

The Gospel of John

1.b

²This One was in *the* beginning with God. [Jn. 1:2]

[Jn. 1:2a.] “This One” (Ὁ ὄντως). He means the One first named, the Logos. He repeats for clarity, which is characteristic of St. John’s style.

[Jn. 1:2b.] Saint Chrysostom: “With good reason does the Evangelist John commence his narrative from the eternal subsistence. For while Matthew enters upon His relation from Herod the king, Luke from Tiberius Cæsar, and Mark from the baptism of John, this apostle, leaving alone all these things, ascends beyond all time or age...John has declared to us His co-eternity with God.” [Hom. 4, *P.G.* 59:27 (col. 47).]

³All things came into being through Him, and without Him not even one *thing* came into being that has come to be. [Jn. 1:3]

God as Trinity Creates all things out of nothing (Nicene Creed)

I believe in one God, **Father** Almighty, *Creator of heaven and earth*, and of all things visible and invisible... And in one **Lord Jesus Christ**, the only-begotten Son of God, begotten of the Father before all ages; Light of Light, true God of true God, begotten, not created, of one essence with the Father...And in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, *the Creator of Life*, Who proceeds from the Father, Who together with the Father and the Son is worshipped and glorified, Who spoke through the prophets. (Nicene Creed)

through Whom all things were made.

- (...and to enlighten all *as to* what *is* the dispensation of the mystery which hath been hidden from the ages in God, Who created all things through Jesus Christ, [Eph. 3:9])
- “Who (The Son of God) is *the* image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. ¹⁶For **in Him were all things created**, the things in the heavens and the things upon the earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or authorities. All things *through Him* and **to Him** have been created. ¹⁷And He is before all things, and **in Him** all things have come into existence. [Col. 1:15-17]

Saint Chrysostom: “‘In Him were all things created’ (ἐν Αὐτῷ ἐκτίσθη τὰ πάντα), he says, ‘through Him’ (δι’ Αὐτοῦ), and ‘to Him’ (εἰς Αὐτόν). Behold, ‘in Him,’ is ‘through Him,’ for having said ‘in Him,’ he added, ‘through Him.’ But what *is* ‘to Him’? It is this: the subsistence (hypostasis, existence comes from him) of all things hangs on Him. Not only did He Himself bring them out of nothing into being, but Himself holds together them now, so that were they severed from His providence, they would be destroyed and ruined.” [Hom. 3, *P.G.* 62:344 (col. 519).]

To sin is to cease to exist

“Certainly sin was not made through Him, and it is clear that sin is nothing and that human beings become nothing when they sin (Augustine).”

Saint Chrysostom: “But if you think the expression ‘through’ is making Him inferior, hear him (David) saying, ‘In the beginning, O Lord, You did lay the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the works of Your hands [Ps. 101(102):25].’ What he had said of the Father as Creator he is saying this concerning the Son...Now if the expression ‘through Him’ is used here, it is for no other reason but that no one suspect that the Son is unbegotten (created). For in respect to the dignity of Creator He holds in nothing inferior to the Father.” [Hom. 5, *P.G.* 59:37 (col. 56).]

⁴In Him was life, and the Life was the light of men. [Jn. 1:4]

Saint Hilary: “None of the things that were created in Him was made without Him, for He is the Life which made their creation possible.” [*On the Trinity*, Bk. II(20), in *Nicene*, 2nd Ser., IX:57.]

Saint Chrysostom: “‘He was life,’ pointing out the preservation of the creation, that He Himself is the Life of all things.” [Hom. 2 on Hebrews, *P.G.* 63:18 (col. 25).]

- Chrysostom: this does not refer to the Holy Spirit as some claim but to the Word of God.
- Chrysostom: a hint of the resurrection since ‘life’ has come to be with us, the power of death is dissolved.

“For as (it is) with the fountain, which is the mother of the great deeps – however much you take away, you do not lessen the fountain – so it is with the energy of the Only Begotten. However much you believe has been produced and made by it, it has not diminished...Light however many millions of times it may enlighten, suffers no diminution of its own brightness...if it were necessary that ten thousand or even an infinite number of worlds were created, he still remains the same, sufficient for them all not merely to produce but also control them after their creation. For the world ‘life’ here refers not merely to the act of creation but also to the providence engaged in maintaining the things created (Chrysostom, John 5.3).”

...and the Life was the light of men. [Jn. 1:4]

Augustine: “He accepted death from what was ours (we created death), in order to give us life from what was His. How did He get death from what was ours? The Word became flesh and dwelt among us. He accepted from us here what He would offer for us. And where did life come from for us? ‘And the life was the light of men.’ He was life for us; we were death for Him.”

Illumination of the Soul

“Once this kind of life (eternal) exists in us, it also becomes the foundation of the light of knowledge (Origen).”

Sin blinds us from the light of understanding

“Suppose as in the case of a blind person placed in front of the sun, the sun is present to him but he cannot see it. This is how every foolish person, every unjust person is blind in the heart...let (us) become pure, that we may be able to see God (Augustine).”

Temptations and falling into darkness

“Let us not be troubled when we are plunged into darkness, especially if we are not the cause of it ourselves. For this darkness is brought about by divine providence for reasons that are known only to God. Our soul becomes suffocated and placed, as it were, in the middle of a storm system...It is an hour filled with despair and fear...but those who by the distress of such an hour know that in the end it is followed by a change. God never leaves a soul for a whole day in such a state otherwise it would lose life and Christian hope...blessed is he who endures such temptations...great will be the stability and the strength to which he will come after that. This struggle will not be over all at once, however; neither will grace come and dwell in the soul completely at once, but gradually. After grace, the trial returns...We do not expect complete deliverance from it here, nor do we expect complete consolation (grace). (Isaac of Nineveh).”

Saint Maximus the Confessor: “The Logos always, and in all, wants to effect the mystery of His embodiment.” [*Ambigua* 7, P.G. 91:1084CD.] Saint Maximus uses the term Logos or *logos* or *logoi* in the sense of reason, rationale, or ruling principles. He upholds that all things are defined through their own *logoi* (ruling principles, in Latin *rationes*), as well as by those contiguous with them. They are circumscribed by these, but at the same time all these *logoi* participate in the cosmic Logos, Who is Christ the Logos present in the *logoi* of things. On account of the presence of the Logos in all things, holding their *logoi* together, the world is pregnant with divine reality, and knowledge of it—through the rational quality of man, his own *logos*—and is itself a kind of communion with God, a participation in divine things through the aims and purposes that are recognized in creation. [*Man and the Cosmos: The Vision of St. Maximus the Confessor*, 86, 127.] “In perceiving naturally all the *logoi* that are in the beings, in the infinity of which it contemplates the energies of God, the mind, to say the truth, makes numerous and infinite the differences of the divine energies it perceives. Indeed, the scientific research of what is really true will have its forces weakened and its procedure embarrassed, if the mind cannot comprehend how God is in the *logos* of every special thing and likewise in all the *logoi* according to which all things exist, God Who is truly none of the beings and yet truly all the beings and above all the beings. Thus, in a proper sense, all divine energy signifies God properly, indivisibly and totally via that energy in everything, whatever the *logos* may be which is capable of conceiving exactly and telling how God is it without being divided and without being diversely spread out in the infinite differences of being in which He is as Being....” [*Ambigua* 22, P.G. 91:1257AB, in *Man and the Cosmos*, 140.]