johannine Community was cast out of the Jewish synagogues
      - Historically may be explained as the term used for the aristocracy descended from those who returned from Babylonian exile, including Pharisees and Sadducees but not the *am 'Haretz* or common people

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## Poetic Statement 4 (John 1:12–13)

### The *Logos* Hymn

But as many as received him,  
 to them gave he power to become the sons of God,  
 even to them that believe on his name:  
 Which were born, not of blood,  
 nor of the will of the flesh,  
 nor of the will of man, but of God.

- Become the sons [and daughters] of God
  - Does not refer to becoming spirit children of Heavenly Father (which we are already) but instead to entering into a new spiritual state and relationship
  - Cf. Mosiah 5:7 “And now, because of the covenant which ye have made ye shall be called the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters; for behold, this day he hath spiritually begotten you; for ye say that your hearts are changed through faith on his name; therefore, ye are born of him and have become his sons and his daughters.”
- **Flesh and Blood** are established early on as mortal antitheses to **divinity, immortality, and the will of God**

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## Poetic Statement 5 (John 1:14)

The *Logos* Hymn

And the Word was made flesh,

(and we beheld his glory,  
the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,)

and dwelt among us,  
full of grace and truth.

- The divine Word was made flesh and blood, or mortal
- Dwelt: *eskenosen*, “pitched his tent” or “was tabernacled” among us; the Word clothed in flesh . . .
  - *Mosiah 15:3*, “. . . the Son because of the flesh.”

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## Prose Aside 2 (John 1:15–18)

The *Logos* Hymn

John bare witness of him, and cried, saying, This was he of whom I spake, He that cometh after me is preferred before me: for he was before me. And of his fulness have all we received, and grace for grace.

For the law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ. No man hath seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, which is in the bosom of the Father, he hath declared *him*.

- The law of Moses contrasted with the grace (gifts) and truth that comes through Christ
- No man has seen God? (1:18)
  - *JST John 1:19*, “And no man hath seen God at any time, except he hath borne record of the Son.”
  - “What John actually taught was that the Father has never appeared unto any man except for the purpose of introducing and bearing record of the Son” (McConkie, *DNTC*, 1.77)

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