

AND GOD WAS THE WORD
ΚΑΙ ΘΕΟΣ ΗΝ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ



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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION: WHOSE WORD IS GOD?

He that sitteth in the heavens shall laugh: the Lord shall have them in derision. (Psalm 2:4)

On February 13, 2007 I was sitting on my couch at home in Murmansk, Russia watching the evening news when I heard Vladimir Putin giving an interview as he was returning to Moscow from an extended trip in Germany, Saudi Arabia and Jordan. In Munich he had made a speech at the Conference on Security Policy about the need for a multi-polar, global response to crises which would include the interests of Russia and other nations and not only those of the United States. At the time that speech was perceived by the delegation from the United States to be highly confrontational. Media outlets around the world claimed that it signaled the beginning of a new Cold War, which time has shown was indeed the case. It was a couple of days after Munich that I saw him on my TV screen at the airport in Amman, Jordan, where, having just visited the spot on the Jordan River of Jesus' baptism, Mr. Putin was answering the question of a reporter about the Munich speech. Finishing his response by quoting the Gospel of John, he made a statement that immediately shook me to my core:

And, finally, most important, I am deeply convinced of everything that I said; every word of it was true. That really is how things are in our world. I don't comfort myself with the hope or nurse the illusion that after my speech in Munich everything will change tomorrow. Of course not! But let us remember that today we were here together in Jordan in a place of biblical significance. Let us remember what it says in the Bible. It is said there: "In the beginning was the Word." My point is that gradually the right and necessary positive changes will be happening in the world. And we will build a more just world, a more democratic world, together with our partners, including our American partners, with their direct and immediate participation.¹

"How could he dare to compare his own word to the Word of God?" I said out loud to myself, instinctively realizing that I was witnessing a moment of great historic import. Putin was positioning himself that day as an infallible spokesman for God on high to the nation of Russia on earth, declaring that as such he would impose his will by force over as many nations and for as many years as possible. Historically, when a ruler seats himself on the throne of a god and a nation embraces him as a messiah, there is no turning back from impending judgement. It may be generations in the making, but there is always a point one can look back upon – a Daniel 4:33 or

¹ Author's translation from the official site of the President of Russia (<http://kremlin.ru/events/president/transcripts/24041>).

5:5 “in-that-same-hour” moment – where it all began. Putin that day had drunk from the poisoned cup. It was too late.

But the position we find Vladimir Putin and Russia in today is certainly not unique. In the United States and around the world the democratic process is being directed by an electorate that longs for a messiah-figure to restore them to a perceived former greatness. It seems that the most popular and well-funded candidates for political office, those who dominate the media cycles, are the ones most ready to take their stand in the Holy Place and pass themselves off as gods. (Of course, like Vladimir Putin, only gods with a little “g” – after all, they proclaim themselves to be servants of God in heaven above.) This idea of a great messiah-king standing as a prophet and speaking a word that will take on flesh to redeem the world is not a new one. It was the golden dream of Nebuchadnezzar, the silver dream of Darius, the bronze dream of Alexander and the iron dream of Julius Caesar. But what exactly will this new dream composed of Rome’s iron and the common clay of all nations (formed and reformed by the whims of the majority’s vote and manipulated by the minority’s veto) shape up to be in our *novus ordo seclorum*? It is the spirit of the antichrist.

The Apostle John in the opening statement of his Gospel was not writing about just any word, spoken by just any god, but about *the* Word (Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ – *ho Logos*), spoken by God Almighty. This is that of which philosophers and poets had spoken of throughout history, yet had never been able to truly understand its real nature. This is the full expression of God, His wisdom and logic as substance and element of all that exists. This is God’s light and energy. This is God’s mind. This is what God has on His heart and what He wants to say to us, His creatures. All of this and all that God is, John says, is embodied and expressed in His Word, His Son, Jesus Christ.

Further, John was not writing about just any beginning but was referring his readers back to the beginning of the Law of Moses, Genesis 1:1: “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*” John, therefore, is explaining to us by divine revelation that the Logos is not the first of God’s creations as Philo had taught half a century prior, nor is He another god begotten at some point before creation as Arius would proclaim two and a quarter centuries later. He is, rather, eternally co-existent with the Father as the uniquely-begotten Son (for just as there can be no son without a father, so there can be no father without a son) – begotten not at a point in time, but forever in all eternity. The only-begotten Son was sent into our world, became flesh, and dwelt among us, revealing to us all the glory of His Father.

After Barack Obama was elected in 2008 a speech of his entitled “Bound to the Word” came to my attention because of this same use of John 1:1 in a political context. It was given in 2005 at the American Library Association Annual Conference in Chicago. The keynote of “change,” anchored by the idea of a divine word preceding that change, is so similar to Putin’s statement, that it almost seemed when I first read the transcript that Mr. Obama’s statements had been crafted by the same speech writers working for his Russian counterpart (I’m now convinced that the same PR people do work on both sides of the fence). The theological position represented in these words and the political platform it upholds reveal the secret of ruling the modern, information-and-communication-driven world: “Control the word... what people hear and what they read and what they comprehend... Imprison their minds.”

“If you open up Scripture, the Gospel according to John, it starts: “In the beginning was the Word.” Although this has a very particular meaning in Scripture, more broadly what it speaks to

is the critical importance of language, of writing, of reading, of communication, of books as a means of transmitting culture and binding us together as a people... That's the reason why, since ancient antiquity, whenever those who seek power would want to control the human spirit, they have gone after libraries and books. Whether it's the ransacking of the great library at Alexandria, controlling information during the Middle Ages, book burnings, or the imprisonment of writers in former communist bloc countries, the idea has been that if we can control the word, if we can control what people hear and what they read and what they comprehend, then we can control and imprison them, or at least imprison their minds.

That's worth pondering at a time when truth and science are constantly being challenged by political agendas and ideologies, at a time when language is used not to illuminate but, rather, to obfuscate, at a time when there are those who would disallow the teaching of evolution in our schools, where fake science is used to beat back attempts to curb global warming or fund lifesaving research. At a time when book banning is back in vogue, libraries remind us that truth isn't about who yells the loudest, but who has the right information.

... "In the beginning was the Word." At the dawn of the 21st century... knowledge is literally power... it unlocks the gates of opportunity and success..."²

The real “fake science” is what the Apostle Paul spoke of in 1 Timothy 6:20 as knowledge that shouldn't even be called “knowledge” because it opposes the truth. There is one single truth that lies at the foundation of all of science – political, biological, physical, social and otherwise. There is no true word other than God's Word. All other words sing in melody with His Song or they are empty babblings, nails scratching on the chalkboard of reality. There is no true law other than God's Law. All other laws are interpretations and applications of His Law, or they are the evidence of cultural rigor mortis setting in as our society sinks into the grave.

WHAT THIS BOOK IS ALL ABOUT

John 1:1c is a brief but powerful statement, first expressed as fifteen letters KAI ΘΕΟΣ ΗΝ Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ (*kai theos en ho logos* – “and God was the Word”) and usually rendered in English as “...and the Word was God.” Grammatically speaking, some experts claim that there are compelling reasons for “the Word” to be understood as the subject related to the use of the article to describe “Word” (Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ – *ho logos* – the Word) and its nonuse in relationship to “God” (ΘΕΟΣ – *theos* – God). In light of the external evidence of history and the internal evidence of how divine names are used in the Scripture, however, these reasons cannot withstand the massive sway of the simple word order in determining how the statement should be understood.

This book challenges the traditional English translation of John 1:1c, drawing from emphatic conclusions that the Apostle John's meaning should best be translated into English as it was for hundreds of years prior to the institutionalization of the Protestant Reformation in England as “...and God was the Word,” not as it is invariably translated in every English translation since as “...and the Word was God.” Most nations of the earth, following the English model of translation, read this verse today with the word order reversed from the original, making “Word”

² <http://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/bound-to-the-word/>

the subject of the sentence and “was God” the predicate. All modern commentators on this portion of John’s Gospel meticulously repeat the conclusions of twentieth-century scholar, A.T. Robertson, whose position will be faced as we look at the internal evidence of the text’s meaning. They all indicate that to directly translate the Greek in the order it is written as “...and God was the Word” would be a denial of the Trinity and a contradiction of the preceding clause that states “...and the Word was with God.” As we shall see, there is absolutely no foundation for such a conclusion, and more ancient scholars such as Martin Luther never supported this reversal of word order, though it had its advocates in their day.

WHY THIS BOOK IS IMPORTANT

In defense of why such a topic is even worthy of study beyond the miniscule group of people interested in such fine points of biblical scholarship, let it be said that a vast part of human history over the past several hundred years has been determined by political and religious philosophy expressed in these tiny nuances. It is truly shocking to discover the amount of human blood that has been shed in the battle against the interchangeability of these terms! Is God the Word, or is the Word God? In an age when the King’s rule was considered by Divine Right and the Law was understood as proceeding from the Holy Scriptures, this question took on the form of: REX LEX or LEX REX? (Is King Law, or is Law King?) The nations of the earth have found that when the Law is King, King is no longer a necessary element of a democratic society, for the Law proceeds from the People. Likewise, history has slowly come around over the past several hundred years to the conclusion that when the Word is God, God is no longer a necessity in a humanistic society, because the Word also proceeds from the People. If both Law and King are authored by popular vote of the majority, is it not proof that, having eaten of the fruit of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, we have become as gods... and shall surely die?

Alexandr Isayevich Solzhenitsyn published in 1973, after being exiled from the Soviet Union and stripped of his citizenship, a tract called *As Breathing and Consciousness Return*. In this essay he said about the totalitarian system under which he lived:

“It is not the authoritarian regime alone which is fearful, but the regime that answers to nothing or no one. The autocrats of the past, religious ages under the apparent unlimited authority that they wielded still sensed accountability to God and to their own conscience. Autocrats in our day are dangerous because it is difficult to find a compelling higher value that they submit to...

Our state system is not so fearful because it is not democratic or because it is authoritarian and based on physical force: under such circumstances people are still able to live without harm to their spiritual existence.

*The world-wide, historical uniqueness of our current system is to be found in the fact that, beyond all physical and economical forms of coercion, they require from us the complete casting off of our soul: the continuous, active participation in a notorious and all-encompassing LIE. This is the decay of the soul. This is the spiritual enslavement to which no people can give their assent, if they desire to be **human**.*

When Caesar, having taken what is Caesar’s, in the same manner and with even greater insistence, requires the relinquishment of what is God’s – this, then, we dare not sacrifice to him.

Our freedom in the main is an inner freedom; it is always a part of our will. If we ourselves give it away to be perverted, we have no right to be called human...

And no person actively promoting the lie or standing in support of it can ever be justified when he stands before the living, his descendants, his friends or his children.

We have no one to blame but ourselves, and that is why all the anonymous pamphlets, programs and explanations written to expose the lie aren't worth a cent. We have each fallen into the mud and manure by our OWN will, and no one's mud can be cleansed by the mud of his neighbor."³

We live in an age where every man picks the word that will be his god. Our leaders set up as idols those words that they deem to be our gods. Thanks to ever changing technology, words surround us today as never before in history. Books don't even need to be burned or censored anymore; the truth actually *is* determined by the information which is proclaimed the loudest. A simple look at how quickly the definitions of human gender and marriage have changed in a generation throughout western, democratic society reveals this. Freedom of speech is a beautiful thing, but worship of speech is an idolatry that corrodes the freedom. Words truly have become society's gods, the shapers of man's destiny.

The tiny passage of Scripture at John 1:1c is impregnated with a powerful idea – an idea which has been twisted for centuries by those who truly obfuscate the truth. A simple example as proof might be seen in two of the most influential, pseudo-Christian movements in the world today: Jehovah's Witnesses and Mormons. Both of their teachings are Arian in nature; they deny the Trinity, relegating Jesus to a created being, a god of a lesser sort than the Father God. One of their chief defenses of these teachings today is the modern translation of John 1:1c. They base their positions on a foundation of shoddy scholarship poured with a mix made from convenient contributions of several mainstream commentators, including those that we shall look at in the third chapter of this book. Jehovah's Witnesses even publish a "Bible" where this portion of Scripture is translated into English as "...and the Word was *a* god." Joseph Smith, the founder of Mormonism, produced a version of this verse that's even more confusing than that: "...and the Son was of God."

Dr. Francis A. Schaeffer in his 1972 landmark book, *Genesis in Space and Time*, confronting the philosophy of an impersonal beginning to the existence of the universe and of man, calling the belief in a personal God "that upon which our whole Western culture has been built," said:

"The universe had a personal beginning – a personal beginning on the high order of the Trinity. That is, before "in the beginning" the personal was already there. Love and thought and communication existed prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth. Modern man is deeply plagued by the question, "Where do love and communication come from?"

Many artists who pour themselves out in their paintings, who paint bleak messages on canvas, many singers, many poets and dramatists are expressing the blackness of the fact that while everything hangs upon love and communication, they don't know where these come from and they don't know what they mean.

³ Author's translation from the Russian.

The biblical answer is quite otherwise: something was there before creation. God was there; love and communication were there; and therefore, prior even to Genesis 1:1, love and communication are intrinsic to what always has been.”

God is love and God is communication (the Logos). There cannot be one without the other. In the culture of the twenty-first century more than at any other time in history humankind demands answers to all its questions and worships words as gods in all its groves and high places. The propositional truth of the personal God who was and is the Word is seen as relative to the current needs of society and the ever-changing, ever-warring-with-each-other words of the democratic majority. Yet no answer from the people is forthcoming, only question that leads to question that leads to more questions. As Orual of C.S. Lewis' *Till We Have Faces* concludes:

“I ended my first book with the words “no answer.” I know now, Lord, why you utter no answer. You are yourself the answer. Before your face questions die away. What other answer would suffice? Only words, words, to be led out to battle against other words. Long did I hate you, long did I fear you. I might...”

CHAPTER 2: THE EXTERNAL EVIDENCE – INTRIGUE, POLITICS & THE POWER OF CONVENTION

EARLY TRANSLATIONS

*Remove not the ancient landmark, which thy fathers have set.
- Proverbs 22:28*

*I did but prompt the age to quit their clogs
By the known rules of ancient liberty,
When straight a barbarous noise environs me
Of owls and cuckoos, asses, apes, and dogs;
As when those hinds that were transformed to frogs
Railed at Latona's twin-born progeny,
Which after held the Sun and Moon in fee.
But this is got by casting pearl to hogs,
That bawl for freedom in their senseless mood,
And still revolt when Truth would set them free.
License they mean when they cry Liberty;
For who loves that must first be wise and good:
But from that mark how far they rove we see,
For all this waste of wealth and loss of blood.
- John Milton, On the Same*

We turn now to the examination of hard facts, a studied look over our shoulders at the history of Bible translation. Allow me to warn the uninitiated into the politics of religion that this is a scandalous story fraught with intrigue, betrayal, violence, and murder.

Once upon a time a very young and powerful prince established a short-lived, far-sighted empire that reached to the four corners of the earth. He was a Macedonian by the name of Alexander. Thanks to him the world had, for hundreds of years, including those centuries in which the Septuagint and New Testament were written, at least an elementary understanding of the Greek language known as *Koine* (“common”). Much like English today due to the prevalence of British and American pop-culture and the shrinking barriers to global communication, *Koine* was a simple, flexible language that everyone everywhere could either directly understand or readily have translated into an understandable form. How miraculous that “when the fullness of time was come, God sent forth his Son”⁴ into a world that was ready to receive him and the Gospel of his Kingdom. Due to the Jewish Diaspora, every city of the earth had a synagogue where the Hebrew Scriptures were taught,⁵ and they were being interpreted by the learned in the language of their *Koine* Greek translation, the Septuagint (LXX).⁶ Due to Roman rule, communication flowed quickly and freely between every corner of the earth and levels of literacy and education were high, if not by today’s standards, at any rate more so than ever had been in ancient history. When the Spirit of God inspired the writers of the New Testament the Scriptures they produced were in *Koine* Greek, the language of the common people. “God was the Word,” and he wanted his Word to be known so that all might know him. He wanted it to be discussed from the palace to the market place to the kitchen table, overheard by passersby and children playing at the feet of their parents, taught in places of public gathering and private meeting, and translated into all the languages of the world.

Over the course of the first few centuries after the final writings of Christ’s Apostles, during the long and ambiguous process of the Church recognizing the complete canon of New Testament Scriptures, these writings were translated into many languages in many countries but chiefly into the Latin that was the official language of the Empire. Around the beginning of the fifth century, St. Jerome completed his labors, and, together with the rest of the Bible, the Gospel of John was published in the common Latin of his day. With powerful simplicity the Vulgate translates John 1:1c as “*et Deus erat Verbum,*” a Latin wording that can only mean in English “and God was Word.”⁷ Is that how the original meaning of the Greek text should be expressed in Latin? At least we know that around 300 years after John’s original autograph, based on all the Old Latin

⁴ Galatians 4:4.

⁵ Acts 15:21.

⁶ Though it is doubtful that this was the native Bible studied by Jesus and his apostles in their Jewish upbringing (Jesus was obviously learned in the Hebrew Scriptures), this is the Bible that is directly quoted over and over again throughout the Greek New Testament.

⁷ Although Latin like Greek, Russian and other languages is highly inflected, and the subject and predicate of a sentence can be placed in various orders, this Latin sentence structure allows for no other understanding than subject-verb-object. In statements of correlation both subject and object are in the nominative form (they are not declined to indicate which would be the object). Latin word order in such sentences is the determining factor of subject and object, just as it is in Russian. Ancient Latin, like Russian, has no articles, neither definite nor indefinite. Because of this, placing “*Deus*” (“God”) in the position of the predicate and not the subject could give the impression of “a god” amongst other gods. In the position of the subject, it can only refer to the one true God revealed throughout the context of the Bible. (See Frederic M. Wheelock, *Wheelock’s Latin* (Harper Collins, 2005) for a more detailed explanation of word order and determination of the subject in a copula sentence.) See also Footnote 12 below.

translations available to him, Saint Jerome believed it to be so. The question that we must face is: Why then has it been changed in nearly all modern language Bibles today?⁸

In short time, as the fluidity of human intercourse continued to shape mankind's languages, St. Jerome's Latin text ceased to be common and became the property of only the educated. The common person's understanding of the Word of God, contrary to the design of the Apostles, was limited for centuries to the interpretation of the Church hierarchy. Very few had the opportunity to hear or read the Scriptures in their native tongue.

Nearly five hundred years passed, and in the year 862 motivated by a desire to consolidate his authority in Great Moravia against the Franks, Prince Rostislav, having expelled the Roman Church missionaries, turned to Constantinople for help. The Byzantine Emperor Michael III together with Patriarch Photius sent two brothers, two of the most influential missionaries of all time, Cyril and Methodius, to the Slavic peoples in the land of the modern day Czech Republic. In short time these two men made history with a new alphabet, a new translation of the New Testament, a written Slavic system of law, and a Slavic liturgy authorized even by the Roman Pope for use among the new converts. While the uneducated masses throughout all Western Europe languished in the darkness of an incomprehensible Bible, in the East amongst Slavic barbarians the light was shining brightly!

Ѡ ѿ ѡанна сѣѡе бѣговѣствованїе.

Глава 1

1 Въ начаѣ бѣ слово, ѿ слово бѣ къ бѣ, ѿ бѣ бѣ слово.

2 Сѣ бѣ ѿсконѣ къ бѣ:

3 всѣ тѣмъ быша, ѿ бѣ негѡ ничтѡже бысть, ѣже бысть.

4 Въ томъ живѡтъ бѣ, ѿ живѡтъ бѣ свѣтъ челоуѣкъмъ:

5 ѿ свѣтъ во тѣмъ свѣтитса, ѿ тѣмъ ѣгѡ не ѡбѣтъ.

John 1 from the Old Church Slavonic text.

How did these two brothers of Macedonia translate from their own native Greek into the Slavic tongue the words recorded at John 1:1c? Of course their original translations are long since lost, but there still exists a trustworthy testimony to their labors in the Old Church Slavonic text, so

⁸ Even earlier than Jerome we have the testimony of the Coptic translators. George W. Horner published in 1907 *The Coptic Version of the New Testament in the Southern Dialect, etc.* and from the available manuscripts we see that John 1:1c was produced with exactly the word order of the Greek. Horner's literal translation from the Sahidic dialect to English is "[a] God was the Word." The Coptic translator employed an indefinite article for "God" which, according to Horner's apparatus, is not necessary to translate its meaning into English. This is the only place in the New Testament where the translator used an indefinite article for the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ. It has been conjectured that this was to "indicate an interpretative distinction, categorically labelled in Coptic grammars as 'descriptive' (or 'qualitative' in Greek grammars)." We will be discussing this qualitative aspect in great detail in Chapter 3. See Brian J. Wright and Timothy Ricchuiti, "From God (ΘΕΟΣ) to God (-): A New Discussion and Proposal Regarding John 1:1c and the Sahidic Coptic Version of the New Testament," *The Journal of Theological Studies* 62 (2011): 494-512 and Brian J. Wright, "Jesus as ΘΕΟΣ: A Textual Examination, etc." available here: <http://ridley.academia.edu/BrianJWright>.

diligently preserved by the Eastern Orthodox Church and still revered as the only authoritative Slavic translation. The language of that text is quite clear: *Ē BŌG B'Ě SLŌVŎ* (“and God was Word”).

In the Old Church Slavonic text the verb “to be” is in an aorist imperfective construction that does not exist in modern Russian. Its meaning is, therefore, very close to the meaning of the construction in the Greek text at John 1:1c. This meaning does not perfectly translate into English or Russian because it is one of past existence without beginning or end. It would be something like saying in English: “In the beginning the Word was ever in existence, and the Word existed ever before God, and God ever had been the Word.” This Slavonic verb could refer by its construction, just as the Greek verb, to either God or the Word. Since there is no article in Slavonic and in such correlative sentences both nouns are expressed in the nominative case, only the word order can make perfectly clear which of the two is the subject and which the object. Again, the word order of the Slavonic text like that of the Latin must clearly be understood as saying “and God was the Word,” not “and the Word was God.” We must, therefore, raise the question: Why then in the nineteenth century was the first modern Russian translation, the only Bible read and understood by millions of native Russian speakers around the world today, prepared with John 1:1c reading «и Слово было Бог» (*e slovo bilo bog* – “and Word was God”)?⁹

THE FIRST ENGLISH TRANSLATION

*For if a preest be foul, on whom we truste,
No wonder is a lewed man to ruste!
And shame it is, if a preest take keep –
A shitten shepherd and a clene sheep!*
- Chaucer, The Canterbury Tales (General Prologue 496-504)

A thousand years had passed since Saint Jerome with most of humanity tethered to a tractor beam of Scriptural illiteracy until a bright light appeared on the distant shores of England with enough substance to outlast the black hole of ignorance and superstition. Perhaps it's not fair to say that the light simply appeared from out of nowhere, because God always seems to have a remnant of ardent believers filled with His Spirit and hungry for the truth. Fire, however, without knowledge only leads, as history has proved and still is proving, to destruction. This was a light not only of fire but of knowledge and skill and labor and a desire to educate the world with truth.

⁹ The obvious outside influence upon the translators into modern Russian is seen in their reversal of the Greek word order. The word order could have been left exactly as in Greek even if they believed “the Word” to be the subject. The verb form «было» (*bilo* – “it was”) is neutral and can only apply to the neutral noun «Слово» (*slovo* – “Word”) as opposed to the masculine noun «Бог» (*bog* – “God”). In other words, had the Greek, Latin or even Slavonic texts been followed here (we shall see later that they were influenced by the English translation), they would have naturally written «...и Бог было Слово» (*i Bog bilo Slovo* – “and God was Word”) – a statement that makes perfect sense in Russian and is even quite poetic.

have sat down for a tete-a-tete in Havana, Cuba of all places. Amazingly, however, the division of east and west was healed by the Holy Spirit over six hundred years ago in the infancy of the Protestant Reformation when Jan Hus, an Orthodox Slav from the very same lands that Cyril and Methodius had visited 550 years before him, embraced the teachings of a Roman Catholic Doctor, John Wycliffe, and his new English translation of the Bible. Our present study can hardly even begin to explore the importance of Jan Hus and the movement that was sparked by his life and teachings, mainly learned from Wycliffe, to the overall Protestant Reformation. The Roman Church had him burnt at the stake with a fire lit by one of Wycliffe's translations, but 500 years later a monument was erected in his honor in Prague that outlived all the monuments of the Communist regime which soon would follow.

This is the legacy of John Wycliffe – a revival of the Spirit of the Living God in people around the world who refused to allow a religious or political hierarchy to stand between them and a personal knowledge of the Father God through Jesus Christ. As Sir Winston Churchill wrote of Wycliffe:

“But a vital element of resistance to the formation of a militant and triumphant Church survived in the English people. Wyclif’s failure in his own day was total, and the ray of his star faded in the light of the Reformation dawn. ‘Wyclif,’ wrote Milton in Areopagitica, ‘was a man who wanted, to render his learning consummate, nothing but his living in a happier age.’”¹¹

What became of Wycliffe's great legacy, the first English Bible? It survived in many copies due to the evangelistic fervor of his itinerant preachers, known as the Lollards, whom a seventeenth-century writer, Fuller, called “sentinels against an army of enemies until God sent Luther to relieve them.”¹² The Lollards faced intense persecution throughout the fifteenth century. Their preaching, however, more than any other factor, seems to have introduced God's Word into the English idiom. Wycliffe's Bible served as the basis for the translation work of William Tyndale nearly 150 years later. So, just how did Doctor John Wycliffe translate into English John 1:1? Of course, he faithfully followed the Latin text of the Vulgate which served as his base and wrote simply and beautifully: *In the bigynnyng was the word, and the word was at god, and god was the word.*¹³ The concept of God expressing himself completely in his Word was at the heart of all that this great Oxford scholar believed. The idea of any word of a king, pope or priest exalting itself over God's Word was exactly what Wycliffe and his followers preached against in the Church and what they characteristically called the “spirit of the antichrist.”

LUTHER'S ANALYSIS OF JOHN 1:1

*In a hundred years, God will raise up a man whose calls for reform cannot be suppressed.
- Jan Hus' dying words*

¹¹ The Right Honorable Sir Winston Churchill, *The Birth of Britain* Volume II (1956), pages 376-77.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Incidentally this gives further proof that Jerome's Latin translation indeed places “God” as the subject and “Word” as the object of the statement in John 1:1c, since in English, of course, the word order of such a sentence determines everything.

Next stop – Wartburg Castle, where Martin Luther is being held in the year of our Lord 1521 and beginning his translation of the New Testament from Erasmus’ Greek text. The story is familiar enough that we won’t take time here to repeat its details. Let us cut right to the very heart of the matter at hand. Doctor Martin Luther, likewise, translated John 1:1c into German as: “*und Gott war das Wort*” – “and God was the Word.” Not only did he translate it exactly as it is in the Greek, but he also left a quite lengthy commentary on why he chose to do so. It is quoted here, since it is key to an understanding of when, where, why, and how during the Protestant Reformation a reversal of word order was applied (resulting in a reversal of meaning) to the text of John 1:1c:

“And the Word was with God.” Where else should it have been? There never was anything outside of God. Moses says the same thing when he writes: “God said, Let there be light.” Whenever God speaks, the Word must be with him. But here he clearly distinguishes the persons, so that the Word is a different person than God with whom it was. This passage of John does not allow the interpretation that God had been alone, because it says that something had been with God, namely, the Word. If he had been alone, why would he need to say: The Word was with God? To have something with him, is not to be alone or by himself.

It should not be forgotten that the Evangelist strongly emphasizes the little word “with.” For he repeats it, and clearly expresses the difference in persons to gainsay natural reason and future heretics. For while natural reason can understand that there is but one God, and many passages of Scripture substantiate it, and this is also true, yet the Scriptures also strongly oppose the idea that this same God is only one person.

Thus arose the heresy of Sabellius, who said: The Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are only one person. And again Arius, although he admitted that the Word was with God, would not admit that he was true God. The former confesses and teaches too great a simplicity of God; the latter too great a multiplicity. The former mingles the persons; the latter separates the natures. But the true Christian faith takes the mean, teaches and confesses separate persons and an undivided nature. The Father is a different person from the Son, but he is not another God. Natural reason cannot comprehend this; it must be apprehended by faith alone. Natural reason produces error and heresy; faith teaches and maintains the truth; for it clings to the Scriptures, which do not deceive nor lie.

*“And God was the Word.” Since there is but one God, it must be true that God himself is the Word, which was in the beginning before all creation. **Some change the order of the words and read: And the Word was God, in order to explain that this Word not only is with God and is a different person, but that it is also in its essence the one true God with the Father. But we shall leave the words in the order in which they now stand: And God was the Word;** and this is also what it means; there is no other God than the one only God, and this same God must also essentially be the Word, of which the Evangelist speaks; so there is nothing in the divine nature which is not in the Word. It is clearly stated that this Word is truly God, so that it is not only true that the Word is God, but also that God is the Word.*

Decidedly as this passage opposes Arius, who teaches that the Word is not God, so strongly it appears to favor Sabellius; for it speaks as though it mingled the persons, and thereby revokes or explains away the former passage, which separates the persons and says: The Word was with God.



John 1 from Luther's German New Testament (1530)

But the Evangelist intentionally arranged his words so as to refute all heretics. Here therefore he overthrows Arius and attributes to the Word the true essential of the Godhead by saying: And God was the Word; as though he would say: **I do not simply say, the Word is God, which might be understood as though the Godhead was only asserted of him, and were not essentially his, as you, Arius, claim; but I say: And God was the Word, which can be understood in no other way than that this same being which everyone calls God and regards as such, is the Word.**

Again, that Sabellius and reason may not think that I side with them, and mingle the persons, and revoke what I have said on this point, I repeat it and say again: "The same was in the beginning with God." **The Word was with God, with God, and yet God was the Word. Thus the Evangelist contends that both assertions are true: God is the Word, and the Word is with God; one nature of divine essence, and yet not one person only.** Each person is God complete and entire, in the beginning and eternally. These are the passages upon which our faith is founded and to which we must hold fast. For it is entirely above reason that there should be three persons and each one perfect and true God, and yet not three Gods but one God.

The Scholastics have argued much pro and con with their numerous subtleties, to make this doctrine comprehensible. But if you do not wish to become entangled in the meshes of the enemy, ignore their cunning, arrogance, and subtleties, and hold to these divine words. Press into them and remain in them, like a hare in a rocky crevice. If you come out and deign to listen to human talk, the enemy will lead you on and overcome you, so that you will at last not know where reason, faith, God, or even yourself are.

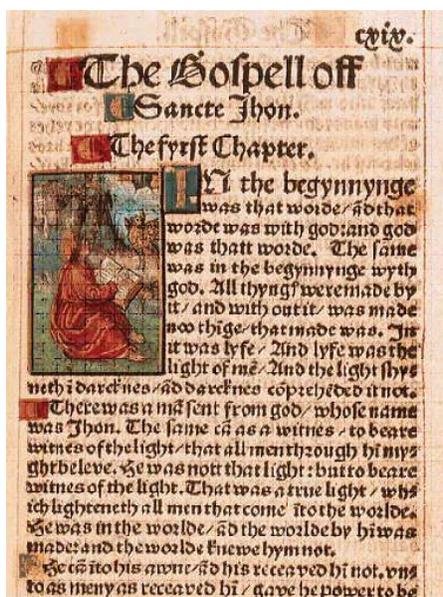
Believe me, as one who has experienced and tried it, and who does not talk into an empty barrel; the Scriptures are not given us for naught. If reason could have kept on the right road, the Scriptures would not have been given us. Take an example in the case of Arius and Sabellius.

Had they clung to the Scriptures and disregarded reason, they would not have originated so much trouble in the church. And our Scholastics might have been Christians, had they ceased fooling with their subtleties and had clung to the Scriptures."¹⁴

It is clear, therefore, according to Luther's opinion that there are important theological issues at stake in how these words are understood and translated. It is also clear that in his day there were forces of an unspecified nature that were at work to translate the Greek of John 1:1c into modern languages as "...and the Word was God." It is also clear that Luther was adamantly opposed to such forces. In fact, Luther states emphatically that such a wording is much weaker in asserting the divinity of Christ, because it "might be understood as though the Godhead was only asserted of him, and were not essentially his." In other words, it might be understood just as the Jehovah's Witnesses have published it in their translation of the Bible: "...and the Word was a god."

TYNDALE

I never read the Scripture, nor never will read it. It was merry in England afore the new learning came up: yea, I would all things were as hath been in time past.
- Thomas Howard, 3rd Duke of Norfolk



John 1 from Tyndale's first edition English New Testament (1526)

¹⁴ Dr. Martin Luther, *Church Postil 1521-1522, Sermons for the Principle Christmas Service, John 1:1-14, points 20-27*, trans. John Nicholas Lenker as *The Precious and Sacred Writings of Martin Luther, vol. 11* (Minneapolis: Lutherans in All Lands, 1907). Public domain:

www.trinitylutheranms.org/MartinLuther/MLSermons/John1_1_14.html.

This brings us to the fascinating case of William Tyndale's translation. Working under the influence of Luther, Tyndale produced and printed in 1526 at Worms thousands of copies of a small, pocket-sized English New Testament intended for evangelistic distribution and personal reading. The British Museum called it "the most important printed book in the English language" when in 1994 it purchased one of only two then known copies (there are now three such copies) for just over a million pounds.¹⁵ Tyndale's labor was a highly illegal enterprise, and all of these copies had to be smuggled into England (probably another reason for their small size). Eventually, after spending a year in prison, Tyndale was also burned at the stake in 1536. And, yes, Tyndale also translated John 1:1 in the way Wycliffe had before him, though he was working from the Greek and Wycliffe had worked from the Latin: "*In the bigynnyng was that word, and that word was at god, and god was that word.*"

Tyndale and others like him were dangerous men for the established powers of his day. No king in Europe and no official of the Roman Church embraced the type of reforms that were being produced by Luther's teaching in Germany. With the invention of the printing press and the advent of the Renaissance had come the possibility of mass production of the Scriptures in a size affordable for the common people and in a language they could understand.

Tyndale's preaching at times touched on the sensitive issue of King Henry's marital arrangements, which doesn't seem to have made the King particularly happy. Yet, strangely enough, the popularity of Tyndale's English Bible apparently forced Henry VIII to take measures along the lines of "If you can't beat 'em, join 'em!" In 1535, while Tyndale was being held prisoner in Brussels after being betrayed, the King, who had originally ordered his arrest, mysteriously sent his henchman, Thomas Cromwell, to intercede on Tyndale's behalf. (Little did poor Cromwell know that it'd be "Off with his head!" too, in another five years). This turned out to be unsuccessful, and history doesn't favor the idea that Henry really ever wanted it to succeed. It did seem, however, to boost the King's PR a bit back home, and Tyndale was executed. The King, having declared himself head of the Church of England in 1534, desperately needed an English Bible; he just didn't seem to need Tyndale. So, under his royal auspices in 1535, an associate of Tyndale, Myles Coverdale, produced *Biblia. The Bible that is, the Holy Scripture of the Olde and New Testament, Faithfully and Truly Translated out of Douche and Latyn in to Englishe*. It wasn't a scholarly or evangelistic effort as much as it was a work of church hierarchy and politics. However, faithfully following all the other translations available, the Coverdale Bible still produced John 1:1c as "...and God was the worde."

THE TURNING POINT

Now, this is the historical turning point in understanding why the word order of John 1:1c has been reversed in nearly all modern translations today. In 1534 from Antwerp just months prior to his arrest Tyndale prepared a second edition of his New Testament for publication. This second

¹⁵ See the illuminating transcript of Moira Goff's audio file (or listen to the file) on the British Library's official site: <http://www.bl.uk/onlinegallery/sacredtexts/podmoiragoff.html>.

edition included "...and the Word was God" as an alternate reading to "...and God was the Word." What influenced Tyndale to include this alternate reading? Did he himself include it, or was it placed there by others? He was no coward but was ready to go to great lengths to see his dream of an English Bible that was legally and freely available come to fruition.¹⁶ The fact that the "...and the Word was God" reading later appeared alone with no reference whatsoever to the original rendering of "...and God was the Word" in the 1537 third edition (It being published after Tyndale's execution, although it claimed to be corrected by him!) made by another of Tyndale's assistants, John Rogers, who used the pseudonym Thomas Matthew, shows that something very fishy was going on. Even stranger, perhaps, was the reappearance of the "...and God was the Word" rendition in the 1539 *Great Bible* – the only Bible ever officially authorized for use in the Church of England. This was prepared by Myles Coverdale under the official authority of King Henry VIII and under the direction of Cromwell and Cranmer just as the 1537 edition of Rogers had been. The point is that there was obviously some active controversy amongst scholars on the continent and perhaps even in the mind of King Henry, who was keenly interested in theological issues, about how to properly translate John 1:1c into English. Coverdale held to the word choice of Tyndale, who had held to that of Wycliffe before him.

It is obvious from Luther's comments quoted above that the controversy had nothing to do with grammatical issues; it was all around theological issues, which in that day, as in ours, were the basis of ideological issues, which in turn were the foundation for political issues. When analyzing decisions made by leading historical figures concerning the most important issues of their day, logic must reject the concepts of coincidence and accident. Historian Richard Pipes accurately describes the ideological and political climate of England during this period:

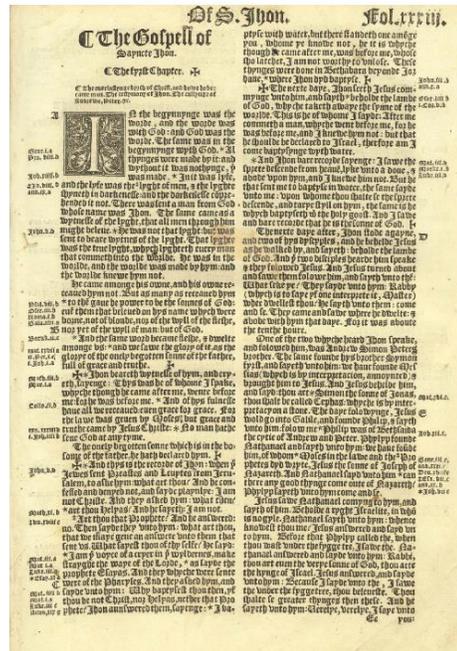
"After 1530 a statute became the law of the realm only if it had the concurrence of parliament. For the king to revoke or alter a statute on his own was deemed an abuse of authority. Thus came into being certain crucial attributes of modern democracy... An early writer on the English constitution, Sir John Fortescue, chief justice of the King's Bench, argued in the years 1469-71 that English law was fundamentally unaltered since antiquity... For this reason, kings could not impose taxes without their subjects' consent. Fortescue contrasted the king of England with his French counterpart by distinguishing between a monarch who ruled only "regally" (as he did in France) and one who ruled both "regally" and "politically" (in modern language, constitutionally), as was the case in England. The difference lay in the fact that the latter "is not able himself to change the laws of his kingdom at pleasure"... First published in Latin in 1537 and in English in 1567, Fortescue's treatise became something of a best-seller in the reign of Queen Elizabeth... it reflected an opinion widely shared in educated circles of England by the fifteenth century that good government obeyed the law."¹⁷

¹⁶ Tyndale had said in Antwerp prior to his arrest that if Henry VIII would only allow a "bare text of the scripture to be published for the benefit of his people, as other governments had done long since, 'I shall immediately make faithful promise never to write more, nor abide two days in these parts after the same.'" J.F. Mozley, *William Tyndale* (London, 1937), p. 198.

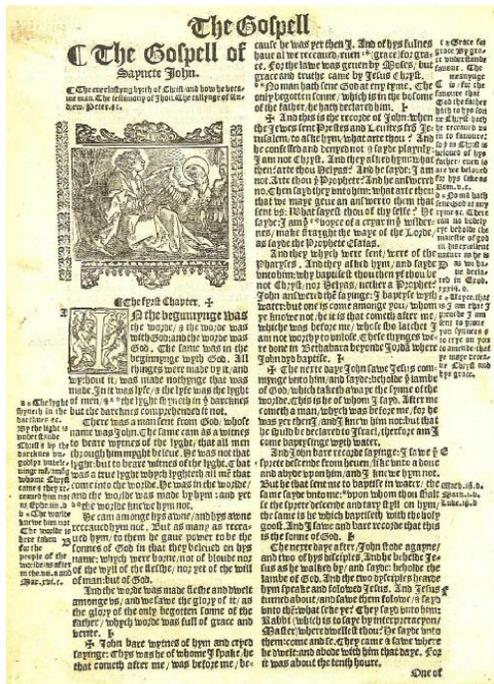
¹⁷ Richard Pipes, *Property and Freedom* (Vintage, 2000), 129-30.



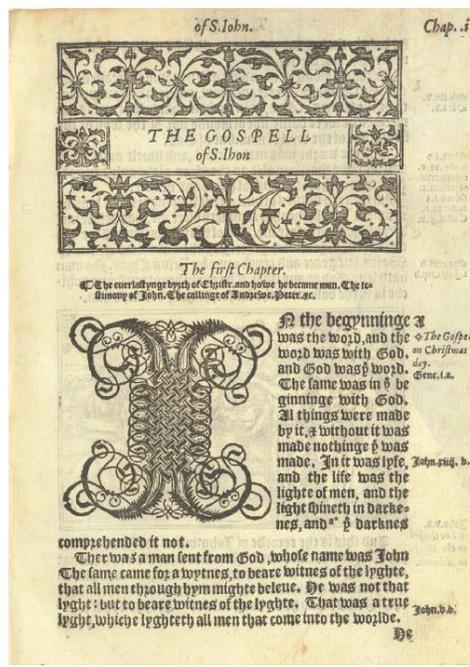
John 1 from the Coverdale Bible (1535)



The Great Bible or Cranmer's Bible (from a 1541 edition). Note the restoration of word order to that of Tyndale's original edition.



John 1 from the "Tyndale" Third Edition English New Testament (compiled by John Rogers, aka Thomas Matthew, in 1537 after Tyndale's execution). Note the reversal of word order from Tyndale's first edition.



Tyndale's first edition reprinted in 1552 by Richard Jugge in London. Note the original word order is maintained even at such a late date.

Underlying this sixteenth-century ideology that was gaining ground in the political life of England and would soon thereafter burst on the scene of the New World we can see the sixteenth-century theological controversy: Was God the Word as manifest in Catholic France, where the King was the Law; or was the Word God as manifest in England, where the Law was to be the King? In one of those stranger-than-fiction twists of history, that question was soon to be settled in favor of the English position by a Frenchman, ruling a miniature theocratic government from the center of Europe. Heretic for some and saint for others, it is doubtful that any single figure in the history of the Protestant Reformation, not even Luther, has had as much influence, either by reverence for his teaching or hatred of it, on the shape of our modern world as has John Calvin.

CALVIN

Such veneration we ought indeed to entertain for the Word of God, that we ought not to pervert it in the least degree by varying expositions; for its majesty is diminished, I know not how much, especially when not expounded with great discretion and with great sobriety... It is therefore an audacity, closely allied to a sacrilege, rashly to turn Scripture in any way we please, and to indulge our fancies as in sport; which has been done by many in former times.
- John Calvin, Commentary on Romans (Epistle Dedicatory)

To kill a man is not to protect a doctrine, but it is to kill a man. When the Genevans killed Servetus, they did not defend a doctrine, they killed a man. To protect a doctrine is not the magistrate's affair (what has the sword to do with doctrine?) but the teacher's. But it is the magistrate's affair to protect the teacher, as it is to protect the farmer and the smith, and the physician and others against injury. Thus if Servetus had wished to kill Calvin, the magistrate would properly have defended Calvin. But when Servetus fought with reasons and writings, he should have been repulsed by reasons and writings.
- Sebastian Castellio, Vaticanus, 1612 (Contra libellum, # 77)

When Queen Mary came to the throne of England and began actively persecuting and burning Protestants at the stake, a group of men, who narrowly escaped with their lives, printed the *Geneva Bible* in the city of the same name, where John Calvin was ensconced as the spiritual leader of the republic. It seems that it was his influence more than any other man that popularized the favored wording "...and the Word was God." In his life's masterpiece, *INSTITUTIO CHRISTIANAE RELIGIONIS* ("Institutes of the Christian Religion"), there is an entire portion dedicated to the rebuttal of the anti-Trinitarian doctrines of Michael Servetus, the man Calvin had executed. His primary argument lies in an understanding of the meaning of John 1:1 as "...and the Word was God."¹⁸

The Geneva Bible is the Bible that landed with the Pilgrims at Plymouth Rock, and was a driving force in the entire Puritan movement which ultimately gave rise to the King James Bible. In the

¹⁸ *Nam quum Ioannes (1,1.) nondum creato mundo λόγον fuisse Deum pronuntiet... λόγος ille, qui Deus erat...* ("For when John (1:1) declares Logos to be God before the creation of the world... that Logos, which was God..."). Book 1, Chapter 13, Section 22.

history of Bible translation these are, without a doubt, great events. However, there were so many political and religious forces at work to produce those translations, we need to dig deeper than our sense of propriety would conventionally allow us and take on the risk of inspecting certain facts which lie beneath the surface. It may be that, without condemning the engineer or builders, we might still discover some dry rot undermining the integrity of our understanding of God's Word in modern tongues and find some simple remedy to correct it.

Calvin was firm on his belief in the depravity of human nature, and at least once he certainly proved how depraved a man can truly become. The low point of his life, which he seems to have truly regretted ever happening, since he spent the rest of his days trying to justify it, surely was the execution of Michael Servetus.

Servetus was a Spaniard running for his life from the summons of the Inquisition in his native land because of a treatise he had written in 1531 at the young and foolish age of twenty. He had written *DE TRINITATIS ERRORIBUS* ("On Errors of the Trinity") with hopes that his rambling logic would impress the Reformation leaders. It did not, and he found himself in short time without a friend among the Roman Church or the Reformed Churches. He went underground and continued his studies under an assumed name in Paris. He proved himself a genius in other areas important to mankind – as a physician he is known as the man who discovered pulmonary circulation – but quite a sorry theologian. He didn't exactly deny the Trinity but had kind of an eclectic theory about the divinity of Christ and his oneness with God that really is not easily explained. Suffice it to say that, like Arius, he believed the Christ to be a created being lesser than the Father, and yet, like Sabellius, he believed there to really be only one divine being and not three. It's quite the history of how much animosity oozed back and forth between him and Calvin in their letters, each one adamant to prove his point. Calvin took drastic measures to stop the heretic and revealed his true name to the world, thus ruining Servetus' career. Finally, on a short stop in Geneva, the fugitive was recognized at a church service. Calvin had him hauled before the Council and sentenced to death as a heretic for opposing the doctrine of the Trinity and calling infant baptism a contraption of the devil. In his mercy (and he actually defended this act by trying to show that this was merciful) Calvin tried to convince the Council to have Servetus beheaded before burning him! They would have nothing of it and just burned him alive at the stake. It is said that his dying words were, "Have mercy on me Jesus, Son of the Eternal God," but had he said instead, "Eternal Son of God," his life would have been spared. Semantics and syntax... it was all in the order of the words!

What's of great importance to our present study is to note that in his treatise about errors in the Church's doctrine of the Trinity, the writing of which eventually cost him his life at the hands of John Calvin, great use was made by the young Servetus of the Greek text at John 1:1c.

Specifically in Book VII he strongly urges the phrase "...and God was the Word" to show that the Word was *in* God but did not emanate *from* God. Later he emphasizes the use of the Greek article to specify "Word" as a visible person. By, as he believed, rightly understanding this text, the "proof" of the "mathematical delusions" (the belief in the Trinity) could be dispelled. As stated above, his theology was lame and his teaching blind; we do not turn to Servetus to understand the meaning of John 1:1c but to establish the historical fact of the controversy surrounding its translation. It is apparent from Servetus, as from Luther, that John 1:1 was being bandied about in theological discussions of their day quite often as a proof text of the Trinity.

Just two years prior in 1519 Erasmus had published the second edition of his Latin-Greek parallel New Testament that served as the basis for Luther's German translation. Though it may

be amazing to us today, this was a huge best-seller and sparked a wave of something akin to textual criticism and Bible study across Europe. In this second edition he had not yet included the so-called *Comma Johanneum*. It is not necessary to go into the story of its later inclusion here, but it does offer convincing proof of the kind of religious and political pressure that theologians lived under in that day (or in any day for that matter) and the fierceness of the battle that was raging between modern, rational textual criticism and ancient, spiritual doctrines of the Church.¹⁹ This rendering at 1 John 5:7 became the other necessary “proof-text” for the doctrine of the Trinity that so many demanded, but it was not included until the third edition in 1522, *after* the publication by Servetus of his treatise. The proof-text of the Trinity that Michael Servetus worked feverishly to debunk by critical analysis of the Greek text was John 1:1.

The net, thus, tightens around John Calvin in the search for who authoritatively introduced the word order of “...and the Word was God” into the English translation of the Geneva Bible, for it was he, one of the most powerful and influential men in Europe of that day, who was the chief opponent of Servetus’ writings; and Servetus’ writings were chiefly founded in an enigmatic understanding of the text as “...and God was the Word.”

Calvin was greatly revered by the English Puritans, and they were strongly swayed by his authoritative teaching. Geneva was the place of the printing of their English Bible. The rule of the Catholic Queen Mary I in England supported by the Pope in Rome was their enemy. Calvin was their strong tower of protection and their unwavering moral ruler, at least while they were in Geneva. Calvin in opposition to Luther supported the “...and the Word was God” translation.

Granted, Calvin himself could not have invented the construction “...and the Word was God,” since Luther mentioned it at a time when Calvin was still a young boy. Calvin, however, as he did so in many other points of doctrine, proves to be the one who championed its cause. The little twist in interpretation of John 1:1c had the aim to kill two very important birds for the Reformation with one tiny stone: it offered an easy proof-text for the divinity of Christ and established a doctrinal position of even God being submitted to the Word (necessary of course to show that rulers are submitted to the law).²⁰ But was it ultimately successful in achieving its aim? The divinity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity are under greater attack today more than ever in history in spite of and, at least in part, due to this invention. As concerning the rule of law, many political and social consequences that contradict the very nature of the Gospel (certainly unforeseen by those seeking to arrest the power of tyrants) have taken place in the name of some word being a god or some law being a king. The recent institution of gay marriage across Western Europe and the United States as law based on the perceived opinion of the majority as dictated by the word of the minority is a perfect case in point. Never has a tyrant in the recent history of our last century wielded power without first claiming that he is doing so by the will of the people and founding his authority on the democratic law of the land!

In hindsight, of course, it’s easy to see that the despotism of Calvin that would lead him to burn Servetus at the stake was the inevitable consequence of the position he had taken up in his miniature democratic-theocracy. Jesus said long ago to take care how we judge others, because

¹⁹ See Wikipedia (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Comma_Johanneum) for a brief history of this matter.

²⁰ Again, it’s important to note that the argument of this book is not against the truth of these doctrines. The argument here is that a notorious foul was committed by twisting the meaning of this text in order to prove these doctrines.

by that same measure we will be judged. In his Geneva there was a lot of judgment going on all the time. They were anti-Catholic, anti-Luther, anti-Baptist, anti-anybody that didn't hold strictly to the doctrines Calvin taught; everyone else was in danger of being punished as a heretic. But to Rome, Calvin was a heretic. And, so, we see during these early years of the Reformation a peak of division and animosity in the Body of Christ. It gave rise in backlash to an era of religious tolerance that with its atheism, secularism, nationalism and a lot of other -isms is making our world a more dangerous place than it ever has been before. It was as if a signal was sounded when the Black Plague cast its pall over civilization as the events of the Reformation were unfolding and mass death, knowing no cultural or legal regulation, was unleashed from some bottomless pit where long since it had been held under lock and key. It was truly a time when all institutions were shaken, and anything and everything that rested on a faulty foundation came crashing down, so that only that which cannot be shaken, the Kingdom of God, would remain – a time much like today (Hebrews 12:27-28).

LEX REX

The Presbyterian clergy are loudest. The most intolerant of all sects, the most tyrannical, and ambitious; ready at the word of the lawgiver, if such a word could be now obtained, to put the torch to the pile, and to rekindle in this virgin hemisphere, the flames in which their oracle Calvin consumed the poor Servetus, because he could not find in his Euclid the proposition which has demonstrated that three are one, and one is three, nor subscribe to that of Calvin that magistrates have a right to exterminate all heretics to Calvinistic creed. They pant to reestablish by law that holy inquisition, which they can now only infuse into public opinion. We have most unwisely committed to the hierophant of our particular superstition, the direction of public opinion, that lord of the Universe. We have given them stated and privileged days to collect and catechise us, opportunities of delivering their oracles to the people in mass, and of moulding their minds as wax in the hollow of their hands.

- Thomas Jefferson to William Short, April 13, 1820, Monticello

In his landmark book published in 1644 *LEX, REX the Law and the Prince, etc.* that laid the philosophical foundation for modern constitutional systems of government the Rev. Samuel Rutherford refuted the principle of REX LEX (King is Law as opposed to LEX REX: Law is King) which all reformers knew by experience was corrupt but not all agreed was wrong. This was a political argument based on the theological idea expressed in the Protestant reversal of word order in John 1:1c (REX LEX corresponds to God is the Word, while LEX REX is akin to the Word is God). Rutherford's views were a natural outgrowth of Scottish Presbyterian theology founded in the teachings of John Knox, who in turn had been so greatly influenced by John Calvin. An argument of Rutherford's made under Question V about the king's sovereignty being founded in the law, derived from the people, and not directly from God gives a prime example of how the political ideology that has shaped our modern democratic world was forged in the fires of theology. Here we see that the political thought of the day, which ran concurrent to the rise of Deism and Unitarianism, was that the Bible teaches that the ruler's authority comes not directly from God but, rather, arises from the Law (the Word) which, in turn, arises from the people:

"It is false that Saul and David's call to royalty was only from God, "by a special ordinance sent from heaven," for their office is (Deut. xvii. 14) from the written word of God, as the killing of

idolators, (ver. 3, 7,) and as the office of the priests and Levites, (ver. 8-10,) and this is no extraordinary office from heaven, more than that is from heaven which is warranted by the word of God. If he mean that these men, Saul and David, were created kings only by the extraordinary revelation of God from heaven, it is a lie; for besides the prophetic anointing of them, they were made kings by the people, as the Word saith expressly; except we say that David sinned in not setting himself down on the throne, when Samuel first anointed him king; and so he should have made away with his master, king Saul, out of the world; and there were not a few called to the throne by the people, but many, yea, all the kings of Israel and of Judah.”

It is interesting especially to note Rutherford’s line of reasoning about David’s supposed “sin” of not taking the throne by force after his anointing by Samuel. Rutherford, as other preachers and philosophers of his time labored diligently to find support in Scripture for the overthrowing of royal power that was deemed tyrannical even to the point of regicide. This forceful overthrow of an authority perceived to be unjust began nobly in the American Revolution as it did in the French. In the latter, however, it quickly turned into a monstrous blood bath whose repercussions and reparations in chain reaction over 250 years gave rise to an unleashing of antichrists, from Napoleon to Hitler and Stalin, on the world scene. The American story reads differently at least in part. Perhaps this is because the Declaration of Independence proclaimed a resolve to sever ties with the King and establish self-government, not to “make away with him out of the world.”

Meanwhile, as the Reformation progressed, the sanctioned cruelty and manipulative cultural mind control of the Inquisition proved to be such an integral part of how religion, any religion, was propagated that it took centuries to root out the deadly weed of intolerance that had germinated and prospered in the long, dark age since the Church and State had wedded. Thus, Luther, the once persecuted preacher of the liberty of the conscience, lived, unfortunately, long enough to sour in the establishment and preach the destruction of Anabaptists, the burning of synagogues and the banishment of Jews. As the oft quoted Lord Acton wrote in 1887: “Power tends to corrupt, and absolute power corrupts absolutely. Great men are almost always bad men...”

“The Reformers inherited the doctrine of persecution from their mother Church, and practised it as far as they had the power. They fought intolerance with intolerance. They differed favorably from their opponents in the degree and extent, but not in the principle, of intolerance. They broke down the tyranny of popery, and thus opened the way for the development of religious freedom; but they denied to others the liberty which they exercised themselves.”²¹

The process of rooting out religious intolerance, however, invariably produces new forms of despotism. An example of this that greatly influenced the minds of the framers of the Constitution of the United States was Poland’s failed experiment in absolute democracy. The emerging sixteenth-century democracy of Poland and the official religious tolerance mandated by the Sejm arose, at least in part, as a protection against the Catholic and Protestant terror that threatened to engulf their nation. Within another two centuries Polish tolerance exemplified in the *liberum veto*, which required absolute unanimity within the parliament before any act of legislation could be passed; proved impotent to defend the nation. When the Word is God, and the Word proceeds from the people, there are so many opposing gods that no decision can ever

²¹Philip Schaff, David Schley Schaff, *History of the Christian Church* (Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc., 1997), § 139.

be reached. This is a situation still seen today as governments, such as that of the United States, find themselves powerless in spite of all their riches to deal with their runaway debt. Poland in the end was divided and conquered again and again until 1989 between Catholic, Protestant, Russian Orthodox, and eventually Atheist powers.

*“Poland’s parliamentary experience was unique: here the nobility overwhelmed the monarchy and created a constitutional imbalance that ultimately destroyed the country... the undisciplined Polish nobles brought legislation to a standstill. The result was an excess of liberty.”*²²

This “excess of liberty” provided the ground in Europe for the establishment of Unitarianism as an organized religious system, which, ironically, still inspires itself with the martyrdom of Servetus but looks to Calvin’s pastoral theology for its structure!²³ It was on the wings of Unitarian rationalistic theology that the philosophy of John Locke stipulated the fundamentals of modern religious toleration which so influenced the founding fathers of the United States, in particular Thomas Jefferson and the idea of a separation between Church and State that was embodied as law in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States. A careful study, however, of Locke’s philosophy²⁴ and Jefferson’s ideas, perhaps peering out from their hearts more vividly in personal correspondence than in public policy,²⁵ reveals what twenty-first century global-democracy is fast on its way to proving – namely, that tolerance, if it holds the fancy of “public opinion, that lord of the Universe,”²⁶ can prove to be more intolerant of the intolerant than the intolerant ever were of the tolerant!

During his short stint as President of Russia, Dmitri Medvedev once said of the Russian Constitution, “The Constitution isn’t dogma.” It isn’t in Russia, and it no longer is seen as such in the United States. Constitutions today serve public opinion. As long as a leader is popular he can use his influence to shape the law according to his own word. His word is god. But “blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD; and the people whom he hath chosen for his own inheritance” (Psalm 33:12). For such a people God is the Word.

THE RUSSIAN BIBLE

O Lord! Don’t you agree? How overwhelmingly difficult it is to die twice, only because I dreamed of liberty for my country.

²² Richard Pipes, *Property and Freedom* (Vintage, 2000), pg. 157.

²³ Clifford M. Reed, *A Martyr Soul Remembered Commemorating the 450th Anniversary of the Death of Michael Servetus*. International Council of Unitarians and Universalists, 2004.

²⁴ John Locke, *A Letter Concerning Toleration*, trans. by William Popple (1689). This may be viewed at <http://www.constitution.org/jl/tolerati.htm>

²⁵ See, as an example: *Thomas Jefferson to William Short, April 13, 1820, Monticello*, which can be viewed at <http://founders.archives.gov/documents/Jefferson/98-01-02-1218> and is quoted from above. The “syllabus” that Jefferson speaks about is his own *The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth*, commonly known as *The Jefferson Bible* and left unpublished by Jefferson in his lifetime.

²⁶ *Ibid.*

- *Sergey Muravyov-Apostol*, after falling from the gallows (his head having slipped through the poorly tied noose) and before being hanged again in St. Peter and Paul Fortress, St. Petersburg, Russia, July 25, 1826; as quoted in *The Martyrs* by Alexander Dumas.

And what of that vast empire fashioned under the iron will of the former Russian Orthodox seminary student, Joseph Stalin, who ruled for most of the twentieth century over the destinies of the other half of the world? Neither Lenin nor Stalin nor any other of those who invented the entire cult that religiously shaped the face of atheism's icons was ignorant of the teachings of the New Testament. In fact, any person who was born in the Soviet Union before 1982 should be of sufficient public education to immediately recognize, coming into the Church and beginning to study the New Testament, how much of the New Testament was used unedited to pack a necessary punch into the powerful propaganda. One of the most shocking examples for the Western reader is what every child raised to revere Lenin learned from his earliest lessons in preschool: "Lenin was, he is, and he evermore shall be."

The history of the Russian Bible is a long, twisted journey clouded by the revisions of native political forces. It is not necessary, fortunately, in the case of the Gospels to trace the 900 year path from Cyril and Methodius to the first corrected, printed and published Slavonic Bible, the 1751 Elizabethan Bible (printed on the authority of Peter the Great's ukase of 1712 which was forty years in the execution), because, unlike all of the Old Testament and much of the New Testament, the Four Gospels in Slavonic manuscript form had always been in the possession of the Church. It is worthy to note that, even with this publication in 1751, the mass of Russian people remained completely ignorant in regards to the Scriptures. A complete lack of funds (indicating most likely a complete lack of interest) hindered the authorities from producing enough copies, even through 22 printings, at a reasonable enough price for whole church parishes to acquire more than just a few. Further, the ancient Slavonic text was already so distant from the modern Russian language as to be nearly unreadable, especially by the mass of peasants, largely illiterate at that point in history. Amongst the aristocracy French was spoken; in seminaries theology was taught in Latin, and the Bible for study was the Vulgate. The Slavonic Bible's special niche was, as it remains today, only in the official liturgy of the Church. In other words, the spiritual situation in eighteenth and nineteenth century Russia differed little from that of fifteenth century Europe. Society was ripe for reformation, but, instead, the fermentation of European thought produced yet another revolution!

In the aftermath of the Napoleonic invasion and the events of 1812, patriotic fervor gave rise, first, to an establishment of the Russian language throughout the Russian Empire in aristocratic circles, scientific endeavors, and all areas of life. Next, it loosed a fierce desire in the heart of the peoples of the Empire for independence. This desire for freedom prospered through the poetry and prose of some of the greatest writers the world has ever known. The avant-garde of the coming century was the Decembrist Revolt of 1825 "in which young members of the most distinguished noble families took up arms against the monarchy in the name of constitutional and republican ideals."²⁷ Is it mere coincidence that at this very time there was a parallel revolution occurring in theological circles, where many were beginning to realize that the greatness of the Russian people would always lie dormant and subjected to the control of outside forces as long

²⁷ Richard Pipes, *The Russian Revolution* (Vintage Books, New York, 1990), pg. 85.

as they remained without the Word of God? The old Slavonic text was not able to proclaim the Gospel to the masses and educate them in God's truth. In 1816 the Russian Bible Society was founded, and in 1818 the Gospels were first published in the common Russian language.

Unfortunately, it seems impossible to establish exactly how John 1:1 was translated into Russian in this original version, since by 1826 the tiny decade of relative freedom drew to a close when, in reaction to the Decembrist Revolt, Nicholas I reversed the reforms of his father, Alexander I. It is unclear if the 1816 version in stark contrast to the Slavonic Bible immediately produced this verse as "...and the Word was God," or if that was done for the 1860 version which was produced by permission of Tsar Alexander II by the official Russian Orthodox Synod in the seminaries of Moscow, Kiev, Saint Petersburg, and Kazan – the seminaries which fomented the coming Revolution! Was this a purposeful and clear nod toward the LEX REX cries that would overthrow the monarchy within sixty years, or was it simply the result of lazy scholarship that relied heavily on English translations of the Bible? Probably it was the latter, after all, it wasn't until the 1840's that Russian was even introduced as a language for study into the seminary and, as stated above, there was a much greater familiarity with Latin than with Greek. The former, however, does make for an interesting conjecture!

*"Since the 1860s Russian institutions of higher learning had been the principal center of opposition to the tsarist regime: revolutionaries were, for the most part, either university students or university dropouts... In 1911, the largest contingent (of student enrollment) was made up of sons of priests..."*²⁸

Whatever the reasons, it is a tragedy of loss to the Russian speaking world that the nineteenth-century anointing of literary genius exemplified by such giants as Pushkin, Gogol, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky and Chekhov was not invoked for translating the greatest Book of all. The tragedy is multiplied over innumerable times, since neither English nor German (the major languages of theology today) can even approximate the adaptability of the Russian language to the Greek. For centuries the ancient Slavonic text has had a familiarity for all Russian speaking people which translates into their very soul and energizes them with the potential to understand concepts of the New Testament Greek not so easily grasped by non-Russian speakers. Then, there's that fabulous ability of Russian art, dance, literature, design – all the beauty of the Russian spirit – to capture the heart of the world. O, that the Russian spirit was free to worship God with that same strength, beauty and exuberance! Russia is a nation where the vast majority of people believes in God but has little to no understanding of the Word of God. Amongst Protestant pastors there is a slavish following of Western teaching that is translated into Russian and often produces a level of preaching that does not communicate to the overall Russian culture. The Russian Orthodox Church slavishly follows ancient rituals in the old Slavonic language that for the most part is completely unintelligible to the modern Russian ear. There is a famine of indigenous theological scholarship in the Scriptures, few original spiritual ideas choreographed with oratory and literary skills to produce preaching of the Word empowered to reach the nation. Imagine the impact on world missions that Russian Christians of all varieties will have when, having already set their mind to the repair of the House of the Lord, they discover the Book of the Covenant of the Lord, blow the dust off its cover and "read in their ears all the words of the Book!" (2 Kings 22:3 – 23:2)

²⁸ Ibid., pg. 4.

THE POWER OF CONVENTION

Faith in God's revelation has nothing to do with an ideology which glorifies the status quo.
- Karl Barth

There can be no doubt that the English translation of the Bible produced in Calvin's Geneva, which in turn gave rise to the Authorized Version, served as the standard for all subsequent translations of the last four hundred years not only in English but also in all the major languages of the world with the exception of German. The so-called King James Bible; because of its stylistic beauty, grammatical excellence, oratorical rhythm, and overall integrity; has remained popular on into the twenty-first century, long after all other literary achievements of its day, other than Shakespeare, have become practically unreadable to the mass of English speaking people around the world. Yet, without expanding our argument beyond the limits of this present examination, at least in the case of the translation of John 1:1c, we must admit that its translators have freely interpreted the original Greek in a way that neither Jerome, Cyril and Methodius, John Wycliffe, Martin Luther, William Tyndale had done before them. Their interpretation could be considered a proper correction, except that it finds no scholarly defense or explanation until the twentieth century (as we shall discuss in the next chapter). It just simply appears in the midst of a holy terror, and all its opponents are systematically silenced. In light of the historical evidence, it seems that this new interpretation was not a correction but a corruption – one that has been passed on because of convention into all the major modern translations of the world today. One final example from the history of English translations of the New Testament will serve to show this.

In 1582 the Catholic Church finally got in the groove of modern Bible translation with the publication of the Rheims New Testament as a first installment on the Douay Bible printed in 1609. The Rheims Testament was produced in France during a short period of temporary expulsion from the University of Douay in Flanders that occurred as a result of fierce Protestant opposition in England. This was a major thrust of the counter-reformation after the Council of Trent on behalf of the English-speaking peoples of the world. As with Wycliffe's version 200 years earlier, the Rheims Testament had been translated from the Latin. As Wycliffe's Lollards had been burned by the Catholic majesties of the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, so Douay's missionary priests were hanged, drawn and quartered by the Protestant majesties of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Both Bibles faced severe opposition in England. Both of them produced John 1:1c faithfully from the Latin as "...and God was the Word."

The Rheims translation had as its particular and hopeless mission the goal of supplanting other English translations in the hearts of English readers.²⁹ This New Testament was reprinted in

²⁹ The preface reads: "Now since Luther's revolt also diverse learned Catholics, for the more speedy abolishing of a number of false and impious translations put forth by sundry sects, and for the better preservation or reclaim of many good souls endangered thereby, have published the Bible in the several languages of almost all the principal provinces of the Latin Church, no other books in the world being so pernicious as heretical translations of the Scriptures, poisoning the people under colour of divine authority, and not many other remedies being more sovereign against the same (if it be used in order, discretion, and humility) than the true, faithful, and sincere

In this version, along with all subsequent Roman Catholic English Bibles to this day, John 1:1c is translated just as it was in the Geneva Bible and the Authorized Version: "...and the Word was God," although such a translation clearly does not follow the Latin text proclaimed to be authoritative in the Catholic Church!

This parallels the conflict between the authoritative Slavonic text of the Russian Orthodox Church and the Russian Bible produced by that very church. It is the perfect example of the power of popular convention to reproduce corruptions in translation especially in texts that are so well known and widely used as the opening verses of the Gospel of John. Why would Dr. Challoner at John 1:1c use the Calvinistic translation made popular with the Puritan publication of the Geneva Bible rather than following that of his Catholic predecessors and, more importantly, that of the authoritative Latin Vulgate? The answer must lie in his great need for the Bible to be accepted amongst English-speaking Catholics on a large scale. To accomplish that, the Bible had to use language at key places that the English reader was used to hearing, because such conventional language is always considered authoritative by the casual reader. To illustrate this, simply imagine that a new English translation was printed today for English readers offering at John 1:1 an exact rendering of the original Greek: *In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word.* Would that ever fly?

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, it would seem that the translation from the Greek of *καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος* (*kai theos en ho logos*) to "...and the Word was God" was popularized under the dictatorial rule of John Calvin in Geneva as a device for both defending the theological doctrine of the Trinity and the political doctrine of the rule of law over the king. This is not to say that there is proof that Calvin himself demanded such a translation, only that he supported it and that his Geneva offered the necessary soil for such a translation to take root, grow and prosper. In the light of Luther's expressed opposition to such a translation and the overwhelming weight of more than 1000 years of known translation history holding them back, the translators of Geneva must have had a statement to make and an agenda in sight. It is impossible to think that they simply produced this new translation for mere stylistic reasons. Because of strong political reasons and owing, likewise, to economic factors, within a century the most widely published English translation became the conventional paradigm for all future translations in most languages of the world.

In *Politics* (3.1284a, 1287a-b), Aristotle explains that in order for a society to remain equal it must ostracize the exceptional one of uncommon virtue who may be born amongst it, because he is "as a god amongst men." He states that no law can be legislated for such a person, since he is himself law. He draws a line between customary and written laws, showing that customary are more sovereign than written, which change according to the times. The customary law is the law of reason, which Aristotle says is God's rule. Aristotle's Custom is as Solomon's Wisdom or Philo's Logos in that it is begotten of God as a manifestation of Himself in the world. Paul states in Galatians 5:14-23 that the most complete fulfillment of the law is Love, because it is borne in God's children by the Spirit of God and actually makes them like God; and no law, therefore, could ever be more sovereign than they themselves are in God. God is Himself the law, and were He to be born amongst men, though He should be received as King, He must be subjected to the

law and driven from society, otherwise His glorious virtue would turn the world upside down and reform society as a Kingdom where He alone rules!

Thus, Aristotle through a glass darkly prophesied of the incarnation of the Logos, who had been in the world since its creation and, though it was created by Him, did not know Him. That's why, as John's prologue puts it, the Logos came unto his own, revealing God's glory in the Tabernacle and His Word by the Torah, the written Law, unto Moses; but His own received him not. So, the Logos became flesh and made His tabernacle in a body like ours; and this Incarnation, this chief Cornerstone of the Kingdom of Heaven that has drawn so near to us, has been the stumbling block for all the builders of all the new world orders ever since. By deliberately stating that the Logos was God, the builders of sixteenth-century Europe were contradicting what had been established by all who had handled the text before them – namely, that God was the Logos.

The historical fact is: up until the printing of the Geneva Bible, throughout a millennium and a half of New Testament history, John 1:1c was recorded over and over again by scribes around the world just as it appears in the ancient Greek manuscripts: "...and God was the Word." At the juncture in history prior to the printing of the Geneva Bible there were only four wide-spread, scholarly translations of the Greek New Testament: Jerome's Latin, Cyril and Methodius' Slavonic, Luther's German and Tyndale's English. These all had several things in common: first, they were in use by the Church as authoritative Scripture; second, they had arisen because of the direct labor of a single person (or in the case of the Slavonic, two brothers) working with a tight knit group of assistants; third, they were based on the best available Greek manuscripts of their respective days; and finally, they bore remarkably little variation from each other and were in very close harmony, including their renderings of John 1:1c as "...and God was the Word." This fact alone should be a weighty enough consideration for us to revisit this tiny portion of Scripture, dare to smash the mold, and reconsider our understanding of the truth that the Spirit of God holds open for our discovery.

CHAPTER 3 – THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE, PART 1: INTERCHANGEABILITY, DEFINITION & QUALIFICATION

*'Tis but thy name that is my enemy...
O, be some other name!
What's in a name? That which we call a rose
By any other name would smell as sweet.
- Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet*

INTRODUCTION

There's not much to work with in the way of scholarly research into the grammatical issues at stake in understanding the meaning of John 1:1c up until the twentieth century when two

important papers were published, which continue to be quoted today as authoritative. The first stipulated that “definite predicate nouns that precede the verb usually lack the article;”³² the second in polite contrast suggested with more certainty that “anarthrous³³ predicate nouns preceding the verb may function primarily to express the nature or character of the subject, and this qualitative significance may be more important than the question whether the predicate noun itself should be regarded as definite or indefinite.”³⁴ In addition to these positions, which will be discussed a bit later, a third source that is often quoted and may serve as authoritative (not by offering a new position but by succinctly stating the current accepted position among most Greek New Testament scholars) is the commentary of Archibald Thomas Roberts. It is interesting to note how Roberts stands in complete opposition to Luther as regards the structure of the sentence, taking “the Word” as the subject and “was God” as the predicate, and yet he quotes Luther, lifting him out of context, to strengthen his point!

“And the Word was God (και θεος ην ο λογος – kai theos ēn ho logos). By exact and careful language John denied Sabellianism by not saying ο θεος ην ο λογος (ho theos ēn ho logos). That would mean that all of God was expressed in ο λογος (ho logos) and the terms would be interchangeable, each having the article. The subject is made plain by the article (ο λογος – ho logos) and the predicate without it (θεος – theos) just as in John 4:24 πνευμα ο θεος (pneuma ho theos) can only mean “God is spirit,” not “spirit is God.” So in I John 4:16 ο θεος αγαπη εστιν (ho theos agapē estin) can only mean “God is love,” not “love is God” as a so-called Christian scientist would confusedly say... So in John 1:14 ο Λογος σαρχ̄ εγενετο (ho Logos sarx egeneto), “the Word became flesh,” not “the flesh became Word.” Luther argues that here John disposes of Arianism also because the Logos was eternally God, fellowship of Father and Son, what Origen called the Eternal Generation of the Son (each necessary to the other). Thus in the Trinity we see personal fellowship on an equality.”³⁵

The theological conclusions of the two are identical, but the approach of the modern scholar to reach such a conclusion is not only different but completely rules out the approach of the more ancient. Let us note that, simply from a success rate point of view, between the two opposite approaches, the ancient (“...and God was the Word”), as our historical study shows above, has proven over the centuries to be much more deft at staving off the heresies of both Sabellianism and Arianism.

CRITIQUE OF ROBERTSON FROM A THEOLOGICAL AND LOGICAL STANDPOINT

³² E. C. Colwell, “A Definite Rule for the Use of the Article in the Greek New Testament,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 52 (1933), 12-21. The quote is from pg. 20.

³³ The meaning of “anarthrous,” which is not readily found in an English dictionary, is simply that of a noun used without the article. Its opposite is “arthrous” or “articulate,” meaning a noun used with the article.

³⁴ Phillip B. Harner, “Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns: Mark 15:39 and John 1:1,” *Journal of Biblical Literature* 92 (1973), 75-87. The quote is from pg. 75.

³⁵ Robertson, A.T.: *Word Pictures in the New Testament*. Oak Harbor: Logos Research Systems, 1997, S. John 1:1.

The two points in Robertson's commentary that we need to especially address are that of interchangeability of terms and the use of the article. We shall be dealing with the latter in detail in the final section of this book; an examination of the former will bring us now to certain conclusions about the name of God and its interchangeability with the title of His person. Robertson indicates that there would be something not fitting if the terms "God" and "the Word" were taken to be interchangeable. From a theological standpoint, it seems that Robertson is building on very sandy soil here. Verse 18 of this very passage, in what is accepted today to be the most likely reading of the original text, calls Jesus *μονογενῆς θεὸς ὁ ὢν* (*monogenis theos ho on*). Now, whether this is understood, as is likely, to be a three-fold description of the Saviour (i.e. "Only-begotten, God, the Existing One"), or if it is understood as a simpler "Only-begotten God, the Existing One", the conclusion is the same: Jesus is God, and if anyone at any time in all of human history desires to see and know God the Father, he must see and know Him only in and through God the Son. In other words, interchangeability is the very heart of the Gospel message that John is preaching (John 14:8-11).

Further, it makes no sense to refuse the property of interchangeability to entities that are different. Mathematically and logically, interchangeability does not imply sameness or repetition as in the statement " $3 = 3$." No entity can be considered to be interchangeable with its own self; it is simply the same as itself in mirror-like repetition. However, the statement " $x = 3$ " implies interchangeability – true unity and equality between completely different members. It makes no difference if "x" is stated as " $5 - 2$," " $1 + 2$," or in any other way, it will always be interchangeable in its composition with "3."

Abigail Adams once wrote to her husband, John Adams, "There is not any reasoning which can convince me, contrary to my senses, that three is one, and one is three," thus expressing in simple terms the above-mentioned Unitarian sympathies of many of the United States' founding fathers. It is strange how unenlightened a modern thinker can become whose rational won't allow himself or herself to think outside of the box! In fact, the binary system identified as a poetical system of logic by the Sanskrit writer Pingala in Ancient India and employed behind the scenes today in every aspect of modern life as the basis of all computer operations offers a perfect example of three being one.

In the binary system there are only two possible representations of numbers, which today are usually symbolized as 0 and 1. These two representations are Existence or Non-existence, Fullness or Emptiness, Yes or No. If we take the first three positions in the binary system and place in each of them the single representation symbolized by 1, then we get 111, the equivalent of 7 ($2^0 + 2^1 + 2^2$). In Scripture seven is symbolic of God's fullness, his perfection, his completeness. On the seventh day God entered into his rest. Throughout all of human history the seven day week has been the basis for how we keep track of time. It is a single unit, and in the Scriptures the week is also symbolic of the seven year recurring period that serves as the basis of God's economy under the Old Covenant and will be fulfilled at the end of this age. In other words, seven is one. Now if seven is one, and $1 + 1 + 1 = 7$ in the binary system, then three is also one!

This "one" is what the ancient Greeks called *περισσός* (*perissos*), a word translated in the Bible as "abundant," as in John 10:10, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Mathematically this word, "abundant," was used to describe what we call an odd number, because such a number was always *one* more than an even number, called in Greek *ἄρτιος* (*artios*). This word used in the genre of math to describe what we would call an

even number is also found in the Bible and translates as “perfect,” as in 2 Timothy 3:17: “That the man of God may be perfect...” Thus, just as two odds always make an even, so double abundance always produces perfection – the Father in His abundant love together with the Son in His abundant faithfulness produce the perfection of salvation for all His creation. Further, three odds always make an odd, so the triple abundance of the Father’s love, the Son’s faithfulness and the Spirit’s power energize our lives with God’s abundance that we might believe on Him, thus adding our Yes to his Yes’s and creating together with Him one new Existence, the Church, the Fullness of Christ. If you’ve followed this line of thinking so far, then you’ve probably guessed that this would be in the binary system 1000, i.e. 2^4 (Father, Son, Holy Spirit and I) or simply 8, the Scriptural day of resurrection and new beginnings!

The point of all this is that our logic is the product of our understanding, and if something about the nature of God seems to us to be illogical, it doesn’t mean that it’s not true. There is a triune relationship between the Father, Son and Holy Spirit that we come close to understanding when we accept the Word of God simply and by faith, but that remains far beyond the limits of human logic when it is approached by skeptical reasoning. (Isn’t that true even in human love and relationships?) Whether Jesus is called the Son of Man, the Son of God, the Savior, the Lord, the Christ, the Teacher or the Man from Nazareth, He is and always will be equal to God – to see Him is to see the Father God. The Father and Son are interchangeable.

CRITIQUE OF ROBERTSON FROM A TEXTUAL STANDPOINT

If John indeed intended to express the Word as subject and God as predicate in the fifteen letters of John 1:1c, then it is a strange phenomenon indeed. In fact, if that is the case, it is the only place in all of Scripture that any writer directly correlated some object or some person with the Most High and left God in the position of a complement to a subject. By “direct correlation” a reference is made to the simple sentence structure of subject and object separated by the copula (linking verb of being), εἶμι (*eimi* – “I am”). When the Lord explains Himself to Moses in Exodus 3:14, he can correlate Himself only with Himself for there is nothing else like Him. The Greek rendering of the Hebrew אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה (*ehyeh asher ehveh* – “I am who I am”) is simply Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν (*Ego eimi ho on* – “I am the being”, or “the one who is”).

Let’s take a look at other places in the Greek text of the Bible where God is correlated with another. There are six of these in the Septuagint, in addition to Exodus 3:14 (seven in all), and thirteen in the New Testament, in addition to John 1:1c (twenty-one in all: seven in the Old Testament and fourteen in the New). The grammatical structure of 18 of these correlations differs from that of Exodus 3:14 and John 1:1 in that, while these two are made by directly opposing two names on opposite sides of the verb (“I” and “who I am” in the first; “God” and “the Word” in the second) with the subject and object being determined by the verb in the case of Exodus (the verb being in the first person: “I *am*” not “I *is*”) and undetermined by the verb in the case of John (the verb being in the second person as are both “God” and “the Word”). These 18 are listed below.

Before we look at these, however, let’s look at Philippians 2:13, the one other verse where we find the *to be* linking verb with its two correlated nouns standing on opposite sides just as in Exodus 3:14 and John 1:1. Here, as in Exodus 3:14 with ὁ ὢν, the noun that follows the verb in

word order is actually a participle defined by the article.³⁶ As in John 1:1c, θεός (*theos* – “God”) stands at the head of the clause without the article, and a noun defined by the article follows the verb. In other words, the grammatical structures of Exodus 3:14b, John 1:1c and Philippians 2:13a are exactly the same.

	nominative case noun (pronoun)	<i>to be</i> verb	definite article	nominative case noun (predicate)
Exod. 3:14	Ἐγώ (I)	εἰμι (am)	ὁ (the)	ὢν (being, one who is)
John 1:1	Θεός (God)	ἦν (was)	ὁ (the)	λογος (word)
Philip. 2:13	Θεός (God)	ἐστιν (is)	ὁ (the)	ἐνεργῶν (worker, one who is working)

Most English translations of Philippians 2:13 offer θεός γάρ ἐστιν ὁ ἐνεργῶν (*theos gar estin ho energon*) as “For it is God who is at work,” but more properly it should be something like “For God is the one working” or “producing.” The verse is quite difficult to translate to English exactly, and some translations like the NET Bible have even switched the word order here just as in John 1:1: “the one bringing forth... is God.” Overall, however, there is no general consensus that in Philippians 2:13 the article with the participle (acting as a noun) indicates that ὁ ἐνεργῶν (*ho energon*) is the subject. In fact, the vast majority of translations have always maintained θεός (*theos*) as the subject. The word order alone determines that the anarthrous θεός (*theos*) is the subject and ὁ ἐνεργῶν (*ho energon*) is its corresponding predicate. The fact that it could easily be understood in English as either “God is the one producing in you” or “The one producing in you is God” shows the equality and interchangeability of the two parts in such a sentence. The former translation, however, is preferable since it keeps God in the main with His energetic operation being a manifestation of His person in us. In the same way, John 1:1c was written in this word order with God in the main, and His Word as the manifestation of His person amongst us (John 1:14).

Thirteen of these other eighteen correlations follow a distinct pattern with the name of God emphasized at the beginning of the clause. They are as follows:

- In Exodus 34:14 the Greek word order is θεός ζηλωτής ἐστιν (*theos zelotes estin* – literally “God zealot is”, or “jealous person is”) indicating by placing “God” first that this is the subject of the sentence, “jealous person” being the predicate nominative.

³⁶ For those who may have forgotten, in English a present participle is the verb form ending in –ing which is acting in a sentence in a role similar to an adjective or an adverb. In Greek as in Russian this verbal form is declined for gender (he, she, or it), number (1st, 2nd, or 3rd person), and case (nominative, vocative, accusative, genitive, dative). It is often defined by the article and employed as a noun.

- This exact word order of subject, object, linking verb is followed in Joshua 24:19 with the predicate adjective ἅγιός (*hagios* – “holy”);³⁷
- Psalm 49:6 and 74:8 (50:6 and 75:7 in the English Bible) with the predicate nominative κριτής (*kritis* – “judge”);
- John 3:3 with the predicate adjective ἀληθής (*alethes* – “true”);
- John 8:54 with the genitive pronoun “of us” indicating possession (“our”);
- Galatians 3:20 with the number εἷς (*eis* – “one”) as a predicate adjective;
- James 1:13 with the predicate adjective ἀπειραστος (*apeirastos* – “unable to be tempted”);
- 1 John 1:5 with the predicate nominative φῶς (*fos* – “light”), and, finally;
- 1 John 4:8 and 4:16 with the predicate nominative ἀγάπη (*agape* – “love”).
- In both Numbers 16:22 (Θεὸς θεὸς... – *theos theos*) and Nahum 1:2 (Θεὸς ζηλωτῆς... – *theos zelotes*) the linking verb is simply implied, but the word order again determines the subject.

Word order alone, however, does not always determine the subject in such sentences. Word order is changed in order to provide emphasis. At times it is not the subject being emphasized but its object. There are five other cases where the name of God comes at the end of the clause (not in the place of emphasis).

- In Acts 10:34 and Romans 1:9 “God” comes at the end of the clause and has the article while the complement comes before it without the article. However, in either case what we usually understand as the complement could just as well be the subject. Peter’s statement could be as easily understood in English as “a respecter of persons is *not* God,” with the emphasis on “not,” the first word in the clause. In the same way Romans 1:9 could follow the Greek word order and read: “For my witness is God.” In these two cases “respecter of persons” and “witness” could be the subject.
- Romans 11:23 could read as the Greek: “For mighty is God,” just as 1 John 3:20 could read: “Greater is God.” In these two cases, however, the name of God surely is the subject since both “mighty” and “greater” are describing him. In both we see God’s name with the article at the end and the predicate adjective at the beginning without the article. In no way, however, does this serve as an example of how John 1:1c should be interpreted. God is not a description of the Word, nor is he simply a quality ascribed to the Word. John is not saying that the Word is simply *a* god, or divine.
- Similar to this James 2:19 mirrors Galatians 3:20 (above) in stating: “God is one,” but has the name of God at the end. Again, this reversal of word order has no bearing on an understanding of John 1:1c as this is a description and qualification of God by an aspect of his nature.

³⁷ In Joshua 24:19 there is the only example after the early chapters of the Book of Genesis of “Elohim” being defined by a plural adjective: $\text{הוּא הוֹיִם קְדוֹשִׁים הַאֱלֹהִים}$ (*Elohim K'doshiym Ho* – literally “Holy (*pl.*) Gods (*pl.*) is He (*sg.*)”).

The importance of determining exactly which name is the subject in these statements can be seen by reversing their order in the final two New Testament revelations. If the meaning was, “Love is God,” or “Light is God,” it would be closer to something pagan or gnostic, rather than divine (as Robertson has pointed out). If we were to approach the phrase, “and the Word was God,” objectively, with no prior knowledge of the Word being a reference to Jesus Christ and with only an understanding of what the term “Logos” meant to the world before John defined it as Jesus; we would be hard-pressed to see its orthodoxy, especially through the eyes of a Jewish writer like John. In the light of these other passages, it is much more in keeping with the overall message of the Bible to read “God” in the subject and “the Word” in the predicate of the final clause of John 1:1.

CRITIQUE OF ROBERTSON FROM A GRAMMATICAL STANDPOINT

Further, it seems that from a strictly grammatical standpoint, Robertson’s statement is also faulty. Let us rephrase the old saying “Father knows best” as “Father is (or was) the boss,” which differs not at all grammatically from “God was the Word.” In the purest understanding within the limited framework of a given conversation, in which there is only one boss being spoken of, who is, therefore, referred to as “the” boss, this simple correlation can be stated either way and still have the same meaning. “Father was the boss,” is exactly the same as saying, “The boss was Father.” In other words, “Father” and “the boss” are interchangeable terms, not, of course, always and in any context, but in the present context. It makes no difference that “Father” is expressed without an article, they are still interchangeable terms. The only difference between the two statements is which term may have the more emphasis.

The intransitive verb “to be” is a statement of existence and cannot be completed by an object, direct or indirect, in the same way that a verb of action is completed. It is copulative in nature and, like the marriage vows between a husband and wife, binds the subject of a clause with the predicate (a noun, participle, or substantive adjective acting as a noun) in a relationship of equality without confusing their plurality. In our example above, Father exists as the boss, but he could still conceivably exist alone were he not the boss, just as the boss could conceivably have his shoes filled by another other than Father. In other words, in our statement Father and the boss are equal, yet they maintain their plurality.

According to this overriding understanding of the copulative, there is no reason that “God” and “the Word” in our text cannot be interchangeable terms, even though “God” is expressed without the definite article. There is one particular instance, in fact, where they work perfectly together as such, and that is if “God” without the article (simply ΘΕΟΣ, not Ο ΘΕΟΣ) is understood as a name in contrast to a title, just as “Father” above is understood as a personal name and not an impersonal title as would be “the father.”³⁸ For that reason in English “Father” in the above

³⁸ An example of interchangeability between nominative nouns, one as a name and the other a title, which are separated by a simple correlative verb can be found at John 20:31 – Ἰησοῦς ἐστὶν ὁ Χριστὸς ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ Θεοῦ (*Iesous estin ho Christos ho huios tou Theou* – “Jesus is the Christ the Son of the God”). Note that “God” here, as nearly everywhere in the Greek New Testament, is specified by the article, thus indicating, as we shall see in more detail, a title referring to the Father God. “The Christ” and “the Son” are also titles here, while “Jesus” is used as a name with no specifying article. If this were translated, “The Christ, the Son of God, is Jesus,” or as, “The Son of God, the

example would be capitalized even if it was not located at the beginning of the sentence (e.g. “I just found out that Father is the boss!”). Were it to be specified by any other part of speech, it would fall out of the category of a name into that of a title or description and cease to require capitalization (e.g. “I just found out that our father is the boss!”).

This idea of the unspecified “God” in the nominative form (simply ΘΕΟΣ with no other part of speech to modify it and especially without the article), which occurs quite rarely in the Greek New Testament, shall be shown with convincing proofs to have all the characteristics of a device used to signify the divine name of God. For now, let us take this as a hypothesis and apply it to an examination of the above mentioned two theories of Colwell and Harner.

CRITIQUE OF COLWELL AND HARNER

John 1:1c interpreted with “the Word” as subject and “was God” as predicate presents a particular problem to orthodox Christian believers and especially to Protestants who put a heavier emphasis on the teaching of the Bible than on that of Church tradition. The simple reason for this is that in John 1:1b “God” is specified by the article (literally, “the God”), and thus shown to be definite. The deep-rooted idea of the indefinite article in English (a) as opposed to the definite (the) is indivisible from the way native speakers think, speak and write. It is an idea that for billions (to any native Russian speaker, for example, who has no article in his language whatsoever) is so foreign as to never be properly understood or used. The writers of the New Testament Greek had a well-developed definite article (ὁ) at their disposal in contrast to the writers of Latin in their day. They did not, however, have an indefinite article that was used on a wide scale as ours; therefore, it is wholly mistaken for us to assume that they had any concept of what we imply when we use the indefinite article. Yet, the limitations of approaching the Greek New Testament with a native English mind demand that the Greek construction (which word for word literally translates as: “In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and God was the Word”) be made proper in English by adding a definite article to “beginning” (uniting it well with Genesis 1:1 just as the Holy Spirit intended), removing the definite article from “the God” (by simple capitalization to show the reference is to the one, true God), and finding some other way to express the third clause. If we simply say that God is undefined in this third clause, then the best English variant that is often employed in translating this aspect is to use the indefinite article. This, however, yields the highly unfortunate and unorthodox statement, “...and a god was the Word.” This is exactly how the Jehovah’s Witnesses in their New World Translation have stated it, following closely the reversal of word order supported by modern scholars: “...and the Word was a god.” To translate it as has been done consistently since Calvin’s Geneva as “...and the Word was God,” however, completely hides from the English reader the all-important, purposeful nuance of John’s Greek text: in 1:1b “God” is defined by the article, while in 1:1c “God” is left undefined and unspecified by any other part of speech. As we shall see, this naked writing of the divine name with no part of speech defining it is an extremely rare and, therefore, important case in the Greek New Testament.

Christ, is Jesus,” the meaning (though not the emphasis) would be exactly the same. Other examples of this phenomenon in the Greek can be found at John 5:15; 1 John 4:15, 5:1.

Without diverging into a lengthy discussion of the published theories of Colwell and Harner, taking them at face value with all the evident authority they deserve, simply put, they state two near axioms³⁹ that apply to our understanding of the text. Both writers assume that “God” is in the predicate,⁴⁰ and their rules apply to nouns in the predicate. Colwell stipulates that when a noun is obviously definite (as is the case here, since the obvious reference is to the one God known throughout the Bible) and it is in the predicate (as we shall assume for now, since it makes no difference to the argument) then it is usually expressed without the article. There is no specific or known reason for this, but he presents adequate proof throughout the Greek New Testament to the existence of such a phenomenon. Harner’s theory starts from the hard evidence of a nominative noun without the article which is in the predicate and states that such a noun is likely to have a qualitative aspect (as would an adjective) of describing the subject’s nature or character as its primary function. He goes on to say that this qualitative aspect is more important to understanding the text than that of the noun being definite. Again, the idea of the noun being in the subject or the predicate of the sentence is not necessary to a partial understanding of John 1:1c, since its simplicity, as shown above, requires interchangeability between the two parts. What is important at this point in our study is that we seek to harmonize Colwell and Harner’s mutually exclusive theories in relation to John 1:1 by finding some missing link between them.

While Harner makes an allowance that “the categories of qualitiveness and definitiveness are not mutually exclusive,” calling this “a delicate exegetical issue,” he emphatically states: “In John 1:1 I think that the qualitative force of the predicate is so prominent that the noun cannot be regarded as definite.”⁴¹ In other words, Harner does not believe that “God” without the article in 1:1c is referring to the same person that “God” with the article refers to in 1:1b but, rather, to the divine nature that God and the Word have in common. He suggests that 1:1c could be translated, “...the Word had the same nature as God.”⁴² Kenneth Wuest in this manner translated it, “And the Word was as to His essence absolute deity.”⁴³ Colwell writing thirty years earlier, on the other hand, believed that “God” without the article in 1:1c is referring to the exact same person as “God” with the article in 1:1b. Harner’s basic premise is that if “God” is understood to be definite in 1:1c that would be a contradiction of 1:1b in which God and the Word are delineated as two distinct individual persons. Colwell’s is that if “God” is understood as indefinite that would make a reference to some other god than the one spoken of in 1:1b.

Logically, Harner’s “qualitiveness” does indeed open the door to understanding the inarticulate “God” of the Greek text as “a god” in English. In general, predicate adjectives (not predicate nouns) in English are employed with a qualitative aspect of describing the nature or character of

³⁹ Anyone that remembers all the exceptions to the rules from their years of studying grammar knows that there are no such things as true mathematical axioms in speech!

⁴⁰ This assumption is based on another near axiom that when two nouns are both in the nominative and separated by a correlative (linking) verb, if one is anarthrous (without the article) and the other is articulate (with the article), then the articulate is the subject regardless of the word order. This is not much of an “axiom,” however, since an example of the opposite can be found at John 20:31 and several other places mentioned above.

⁴¹ Ibid., Harner, pg. 87.

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Kenneth S. Wuest, *The New Testament: An Expanded Translation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1997, c1961), John 1:1.

the subject in simple correlative sentences. With the application of some nouns, however, an idea of descriptiveness of the subject's nature can be imparted. An example that follows Aristotle's well-known rules of logic set out in *Categories* (ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΙΑΙ) would be in the statement: "Man is he." Here "he" must be the subject, and "man," must be predicated to it. It is impossible to understand the statement otherwise, because the particular "he" that is being spoken of does not embody the fullness of the species "man." The reversal of order places the emphasis on the subject's humanity and comes off as somewhat poetic. (The poetry of John 1 is something that we cannot overlook.) "Man" cannot in any way be considered to have any definition in such a statement and is not interchangeable with the subject "he," since "man" refers to a much larger category than can be contained within the understanding of "he." It is the same as saying simply and without poetry, "He is a man." If "God," therefore, is qualitative but not definite and is predicated to the subject "the Word," then, just as "he" in our example is a member of the species called "man," then "God" is a species to which the Word and perhaps others belong. In that case it would be logical to translate into English, "And the Word was a god," just as in our example it is fair to use "he is a man." This, happily, is not the case, since John is in fact teaching that the Word is the fullness of God. He is not saying that the Word is only godlike or divine. The whole context is saying that the Word is eternal ("In the beginning was the Word"), almighty ("all things were made by him"), omnipresent ("and the Word was with God"), etc.; that God is the Word manifested in flesh. Therefore, God must be definite (with a capital "G" in English) and must be the subject about which the Word is predicated.

In the Greek New Testament and in particular in John's writings this same pattern can be observed. First of all, an adjective is often employed in the predicate for description of the subject. Examples are found at John 6:60 and 8:14, where the people respond to Jesus by saying, σκληρός ἐστὶν ὁ λόγος (*skleros estin ho logos* – "hard is the word"), and Jesus says, ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία (*alethes estin he marturia* – "true is the testimony"). A further example is at John 3:33 - ὁ θεὸς ἀληθὴς ἐστὶν (*ho theos alethes estin* – "God true is"). There is a difference here in word order that should be noted. In John 6:60 and 8:14 the order is qualifier-verb-subject. In John 3:33 the order is subject-qualifier-verb.⁴⁴ Harner's explanation of these word orders would be that in the former the emphasis is on the qualifier, while in the latter the emphasis would be on the subject. The former implies that the word Jesus spoke is hard (and not in any way less than hard), and that the testimony of Jesus is true (and not in any way less than true). The latter implies that God (and not someone else) is true.⁴⁵

Further, when in John's writings a noun is used in the predicate to act qualitatively as an adjective, it is not definite and it is not interchangeable with the subject. The two perfect examples of this are found at 1 John 1:5 - ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστὶν (*ho theos fos estin* – "the God light is"), and 1 John 4:8,16 - ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστὶν (*ho theos agape estin* – "the God love is").⁴⁶ Both of these statements follow the exact word order of John 3:33, only they employ a noun (predicate nominative) instead of a predicate adjective to describe a quality of God. Again, according to

⁴⁴ By "qualifier," I refer to the predicate adjective or predicate nominative that qualifies the subject of the sentence.

⁴⁵ Ibid., Harner; based on his five paradigms for understanding John 1:1c, pg. 84-85.

⁴⁶ Another example would be at John 4:24 - πνεῦμα ὁ θεός (*pneuma ho theos* – "spirit (is) the God"). Here the verb is simply implied thus weakening the overall definitiveness of "spirit" (the same phenomenon occurs in Russian) and giving a proper translation of, "God is a spirit" or just "God is spirit." The two terms are not interchangeable as, "a spirit is God" or "spirit is God."

Harner's explanation, this word order, subject-qualifier-verb, implies that God (and not someone else) is light and love. In neither can the words be seen as interchangeable (again, both "Love is God" and "Light is God" are pagan understandings, not possible as translations in the context of the Bible⁴⁷), nor are they definite in the sense of referring to a particular love or light that God has (though in other places John makes both nouns definite). According to Harner it makes sense that John did not employ such a word order in the text of John 1:1c. Had he done so, the meaning would have come off as saying that the Word (and not someone else, not the Father and not the Holy Spirit) alone is God. It is also clear, says Harner, why the word order that was used is so important, because it implies that the Word is God (and not anything less than God).

What is not clear, however, is how "God" in 1:1c could be construed to be indefinite. This is a divine name, not a simple noun or adjective that can be used differently by different people with different meanings. Harner states, "John's thought is, as I understand it, that *ho logos*, no less than *ho theos*, had the nature of *theos*."⁴⁸ Logically, this is the same as the statement: "The heat and the light (of the sun) have the nature of light." The heat of the sun is not all the energy of light in the universe, and neither is its light all the light. Harner effectively is stating that there is a divine species called *theos* to which belong two gods: *ho logos* and *ho theos*. He is saying, intentionally or not, that neither *ho logos* nor *ho theos* exist as the fullness of *theos*, which is a substance other than they, one from which their natures are derived. This is not John's thought, however, for he teaches clearly: "In him was life; and the life was the light of men." There is no place in the entire Bible where the word "god" is used indefinitely that it does not apply to a false god. There are innumerable false gods, but there is only one true God. He is the God revealed from the beginning, and all references to him must, by their very nature, be definite. If at this key doctrinal juncture in Scripture we are to agree with Harner that "God" is indefinite, then we need to write it without capitalization as "god," and, perhaps the Jehovah's Witnesses are right, we should just go all out and write, "The Word was a god!" Of course, this is not to say that Harner meant to imply this with his study. There are ways to define a noun other than using the article, and there is a way to harmonize both Colwell's principle of definition and Harner's of qualification that perhaps neither one of them ever thought of – a proper name.

This exact sentence construction, with what Harner deems to be the qualifier – an anarthrous noun (predicate nominative) – is attested in Athanasius' *Discourses Against the Arians* in his arguments against those who would say κτίσμα ἦν ὁ Λόγος (*ktisma en ho Logos* – "creature was the Word") or ἔργον ἦν ὁ Λόγος (*ergon en ho Logos* – "work was the Word"). This is the only ancient text where these phrases are used in abundance and makes comparison with the text of John 1:1 relatively easy. This has especial interest to our current study because of John Henry Cardinal Newman's translation of the text into English, in which he follows the Authorized

⁴⁷ This brings us to a further vital point in the Greek concept of God. In face of the deepest reality, of great, sustaining being in all its glory, the Greek can only say that this, and not the Wholly Other, is God. Where we read in 1 John 4:16 that θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν, classical Greek would have to reverse this and say that ἀγάπη θεός ἐστίν. This shift of subject and predicate expresses a whole world of religious difference. The Greek gods are simply basic forms of reality, whether this be conceived in the forms of myth (Homer), in a final, unifying ἀρχή (Ionic physics), or in the ἰδέα of philosophers. Reality, however, is manifold, and it advances on man the most varied claims, which are free and unbound in the world of the gods, but which in many cases tragically intersect in the human breast. Hence the plural θεοί, or polytheism. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich; *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 3:67.

⁴⁸ Ibid., Harner; pg. 87.

Version for translating Athanasius' quotes of John 1:1c as, "The Word was God." At these other places, however, though the text structure is exactly the same in the Greek he offers, "The Word was a creature" and "a work." Why does he not then write, "The Word was a god?" Cardinal Newman's orthodoxy would not allow him to see "God" as indefinite and translate it as "a god." His instinct was to see "God" as both definitive and qualitative, whereas "creature" and "work" are only qualitative and not definitive. Had Newman been free to keep the Greek word order and translate John 1:1 as, "God was the Word," with "God" being understood as a definitive and qualitative proper name used as a subject, then he well could have maintained these aspects by translating the phrases as, "Creation was the Word" and "Work was the Word" thus personifying Creation and Work. Since applying the philosophical Logos principle to the unity of creation and work was exactly what the Arian teaching was trying to accomplish by explaining Jesus as the first of all God's creations, such an English translation would actually have been more in line with the meaning of Athanasius. Only in such a manner can "God," "creature," and "work" – each operating grammatically in the same manner within the same text – be maintained as both definitive and qualitative.

“GOD” AS A PROPER NAME

To reiterate, the article in Greek, as in English, lends somewhat an air of nobility, turning a simple noun into a title. Of course, this aspect is not usually so pronounced or even recognized by the reader, but it is always there. Though in the Greek New Testament proper names often are specified by the article for various reasons, they never need the article to be definite.⁴⁹ The article is used with proper names basically to help the reader distinguish one person from another. In relation to divine proper names, as we shall see, the article is used in an overabundance that cannot be explained simply by the need to distinguish, for example, one Jesus from another Jesus. Even a simple need to distinguish, however, still makes the name distinguished or honored above others. As a rule:

The article, in the case of the divine names in the Greek New Testament, is employed to transform a proper name into a title, or it is purposely not employed to transform a title into a proper name.

Both the title and the proper name are always definite and qualitative. They both speak of a single defined person, and they both relay certain qualities about the character or nature of that person (especially in the case of biblical proper names). Definitiveness of terms in a correlative

⁴⁹ The use of the article is a complicated issue. A good list of rules and exceptions is given by Smyth. One such rule is: "Names of *persons* and *places* are individual and therefore omit the article unless previously mentioned or specially marked as well known." Another that applies directly to our text is: "Names of *deities* omit the article, except when emphatic." This means that the vast amount of times that God is mentioned in the New Testament are emphatic in that they speak definitively of the one true God as opposed to all false gods. (Herbert Weir Smyth, "Syntax, the Article – Origin and Development," *A Greek Grammar for Colleges*, part iv (electronic version from <http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/text?doc=Perseus%3Atext%3A1999.04.0007%3Apart%3D4%3Achapter%3D40%3Asection%3D78>).

sentence makes the terms interchangeable.⁵⁰ Not only are proper names and titles always understood as definite and qualitative, but their counterparts, pronouns, are also, since they always make reference to these name. Pronouns in the subject of a correlative sentence with a defined predicate nominative are always interchangeable.⁵¹ If two names were expressed in correlation to each other, therefore, they would necessarily be interchangeable with each other. For example, in the statement, “Mary was Martha,” the meaning is no different than to say, “Martha was Mary.” Obviously, we’re not going to find too many name-name statements, since a name is so definite that the statement will almost always be at best clumsy and at worst absurd. Title-title is more workable, for example, “The lady became the queen.” In the case of John 1:1c, however, the absence of the article indicates, if we follow this line of proper name and title, a name-title construction, as in “Mary was the Queen.”

CONCLUSION

As we consider the original meaning of John 1:1c, we cannot forget that those who were speaking, writing and thinking in the Koine Greek never reasoned along the lines that we do. “It was only in the twelfth century that grammarians began to think in terms of the units that we understand by subject and predicate, and to create new terminology to make this distinction clear.”⁵² Both Plato and Aristotle in dealing with logic referred to what we now call “subject” as ὄνομα (*onoma* – “name”), what we call “predicate” as ῥῆμα (*rhema* – “statement”) and what we call “proposition” as λόγος (*logos* – “word”). Grammarians later borrowed these ideas in describing what we mean by “noun,” “verb,” and “sentence.” Aristotle in his abovementioned *Categories* (ΚΑΤΗΓΟΡΙΑΙ) discusses

“...the structure of propositions. To do so, he makes heavy use of the notion of predication. What may be predicated of a subject? Ultimately, he says, all predicates fall into one of ten fundamental categories.

1. *substance, or being, e.g. man and horse;*
2. *quantity, e.g. four-foot, five-foot;*
3. *quality, e.g. white, grammatical;*
4. *relative to something else, e.g. double, half, bigger;*
5. *local, e.g. in the Lyceum, in the market;*

⁵⁰ For example, John 1:4 - ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς (*he zoe en to fos* – “the life was the light”). This could easily be understood with no change of meaning, just a change in emphasis, in the reverse order. See also John 6:33 and 1 John 3:4 as well as 1 Corinthians 10:4.

⁵¹ For example, John 1:9 - ἦν τὸ φῶς (*en to fos* – “(he) was the light”). Here the pronoun is implied. In John 6:35 it is expressed - Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ἄρτος (*ego eimi ho artos* – “I am the bread”). No damage would be done to the meaning to say, “The bread is I,” or, “The light was he.” See also John 5:35; 6:41,48,50,51,58; 10:7,9.

⁵² Vivien Law. *The History of Linguistics in Europe from Plato to 1600* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), pg.29-31.

6. *temporal, e.g. yesterday, last year;*
7. *position, e.g. is lying, is sitting;*
8. *possession, e.g. shod, wearing armour;*
9. *action, e.g. cuts, burns;*
10. *being affected, e.g. is being cut, is being burnt.*⁵³

Of these ten there are two which describe the three statements made by John in the first verse of his Gospel:

- Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος: though it seems to modern readers to be a temporal or local proposition speaking of a moment in time or a place in history, “in the beginning,” when the Word was present; it is actually a proposition of substance or being inasmuch as John’s εἶμι (in the imperfect tense and active voice ἦν) answers to Aristotle’s οὐσία (*usia* – “substance, being”). John’s meaning is that wherever and whenever “the beginning” occurred, the Word was already in existence; in other words, the Word eternally exists before anything or anyone was ever created.
- καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν: though it seems to us to be a local proposition speaking of where the Word was located – “with God”; it is actually a proposition of being and relationship, as made clear by John’s εἶμι and his πρὸς which answer to those of Aristotle. John’s meaning is that the Word eternally has been in existence in a face-to-face relationship with the Father God.
- καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος: this then is, as the first and partially the second, a proposition of substance and being. It is not, and we must emphasize this, a statement of quality as Harner implies. John’s meaning is not, primarily, that the Word is divine, but that God is the Word and, therefore, the Word is God.

The only way to neatly follow John’s statement through the narrow labyrinth of grammatical requirements and theological implications is to understand his Θεὸς (*Theos* – “God”) without the article as an indicator of God’s proper name and not as his title ὁ Θεός (*ho Theos* – “the God”), which title speaks in the Greek New Testament exclusively of the Father. This conclusion, presented here somewhat prematurely, will be supported by a ponderous body of evidence in the final section of this book. There is no reason to understand “God” as the predicate nominative and “the Word” as the subject, if “God” is understood as a name. Understanding Θεός (*Theos* – “God”) as a name in John 1:1c makes it both definite and qualitative. This is the missing link that unifies the theories of Colwell and Harner, and this reestablishes a strong grammatical pillar for the support of the historical translation of the verse as, “...and God was the Word.”

Before moving on to the final section of this book, let us take a short retreat from grammatical interests into the philosophical understanding of a name. Aristotle required that a name have only a conventional meaning, which deprives it of its qualitative value. Plato had some quite different views. The names of God revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures, as many other names in the Bible, are obviously invested with more than just a conventional meaning. They are each rich with

⁵³ *Ibid.*

inherent, natural meanings that beautifully fulfill the role at hand: to be both definite (speak of only one God) and qualitative (descriptive by the very meaning of the name).

CHAPTER 4: THE CARPENTER AND THE SHIP'S PILOT

It seems, then, that tyranny establishes itself out of no other political form than democracy – from the height of liberty, I suppose, comes servitude of the most extreme and brutal nature...

Whenever a tyrant arises, from a protectorate root, not from anything else, does he sprout.
- Plato, Republic 8.564a, 8.565d

*What is in my name to thee?
It shall die as a voice that mourns,
Waves that splash upon a distant shore,
As a night sound in the thick of trees.*
- Alexander S. Pushkin

Four centuries before the Gospels were written, Plato wrote the dialogue, *Cratylus*, in which he employed Socrates as a teacher on the origin of names. Socrates, as a philosopher, was the great friend of the Athenian state, though considered by those in authority to be its greatest enemy. His loyalty and courage were never held in question, but his outspokenness about what he perceived to be the corruption of power in the name of democracy earned him a death sentence (by a slight majority vote of 281 to 220!). Socrates believed that the Athenian democratic system of government, where might was equated with right, where the voice of the majority was the great determiner of truth, and where the word of the majority was the ever changing god of society, was ultimately doomed to destruction.

In Plato's dialogue, Socrates stands as a mediator between Hermogenes advocating the conventional origin of names on the one hand, and Cratylus advocating their natural origin on the other.⁵⁴ Is there really nothing more to a name than just the opinion of the people, or is there at the very heart of a name the immutable, eternal nature of truth? In other words, can truth be something relative to society's current desires and perceived needs, or is it something permanent to which society's norms should be conformed? If those who make names and establish laws are blind to the truth, then woe unto our generation!

“Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! Woe unto them that are mighty to drink wine, and men of strength to mingle strong drink: which justify the wicked for reward, and take away the

⁵⁴ “Conventional” refers to what society by convention calls a thing. According to this view anything could be called by any name if only people agreed together to so call it. “Natural” refers to what a thing should be called according to its very nature as invested in it by God. According to this view a thing already has a name inherent within its nature that must be discovered by wise men. Within the dialogue Socrates seems to agree with the argument for a natural origin of names as concerning immutable objects but also admits that concerning the ever changing flow of societies norms (especially apropos in this modern age) many lesser things do carry names of conventional origin.

righteousness of the righteous from him! Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust: because they have cast away the law of the LORD of hosts, and despised the word of the Holy One of Israel.” (Isaiah 5:20-24)

Today, governments, courts and pulpits constantly adapt to the latest polls of public opinion by the unceasing monitoring of human thought processes, conducted by ubiquitous technological systems. Just exactly who John Q. Public is, however, has become an ever-deepening enigma... so many virtual environments open for parallel existence, so many costumes available for so many masquerades, so many log-ins and passwords, so much hypocrisy, so many lies... What is public opinion, if no one can even define anymore who the public is? In discussing the origin of the name of the Immutable, ΘΕΟΣ, Plato places an interesting statement on the lips of his teacher:

“Moreover, I’m suspecting something like this is the case: it seems to me that sun, moon, earth, stars and heaven, being the only gods of many barbarians today, were the very same by which the aboriginal Hellenes were guided. Inasmuch as they are ever traversing and running a course, from a study of this very nature they were called “θεοὺς” (theoys – “runners”). Later when they began to understand the other gods, forthwith they proceeded to address them by the same name. Do you think that likely, or speak I not the truth?”⁵⁵

The ancient Greeks could only guess at the true nature of the Godhead based on the manifestations of its being that they could see with their eyes, hear with their ears and feel with their hands. So, according to Plato’s version, the Godhead for them was an overall benevolent force steadily running in its course and regulating all of life on earth by certain seasons, times and hours that, though full of innumerable variations, in their substance were unchanging. In the opening stanza to his first epistle the Apostle John confirms the proof of God by saying that, together with an entire generation of witnesses, he had heard, seen, intently studied and even touched with his hands the greatest empirical evidence that man has ever known – the Word of Life, Jesus Christ: crucified, buried, and raised up from the dead. John recognizes in Jesus the benevolence, the force and the authority of the God, whom the ancient Greeks recognized in the strict care of nature. As noted above, the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures made just after Plato, the Septuagint (LXX), directly correlates God with three names, each corresponding to John’s correlation of God with the Word: “Jealous” (not willing to allow any new interpretations of His covenant), “Holy” (above all manipulations against His sovereignty), and “Judge” (regulating all according to His unchanging will). After having witnessed God in the flesh, the man who could only refer to himself as “the disciple whom Jesus loved” had to conclude that these attributes are but the first observations of the God who indeed is Light and Love, the God who is True, never hiding from man but ever revealing Himself by his Word. God is the Word. And, not just all the information we need to know, but all that there ever was or ever will be to know about God is seen and heard and known in Jesus Christ.

Prior to his argument about the origins of the name of God, Socrates concludes a long discourse on who should have the authority to craft names by saying that just as

⁵⁵ Plato, *Republic*, 397.c-d; author’s translation from the Greek text of John Burnet (Oxford University Press, 1903), 230.

“the work of a carpenter is to make a rudder under the direction of the ship’s pilot... so, as it appears, the work of a lawgiver is to make names, but if he would properly set names, he must do so under the direction of a dialectician⁵⁶ ... Peradventure, therefore, o Hermogenes, this setting of proper names can hardly be such a trifling matter, as you suppose; neither is it one for trifling or casual men. And Cratylus speaks truth by saying that the names of these things are according to their inherent nature. And not everyone is a craftsman of names, but he only who attentively looks to the name inherent to each thing by nature and is able to set its particular image into the letters and syllables of a name.”⁵⁷

The first craftsman of names was none other than the first man, Adam. According to Genesis 2, God brought all the animals to Adam to see how he would name them. Borrowing Plato’s terms, it could be said that Adam was the lawgiver, naming all of creation under the direction and in the order of God’s logical creation as it issued forth from His Word. When, at last, God put man to sleep (for Adam was only the craftsman of names not the Creator of life) and fashioned woman from that strength which protected man’s heart, she was brought also to the man by God to see how he would name her. There was no other name he could devise under the tutelage of God’s great plan but to call her by his own name, for in her very nature he saw himself.⁵⁸

The greatest lawgiver after Adam is he who put the story of Adam in writing – Moses. All of the patriarchs had known God by the name אֱלֹהִים (*Elohiym*). It seems to fit the narrative to see this as the name given to Almighty God by Adam, also under the direction of God Himself. That is to say, this is that part of His own nature that God wanted to reveal to Adam. The origin of this name is even less understood than that of the much more recent Greek version. Most consider its root to be לָא (*El*) – another common term for God in the Hebrew Scriptures. Many believe that the original meaning is something in the way of “power” or “might.”⁵⁹ It seems logical that Adam would chiefly refer to God by a name indicating His goodness and might. After all, that’s what we mean by our English word “God” also.

Probably the most intriguing aspect of this name is that, though it is plural, it is, with scant exceptions,⁶⁰ always coupled paradoxically with vowels and pronouns in the singular; thus indicating from the very beginning of God’s revelation to man that, though He is one, He exists eternally as a plural union of Persons who are completely different from each other, yet share only one nature. This is incomprehensible to man who is merely the crafter of names, not the revealer of natures. There is, however, deep in the consciousness of humanity a spiritual understanding of the truth of the relationship and existence that we call the Trinity, an understanding that is awakened by faith in God’s Word.

⁵⁶ Plato means by “dialectician” a wise philosopher who is skilled in logic and reason.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 390.d; 160-164.

⁵⁸ Adam called her אִשָּׁה (*ishah*), a form of what he called himself אִישׁ (*iysh*).

⁵⁹ In the Russian translation of the Torah (Shamir: Art-Business-Centre, 1992) for this name the term “ВСЕСИЛЬНЫЙ” (*vseyecil’ni* – “Almighty”) was preferred to “БОГ” (*bog* – “God”).

⁶⁰ These exceptions, Genesis 1:26 and 3:22, standing sentinel at the very fountainhead of revelation, however, completely forbid the understanding of Elohim in the singular.

From the first moment that Adam and Eve laid eyes on each other, the differences in who they were individually must have been obvious, but the unity of their existence, as two who are one, was so much more obvious that there was not even the hint of shame nor the slightest note of their nakedness. They were clothed in the glory of love. And, though the relationship of husband and wife is duality, it embodies a spiritual aspect wholly apart from itself, inasmuch as the inevitable result of such passionate oneness is a child, an entire other individual created by love. Modern DNA studies have proven what the Word of God teaches, that we were all in Adam's loins from the moment of his creation. When our first ancestors were on their first date, we were there right along with them!

The remnants of our original existence are so marred and scattered because of sin, that these examples are no better than squinting through a grimy windshield in a blizzard at the blur of the red taillights of God in front of us, trying to follow Him at a safe distance and desperately hanging on to some closeness, so as not to end up in the ditch. Our sin has so far alienated us from our original nature, from the image of God that we were created in by His love, that only *they that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters, see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep* (Psalm 107:23-24). Nonetheless, Christ came to redeem us by His blood unto the Father and restore us to God's perfect plan for His family. We were created to bear the perfect image of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. By His grace, the glories of God's unity and love are still to be seen at times even here in the frailty of our earthly homes (Ephesians 5:32).

This name, אֱל (El), and its derivatives, according to Exodus 6:3, is the name by which all of the patriarchs knew God. Obviously, they knew the name "Yahweh," inasmuch as according to Moses' record in Genesis they used it.⁶¹ It seems, however, that they knew it only as a title indicating God's nature but had no direct revelation of it as a name. "Yahweh" means literally "he is" and was from the most ancient of times a way of referring to God, though it apparently was not then understood to be God's name. This is the miracle of the revelation given by God to Moses at the burning bush in the wilderness when he answered Moses' bold request to reveal his true nature and name. As recorded in Exodus 3:14-15, an exact literal translation of this answer into English would read something like:

I AM WHO I AM! Say this to the people of Israel: I AM (אֶהְיֶה – ehyeh) has sent me to you. HE IS (יְהוָה - Yahweh), God of your fathers, God of Abraham, God of Isaac, and God of Jacob has sent me to you. This is my name...

It would seem that, prior to this, in calling God, "Yahweh," the patriarchs were signifying him by the most generic of titles, because they actually knew very little about him. They knew God as the Almighty Creator of the universe, the God of all gods who actually and truly is. Is what? Just is! Now, he who knew God "face to face" and spoke with him "as a man speaketh unto his friend," gained the great revelation of the divine nature and learned the Name of God. He learned and preached to the world that the One True God's nature is not bound to demonstrations of

⁶¹ This is God's revealed name as represented in language by the four Hebrew letters of the Tetragrammaton: יהוה (YHWH). It is common knowledge that a phonetically correct pronunciation of these letters is impossible to ascertain since the name was considered too holy to speak. Though it is often represented in English by "Jehovah," it is translated as LORD in the vast majority of its occurrences. For clarity this book uses the spelling "Yahweh" to represent this name.

power but to a manifestation of glory; it does not emanate from *what he does* but, rather, from *whom he is*.

John describes God as true light and love but directly correlates him as equal only once and only to his very self. As Elijah learned at the entrance to his hermit's cave, God cannot be found in the tornado, the earthquake or the fire – these are the mere results of his passing by – if we look for him and not just his manifestations, then we'll find him only in “a still small voice.” God is, after all, the Word. And the Word, God's Son, “the heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds,” is “the brightness of his glory and the express image of his person.”⁶² John affirms in verse 18 of the opening chapter of his Gospel that “no man hath seen God⁶³ at any time.” Whom then did Moses see in the burning bush? He saw, of course, the Glory and the Word of God.⁶⁴ And who or what is this? This is He who was born of the Virgin in Bethlehem's stable – Jesus, the Son of God.

Returning again to Plato's *Cratylus*, God's Son is the great Dialectician, because He is the Dialect of God. Under His direct guidance through a bush burning with unquenchable fire, Moses, the lawgiver, properly understood God's name as Yahweh, He Who Is. This Dialectician's logic is impenetrable and his reasoning is impeccable, because He is the logic and reason of God. In a word, He is the Logos, and God is the Logos.

Yet, He is also the Son of Man, the child of the Virgin Mary, the carpenter's boy from Nazareth. And as the great Carpenter he fashioned a rudder for the turning of mankind back to the “desired haven” from which it had so long wandered. He placed the rudder in its place with masterful teaching of God's Word. His teaching amazed the masses because He was the Master, the Rabbi, teaching under the very authority of God. Many a carpenter before him, including Plato, had guessed at the proper form for man's salvation, many more would make an attempt after him, but He alone worked in direct communication with the ship's Pilot, for the Captain was his Father.

He named God in a way that none before had dared and none that followed could admit, because to do so they would have to admit that He was truly God's Son. Each hireling tries to find a way

⁶² See Hebrews 1:2-3 where the Greek reads: ὃς ὢν ἀπαύγασμα τῆς δόξης καὶ χαρακτήρ τῆς ὑποστάσεως αὐτοῦ (*hos on apaugasma tes doxes kai charakter tes hypostaseos autou* – “which being shining forth of the glory and exact image of the reality of him”). Note the present-active participle of the verb “to be” signifying a state of perfect and eternal existence. The Son was not born at some point in time but is ever begotten. He did not begin to radiate the glory but is an ever shining radiation. He has always been the exact and perfect image of the one true Reality. It is now as it always has been: if we want to see or know God, there is only one way, one truth and one life – the mediator between God and man, Jesus Christ.

⁶³ As will be shown later, the absence of the Greek article in specifying “God” here, together with the overall context, indicate that John is saying that no man has ever beheld the fullness of the Godhead. As the Lord told Moses in Exodus 33:20, “There shall no man see me and live.”

⁶⁴ The Targumim, Aramaic translations and interpretations of the Hebrew Scriptures, make it clear that it was commonly understood by Jewish scholars in the first century that the Lord himself never appeared or spoke to man but, rather, appeared in the שכינה (*Shekinah* – “Glory” or “tabernacle of God's presence”) and spoke in the מֵאמַר (*Memra* – “Word”) of the Lord. By claiming to be the light of the world and the word sent from heaven, Jesus was not introducing a theology new to Jewish religious thought. He was saying “that God was his Father, making himself equal with God” (John 5:18). He claimed to be the Glory and Word of God in whom God makes himself evident to man and through whom God speaks his heart to his creation. The difference was not in what Jesus taught about this, but in his unwavering testimony of being the only begotten Son of God, the Glory and Word of God. That is the reason they sought to kill him.

to climb the fence and get in on the good stuff, but only the true Shepherd holds the key, for He is the very door itself. He simply called God, “Father,” claiming that He and his Dad were one! And, so, we see that not only is He the great Dialectician, but He is also the great Lawgiver, fashioning new names for His elect, the “pillars” of his coming Kingdom – names that none of the political electorate today may know, names that are not on any ballot other than the “white stone” of the Lamb. Jesus said that these new names are drawn from the one Name that truly is:

“The name of my God and the name of the City of my God, New Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and my new Name. He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.” (Revelation 2:17; 3:12-13)

The Son was faithful and obedient in giving His life on the burning tree of Calvary, quenching once and for all the fire, and opening the way by His resurrection for man to be redeemed out of death unto eternal life with his Father.

CHAPTER 5 – THE INTERNAL EVIDENCE, PART 2: THE RELEVANCE OF THE ARTICLE TO AN UNDERSTANDING OF DIVINE NAMES IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

*Old inflections move from case to case,
gender to gender, softening consonants, darkening
vowels, till they sound like the sea moving
icebergs back and forth in its mouth.
- Bill Holm, The Icelandic Language*

INTRODUCTION

In this final chapter, based on the gathering of extensive statistics and evidence, we will establish the following conclusions that extend far beyond the scope of John 1:1c, giving us a broader picture of how divine names are expressed throughout the Bible and, therefore, a much more exact understanding of the text at hand:

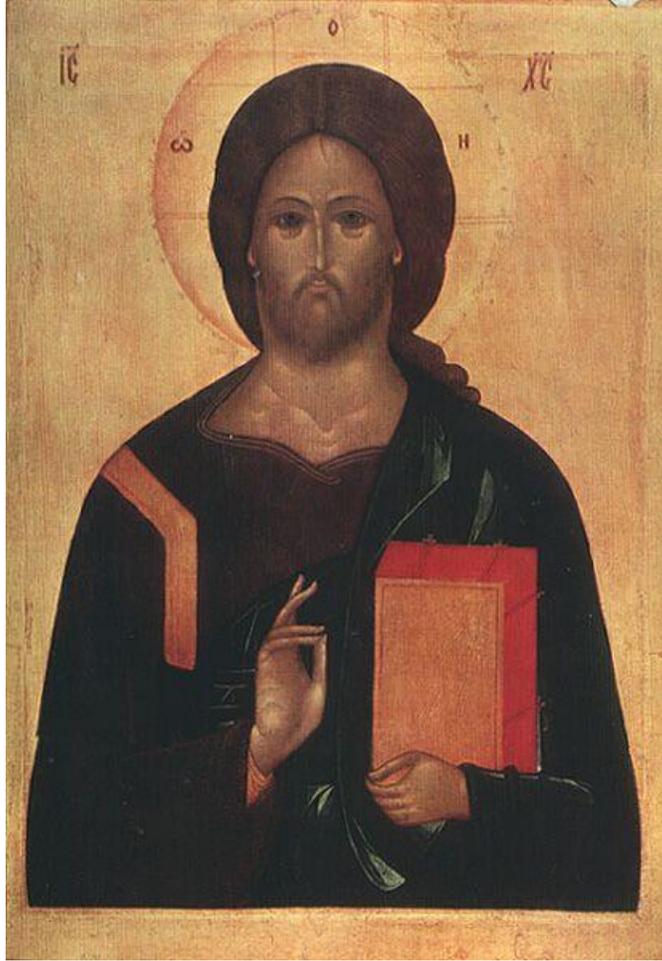
- The authors of the Greek New Testament consistently employ the article with the divine name, Ο ΘΕΟΣ (*ho theos* – “the God”), as a *title* to express exclusively the first person of the Godhead, whom they also refer to as Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ (*ho pater* – “the Father”). These two terms are in essence interchangeable, since they both describe the Father God specifically and are *never* used to designate the Son of God, the Holy Spirit, any false god, or any earthly father.
- Ο ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (*ho christos* – “the Christ”) belongs as a *title* to the genre of the Gospels and expresses the person of the Messiah revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ

(*christos* – “Christ”) without the article belongs as a *name* to the genre of the Epistles and expresses the person of Jesus, revealing His anointing by God.

- Ο ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (*ho iesous* – “the Jesus”) belongs as a *title* to the genre of the synoptic Gospels, the Book of Acts and the General Epistles, excluding those of John. It reveals Jesus of Nazareth as being the Savior sent by God for the salvation of the world. ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (*iesous* – “Jesus”) without the article belongs as a *name* to the genre of the writings of John and Paul. It reveals the personal relationship, which each person believing on Him may enjoy.
- ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (*kurios* – “Lord”) without the article belongs as a *name* to the genre of the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures employed extensively by the writers of the LXX. Therein it translates the *name* of God revealed by Him in the Hebrew Bible, יהוה (“Yahweh”). LXX quotations are thus carried over to the Greek New Testament. Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (*ho kurios* – “the Lord”) belongs as a *title* to the genre of the New Testament and expresses the deity of Jesus Christ.
- Where ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”) is found with reference to the Godhead but without the article, therein is an expression of the fullness of the Trinity - Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. ΘΕΟΣ without the article makes reference to God as Almighty Creator, referred to in the Hebrew Bible by the plural *title*, “Elohim” (אֱלֹהִים) or its singular root, “El” (אֵל). It is, therefore, in the genre of the entire Greek New Testament the equivalent of God’s *name*, Yahweh, as revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures.

From ancient times, when the first Hebrew Scriptures were transcribed to the times when the first New Testament Scriptures were copied and even to modern usage among Jews and Christians alike, special attention has been given to divine names. Whether by abbreviation, capitalization or paraphrasing, otherwise regular nouns, such as “God,” “Father” and “Lord” are accorded a special status and honor for the understanding of the reader. It may be assumed that a certain distinguishing device would be employed by the writers of the Greek New Testament, since the LXX, which they consistently quoted in composition, did just that by translating the revealed name of God, Yahweh, over and over again as ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (*kurios* – “Lord”). Further, it may be presupposed that this unique approach would be uniform throughout the Greek New Testament.⁶⁵

⁶⁵ Exactly such a phenomenon can be seen in the most ancient manuscripts, such as P66, in which ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”) is designated by Θε̅ς (*ths* – “God”), when reference is to God Almighty. If the reference is to other gods, as at John 10:34, the name is written out as Θεοι (*theoi* – “gods”). Other designations for divine names are, for example, πα̅ρ (*pr, pater*) for “Father,” χ̅ς (*chs, christos*) for “Christ,” υ̅ς (*us, uios*) for “Son,” and ι̅η (*ie, iesous*) for “Jesus.” This same type of designation by abbreviation for divine names is followed in the Church Slavonic texts as well as in the writing of Eastern Orthodox icons.



Abbreviation of the Divine Name, Jesus Christ, together with the Divine Name, O ΩN, on a Russian Orthodox icon.

Evidence presented within this investigation conclusively proves that in comparison with all the other nouns belonging to the Greek New Testament vocabulary, there is an unbalanced use of the article, O (*ho* – “the”), to specify the divine names, ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”), and ΠΑΤΗΡ (*pater* – “Father”), especially as they are used in both the subject and complement. The names ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (*iesous* – “Jesus”), ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (*kurios* – “Lord”), and ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (*christos* – “Christ”) are also given special treatment by the article that can compare to its relationship with other nouns in only rare cases, especially as they are found in the subject.

The article is so widely used in the Greek New Testament that, at first glance, an assumption is often made that the use of the article to specify nouns in its text is the norm. This study concludes that such a banal employment of the Greek article across-the-board of the New Testament simply does not exist. The evidence casts an image of purposefulness on the part of the authors in using the article to define both subject and object. Although each writer uses his own style and approach, the use or nonuse of the article to specify the abovementioned divine names bears a character of uniformity in the overall syntax, which can only indicate a purposeful establishment of a rigid semantic structure peculiar to the Greek New Testament. This, of course,

should be expected if we believe that these authors were indeed moved and inspired by the Holy Spirit to produce an autograph that deserves, in part due to its complete perfection and harmony, to be called the Word of God.

In review, many have viewed the nonuse of the article as indicating an indefinite specification of the noun, thus categorizing the Greek article as a “definite” article and its absence as an “indefinite.” This might seem a useful theory at first glance, if the reader of the New Testament is familiar in his native tongue with the concept of an indefinite article. If, however, as noted above, this concept does not exist in the mind of the native speaker,⁶⁶ then the theory is utterly worthless for grasping an understanding of the original Greek text. In fact, reading into the nonuse of the article a deliberate application of the same idea conveyed by an indefinite article in the reader’s language is completely erroneous since no widely applied indefinite article existed in the minds and hearts of those authors who gave us the New Testament. Effective translation must start with clues left in the original language and project its meaning onto the target language, not vice versa. A more effective way of viewing this approach would be to refer to the noun as being left unspecified. If something is purposely left unspecified that does not mean necessarily that its understanding is undefined. In fact, as Colwell attempted to show, even without the article, a noun can justifiably be understood as definite.⁶⁷ Otherwise, John’s meaning could be misunderstood as, “...and the Word was *a* god.”⁶⁸

Others, such as Harner mentioned above, have stated by various means another way for viewing the nonuse of the article in the Greek New Testament. That is the idea of qualitiveness, according to which the anarthrous noun should be read as having the defining influence of an adjective upon the subject being expressed. Thus, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος (*kai theos en ho logos* – “...and God was the Word”) would be translated literally as: “...and the Word was godlike (or divine).”

This second approach would make ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”) to serve as a predicate nominative in the complement of John 1:1c to the same degree as ΑΓΑΠΗ (*agape* – “love”) does in the complement of the statement made twice by John in his first epistle: ὁ θεὸς ἀγάπη ἐστίν (*ho theos agape estin* – “the God love is”). If this were true, however, then John would be completing the meaning of ὁ λόγος (*ho logos* – “the Word”) with the noun, ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”), in just the same way as he completes the meaning of ὁ θεὸς (*ho theos* – “the God”) with

⁶⁶ Russian, for example, is a vast and poetic language which has no concept whatsoever of a definite or indefinite article. John 1:1 is translated into Russian as: В начале было Слово, и Слово было у Бога, и Слово было Бог (In beginning was Word, and Word was with God, and Word was God). Only the capitalization allows the reader to understand the difference between *the* God and *a* god. Soviet-era publication expunged the practice of capitalizing God when reference was made to the God of the Bible (e.g. in Tolstoy’s or Dostoevsky’s novels).

⁶⁷ Even in English the indefinite article does not release a noun from the confines of the obvious context. For example, if a wife were to say to her husband, “Help me find a wall to hang this picture on;” she would obviously be implying a wall in their home or even in the particular room where she is standing. In any case she couldn’t be referring to a wall in the neighbor’s home. Except where ΘΕΟΣ appears in the plural or is obviously referring to some false god (this is rare), the context of the New Testament must be limited to the God revealed in the Hebrew Bible and cannot be applied to any other god or set of gods.

⁶⁸ This construction is so impossible that it should be considered ridiculous. If all the instances where ΘΕΟΣ appears without the article were translated “a god,” there would be a number of strange statements such as: “Be not deceived; *a* god is not mocked” (Gal 6:7); “Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not *a* god” (2 John 9).

the noun, ΑΓΑΠΗ (*agape* – “love”). John could not have meant that God is love to the same degree that the Word is God.⁶⁹ Further, it will be seen that the syntax of John 1:1c, as concerning the word order, makes possible the argument that ὁ λόγος (*ho logos* – “the Word”) is the complement not the subject of the clause. This is usually ignored in favor of the supposed grammatical “rule” (one that has many exceptions) that it must be the subject because it bears the article. In reading a non-native language, as opposed to writing it, grammar is generally understood better through syntax, than syntax can be through grammar. Most native speakers of any language, while competent in arranging words (syntax) to convey meaning (semantics), are at a complete loss to remember the rules of grammar they studied for years in school. They cannot explain why they do what they do! On the other hand, most non-native speakers who have studied as adults to learn a second language know the grammar, struggle with the syntax and often bungle the semantics. They don’t always “feel” the language and are not able to perfectly produce in speaking and writing, or understand in listening and reading, the things they think they understand in their minds. The New Testament was written by men that “felt” the language.

EXPLANATION OF FORMAT

We shall now approach the study of the Greek article’s relationship to the divine names of the Greek New Testament by making use of mathematically determined percentages within separate contexts of subject and complement.⁷⁰ When used as the subject of a clause or as its complement (as opposed to being used in a prepositional phrase, for example), nouns are less likely to be affected by the addition of other factors (a preposition, for example). Therefore, by confining ourselves to these limitations, we shall receive a more accurate and concise picture of the article’s use and nonuse.

The value of studying how nouns are expressed in the complement must be slightly minimized as compared to that of studying them in the subject. When a noun is positioned in the complement

⁶⁹ Although 1 John 4:7-8 employs a similar word play with the article to that used in John 1:1, the main differences are as follows: In the former passage “God” and “love” are specified by the article throughout, but the article is dropped from “love” at the end. In John 1:1 the article is dropped from “God” at the end and maintained with “Word” throughout. In the former “the love” is said to have its being as having issued out from “the God” (ἡ ἀγάπη ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ ἐστίν – *he agape ek tou theou estin* – “the love out of the God is”). In the latter “the Word” is seen as having always existed in closest proximity to “the God” (ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν – *ho logos en pros ton theon* – “the Word was before *the face of* the God”). This makes the abstract noun, “love,” in the New Testament to be understood as something nearly divine. In fact it is defined when used as a subject (as will be discussed further in the following section) by the article in 87% of its occurrences, solidifying “the Love of the God” as a specific, concrete New Testament idea. In light of Jesus’ statements to Nicodemus in John 3:16-21, together with John’s similar correlative statement about God – ὁ θεὸς φῶς ἐστίν (*ho theos fos estin* – “the God light is”) in 1 John 1:5, we must conclude that John is calling Jesus both Light and Love. From this angle we also see that the statement: “God is the Word,” differs in no way theologically (though somewhat grammatically) from what John is saying by correlating God with Light and Love. Again, this means that it is incorrect to translate it into English as “the Word was God,” since in like manner we must then translate also as “love was God” and “light was God.” In the final analysis all three names: Word, Love and Light, make reference to Jesus.

⁷⁰ By “complement” what is meant is the object of a sentence found in its predicate.

many factors can influence its grammatical state, thus effecting how the article may or may not be related to the noun. As the subject of a sentence, however, nouns may be examined in their native habitat, with their guard down, so to speak – they may be seen in the nominative case. For that reason, all examples herein have been grouped according to their respective results as found in the subject.

Where a preposition is used, which also specifies nouns as does the article, a separate accounting has been made. In addition, divisions were employed between nouns that are defined or qualified by another word. In such a manner, this study literally distills from the New Testament text those places where the nouns under consideration have been expressed without an article, with no defining or qualifying word, and with no specifier whatsoever. In the case of the divine names, these instances are so rare as to be entirely unique.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

This investigation makes use of the twenty most frequently occurring nouns in the Greek New Testament.⁷¹ These twenty names are, with the number of their occurrences, as follows:

1. ΘΕΟΣ (*theos* – “God”) – 1318,
2. ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (*iesous* – “Jesus”) – 917,
3. ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (*kurios* – “Lord”) – 719,
4. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (*christos* – “Christ”) – 529,
5. ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ (*anthropos* – “man” as in “human”) – 551,
6. ΠΑΤΗΡ (*pater* – “father”) – 414,
7. ΗΜΕΡΑ (*hemera* – “day”) – 389,
8. ΠΝΕΥΜΑ (*pneuma* – “spirit”) – 379,
9. ΥΙΟΣ (*huios* – “son”) – 379,
10. ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ (*adelphos* – “brother”) – 343,
11. ΛΟΓΟΣ (*logos* – “word”) – 330,
12. ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ (*ouranos* – “heaven”) – 274,
13. ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ (*mathetes* – “disciple”) – 261,
14. ΓΗ (*ge* – “earth”) – 250,
15. ΟΝΟΜΑ (*honoma* – “name”) – 231,

⁷¹ In order to minimize redundancy and keep the narrative flow smoother, from here on only the capitalized, non-accented Greek lettering will be used where reference is made to these words. No pronunciation or definition will be provided in parentheses following. Where a quote is made from the Greek New Testament, standard lettering will be used, followed by a parenthetical explanation.

16. ANHP (*aner* – “man” or “husband”) – 216,
17. ΓΥΝΗ (*gune* – “woman” or “wife”) – 215,
18. ΝΟΜΟΣ (*nomos* – “law”) – 195,
19. ΚΟΣΜΟΣ (*kosmos* – “world”) – 186,
20. ΧΕΙΡ (*cheir* – “hand”) – 178.

If ΘΕΟΣ, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, ΚΥΡΙΟΣ, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, and ΠΑΤΗΡ – each being a divine name – are excluded from this list for separate consideration, and the remaining fifteen most frequently occurring nouns in the Greek New Testament are weighed according to their use within the subject and complement and in relationship to the use of the article specifying them, the following results are ascertained.

This list of fifteen may be divided into three groups. Five of these words when grouped together (ΑΝΘΡΩΠΟΣ, ΗΜΕΡΑ, ΟΝΟΜΑ, ΑΝΗΡ, ΓΥΝΗ) are specified by the article in 48% of their occurrences in the subject and 61% in the complement. Six of these (ΠΝΕΥΜΑ, ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ, ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ, ΓΗ, ΝΟΜΟΣ, ΧΕΙΡ) are defined with the article in the subject at an average rate of 81% and in the complement 76%. The final four (ΥΙΟΣ, ΛΟΓΟΣ, ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ, ΚΟΣΜΟΣ) evidence a remarkable change in the subject, being specified by the article in 96% of their combined cases. In the complement, however, these words exhibit a much lower 79% average.

In comparing the composition of these groups it should be noted that the first group is made up of words of a very generic character. They are often used in Scripture with reference to no single or particular entity. In fact, each of them, with the exception of ΟΝΟΜΑ, requires different English words to translate its meaning depending on the context. A “Man” in the sense of a “human” also includes the idea of a “woman” or simply a “person.” A “day” can mean a 24-hour period or a much longer period. A “man” can also refer to a “husband.” A “woman” can also refer to a “wife.” Thus, the article is employed with these nouns in only about half of their occurrences, usually when they refer to a specific, already-named person, day, name, man, or woman.

The second group is composed of words which in most cases describe a very particular entity described throughout the Scriptures. For example: ΠΝΕΥΜΑ relates quite often to the Holy Spirit; ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ to the brothers and sisters in the Body of Christ; ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ to heaven as God’s home; ΓΗ to the earth as man’s home; ΝΟΜΟΣ to the Law of Moses; ΧΕΙΡ to the hand of God, a sign of His anointing and power. Therefore, we find these words much more often being specified by the article, especially when they are the subject of clauses.

In the final group are words which have almost exclusive reference to a single known entity. ΥΙΟΣ refers to the Son of Man and the Son of God. By consistent use of the article, the New Testament writers reveal both of these as divine titles of Jesus.⁷² It should be noted, however, that when the Sanhedrin accuses Jesus of making himself the Son of God (John 19:7) the article

⁷² The opening chapter of John’s Gospel establishes these with John the Baptist speaking of Jesus as ὁ υἱὸς τοῦ θεοῦ (*ho huios tou theou* – “the Son of the God”) (John 1:34). Further, Jesus refers to Himself in addressing Nathanael, saying that he shall see the angels of God ascending and descending ἐπὶ τὸν υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου (*epi ton hion tou anthropou* – “upon the Son of the Man”) (John 1:51). Here John even maintains the article after the preposition.

is not employed. This nonuse of the article seems to have the effect of stripping the title of its majesty and revealing unbelief on the part of his accusers that he is indeed ὁ υἱὸς ὁ μονογενῆς (*ho hios ho monogenes* – “the Son, the only-begotten”) sent by ὁ θεὸς (*ho theos* – “the God”) (John 3:16). They seem to be accusing him of making himself *one of God’s sons*. ΛΟΓΟΣ refers to the Word of God, whether the direct person of Jesus Christ or the Gospel which he came to preach. ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ, of course, refers exclusively to his tight-knit group of disciples. Its high rate of occurrence with the article in the complement (82%) proves that even under the influence of other grammatical forces, the writers of the Gospels wished to very specifically designate exactly which disciples were being described. Such is also the case with ΚΟΣΜΟΣ referring entirely “to the totality of all created things, of universal space and everything contained in it.”⁷³ Both historically and philosophically this word could have been construed to mean a number of different things by the original recipients of the New Testament.⁷⁴ It seems that, in order to specifically designate its meaning, the writers, in almost all cases, used Ο ΚΟΣΜΟΣ. It should be noted that both ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ and ΚΟΣΜΟΣ remain at a very high rate defined by the article even when joined with other specifiers in prepositional phrases. This is an unusual phenomenon, repeating itself in certain aspects related to ΘΕΟΣ.

Returning to ΠΝΕΥΜΑ, some further examination is in order. Being the only word in this list other than ΥΙΟΣ and ΛΟΓΟΣ which could be considered a divine name in the New Testament, it needs to be established that in those instances, which seem to designate the Holy Spirit, the article is employed at a rate of 91% in the subject and 93% in the complement. It is usually defined by the adjective, “holy,” which is also specified by the article as in τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον (*to pneuma to hagion* – “the Spirit, the Holy”). In fact, there are only four appearances in the subject without the article.⁷⁵

THREE RULES

On the basis of this data certain conclusions may be drawn about nouns in the Greek New Testament. These conclusions are here expressed as three rules, which will then be applied for studying the divine names under examination:

1. A very high rate (90% or greater) of specification by the article in the *subject* indicates a noun whose meaning is specifically confined to a single, predetermined entity, who is revealed throughout either the Greek New Testament, the Hebrew Bible (in symbiotic relationship with the LXX), or both. In such instances as cited above even the English equivalents seem inseparable from the article: “the Son,” “the disciples,” “the world.” As this rate lowers, the generic use of a particular word increases as it indicates a variety of ideas related to its central meaning.

⁷³ Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey William Bromiley, Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (electronic ed. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964-c1976), 3:884.

⁷⁴ It is still used in Russian (космос) to signify what is meant in English by “outer space.”

⁷⁵ Luke 1:35; 4:18; John 7:39; Acts 8:39; Rom. 8:9. Each of these works very well with the third rule stated below. They seem to make clear reference to “Holy Spirit” as a name, rather than to “the Holy Spirit” as a title.

2. As seen above, the rate of article usage with nouns in the *complement* tends to range from 50 -75%. If this rate rises higher than 80%, as in the case of all the nouns placed in the third group except ΥΙΟΣ, that factor should be taken in conjunction with the first conclusion as an exceptional indicator of specificity of meaning.
3. A noun may be designated, by the consistent employment of the article to define it, as having the status of a *title*. The nonuse of the article in relation to this noun, therefore, deprives the title of a certain formality, relaxing it into the familiarity of a personal *name* or transforming it simply into an unspecified, inarticulate noun. In the case of the divine names non-specificity, non-articulation and non-definition are not a viable option where the context is speaking (as in the overwhelming majority of the cases) of the God of the Bible, of the Father God of the Bible, of the Jesus of the Bible and of the Christ of the Bible. The only solution that meets, as seen above, the demands of both Colwell's Rule for definition and Harner's conclusions about qualification is that of a personal *name*.

APPLICATION OF THE RULES TO THE DIVINE NAMES

The first two of these rules may now be applied to the data collected on the divine names, ΘΕΟΣ and ΠΑΤΗΡ. Of the 1318 occurrences of ΘΕΟΣ in the New Testament 97% are specified by the article in the subject and 83% in the complement. If its plural form is excluded (not having reference to the one God), these rates rise to 98% and 84% respectively. Of the 414 occurrences of ΠΑΤΗΡ, 96% are specified by the article in the subject and 84% in the complement.

Taken separately from those instances which obviously do not refer to the Father God, a study of ΠΑΤΗΡ yields some amazing results. As a divine name in the subject, 100% of all occurrences are specified by the article; in the complement this is 96%. Further, even those cases already specified by a preposition still maintain the use of the article at a rate of 96%.

When the four instances of nonuse of the article in the complement are studied, it is seen that the first of these in John 5:18 is defined by ἴδιον (*idion* – “own”), effectively specifying the Father as belonging only to Jesus and, thus, making the use of the article redundant. After the same manner, the second and third in John 8:41-42 are grammatically specified in the first case by ἓνα (*hena* – “one”), having the same effect as ἴδιον (*idion* – “own”), and in the second by proximity to ὁ θεός (*ho theos* – “the God”).⁷⁶ Perhaps more importantly, these final cases do not exactly refer to the Father God, since the Pharisees are making a point that God is their father, and Jesus is making the point that He is not their father. In fact, the article is used at the beginning of the discourse, where Jesus specifies exactly who their father is. He is obviously not referring to the Father God at that point!

⁷⁶ There are certain arrangements in the Greek New Testament, which seem to discourage the use of the article. Such is the case where ΕΝΑ (*hena* – “one”) and ΙΔΙΟΣ (*idios* – “own”) define a noun more narrowly than the article could, if it were used. Likewise, certain cases seem to discourage the article's usage. For example, the dative case, especially where it is used to show instrumental usage (what is known as the creative case in Russian), appears to rarely need the article. These factors, not having a noticeable effect on the outcome of this study, have been given but slight consideration.

Perhaps the most useful evidence in these passages is that a bridge is provided for understanding Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ and Ο ΘΕΟΣ (“the Father” and “the God”) as one and the same person.⁷⁷ Jesus is saying here that “the God” is His very own Father (there can be no question that He is speaking of His heavenly Father). In so doing, He is understood by His hearers as making Himself equal to “the God.”

The final of these four instances, found in 1 Peter 1:17, does indicate the Father God without using the article, but there are three possible explanations of this. The first might simply be stylistic. Peter is the author of very few words in the New Testament, and a composition of his style is not easy to attain. Further, the second complement of this secondary clause does include the article, and that seems to be enough to specify the whole. Finally, the most likely reason is that Peter is, in fact, purposely changing the *title* into a *name* (as in, “If you address as ‘Father,’ the One who impartially judges”). In that case it would be consistent to leave the article off, indicating the same that is meant in English by saying about an earthly dad, “Father” instead of “the father.”

PRELIMINARY CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this data the following conclusion can be drawn: Ο ΘΕΟΣ is in essence a title referring over a thousand times throughout the New Testament to a single entity, namely to the Father God.

Where ΘΕΟΣ is written without the article some other idea is being expressed about God broader than the single aspect of His fatherhood. This idea of a narrower meaning versus a broader one is expected with the specifying by an article of any noun, for that is the general function of an article. Therefore, within the context of the Greek New Testament, there is a uniformly *narrow* meaning, namely that of the Father God, accorded to ΘΕΟΣ when it is specified by the article. A *broad* meaning may be, therefore, also accorded to ΘΕΟΣ when it is *not* specified by the article, and this meaning should also be uniform throughout the New Testament.

If this conclusion concerning the use and nonuse of the article to define ΘΕΟΣ is accurate, then we should expect the data on the other three divine names to reveal a similar pattern of purposeful employment or non-employment of the article. Before determining the meaning of the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ in the New Testament (which forthwith shall be established), it must first be shown that the use or nonuse of the article causes the names ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, ΚΥΡΙΟΣ, and ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ to express both narrow (by the use of the article) and broad (by its nonuse) ideas with very singular meanings to each. We shall see that such is the case and that these meanings remain uniform throughout the Greek New Testament.

FURTHER ANALYSIS

⁷⁷ (John 5:18b) πατέρα ἴδιον ἔλεγεν τὸν θεὸν ἴσον ἑαυτὸν ποιῶν τῷ θεῷ. (*patera idion elegen ton theon ison heauton poion to theo* – “own **Father**’ he was calling **the God** – making himself **equal** to **the God**”).

To begin with, it is common knowledge that the name, ΙΗΣΟΥΣ, is often specified by the article in the New Testament, and ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ is left unspecified by the article quite often in the Epistles but almost never in the Gospels and Acts. Nunn makes the point well that the use of the article in reference to ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ narrowly designates Christ as the expected Messiah of the Hebrew Scriptures. By the non-use of the article, while he is still the single figure of reference, the person of Christ is painted with the broad brush strokes of his name, including all the aspects of the Anointed One.

“Proper nouns may take the Definite Article, especially if the person or place named is well known, or has just been mentioned. Jesus is generally written ὁ Ἰησοῦς. The Definite Article is generally used before Χριστός in the Gospels in the sense of the expected Messiah, the One who is well known by that title, just as we speak of the Christ. But in the Epistles, written at a time when Χριστός was becoming a proper name, the Article is often omitted.”⁷⁸

A FOURTH RULE

These statements confer with the third rule stated above; confirming that “the Christ” should be regarded as a *title*, while “Christ” is the divine *name* of him, whom the title represents. ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ occurs 529 times in the New Testament. In the subject and complement both, it is specified by the article at a ratio of 73%, which according to the first two rules stated above would indicate a somewhat less than specific meaning for this noun. The reason for this is implied in the third rule and will now be stated as a fourth:

4. Though a proper name *may* take the article, it is not *usually* specified by the article. If it is, and there is no compelling grammatical reason for it so being,⁷⁹ then that name should be considered a *title*.

APPLICATION OF THE FOURTH RULE

An example of this can be seen in a brief comparison of nicknames with given names. While any name is full of meaning and can serve as a person’s title, a nickname is applied because of certain personal qualities and more often is understood as a specific title for a known person. Though a nickname acquires with time a conventional use, it always has a meaningful and natural beginning. The name, “Saul,” has the article in only 2 out of 24 (8%) uses in the New Testament, while the name, “Paul,” being a nickname or title for Saul of Tarsus, receives the article in 101 of 159 uses (64%). “Peter,” being Simon’s nickname, has the article less often, having become in truth his name before the writing of the New Testament, but still is specified

⁷⁸H. P. V. Nunn, *A Short Syntax of New Testament Greek* (Cambridge: University Press, 1913), 57.

⁷⁹Such is the case with the name, “Abraham,” which occurs in the New Testament 73 times of which 12 are coupled with the article in either the accusative, genitive, or dative case; but not in the nominative. This is necessary for the understanding of the reader, because the name cannot be grammatically declined in the Greek. In other words, only the articles declination reveals whether “Abraham” is in another case other than the nominative.

thus in 86 of 156 occurrences (55%). “Simon,” on the other hand, gets the article only 12% of the time. Of the 135 occurrences of “John,” only 33 have the article (24%), but of these 29 refer to John the Baptist, that being in fact his prophetic title. In John 20:27 the article in the dative to specify the name, “Thomas,” either supplies a grammatical emphasis to Jesus’ address, making it all the more direct to the doubting disciple; or it may be that in this manner John is referring to him by his nickname – “The Twin,” which is the meaning of “Thomas.”

How then should ΙΗΣΟΥΣ be understood when specified by the article? Taken as a whole, “Jesus” is recorded in the New Testament 917 times, obviously the most common proper name in Scripture. Of these, as a subject this name receives the article in 78% of all its occurrences. As seen above, for a proper name this is very high. In the complement, it remains high at 71%. Even being specified by a preposition, it retains a 62% rate for usage of the article. These numbers, however, do not relate the full picture.

Counting the use of the name, “Jesus,” in both subject and complement: of Matthew’s 110 occurrences of the name, only four do not take the article; of Mark’s 58, only 1; of Luke’s 67, only 11. This makes an overall ratio for the Synoptic Gospels and Acts of 93%. In contrast, John records the name 74 times without the article, as does Paul in 22 references to Jesus in his Epistles. It may be concluded that the synoptic writers wished to designate Jesus by title as being the Savior of Israel sent by the very Yahweh of the Hebrew Bible (“Yahweh saved,” of course, being the meaning of the name Jesus).

John, employing the article to specify the name of Jesus, called himself both ὁ μαθητῆς ἐκεῖνος ὃν ἠγάπα ὁ Ἰησοῦς (*ho mathetes hon egapa ho Iesous* – “the disciple, whom the Jesus loved”) and, in John 20:2, ὃν ἐφίλει ὁ Ἰησοῦς (*hon ephilei ho Iesous* – “...whom the Jesus loved as a friend”). By his nonuse of the article in reference to Jesus in so many other passages, he seems to want to emphasize a very personal relationship with Jesus. To John, this relationship is to be enjoyed by all believers in the risen Lord. The Apostle Paul consistently calls Jesus by the name that he first heard from the Master’s lips on the road to Damascus, when he cried out to know who he was, and heard in answer: ἐγώ εἰμι Ἰησοῦς (*ego eimi Iesous* – “I Am Jesus”).⁸⁰ Thus, and as noted above concerning his use of the name, ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ, Paul’s Epistles are flavored with the sense that he desires for his readers to enter into the same personal, life-changing relationship with Jesus Christ, which embraced him from the first day they met.

ΚΥΡΙΟΣ is consistently employed in the LXX to designate the proper name, by which God revealed Himself to Moses – Yahweh.⁸¹ In the Greek New Testament it is used not as a name so

⁸⁰ It may be of interest to note the tiny primary clause, ὁ δέ (*ho de*), which precedes Jesus’ introduction. The exact phrase is used in Russian (тот же) to mean something like “the very one,” or “one in the same.” Jesus seems to be affirming that He is indeed whom Saul called Him – Lord. Therefore, Jesus’ statement to Saul recorded in Acts lies at the very heart of the New Testament understanding of his divinity by saying, in effect, “Yahweh, I AM, is Jesus.”

⁸¹ Of the 5,321 references to יהוה (“Yahweh”) in the Hebrew Bible the overwhelming majority are translated in the LXX by the anarthrous ΚΥΡΙΟΣ. This is especially the case amongst the 1,500 references in the Pentateuch where only 5 are translated by Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ. Usually when it has the article ΚΥΡΙΟΣ is referring to a human master. A beautiful example of this can be found in Genesis 39:2-3 where the Greek renders יהוה (“Yahweh”) as the anarthrous ΚΥΡΙΟΣ three times and ἄδων (*adon* – “lord, master, owner”) as the articular Ο ΚΥΡΙΟΣ twice in reference to the Egyptian master. Another is Numbers 32:27 where the same pattern is followed. The five exceptions can be explained as follows. Genesis 8:18 (8:22 in the English Bible) has an addition to the Hebrew that reads κύριος ὁ κύριος (*kurios ho kurios*) for the single “Yahweh,” making it say “Lord the Lord.” In this case the article is required grammatically to tie the second “Lord” to the first which is without the article. For the same grammatical reason

much but as a title of the Lord Jesus Christ approximately 700 times. In seeming contrast to the third rule about articulate titles, it is specified by the article when used as a subject in only 71% of the cases and 69% in the complement. There is an important point about its use, however, that cannot be overlooked. God's revealed name, Yahweh, does not receive the Hebrew article in any place where it is recorded in the Hebrew Bible. (It is not a title for God but His most intimate name revealed only to His friends.) If the direct quotes, therefore, from the LXX (since they all serve there as a device to translate the name, Yahweh) are excluded from the count of ΚΥΠΙΟΣ in the New Testament and only the direct references to Jesus of Nazareth are considered, the ratio of article usage soars from 71% to 94% in the subject. If, further, the cases, which are defined or qualified by other words and constitute clear allusions to LXX formulations with יהוה ("Yahweh") are also excluded, the ratio climbs to 99%.

Thus, it may be concluded that while "the Christ" evolved from a *title* into a proper *name* during the first century of the Church; ΚΥΠΙΟΣ ("Lord") developed from God's personal *name* into a *title* for Jesus of Nazareth. In other words, the name "Jesus," revealing as it were the person entitled as "the Lord," has superseded the name "Yahweh" and has become "the new Name"⁸² by which man approaches the Father God. This title establishes without a doubt Jesus' divinity and His equality with the God revealed in the Hebrew Bible as Yahweh. As the Son, He is equal in every way to the Father. Still, for His closest disciples and friends, and especially for John, Jesus' name always remained the most personal and intimate mode of expressing His person.

The evidence overwhelmingly supports the stated conclusion that Ο ΘΕΟΣ is in essence a title referring hundreds of times throughout the New Testament to a single entity, namely to the Father God. We have seen that the consistent use of the article does indeed give the divine name the strength of a title. God's title in the New Testament is "the Father." That is the way he was revealed to the world by the Son.

Further, it has been proven that when these divine names are not coupled with the article, they gain the vitality of a personal name, referring singularly to the same person as when the article is employed, but revealing him in a much broader and more personal sense. These references are consistent and uniform throughout the text. If, therefore, this is true in reference to ΘΕΟΣ when recorded without the article, then what name of God is exactly being designated?

THE NAME OF GOD

ΘΕΟΣ is recorded 1318 times in the New Testament, of which, when used as a subject, 97% are specified by the article. As a complement the rate is somewhat lower (83%), but still high enough to qualify for the principles of our first two rules. If the plural forms are removed, which obviously refer to false gods, the ratio rises to 98% and 84% respectively. Of all the instances

Deuteronomy 11:17 gives the article to the second "Lord" in the sentence. Exodus 9:27 seems to employ the article to keep the divine name out of the mouth of Pharaoh. Numbers 32:31 perhaps is to relate the "Yahweh" to "servants" in an idea of mastery over them instead of using the divine name. Finally, Deuteronomy 1:20 is ascribing "Yahweh" to the title of God as "Yahweh Elohim."

⁸² Revelation 3:12.

where the article is not used, there are four passages, three of Paul and one of Matthew, which are key to understanding what name of God is being referred to by the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ.

The Apostle Paul was very exact in his writing and made use of the article more than any other writer of the Greek New Testament. A simple count of the number of occurrences of the article within the overall text of the Greek New Testament and a division of this number according to specific writers confirms that each writer, with the exception of Paul, employs it quantitatively in relatively the same ratio as that belonging to the entire text, which is 16%. Peter and Jude, providing less than 3% of the New Testament's word count, fall slightly lower than the other writers, making use of the article in only 11% of their text. Mark, James and the author of Hebrews, accounting together for 15% of the word count of the New Testament, each use the article in 13% of their respective works. A majority⁸³ of the words in the New Testament were delivered by Luke, John and Matthew, with the article being found in 15% of their scriptures. This leaves the Apostle Paul, with his unique style and address providing only 15% of the Greek New Testament's words but over 22% of the 19,861 occurrences of the article! In all, the article specifies nearly one in three of all the words authored by the apostle.⁸⁴ Thus, those examples of nouns left unspecified by the article in Paul's epistles are all the more revealing to this investigation because of his comparative penchant to the article's usage within the Greek New Testament genre. It is quite amazing, therefore, that he alone, of all the New Testament writers, records ΘΕΟΣ without the article as a subject, neither defined nor qualified in any other way.⁸⁵

There are four such verses in his Epistles, and they will now be used to determine the character of the One, to whom ΘΕΟΣ refers. The first, 2 Corinthians 5:19, states that θεὸς ἦν ἐν Χριστῷ κόσμον καταλλάσσων ἑαυτῷ (*theos en Christo kosmon katallasson heauto* – “God was in Christ, world reconciling to himself”), and is striking because it also includes the term, ΚΟΣΜΟΣ, without the article to specify it. In this manner, Paul colorfully illustrates the idea of God and his world: once created by him and given his life, lost in sin, and now being reconciled back to him in Christ. The world is not titled *the world* but, rather, is personified, named as “World.” God is seen here as the Creator, spoken of in Genesis 1, manifested in Jesus Christ to save the world, which he personally knows and loves. This is a very broad picture of God – one that includes the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit together.

The next passage, Galatians 6:7, states that God cannot be mocked. Literally no one can snub God, turn the nose up to him, ignore his will or pull the wool over his eyes. Again, God is seen not in the narrower sense of the Father God, but in the broader sense, as the Almighty, the omniscient, Triune God who, knows all and sees all:

“him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and the seven Spirits which are before his throne; and Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth.” (Revelation 1:4-5)

⁸³ Together they account for 67% of the text: Luke – 29%; John – 24%; Matthew – 15%.

⁸⁴ Based on the formula $a / (w - a) = \% w$, where a = the total number of occurrences of the article in all of Paul's epistles and w = the total number of words used in these epistles.

⁸⁵ For the sake of argument, this statement excludes the use of the undefined and unqualified ΘΕΟΣ as a subject in John 1:1c. It is interesting to note that, when used as a subject, even where the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ is defined or qualified by some other word, in each of the very rare cases it is a word (“one” or “only-begotten”) which indicates the unity of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit.

The third, Philippians 2:13, which we have already closely examined above, is like the first. It gives a clear picture of God as the Holy Spirit working in us by the power of the Son's redemptive work to accomplish the will and good pleasure of the Father.

The final place, 1 Thessalonians 2:5, is very revealing, because Paul invokes God as his witness. Understanding that, according to the Law of Moses, no testimony could be established without the witness of two or three others, clearly the apostle is calling on the Almighty, revealed from the earliest pages of the Hebrew Bible by the plural name, אֱלֹהִים (“Elohim”). He is calling on the triune God – the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit – to bear witness to the truth of what he speaks.

“Elohim” is the term used by God in revealing Himself at the moment of creation. It is first found in the very first verse of the Bible. Just as ΘΕΟΣ in the Greek New Testament, it is repeated over a thousand times in the Hebrew Scriptures. In the LXX it is always translated by ΘΕΟΣ. Of the 1,778 occurrences of ΘΕΟΣ in the nominative case in the LXX, only 195 are without the article. That is a rate of article usage of 89%. A total usage ratio of 78% applies to the 3,686 uses of ΘΕΟΣ (in all grammatical cases) in the LXX to translate various Hebrew terms. Though it would be difficult to see “Elohim” as a name per se, it definitely serves as a title for God, especially when taken alongside His revealed name, Yahweh.

Another place in the New Testament that contains ΘΕΟΣ without the article and reveals this truth is Matthew 27:46. This passage is unique, because ΘΕΟΣ here serves not as the subject or complement but as the addressee. While all 12 other instances in the Greek New Testament of ΘΕΟΣ as the addressee employ the article, it is not used here. This passage is recorded in both Greek and Aramaic and affords the opportunity to directly relate it to its corresponding verse in the Psalms of the Hebrew Bible. Thus, θεέ μου (*thee mou* – “God my”) is the exact equivalent of the Greek transliteration of the Aramaic אלי (*eli*) which is drawn directly from the Hebrew, אֱלֹהִים (“El”), of Psalm 22:2. אֱלֹהִים (“El”) is the root of אֱלֹהִים (“Elohim”) and, while אֱלֹהִים (“Elohim”) is plural (used especially in the opening of Genesis to describe the Triune fullness of the Godhead), אֱלֹהִים (“El”) is singular. As Gesenius states, the meaning of אֱלֹהִים (“El”) in reference to God is one of strength and might. He also makes clear two other points that are very important to this study. One, this title is applied to the Messiah. Two, it is used most frequently in a poetic sense. In fact an examination of the word reveals that it is used almost exclusively in Job, Psalms and Isaiah.⁸⁶

Thereby, it is entirely in keeping with the purpose of the Gospels, in presenting Jesus as the awaited Messiah recorded in the Hebrew Bible, to equate Him with the Almighty Creator revealed by both “Elohim” and “El,” but especially by “El,” because of its vital poetic nature. When this idea is applied to the three passages from Paul's Epistles examined above, it bears up very well, since they all evidence a poetic flare. The writings of John are more poetic than any other New Testament writings and have a very strong prophetic nature. Of all his writings, in particular the first 18 verses of his Gospel are arguably the most poetic part of the New Testament.

⁸⁶Wilhelm Gesenius, Samuel Prideaux Tregelles, *Gesenius' Hebrew and Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament Scriptures* (Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc, 2003), 45.

FURTHER CONCLUSIONS

On the basis of this analysis, it may be stated that in the Greek New Testament where the divine name, ΘΕΟΣ, is unspecified by the article or any other part of speech, those rare occurrences should be understood as specifying the divine poetic title, El, delivering the semantic quality of creativity, might and strength. This title implies the revelation of the Triune fullness of the Godhead in the only-begotten Son of God, Jesus Christ. Thus, as is the case with “the Christ,” an effectual Old Testament title (“El”) becomes a name when used in the New Testament. Ο ΘΕΟΣ is a title of the Father God, but ΘΕΟΣ without the article is a name, equivalent to El when given to God’s Son, the Messiah, Jesus Christ, and equivalent to Elohim when given to God in his fullness as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

One of the best proofs of this is found in Hebrews 11:16 where the divine name is stated twice in conjunction, at first with the article and then without: ὁ θεὸς θεὸς ἐπικαλεῖσθαι αὐτῶν (ho theos theos epikaleisthai auton – “the God ‘God’ calls himself of them”). Remember, in Genesis 17, God tells Abraham that he is יְיָ לֵא (‘‘El Shaddai’’) and that he will be Abraham’s Elohim, (literally, his “gods” – meaning that as God, he will tolerate no other gods before him). In Exodus 6:3, God told Moses that he had revealed himself to the Patriarchs as El Shaddai, but to Moses he was revealing himself by name as Yahweh. In Leviticus 26:12, he calls Israel to be his people and promises to be their Elohim. This theme repeats several times over throughout the passages of the New Testament where God is mentioned without the definite article. In Hebrews 11:16 the meaning is similar to saying, “The Father God calls himself their God (their Elohim, their Yahweh).” The same can be seen at Revelation 21:3 and 21:7.

We may conclude, therefore, that a purposeful relationship within the overall narrative of the Greek New Testament binds the name ΘΕΟΣ to the name Yahweh, revealed in the Hebrew Scriptures. In fact, there are three verses in the Hebrew Bible that are translated in the LXX using ΘΕΟΣ without the article for לֵא (‘‘El’’) in each of which El is correlated with יהוה (‘‘Yahweh’’) translated as ΚΥΠΙΟΣ. Genesis 21:33 proclaims that Yahweh is Eternal El, Psalm 50:1 (49:1 LXX) that El of Elohim is Yahweh, and Nahum 1:2 that El is jealous and avenging Yahweh. Hebrews 11:16 states that the Father God is God (Elohim), His name is Yahweh, the All-Existing One. John boldly states in no uncertain terms that God (El), whose name is Yahweh, the All-existing One, is the Word, the Son of God, Jesus Christ. He’s saying, in other words, that the Father and Son, though separate, are one. In essence we see confirmed in the New Testament the Old Testament truth that the Lord God, revealed in unified plurality in the beginning of the Bible, is One. El is in the bosom of Elohim, as the only-begotten God is in the bosom of the Father revealing the Almighty to the world.

HOW COULD JOHN 1:1 BETTER BE TRANSLATED?

John’s Gospel has a central theme of Christ’s deity which may be summed up in phrases such as: I and the Father are one (10:30); believe in God, believe also in me (14:1);⁸⁷ he that hath seen me

⁸⁷ This is recorded with the article, indicating the Father.

hath seen the Father (14:9); I am in the Father, and the Father is in me (14:11). Actually, no problem would be presented theologically had the Spirit inspired John to write ὁ θεός (ho theos – “the God”) as in John 1:1b instead of just θεός (theos – “God”) in John 1:1c, though many commentators, such as Robertson above, have postulated that this would have been erroneous. Had it been heretical for John to make “the Logos” equal to “the God,” than John would also have presented Jesus as preaching heresy, which is what the Pharisees judged he was doing. Equal in every way to the Father God is exactly who Jesus presented himself to be. The Gospel of John, for example, reaches a crescendo when Thomas, echoing the words of Deuteronomy 1:20, proclaims (20:28) perhaps the most amazing words in all of Scripture concerning Jesus: ὁ κύριός μου καὶ ὁ θεός μου (ho kurios mou kai ho theos mou – “the Lord of me and the God of me”). Grammatically this is very interesting, because John specifies both “Lord” and “God” with the article and clearly states that Jesus Christ is the rightful bearer of the titles “The Lord” and “The God.” That’s the beauty of how effectively the smallest member of the Greek vocabulary is used to establish the individuality and inseparability of the Father, Son and Holy Spirit as the one, true God.

If, then, it is not theologically inaccurate to equate “the Logos” and “the God,” the reason for John employing the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ in our text of John 1:1c must be of a narrative nature. The need to not confound 1:1b and 1:1c has already been discussed above in the quote of Luther’s commentary. As stated there, 1:1c unites the two persons of 1:1b, and then 1:2 separates them again into two individuals. Simply put, John wants his readers to understand two very important truths: one, the Father and Son are completely distinct persons; and two, the fullness of the Godhead – Father, Son and Holy Spirit – is completely manifested in the Word, Jesus Christ.

To recap: as recorded in John 1:1c, θεός (*theos* – “God”), should, of course, never be understood as “a god;” the context of the entire Gospel and of the entire Bible simply forbids this. “God” here must be understood as definite. It is just as serious an error to take it simply as qualitative to say that the Word is divine or godlike in His nature. Only as a proper name can “God” serve here both with qualitiveness (as an anarthrous predicate adjective would) and definition (as with the article it would). Grammatically, ὁ λόγος (*ho logos* – “the Word”) based on the use and nonuse of the article has come to be considered by modern scholars as the subject and θεός (*theos* – “God”) as the complement. This was not so up until the time of the Protestant Reformation. When “God” is understood as a name and “the Word” as a title, they are completely interchangeable at John 1:1c and the word order becomes only a matter of emphasis. Therefore, it is proper to follow the word order of the Greek in translating to English or any other language, keeping the emphasis on “God” as the subject of the clause.

All the evidence indicates that when John wrote καὶ θεός ἦν ὁ λόγος (*kai theos ho logos* – “...and God was the Word”) in 1:1c, he was indicating exactly what he expressed in 1:18b: μονογενῆς θεός (*monogenes theos* – “only-begotten God”): Jesus Christ is the one, true God, incarnated in flesh, born to us for our salvation. He is Elohim who manifested himself to the Patriarchs and the El of the Psalmists. He is Yahweh, the “Everlasting Father” (Isaiah 9:6). In no way does this diminish the overwhelming message of the Gospel, namely that the Son, as separate from the Father, was sent by the Father to be the Savior of the world. Nor in any way does it refute that the Father is Elohim, is El, is Yahweh (nor does it in any way diminish or deny

the fullness of the Holy Spirit in the Godhead). The mystery of the Trinity does not allow for saying that Jesus is only a part of the Godhead. How can the one God of Israel be divided?⁸⁸

The most unfortunate part of the translation "...and the Word was God" is its inability to express the beauty and depth of the hidden shades of meaning in the use of both the articulate Ο ΘΕΟΣ and the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ in relationship to "the Word" in this single verse. In any case, an English translation, not being able to duplicate the Greek use and nonuse of the article, must be as much a paraphrase as a Russian, which has no article whatsoever to employ. Is there, then, perhaps a more accurate and poetic way to express in modern English what John wrote more than nineteen centuries ago?

The simple arrangement of "...and God was the Word" actually seems to wonderfully bridge the gap between the "In the beginning..." of Genesis 1:1 and that of John 1:1. Elohim reveals himself by the name, Yahweh, in the Hebrew Bible, implying his self-existence from all eternity. He is *in the beginning* existing as one God, yet in the plurality of Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Moses writes that Elohim created all that exists by the speaking of his Word. John equates God with his Word by stating that he is the Word. This equation, especially when the Logos is understood as the person of Jesus Christ, is the very essence of God's nature, his righteous integrity.

In John 6:46, Jesus states that no one has seen "the Father" except for the one, who exists forever as ever "issuing from" – (παρά – *para*) – "the God."⁸⁹ We see here a direct correlation with John 1:18, where John describes Jesus as ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον {*ho on eis ton kolpon tou patros* – "the One existing (being) in (literally, "into," describing a flowing into and rest therein) the bosom of the Father"}. In both 1:18 and 6:46 Jesus is called by the title ὁ ὢν (*ho on* – "the Being" or "the Existing One" or "the One who is") equivalent to the divine name.⁹⁰ In 6:46 He is described as ever issuing out from the presence of "the God." In 1:18 He is described as ever flowing into the presence of "the Father." In 1:1b He has ever existed with "the God" – πρὸς τὸν θεόν (*pros ton theon*). The position in relation to "the God" as described by the preposition πρὸς (*pros*) could be translated as "at," "before," or "with." The meaning is that the Word has always existed in the closest proximity to the Father God: He alone rests eternally in the bosom of the Father, perceives the Father, flows eternally out from the Father, and reveals the Father God. What an incomparably beautiful relationship!

We see, therefore, that Ο ΘΕΟΣ ("the God" with the article) of John 6:46 is equal to Ο ΠΑΤΗΡ ("the Father") of John 1:18. And Ο ΛΟΓΟΣ ("the Word") of John 1:1 is equal to ΜΟΝΟΓΕΝΗΣ

⁸⁸ Jesus said that the first commandment of all is, "Hear, O Israel; the Lord our God is one Lord..." (Mk 12:29). Taken from Deuteronomy 6, this means literally that יהוה ("Yahweh") is אֱלֹהִים ("Elohim"), the one and only יהוה ("Yahweh"). Until this is heard and believed, no other commandment is of any value. That is why this truth is the central theme of John's Gospel.

⁸⁹ The Greek here reads ὁ ὢν παρὰ τοῦ θεοῦ (*ho on para tou theou* – "the One being (or existing) out from the God"). The genitive case delivers a meaning of the Son's issuance out from the Father. See Liddell, H. (1996) *Liddell and Scott's Greek-English Lexicon* (592). Oak Harbor, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc (1996); entry A-II.2.

⁹⁰ Ο ΩΝ (*ho on*) as a title for Jesus Christ is repeated, likewise, in Revelation 1:4,8; 4:8; 11:17; 16:5. Exodus 3:14 is translated by the LXX as Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν (*ego eimi ho on* – "I am the Being" or "the Existing One"). Based on this, Ο ΩΝ (*ho on*) is understood to be a title equal to the name יהוה ("Yahweh"). As such, it is often used as a part of the inscription on icons in the Russian Orthodox Church.

ΘΕΟΣ (“only-begotten God” without the article) of John 1:18. He is the Son of God, sent by the Father for the salvation of the world. He alone *ἑώρακεν* (*heuraken* – “has seen”) the Father, and he alone *ἐξηγήσατο* (*exegesato* – “has explained”) God. Yahweh is Jesus. God is the Word.

FINAL CONCLUSION

In the light of all the evidence presented above, both external and internal, we may conclude that the modern reader would best grasp the meaning of the original Greek text by simply not manipulating the word order and reading John 1:1c as “...*and God was the Word.*” The poetry and beauty of John’s prelude and the fullness of what he is asking his readers to believe could be translated into English by the simple addition of just a few minor changes in the text.

**“In *the* beginning was the Word,
And the Word was with the *Father* God,
And God was the Word.”**

The distinction of the articulate “God” as being understood as the Father God is so obvious to even the casual reader throughout all the New Testament that it would be a redundant and unnecessary paraphrase to tack on “the Father” to the hundreds of places where we read “God” and in the Greek it is specified by the article. For the student and preacher of the Word of God, however, this understanding of difference between the use and nonuse of the article to specify “God” in the Greek New Testament is quite important, especially in those rare cases where the anarthrous ΘΕΟΣ serves as an undefined subject or complement of a sentence. In the extremely rare cases noted above, where Ο ΘΕΟΣ and ΘΕΟΣ are used in extremely close proximity to each other, some distinction between them should be attempted for the reader who cannot access the Greek text. In the all-important case of John 1:1, this distinction should be strong, but not so strong as to turn the poetry into a wordy explanation. In the above, we see only two words (those in italics) added to the original text and no words detracted. The *the* is added in the first line to maintain the link with Genesis 1:1; the *Father* is added to line two to maintain the article and strengthen the distinction between the two persons of the Godhead; nothing is added in the third line in order to underscore the broader description of God and maintain the link with the God of the Hebrew Scripture, whose name is Yahweh.

APPENDICES

TABLE 1: PERCENTAGE OF USE OF THE ARTICLE IN DEFINING THE FIFTEEN MOST COMMON NOUNS OF THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT, (OTHER THAN THE FIVE DIVINE NAMES)

ΑΝΘΡΩΠΙΟΣ (*anthropos* – “man” as in “human”) – 551 : Subject 46%, Complement 48%

HΜΕΡΑ (*hemera* – “day”) – 389 : Subject 45%, Complement 56%

ΠΝΕΥΜΑ (*pneuma* – “spirit”) – 379 : Subject 84%, Complement 84%

ΥΙΟΣ (*huios* – “son”) – 379 : Subject 93%, Complement 60%

ΑΔΕΛΦΟΣ (*adelphos* – “brother”) – 343 : Subject 80%, Complement 75%

ΛΟΓΟΣ (*logos* – “word”) – 330 : Subject 95%, Complement 81%

ΟΥΡΑΝΟΣ (*ouranos* – “heaven”) – 274 : Subject 86%, Complement 85%

ΜΑΘΗΤΗΣ (*mathetes* – “disciple”) – 261 : Subject 98%, Complement 82%, Prep. Phrases 100%

ΓΗ (*ge* – “earth”) – 250 : Subject 78%, Complement 74%

ΟΝΟΜΑ (*honoma* – “name”) – 231 : Subject 53%, Complement 82%

ΑΝΗΡ (*aner* – “man” or “husband”) – 216 : Subject 40%, Complement 44%

ΓΥΝΗ (*gune* – “woman” or “wife”) – 215 : Subject 57%, Complement 63%

ΝΟΜΟΣ (*nomos* – “law”) – 195 : Subject 81%, Complement 48%

ΚΟΣΜΟΣ (*kosmos* – “world”) – 186 : Subject 97%, Complement 91%, Prep. Phrases 92%

ΧΕΙΡ (*cheir* – “hand”) – 178 : Subject 79%, Complement 91%

TABLE 2: COMPLETE LISTING OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WHERE THE DIVINE NAME ΘΕΟΣ (“GOD”) IS RECORDED WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIED BY THE ARTICLE WHEN USED AS A SUBJECT OR COMPLEMENT IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

The terms “defined” and “qualified” here and throughout refer to the actions of identifying or modifying by other parts of speech on the divine name, such as “only-begotten” acting as an adjective in John 1:18 to qualify “God.” Those instances where there is no definition or qualification are particularly striking in their nonuse of the article. In scriptures marked with an * “god” is in the singular but carries the understanding of “a god,” even if it is not translated as such into English. In those marked with an † it is plural and indicates false “gods.” There are a few verses such as 2 Corinthians 5:5 or Hebrews 3:4 where a single article defines a string of nouns and participles acting as nouns including ΘΕΟΣ (or other names in the following tables), but the name in question does not directly follow the article. Such instances are not included, because they are still specified by the article. John 1:1 has not been included for the sake of argument. It should be catalogued under “Neither Defined nor Qualified” as a Subject according to the position of this book.

SUBJECT

Defined or Qualified

John 1:18; 1 Corinthians 8:5 (2x)†; Ephesians 4:6; 1 Timothy 2:5

Neither Defined nor Qualified

2 Corinthians 5:19; Galatians 6:7; Philippians 2:13; 1 Thessalonians 2:5

COMPLEMENT (OBJECT)

Defined or Qualified

Mark 12:27*; Luke 20:38*; John 8:54; Acts 17:23*; Romans 16:27; 1 Corinthians 10:20; 2 Corinthians 6:16; 1 Thessalonians 1:9; Hebrews 9:14, 11:16; Jude 25; Revelation 21:3, 7

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 6:24; Luke 2:14, 16:13; John 1:18, 10:33*, 10:34†, 10:35†; Acts 5:29, 7:40†, 19:26†, 28:6*; Romans 8:8; 1 Corinthians 8:4*, 14:2; 2 Corinthians 5:11, 5:13; Galatians 2:19, 4:8, 4:9; 2 Thessalonians 1:8, 2:4*; Titus 1:16†, 3:8; 1 John 4:12; 2 John 9

ADDRESSEE

Defined or Qualified

Matthew 27:46 (2x)

TABLE 3: COMPLETE LISTING OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WHERE THE DIVINE NAME ΠΑΤΗΡ (“FATHER”) IS RECORDED WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIED BY THE ARTICLE WHEN USED AS A SUBJECT OR COMPLEMENT IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

Only in scriptures marked with an asterisk* is the reference to the Father God.

SUBJECT

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 10:21; Mark 13:12; Luke 12:53; Acts 16:1; Hebrews 12:7

COMPLEMENT (OBJECT)

Defined or Qualified

Matthew 23:9; John 5:18*, 8:41*, 8:42*; Romans 4:11, 4:12, 4:16, 4:17, 4:18; 1 Corinthians 4:15

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 10:37, 15:46, 19:29, 23:9; Mark 7:10, 10:29; 1 Peter 1:17*

TABLE 4: COMPLETE LISTING OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES WHERE THE DIVINE NAME ΧΡΙΣΤΟΣ (“CHRIST”) IS RECORDED WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIED BY THE ARTICLE WHEN USED AS A SUBJECT OR COMPLEMENT IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT

SUBJECT

Defined or Qualified

1 Corinthians 15:20, 15:23; Colossians 1:27; 1 Timothy 1:15, 1:16; Hebrews 9:11

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Romans 5:6, 5:8, 6:4, 6:9, 8:10, 10:4, 14:9, 14:15, 15:8, 15:18, 15:20; 1 Corinthians 1:17, 1:24, 3:23, 8:11, 15:3, 15:12, 15:13, 15:14, 15:16, 15:17; Galatians 2:17, 2:20, 2:21, 3:13, 4:19, 5:1, 5:2; Philippians 1:18, 1:20; Colossians 3:11; Hebrews 3:6, 9:24; 1 Peter 2:21, 3:18, 4:1

COMPLEMENT (OBJECT)

Defined or Qualified

Mark 9:41; Luke 2:11, 23:2; Romans 8:34; 1 Corinthians 1:23; 2 John 7

Neither Defined nor Qualified

John 1:41, 9:22; Acts 2:36; Romans 8:11, 10:6, 10:7; 1 Corinthians 11:1; 2 Corinthians 5:16; Galatians 3:16, 3:27; Philippians 1:21, 3:8

**TABLE 5: COMPLETE LISTING OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES
WHERE THE DIVINE NAME ΙΗΣΟΥΣ (“JESUS”) IS RECORDED
WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIED BY THE ARTICLE WHEN USED AS A
SUBJECT OR COMPLEMENT IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT
SUBJECT**

Defined or Qualified

Luke 3:23, 4:1, 24:15; John 1:24, 4:2, 4:44, 6:15; Acts 9:34; 1 Corinthians 13:5; Galatians 3:1; Philippians 2:11; Hebrews 13:8

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 20:30, 21:1, 21:12, 28:9; Mark 1:9; Luke 2:52, 3:21, 9:36, 22:48, 22:52; John 1:48, 1:50, 2:19, 3:3, 3:5, 3:10, 4:1, 4:10, 4:13, 4:47, 5:1, 6:3, 6:24, 6:43, 7:14, 7:21, 7:39, 8:1, 8:14, 8:19, 8:49, 8:54, 8:58, 8:59, 9:3, 9:35, 11:9, 11:20, 11:32, 11:33, 11:38, 11:46, 11:51, 12:16, 12:30, 12:36, 12:44, 13:7, 13:8, 13:31, 13:36, 13:38, 14:23, 16:31, 17:1, 18:1, 18:2, 18:4, 18:8, 18:20, 18:23, 18:34, 18:36, 19:11, 19:26, 20:15, 20:16, 20:17, 20:24, 20:31, 21:4, 21:13, 21:14; Acts 17:7, 18:28; 1 Corinthians 12:3 (2x); 1 Thessalonians 4:14; Hebrews 4:8, 7:22, 13:12; 1 John 2:22, 4:15, 5:1, 5:5

COMPLEMENT (OBJECT)

Defined or Qualified

Matthew 17:8; John 1:45, 17:3; Acts 7:55

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 1:21, 1:25, 27:16, 27:17 (2x), 27:22, 27:37, 28:5; Mark 16:6; Luke 1:31, 2:21; John 9:11, 5:15, 21:4; Acts 1:16, 5:30, 9:5, 13:33, 26:15; Romans 10:9; 1 Corinthians 2:2, 3:11; 2 Corinthians 4:5, 11:4; 2 Timothy 2:8; Hebrews 2:9; 1 John 4:2; 2 John 7

**TABLE 6: COMPLETE LISTING OF SCRIPTURE REFERENCES
WHERE THE DIVINE NAME ΚΥΡΙΟΣ (“LORD”)⁹¹ IS RECORDED
WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIED BY THE ARTICLE WHEN USED AS A
SUBJECT OR COMPLEMENT IN THE GREEK NEW TESTAMENT**

Scriptures marked with an asterisk* refer to Jesus, those written in italics are references made by Jesus (to his Father), and those written in bold lettering are references made before Jesus’ birth (still within the Old Testament context); all others are direct quotations from the LXX.

SUBJECT

Defined or Qualified

Mark 12:29; **Luke 1:32, 1:68**; Acts 2:39, 3:22, 15:17; Romans 9:29; 1 Corinthians 8:6*; 2 Corinthians 6:18; Ephesians 4:5*; *Revelation 1:8⁹²*, 4:8*, 18:8*, 19:6*, 19:16*, 22:5*

Neither Defined nor Qualified

⁹¹ Certain references to others besides Jesus which occur in the subject and complement without the article (Matt. 6:24; Luke 16:13; 1Cor. 8:5; Eph. 3:9; Col. 4:1a; 1Pet. 3:6) have not been included in these tables.

⁹² Other occurrences in the book (Rev. 11:8; 21:22; 22:6) employ the article.

Matthew 22:44, 27:10; Mark 12:36, 13:20; **Luke 1:25, 1:58**; Luke 20:42; Acts 7:49; Romans 4:8, 9:28, 12:19, 14:11; 1 Corinthians 3:20, 14:21; 2 Corinthians 6:17; 1 Thessalonians 4:6; 2 Timothy 2:19; Hebrews 7:21⁹³, 8:8, 8:9, 8:10, 10:16, 10:30, 12:6, 13:6; 2 Peter 2:9*, 3:9*; Jude 9⁹⁴, 14

COMPLEMENT (OBJECT)

Defined or Qualified

Matthew 4:7, 4:10, 12:8, 22:37; *Mark* 2:28, 12:29, 12:30; Luke 4:8, 4:12, 6:5, 10:27, 20:37; Acts 10:36*, 17:24*; Romans 10:12*; Revelation 17:14*

Neither Defined nor Qualified

Matthew 22:43, 22:45; Mark 12:37; **Luke 1:17**, 20:44; Acts 2:36*; Romans 10:9*, 14:6 (3x)*; 1 Corinthians 4:4*, 12:3*; Philippians 2:11*; Colossians 4:1*

TABLE 7: Author; amount of times he uses the article / his overall word count = the percentage of that word count that the article covers.

Luke; 5,355 / 35,712 = **15%**

John; 4,496 / 29,550 = **15%**

Paul; 4,400 / 18,417 = **24%**

Matthew; 2,788 / 18,203 = **15%**

Mark; 1,514 / 12,003 = **13%**

Hebrews; 698 / 5,261 = **13%**

Peter; 323 / 2,953 = **11%**

James; 232 / 1,852 = **13%**

Jude; 55 / 487 = **11%**

Greek New Testament Total; 19,861 / 124,438 = **16%**

⁹³ Other occurrences in the book (Heb. 7:14; 8:2) employ the article.

⁹⁴ In other occurrences both Jude and James employ the article (Jas. 4:15; 5:11; 5:15; Jude 5).