



CLARE PRIORY CHRISTMAS 2016

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THE PROLOGUE

# PROGRAMME

- ▶ Introduction to John
- ▶ **The history of the Prologue**
- ▶ John the Baptist
- ▶ Background in Wisdom and Philosophy
- ▶ Commentary I
- ▶ Commentary II

### SEQUENCE

- ▶ Criteria
- ▶ Prose and poetry
- ▶ Unease with John
- ▶ Original Hymn?
- ▶ Modifications and additions
- ▶ Why the new version?

### CRITERIA

- ▶ Narrative insertions in the poetry
- ▶ Whatever disturbs the rhythm
- ▶ Adjustments to the original which are not part of Johannine theology
- ▶ Adjustments which fit exactly the Evangelist's theology

### CRITERIA

- ▶ 3b and without him not one thing came into being.
- ▶ 6 There was a man sent from God, whose name was John.  
7 He came as a witness to testify to the light, so that all might believe through him. 8 He himself was not the light, but he came to testify to the light. 9 The true light, which enlightens everyone, was coming into the world. 12c who believed in his name 13 who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God.

### CRITERIA

- ▶ John the Baptist caused anxiety because:
- ▶ John baptised Jesus
- ▶ Jesus was originally a disciples of John
- ▶ Followers of John the Baptist are significant right up to the end of the NT period
- ▶ They still exist today: the Mandaeans.

## PROSE AND POETRY

The Prologue Hymn Source	Wisdom Parallels
<sup>10</sup> In the <i>world</i> she was and the <i>world</i> through her became (ἐγένετο)	Wis 8:1; Sir 24:6
And the <i>world</i> did not know her.	Prov 1:29; Bar 3:23.28.31
<sup>11</sup> Unto her <i>own</i> (τὰ ἴδια) she came, And her own (οἱ ἴδιοι) did not <i>receive</i> (οὐ παρέλαβον) her	Sir 24:8-12; 1 Enoch 42:1-2.
<sup>12a</sup> But as many as <i>received</i> (ἔλαβον) her,	
<sup>12b</sup> She gave them authority children of God (τέκνα θεοῦ) to become (γενέσθαι)	Wis 7:14.27; Sir 6:20-22; 15:7
<sup>14a/b</sup> And Wisdom tabernacled among us (nb. ἔσκήνωσεν)	Sir 24:8.10 (nb. σκηνή); Wis 9:10; Bar 3:37 (cf. Prov 8:31)
<sup>14c</sup> and we beheld her glory.	(cf. Sir 24:23); Bar 4:1.

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# AN ORIGINAL HYMN TO WISDOM?

- 1 In the beginning was Wisdom  
and Wisdom was with God  
and God (divine) was Wisdom
- 2 The same (She) was in the beginning with God
- 3a All things through her became (egeneto)
- 4 What became in her was life  
And the life was the light of humans
- 5 And the light in the darkness shines  
And the darkness did not extinguish it (ou katelaben)
- 10 In the world she was  
and the world through her became (egeneto)  
And the world did not know her.
- 11 Unto her own (ta idia) she came,  
And her own (oi idioi) did not receive (ou parelabon) her
- 12a But as many as received (elabon) her,  
12b She gave them authority children of God (tekna theou) to become (genesthai)
- 14a/b And Wisdom tabernacled among us

### MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

- ▶ There is a concentration of non-Johannine vocabulary in 14e, 16-18.
- ▶ The evangelist's addition of 15 severs 14 from 16, where the "we" confession is continued, indicating that the evangelist was editing a pre-existing ext.
- ▶ The Law-Grace antithesis is not Johannine but Pauline, indicating that this editorial material was added in a Hellenistic community where the Pauline antithesis was known and affirmed.

### MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Hence, it is thought that the Hellenistic version of the hymn added 14e, 16-17, and thus identified Christ with Wisdom. The text would then further read:

14e full of grace and truth.

16 From her fullness we have all received,  
grace upon grace.

17 The law indeed was given through Moses;  
grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

# MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

- ▶ The big insertions are:
- ▶ The Logos Christology;
- ▶ The exclusion of any dualism;
- ▶ The Baptist as witness to the light - in two places.

## MODIFICATIONS AND ADDITIONS

Law v. grace  
Antithesis  
Wisdom =  
Christ

**Evangelist's additions and  
modifications**

Wisdom = Logos  
No dualism;  
Baptist texts

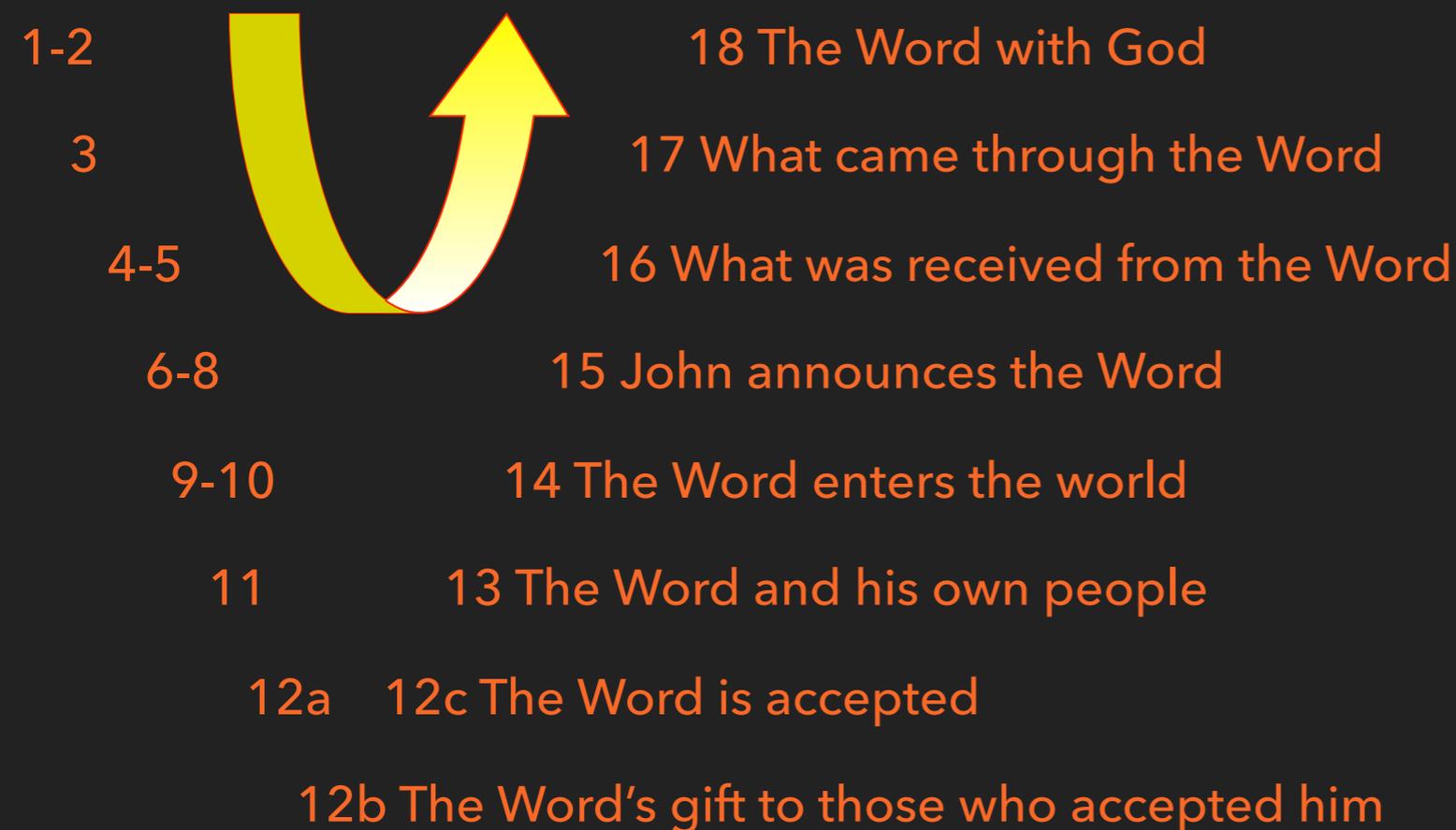
**Christian modifications (Pauline / Gentile?)**

**Jewish Hymn to Wisdom**

### POSSIBLE OUTLINES

- ▶ STROPHE 1: The pre-existence of the Word
- ▶ STROPHE 2: From creation through the history of Israel
- ▶ INTERPOLATION: John the Baptist's announcement
- ▶ STROPHE 3: The Incarnation
- ▶ STROPHE 4: The response of the community

## POSSIBLE OUTLINES



In this scheme, the heart is becoming "children of God". This would have been especially important in discussion with the synagogue. The community claimed to be the true children of God. A descent/ascent model coheres with the Gospel.

### WHY THE “NEW” VERSION?

- ▶ The reason for the Logos Christology
- ▶ opposition to Wisdom/Torah ideology
- ▶ opposition to a defective wisdom Christology.
- ▶ Logos serves to unite important themes - creation (by word), prophecy (word) and incarnation in the person of Jesus (word).
- ▶ There is a powerful contrast between JB and Christ.