

Who or What is the “Logos” in John’s Prologue?

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From the earliest days of Christianity, the “Word” (Λόγος - Logos) in the prologue of John’s Gospel was universally understood as a proper name or title for the preincarnate Son of God. John’s own disciple, Ignatius,¹ explained what John meant by this term.

“Be not deceived with strange doctrines, nor with old fables, which are unprofitable. For if we still live according to the Jewish law, we acknowledge that we have not received grace. For the divinest prophets lived according to Christ Jesus. On this account also they were persecuted, being inspired by His grace to fully convince the unbelieving that there is one God, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His eternal Word, not proceeding forth from silence, and who in all things pleased Him that sent Him.”²

The words, “Who is” requires that Logos is a person. Also, the clause, “not proceeding forth from silence,” indicates that “Logos” was not a spoken word but a real Person, as the longer version of this letter explains.

“... [T]here is one God, the Almighty, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son, who is His Word, not spoken, but essential. For He is not the voice of an articulate utterance, but a substance begotten by divine power, who has in all things pleased Him that sent Him.”

Justin Martyr, born shortly after John’s death, elaborates further:

“But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, ‘And the Angel [Messenger] of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of

¹ Ignatius was pastor of the assembly in Antioch, from which Paul had previously been sent out on his mission to the Gentiles. Ignatius himself was personally taught by John, the author of the Gospel of John. His genuine Epistles exist in a short and long version, the original being the shorter version.

² Ignatius, Epistle to the Magnesians, ch. viii (short, original version)

*Jacob,' yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, 'Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me.' And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, 'No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him.' The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, **though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God**, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son."³*

Scores of similar examples can be produced from the first century after the death of John, showing that "Word" (Λόγος - Logos) of John's prologue was always taken as a personal name or title for a divine, conscious Person. There are no examples of any Christian writers contiguous with the time of the Apostles that understood "Logos" any other way.

Those who wish to deny the preexistence of the Son of God, such as Muslims and Unitarians, argue in favor of what Ignatius specifically denied – that "Word" refers to something spoken and not to something of substance. Unitarian Anthony Buzzard goes one step further, making "Logos" a "plan" in the mind of God.

*"Recent commentaries on John admit that despite long-standing tradition to the contrary, the term "word" in the famous prologue of John need not apply to the Son of God before He was born. Our translations imply belief in the traditional doctrine of incarnation by capitalizing "Word." But what it was that became flesh in John 1:14? Was it a preexisting person? Or was it the self-expressive activity of God, the Father, **His eternal plan**? A plan may take flesh, for example, when the design in the architect's mind finally takes shape as a house. What preexisted the visible bricks and mortar was the intention in the mind of the architect. Thus it is quite in order to read John 1:1-3a: "In the beginning was **the creative purpose of God**"; (just as wisdom was with God before creation, Prov. 8:30). "All things came into being through it."⁴*

³ Justin Martyr, First Apology, ch. lxiii

⁴ Buzzard, Anthony F., The Doctrine of the Trinity, pp. 190-191. Mr. Buzzard has a footnote (19) attached to this passage that says, "... Theophilus of Antioch's understanding of the 'logos' as God's plan, purpose, reason, and vision suggests as the translation of John 1:1, 'The Vision was with God and the Vision was God.'" However, Mr. Buzzard is misrepresenting Theophilus in an attempt to place his view within the purview of the early Christianity. Here is what Theophilus actually wrote on this topic. "God, then, **having His own Word internal within His own bowels, begat Him, emitting Him along with His own wisdom before all things.** He had this Word as a helper in the things that were created by Him, and by Him He made all things. He is called "governing principle," **because He rules, and is Lord of all things fashioned by Him.** He, then, being Spirit of

Mr. Buzzard's reasoning here is flawed for three important reasons:

1. The English idiom, concerning an idea or plan "becoming flesh," cannot be imposed upon the Greek language in which John wrote his Gospel. Unless clear examples from the Greek Scriptures or Greek literature can be produced where the concept of a plan becoming a reality can be expressed as that plan "becoming flesh" in Greek idiom, we should conclude that his reasoning is not logical. We cannot rightly impose a supposed English idiom or metaphor onto the Greek Scriptures. John's readers had no concept of a much later English idiom, and therefore could not have understood John that way.

2. The definition of the Greek word λόγος (logos) is not "plan." While it is true that this Greek noun includes the idea of something well thought out or reasoned, the core meaning is "message" (either spoken or written). The meaning of the word is **a concept articulated and communicated in a logical way by one person to another**. The noun λόγος is derived from the root verb, λέγω, which means to "tell" or to "communicate." The Greek noun that refers exclusively to the cognitive aspect of a devised plan (without the necessity of communication) is λογισμός⁵ – a computation, a devised plan, something thought out. It is masculine in gender because it is assumed that the process of reasoning is a part of a real person. The Greek word that refers to the finished plan or pattern itself (external to the mind) is the neuter noun – λόγιον.⁶ If John intended to point to a master plan in the mind of God he would have used λογισμός. If he intended to portray a finished "plan" external to God's mind he would have used λόγιον. It is virtually impossible that John would have used the masculine noun λόγος since there was no one "in the beginning" to communicate it to in the Unitarian model. The point is, John's Greek-speaking readers would not understand λόγος in this context the way that Unitarians claim. It would either require a hearer (if John meant a spoken word), or else it must be a proper name.

3. The appeal to Proverbs 8:30, where "Wisdom" was begotten and spoken of as a real Person, is assumed to be something abstract that is described by Solomon using personal language. However, both Jesus and Paul portrayed "Wisdom" in this passage as the preincarnate Son. See: http://www.4windsfellowships.net/articles/Proverbs_8.pdf

*God, and governing principle, and Wisdom, and power of the highest, **came down** upon the prophets, and through them **spoke** of the creation of the world and of all other things." (Theophilus of Antioch, To Autolycus, Bk. I, ch. x). When the Word and Wisdom was "begotten" by God, He is thereafter spoken of as a person who acts of His own volition. This is not an inanimate or abstract thing, but a conscious being. Portraying Theophilus as a Unitarian is deceptive to say the least.*

⁵ Examples in the LXX are: Psalm 32:10-11; Prov. 6:18; Prov. 15:22,26; Jer. 11:19; Ezek. 38:10; Dan. 11:24

⁶ Examples in the LXX are: Psalm 119:41,50,123; Isa. 28:13. It is often rendered "oracle"

Proof from the Grammar and Syntax of Verse 1

That Logos must be understood as a person and not an abstract “plan” can be proven from the text itself. John wrote that Logos was **with God**, and Logos **was God**. The first clause, “Logos was with God” shows that Logos’s existence was external to God. The word translated “with” is the Greek preposition “πρὸς,”⁷ which means “in company with” when used with stative verbs⁸ rather than action verbs.⁹ Thus, Logos was not merely in the mind of God, but was necessarily external to God, in the company or presence of God. The second clause, “and Logos was God,” is a predicate nominative (both nouns are in the nominative case). The word “God” θεὸς is always a personal noun. It is not an adjective or a possessive. Since “Logos was God,” and since “God” always describes a Person, Logos must be a person. No inanimate or abstract thing can rightly be called “God.”

Mr. Buzzard tries to avoid the obvious. He writes,

“The Word is not identical with God. It is distinguished from God in some sense by being ‘with Him.’ The Word was not a second God. If then, the Word is neither identical with God (how can it be if it is also ‘with God’?) nor an independent God, the phrase, ‘the Word was with God’ can only mean, as A. E. Harvey points out, ‘that the word was an expression or reflection of God (cf. Wisdom 7:25-6), that it was in some sense divine, ie, of God.’”¹⁰

But if John meant that Logos was “of God” he would have used the genitive case – θεοῦ, “of God.” Or if John meant that Logos had certain divine qualities he would have written κατὰ θεόν (lit. in accord with God), an expression elsewhere translated “godly,” attributing certain divine qualities to another noun.¹¹ But neither of these are what John actually wrote! He used the personal, masculine noun “God” in the nominative case! Logos was God – a person.

The conclusion in the above quote is not driven by a proper handling of the grammar and syntax, or by considering the context. Rather, it is forced by Mr. Buzzard’s own Unitarian presuppositions imposed upon John’s Gospel – that there cannot be two distinct individuals referred to by the title “God,” who can be in the company of one another.

⁷ This preposition is usually used of persons.

⁸ The verb here is “ἦν” (was) which is a stative verb.

⁹ Wallace, Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics, p. 380

¹⁰ Buzzard, pp. 191-200

¹¹ Cf. 2 Cor. 7:9,10,11

His reasoning is as follows:

1. Logos cannot be identical to the God because Logos is said to be distinct from God. (This is true.)
2. Logos cannot be a distinct Person called "God" because that would make Him a "second God." (a presupposition)
3. Thus, we are forced to take John's statement in a way that is grammatically incorrect, interpreting the word "God" as an adjective instead of a personal noun.

The real problem with Mr. Buzzard's interpretation is his incorrect understanding of the personal noun "God," and his unwillingness to accept the concept that another, besides the God, the Sovereign over all, can be properly called "God." Yet this presupposition is demonstrably false, and John's readers knew it!

Psalm 45:1-7

1 My heart is overflowing with a good theme; I recite my composition concerning the King; My tongue is the pen of a ready writer.

2 You are fairer than the sons of men; Grace is poured upon Your lips; Therefore God has blessed You forever.

3 Gird Your sword upon Your thigh, O Mighty One, With Your glory and Your majesty.

4 And in Your majesty ride prosperously because of truth, humility, and righteousness; And Your right hand shall teach You awesome things.

5 Your arrows are sharp in the heart of the King's enemies; The peoples fall under You.

*6 Your throne, **O God**, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your kingdom.*

*7 You love righteousness and hate wickedness; **Therefore God, Your God**, has anointed You With the oil of gladness more than Your companions.*

This passage was quoted by Paul in Hebrews 1 and attributed to David's speaking to the Son of God! David referred to two distinct individuals in this Psalm, both called "God" (θεός LXX). David called the Son "God" while at the same time distinguishing Him from "Your God" (the Son's own God). John's readers were intimately familiar with this Psalm. Furthermore, the Psalm begins in the LXX as follows: ἐξηρέξατο ἡ καρδία μου λόγον ἀγαθόν, lit. "My heart has emitted excellent **Logos**." The entire Psalm is about the Messiah, whom Paul calls the "Son." And this verse was repeatedly used by

the earliest Christians as an example of “Logos” referring to the Son of God¹² in a “mystery”¹³ or an enigma.

What Unitarians fail to understand is that the term “God” is a relational term, just like “master,” “servant,” “father,” and “wife.” Relational terms define a personal relationship between two persons or entities. In order to call YHVH “God” we must understand that He is the Sovereign over all of His subjects and creation. He cannot be called “God” in a vacuum, without this relationship in view. In the above Psalm, David referred to the Son as “God” simply because He was alluding to His ultimate, promised position of sovereignty in His Kingdom when the Son of God will reign over the whole earth, including nature.¹⁴ This is clearly expressed in the very next clause: “*A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom.*” It is because the Son has been granted the role of sole Sovereign in the coming Kingdom¹⁵ that David can refer to Him as “God.” And this role was promised to the Son at the very beginning, when He was “begotten” on day one of creation.

Psalm 2:7-9 LXX (My Translation)

6 But I have been made King by Him on Zion His holy mountain,

7 declaring the ordinance of the Lord: the Lord said to me, “You are my Son, today have I begotten You.

8 Ask of Me and I will give You the nations for Your inheritance, and the ends of the land for Your possession.

9 You will shepherd them with a rod of iron. You will dash them in pieces like a potter’s vessel.

Paul refers to the Son as “*the First-begotten of all creation*”¹⁶ and “*The Beginning.*”¹⁷ Jesus referred to Himself as “*the Beginning of the creation of God.*”¹⁸ This is precisely what Psalm 2 teaches. On the very DAY that God “begat” His “only-begotten Son,” He communicated to Him His future role as “God” on Mount Zion in His future Kingdom.

¹² Victorinus, *On the Creation of the World*, quotes this passage as follows: “*But the author of the whole creation is Jesus. His name is the Word; for thus His Father says: “My heart hath emitted a good word.” John the evangelist thus says: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by Him, and without Him was nothing made that was made.*”

¹³ God has kept the identity of His Son concealed in Old Testament times because it was necessary to His purpose for the crucifixion (1 Cor. 2:6-8; Col. 2:2-3).

¹⁴ Heb. 2:5-9

¹⁵ Psalm 2

¹⁶ Col. 1:15

¹⁷ Col. 1:18

¹⁸ Rev. 3:14

Mr. Buzzard's mistake, arriving at his conclusion based on the process of elimination using his own presuppositions, is that he has eliminated something that the Bible plainly teaches in the above Psalm, something with which John's readers were intimately familiar! By imposing his own (false) presupposition, he then accepts an interpretation that is grammatically impossible – taking "God" as an adjective instead of a personal noun.

Proof from the Grammar and Syntax of Verses 10-12

Much of the debate concerning John 1 centers on the masculine personal pronouns (He, Him). Much is made of the fact that these pronouns must be masculine simply because "Logos" is masculine, and in Greek pronouns must match the number and gender their antecedent. Therefore, if "Logos" is not the name or title of a person, but an impersonal thing, even though the pronouns are masculine in Greek they should be understood in English as "it" instead of "Him." While this is technically true, the opposite is also true. That is, if Logos is indeed a Person (as the clause "and Logos was God" absolutely requires because "God" is a personal noun), then the masculine personal pronouns should be understood in English as "He / Him / His." To settle this issue further, we need only consider verses 10-12.

John 1:10-12

10 He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him.

11 He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him.

12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name:

There can be no doubt that all of the underlined pronouns refer to the same antecedent. Secondly, the same entity called "Logos" in verses 1-3 must be the referent. This is necessary because what was attributed to Logos in verse 3 (the creation of all things) is here attributed to the one referred to by the masculine personal pronouns (He / Him / His). The clause *ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο* (*the world was made through Him – vs. 10*) uses the third person masculine pronoun *αὐτοῦ*. John wrote in verse 3 "*All things were made through Him (Logos), and without Him nothing was made that was made.*" The word "through" in both passages is the preposition *διὰ* (*dia*) in Greek. When this preposition takes an object in the genitive case, it points to something accomplished through employing another as an agent.¹⁹

¹⁹ Wallace, p. 368

Therefore, since nothing was made without employing “Logos” as God’s personal agent (vs. 3), and since verse 10 says that the world was made through (διὰ) “Him,” the masculine personal pronoun αὐτοῦ (Him) in verse 10 must refer to Logos since He is the one previously said to be the agent of creation in verse 3.

Notice that the masculine personal pronouns (and third person verbs) continue to refer to the same antecedent all the way through verses 10-12. If we were to replace the pronouns that are required to refer back to Logos with the word “Logos,” here is how the text would read.

John 1:10-12

10 Logos was in the world, and the world was made through Logos [see vs. 3], and the world did not know Logos.

11 Logos came to Logos’ own [things – neuter], and Logos’ own [people – masculine] did not receive Logos.

*12 But as many as received Logos, to them Logos gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in **the name of Logos.***

Now, consider the difficulties that emerge if we take the personal pronouns to refer to God’s master “Plan,” an abstract thing.

John 1:10-12

10 The Plan was in the world, and the world was made through the Plan, and the world did not know the Plan.

11 The Plan came to the Plan’s own (things – neuter), and the Plan’s own (people – masculine) did not receive the Plan.

12 But as many as received the Plan, to them the Plan gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in the Plan’s name:

This is absurd for the following reasons: The term “own (things)” ἴδια points to ownership. His “own things” refers to what was created through Him and was promised to Him (“*the ends of the land*” in Psalm 2). Likewise, His “own people” οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν (lit. the own people of Himself) points to a people that were His by ownership (“*the nations as Your inheritance*” Psalm 2)! How can a “plan” own anything or a class of people? Finally, the children of God are said to be those who “believe in the Plan’s name!” What name would that be? Here is the answer: “*He was clothed with a robe dipped in blood, and **His name is called Logos of God.***”²⁰ “Logos” is clearly a personal name or title by John’s own admission!

²⁰ Rev. 19:13

In an attempt to sidestep the obvious and essential connection of the masculine personal pronouns in verses 10-12 to Logos in verse 1, Anthony Buzzard offered his own translation which actually alters the text itself of John's Gospel, by creating a NEW antecedent for the masculine personal pronouns – the "Light himself." Here is his translation of verses 6-10.

*"6 There came on the scene of history a man commissioned by God. His name was John. 7 This man came as a witness [a preacher of the Gospel of the Kingdom, Matt. 3:2] so that he might bear witness to the light and that everyone might believe through him. 8 He was not **the Light himself**, but he witnessed concerning the light. 9 This was the genuine light which enlightens every man coming into the world. 10 He was in the world and the world came into existence through him, and the world did not recognize him. 11 He came to his own land and his own people did not accept him. 12 As many, however, as did accept him, to these he gave the right to become children of God — namely the ones believing in his Gospel revelation, his religion."*²¹

But even this blatant manipulation of John's words does not eliminate the connection to Logos in verse 1 entirely. Mr. Buzzard's intent was to introduce the human Jesus into the text here in order to create an antecedent for the masculine pronouns in verses 10-12. He accomplished this by capitalizing "Light" and adding the word "himself." Aside from the fact that this is not what John actually wrote, a massive problem still remains. The creation is attributed to "Logos" (vs. 3) and to Mr. Buzzard's "the Light himself" (the human Jesus) in verse 10, using identical language!

Verse 3: All things δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (originated through Him)

Verse 10: The world δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο (originated through Him)

Mr. Buzzard's translation implies that "Him" in verse 3 is not "Him" in verse 10, yet the language is identical! And how could the world originate through the Man Jesus unless He was present at creation?

Mr. Buzzard has manipulated John's Gospel in a way that might seem acceptable English grammar, but necessarily transgresses the rules of Greek grammar. By capitalizing the word "Light" and adding the masculine pronoun "himself," Mr. Buzzard has made "Light" a proper noun, a name or title of a person (the Man Jesus). By adding "himself" (masculine) he provides the following masculine personal pronouns (He, Him, His) with a new antecedent in his translation, so that they need not

²¹ <http://www.focusonthekingdom.org/John.htm>

point back to Logos. Instead they all point to “the Light himself,” added by Mr. Buzzard.

But the masculine personal pronouns cannot have the word “light” as their antecedent because all third person pronouns must agree in number and gender with their antecedent. This is because a third-person pronoun’s “*gender and number are determined by its antecedent.*”²² The word “light” φωτός (photos) is neuter in gender. But the pronouns in verses 10-12 are all masculine. Mr. Buzzard added the masculine English word “himself” because of the huge grammatical problem that his interpretation created with the grammar. But even if John had intended to portray “light” as a name or title for Jesus, he still would be required by Greek grammar to put the pronouns in the neuter gender unless he actually added the masculine word “himself” after “light” in order to provide a grammatically correct antecedent for the masculine pronouns.

Furthermore, all throughout John’s Gospel, “light” is a metaphor for God’s revelation. It is never the proper name or title for Jesus.²³ While it is true that Jesus was the source of “light” (God’s revelation), He was not literally “light.” Even in this immediate context, it is clear that “light” cannot be referring to a person.

*4 In Him was life, and the life was **the light of men.***

*5 And **the light shines** in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend **it.***

“In Him” (ἐν αὐτῷ - masculine) must refer to Logos. “Light” was equated with “life,” which was said to be “in Him” (Logos). Notice in verse 5 that the pronoun “it” is neuter and has “light” as its antecedent. Again, the pronouns in verses 10-12 are all masculine. Nor can we claim that “light” is a metaphor for Jesus as in “*I am the light of the world.*”²⁴ The use of metaphor does not allow for the violation of the grammar. If John was referring to Jesus using “Light” as a proper noun, he then would have had to use all neuter pronouns in verses 10-12 or else he would have to add the word “Himself” in the Greek text as Mr. Buzzard has done in English.

John’s Greek-speaking readers absolutely would NOT and could NOT understand John 1 as Unitarians attempt to explain it. It is utterly impossible. The only way to understand John’s prologue this way is to run roughshod over the grammar. Here is a correct translation of John’s prologue.

²² Mounce, William D., Basics of Biblical Greek, p. 101

²³ John 3:19-21

²⁴ John 8:12

John 1:1-18 LGV²⁵

1 In the beginning was Logos, and Logos was with God, and Logos was God. 2 This one was in the beginning with God. 3 Everything originated through Him, and without Him nothing originated which has originated. 4 In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. 5 And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not take hold of it.

6 (A man arrived having been commissioned from God whose name was John. This one came for a witness, so that he should testify concerning the light 7 so that all may believe through him. 8 He was not the light, but [came] so that he should testify concerning the light, 9 that was the true light which enlightens every man coming into the world).

10 He was in the world, and the world originated through Him, and the world did not know Him. 11 He came into His own [things], and His own [people] did not receive Him. 12 But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those believing unto the name of Him 13 who was Begotten, not out of bloods, nor out of the will of the flesh, nor out of the will of a man, but out of God. 14 And Logos became flesh, and sojourned among us, and we gazed upon His glory, glory as of the Only-Begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

15 (John testifies concerning Him, and has exclaimed, saying, "This was the one whom I said, 'The one coming after me has originated before me,' because He used to be before me").

16 And out of the fullness of Him we have received, and grace for grace 17 (because the Law was given through Moses; [but] grace and truth originated through Jesus the Anointed). 18 No one has seen God at any time. The Only-Begotten Son, the one being unto the Father's bosom, that one declared Him.

John the Baptist's Testimony to Jesus' Origin before John was Born

In writing his Gospel, John often called witnesses to confirm the points he intended to make, especially quoting John the Baptist and Jesus Himself. In verse 15, John quoted John the Baptist in order to support his point about the preexistence of the Son as "Logos," the agent of creation who "became flesh" as "the Only-begotten of the Father."²⁶ John the Baptist said that Jesus "*has originated before me,*" and that Jesus "*used to be before me.*" Yet the synoptic Gospels record that John the Baptist's mother was in her sixth month when Mary conceived.²⁷ Thus, John was six months older than Jesus in reference to human existence.

Let's compare the LGV with Mr. Buzzard's translation of John the Baptist's words.

²⁵ www.4windsfellowships.net/LGV/LGV_John.pdf

²⁶ Vs. 14

²⁷ Luke 1:26,36

Buzzard: *'The one coming after me has now moved ahead of me, because he always was my superior.'*²⁸

Warner: *'The one coming after me has originated before me, because He used to be [exist] before me.'*

The clause which I have translated "has originated before me" is ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν. The verb γέγονεν means "became," having two possible nuances:

1. Something that came into existence for the first time, **originated**, as in vs. 3, "all things **originated** through Him."
2. A transition from one thing to another, as in vs. 14 "Logos **became** flesh."

I have used the first possibility, but Mr. Buzzard has chosen the second possibility. Regarding the word ἔμπροσθέν which I translated "before" but Mr. Buzzard translated "ahead of," either rendering is correct. However, notice John the Baptist's further explanation using the same word: "I said, 'I am not the Christ,' but, 'I have been sent **before** [ἔμπροσθεν] Him."²⁹ That John did not mean "ahead of" in place or priority but rather in sequence is absolutely clear, because this statement would then indicate that when John was sent he ranked higher (ahead of) Jesus. Clearly, John's meaning is that he preceded Jesus as a forerunner, to prepare the way before He arrived as prophesied by Malachi.³⁰ This was John's further explanation about what he said in John 1:15. Therefore, ἔμπροσθέν must refer to "ahead of" or "before" **in sequence**, not priority or rank.

The reason that most English translations render this clause differently than I have is because the translators were Trinitarians. They do not believe that the Son of God had ANY "origin" in time. They also realized that John was older than Jesus. Therefore, translating this clause as referring to sequence would severely damage their Trinitarian presuppositions that Logos had no beginning or origin. Instead, they were forced to take γέγονεν as "became" in the sense of transition rather than "originated." However, when this bias is removed, the text reads very naturally as I have translated it with γέγονεν rendered "has originated" (perfect tense).

The last clause in verse 15 is πρῶτός μου ἦν "He used to be before me." Mr. Buzzard has translated it "he always was my superior." Yet in doing so, he has violated the grammar

²⁸ <http://www.focusonthekingdom.org/John.htm>

²⁹ John 3:28

³⁰ Mal. 3:1

once again. The verb ἦν is the verb of being in the imperfect tense. The imperfect implies a situation in the past that existed over a period of time. It does not imply that the past situation was still current. Once again, Mr. Buzzard puts his own words in John's mouth in order to change the meaning of what he actually wrote. Mr. Buzzard added the word "always" in order to lessen the problem for himself, making it appear that the situation described was timeless. He then takes πρῶτος to mean "superior" instead of "before" in sequence. Granted, "superior" is a possible interpretation. But the careful reader should notice that Mr. Buzzard's translation created a train wreck concerning the tenses of the two verbs. If John the Baptist was saying that Jesus "has now moved" (perfect tense) into the superior position, how then can he say that He "always was" (imperfect tense) in the superior position? These two verb tenses are virtually opposite in force. The perfect tense refers to a present condition that is the result of a past action. But the imperfect tense implies a past situation that no longer exists! Thus, these two verbs collide with each other and turn John's words into something unintelligible. Jesus could not "move ahead" (become superior in rank) in relation to John if He was "always" John's "superior," or more correctly, if He "used to be" John's "superior."

On the other hand, if we remove the Trinitarian bias against the Logos having an "origin," and if we then translate this verse consistent with John's usage of terminology, my translation is perfectly accurate and natural. It is hard to escape the fact that John included the testimony of John the Baptist to support his thesis in this prologue, that Logos is Jesus, and He originated before John the Baptist because He was "in the beginning with God." He simply called John the Baptist as a witness to this fact.

Finally, consider verse 18 which declares that no man has ever seen God. The words "at any time" cannot be limited to after the incarnation. Then John's declaration that "the only-begotten Son" is the one who has made God known is set in juxtaposition to preceding statement. Consequently, the Son is the one who has made God known "at any time" (all time) which requires that we extend this all the way back to "the beginning." The Son, the "only-begotten of the Father,"³¹ who is "the First-begotten of all creation,"³² and "who is The Beginning,"³³ and "The Beginning of the creation of God,"³⁴ is Logos who was "in the beginning with God" through whom all things were created.³⁵ We have therefore proven conclusively the following points:

³¹ v. 14

³² Col. 1:15

³³ Col. 1:18

³⁴ Rev. 3:14

³⁵ Col. 1:15-18

1. Logos was indeed "God," a Person whom David acknowledged.
2. John tells us that Logos was a name or title for Jesus (Rev. 19:13)
3. The one in whose name we trust, who gives us the right to be called children of God, can grammatically only refer to the person called "Logos" in this context.
4. John the Baptist claimed that Jesus originated before him.
5. No one has ever seen the Father, the Son has always been His personal agent. Thus, all who are said to have seen God in the Old Testament have seen the Son.