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## A Study of Sources of the Theology of Fourth Gospel

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### Abstract

Among the four Gospels, the Gospel of John has a unique theology that distinguishes it from the rest of the Gospels. In this Gospel, unlike the synoptic Gospels, the divinity of Christ as the divine Logos is emphasized. Various opinions have been expressed about the source and main origin of the theology of the Gospel of John. Some consider it to be influenced by extra-religious schools such as Greek philosophy, and some consider it to be derived from reliable Hebrew sources, especially the Old Testament. This article, by reviewing different opinions and using historical and theological evidence, has determined the source of this theology as much as possible. The results obtained show that the theology of the Fourth Gospel is influenced by the foundations of Middle Platonic philosophy and Gnostic teachings. Of course, the degree of this influence is not the same, and this Gospel is most influenced by the mystical and Gnostic schools.

**Keywords:** Gnostic, Gospel, John, Logos, Philo, Plato.

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**Sayyed Mohammad Hasan Saleh****Introduction**

John, the youngest of Jesus' disciples, wrote his Gospel around 100 AD, seventy years after Jesus' crucifixion. This Gospel is unique among the four Gospels in a way that even a casual reader can tell it apart from the other New Testament books. In none of the other Gospels is Jesus introduced as the Word of God and the Creator of the universe, equal to God, sent from heaven, and soon to return. Nowhere else does Jesus claim that whoever sees him has seen the Father and whoever rejects him has rejected the Father. While the Synoptic Gospels contain numerous parables from Jesus, especially about the kingdom of God, there is no such example in John's Gospel. Although the Gospel of John narrates miracles of Jesus, most of them are not mentioned elsewhere and are specific to this Gospel, such as turning water into wine (2:1-11), healing the paralyzed man by the pool of Bethesda (5:2-9), giving sight to the man born blind (9:1-12), and raising Lazarus (11:1-44), according to Bart D. Erman: Most of the events mentioned in the synoptic gospels, with the exception of the tragedy report, are absent in this gospel (Erman, 2023 AD/1402 SH, 275). In a nutshell, it can be said that Jesus' words in the fourth gospel are generally about his own person and identity, and not about moral matters related to the kingdom (Merrill, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 205). In this gospel, unlike the other gospels, Jesus uses the expression "I am..." nearly fifty times and uses unusual attributes for himself, such as saying (I am the bread of life. 6: 35), (I am the light of the world. 8: 12), (I am the good shepherd. 10: 11), (I am the true vine. 15: 1), and (I am the way, the truth, and the life. 14: 6). Some scholars have stated that "the Gospel attributed to John is completely different from the other Gospels, and only eight percent of its contents are repeated in the

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other Gospels (Wolf, 1970 AD/1349 SH: 25). The diversity of the writing style, as well as some repetitions, has challenged the oneness of the author of this Gospel (Erman, 2023 AD/1402 SH: 280-284). Some theologians –believe that considering that in the New Testament itself, John –is introduced as an uneducated and illiterate person (Acts 4: 13), and on the other hand, the initial themes of this Gospel are entirely philosophical and rational, there is serious doubt about its attribution to John the son of Zebedee (Aziz, n.d.: 551). However, our assumption in this article is that the author of the Gospel is the same John the Apostle.

In this Gospel, we encounter a specific theology that emphasizes the divinity of Christ. Given the difference between this theology and the anthropomorphism of Jesus in the synoptic gospels, serious questions have been raised about the primary source of the author of this Gospel. This article seeks to examine whether this theology is derived from the spirit and expressions of the Old Testament or was it nourished by an external source? In other words, based on the evidence and circumstantial evidence, which school of thought is the closest and most likely source of thought for the author of this Gospel? Is it necessarily taken from one source or can it be said that it was nourished by several intellectual sources?

To answer these questions, we will first introduce the intellectual and epistemological foundations of early Christianity that can be considered the context and source of John's theology. Then, while briefly introducing this theology, we will present and examine their theories.

#### **1. The intellectual foundations of early Christianity**

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Theologians believe that no cultural element arises in a vacuum, but rather is formed in a cultural container. Accordingly, Christianity as a religion did not arise in a vacuum, but emerged in a cultural context. At the time of the appearance of Christ and the subsequent emergence of Christianity, various schools and ideologies were present in the region of Canaan and Egypt, and -their micro and macro influences can be observed in the New Testament, especially the Gospels:

**1.1. Hellenistic Judaism**

Judaism entered Egypt after the destruction of the first temple, and after the founding of Alexandria, many Jews settled in the city. Due to their distance from Palestine and their influence on the Greeks, over time, as their ethnic and racial preferences decreased, their use of Greek philosophy intensified. The emergence of Hellenistic tendencies among the Jews was accelerated by the writing of wisdom books. Also, the gradual decline of the Hebrew language paved the way for the creation of the Septuagint translation, in which many Greek philosophical terms and concepts were incorporated into the Bible. The authors of the Gospels had their only connection with the Old Testament through this translation and did not refer to the Hebrew text.

Christianity was a fundamentally Jewish movement, and by the time of Paul, Hellenism had developed not only in diaspora but also to a considerable extent in Palestine itself. This group of the Jerusalem apostles dispersed throughout Palestine after the martyrdom of Stephen, and it was from there that the missionary activities of the next generation began. All of these apostles, like Stephen, had completely Greek names. Among them are Philip, Nicanor, Prochorus, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolaus. Almost all of

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these apostles were of Jewish descent who had converted to Greek culture at least a generation earlier, or even earlier. The name of this new sect, Christians, originated from the Greek city of Antioch. That is, the city where these Hellenized Jews began their first extensive activities (Jaeger, 2010: 28-29).

#### **1.2. Gnosticism**

The word Gnosticism is a general title for expressing the views of a group that emerged at the beginning of Christianity and has its roots in the Greek word Gnosis, meaning knowledge and understanding (Noss, 2024 AD/ 1403 SH: 132). They believed that knowledge, or gnosis, was obtained through direct experience and revelation or initiation into a mysterious and esoteric tradition (Gisil, 2010 AD/1389 SH: 13).

The main distinguishing feature of the Gnostic schools is their emphasis on salvation through knowledge. Of course, this knowledge did not include any kind of knowledge, but rather a special type of knowledge that deals with the nature of things, such as the secrets of the divine world and the beings of the Alawite (Rene, 2005: 2, 606). Therefore, the components of this Life-saving knowledge were secret and hidden and were only available to a select few and privileged. Also, duality and duality are common to all Gnostic schools, in such a way that this duality included the realm of divinity to the universe and human existence, and was expressed in expressions such as the opposition of soul and body or light and darkness.

Although the uniqueness of the creation of Gnosticism in Greece and its philosophical schools cannot be proven, but the appearance and manifestation of Greek philosophy, and especially the Platonic system, in it

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is undoubtedly undeniable. Gnostic dualism is more similar to Platonic dualism than to Iranian dualism, which considers truth to be beyond this world and considers nature and matter to be only a shadow of the ideal world and its subsidiary, created by Demiurge.

Although Gnostic dualism is also used in various fields of cosmology and anthropology, we will briefly refer to dualism in divinity. Gnostic religions believe in two gods: one is a lower god who creates the world, who is the source of evil and some call him wisdom, and the other is a higher and invisible god who is the source of goodness and existence (Rene, 2005: 2, 606). The higher god is a perfect, eternal, invisible and indescribable being who is completely alien to the world and its nature and is free from its creation and administration. However, in contrast to the lower god, who is a stubborn and arbitrary god, the creator of the world and the ruler of man, and the craftsman or maker of the world is called the Demiurge (M Robinson, 1990: 44-50). This is why creation is a condemned matter and, consequently, humans are also introduced as corrupt beings. Most Gnostics considered the creator of the material world to be the same as the God of the Old Testament. They believed that moral laws and commands and prohibitions were the creation of a stubborn creator, but if someone attains knowledge of divine secrets, everything is permissible for him (Geoffrey, 2001: 101).

**1.3. Middle Platonic School**

This school was formed in the late 2nd century BC to the goal of reviving the original Platonic school. Opposition to skepticism was the first priority of the scholars of this school. This "new Platonism, known as the (Fifth

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Academy), soon -explained itself in a prominent way with a theological characteristic (Ested, 2001 AD/ 1380 SH: 96). Many scholars begin the history of the emergence of Middle Platonism with the emergence of Antiochus of Ascalon (67-130 BC) and end with Ammonius of Saccas (175-242 AD) (Dillon, 1979: 19). However, many thinkers before Antiochus also played a role in the formation of this school. Philosophers and thinkers in this period tried to present a new, rigorous and comprehensive interpretation of the theological, cosmological and anthropological foundations prevalent in their time (Hadina, 2001 AD/ 1380 SH: 86).

Given that this school was a synthesis of Epicurean, Stoic, Platonic, and Pythagorean thought, its scholars took a part of these thoughts in each of the theological, anthropological, and cosmological topics and ultimately presented them as a comprehensive package. However, Plato's school played a greater role than any other school in the development of the Middle Platonic school and then in Christian theology and theology. The Middle Platonists introduced themselves as true followers of Plato and considered him a holy man who had been sent to warn them (Atticus, 1977: 1). In this regard, Plato's various teachings about God, man, and the world attracted the attention of the Middle Platonists and later met with the approval of Christian theologians.

The elders of this school believed in two gods and tried to explain the difference between these gods with the help of numerical teachings. The first god is a transcendent and super-material god who has no direct connection with the material world. On the contrary, the second god directly created the world and is in fact the instrument of the Almighty God in proposing the idea of creating and governing the world (Runia, 1993: 162).



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). Some scholars of this school, including Sposippos, following the Stoics, called the Supreme God the Monud and the inferior God the Dyad. The Monud is at the top of the chain of gods and spiritual beings. At the next stage is the Dyad as the creator of existence and goodness, followed by numbers and their mysterious properties, and finally the human soul (Dillon, 1979: 14-18).

The ideas of scholars of this period clearly show the influence of Plato's Timaeus. Espousius says about why the Monud is exempt from creation and intervention in existence:

The cause can never possess the qualities and attributes that it itself has created in the effect. In other words, if we consider the Monud to be the causal source of the existence of the goodness of things, it itself cannot be existence or goodness, and the question arises: What is the origin of existence and goodness? (ibid: 12)

In answering this question, he interprets Plato's theory of unity and considers the monud to be free from name and attribute (ibid: 14).

Despite being a combination of different ideas, the Middle Platonist school had a profound impact on Christian thought (Stead, 2001 AD/ 1380 SH: 95), in such a way -that it can be considered the boundary between Greek Plato and Christian Platonism. William Inge writes about the influence of Platonism on Christianity:

The similarity between Christianity and Platonism is very striking. Justin Martyr claimed that Plato was a Christian before Christ. Athenagoras called Plato the best forerunner of Christianity. Clement considered the Gospel to be a perfected Platonism. The pagans persistently repeated the charge that Christ borrowed from Plato what was true of his teachings, and ST.



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Ambrose wrote a treatise in refutation of them. Although the Christians did not deny this similarity, they believed that Plato had taken [his teachings] from Moses (Inge, 1956: 77-78).

#### **2. The Gospel of John and the Theology of the Word**

Stands out most in the Gospel of John, and in other words, what distinguishes it from the other Gospels, is the discussion of the divinity of Christ as the Logos, which we can also interpret as the theology of the Word. Unlike the synoptic gospels, John begins his speech with this phrase: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. All things were made through him, and apart from him nothing that was made was made." (John 1:1-3) The passage is somewhat rhythmic and seems to have been composed for the purpose of praising Christ. The various statements about the Word are so intertwined that the end of each phrase corresponds to the beginning of the next (Erman, 2023 AD/ 1402 SH: 281). In these initial verses, the relationship of the Word with God and the world is discussed, which can be organized in the following ways:

- 1) The eternity of the Word: "John, with the phrase (In the beginning was the Word), has taken the history of the Word of God to a time before all temporal beings." Without referring to the origin of the world, the author considers the Logos to have an eternal existence. Although the eternity of the Logos is not explicitly stated, it is a prerequisite for the aforementioned phrase.
- 2) Distinction with God: "John says in the second verse: "The Word was with God." Here the author emphasizes that despite the Word's being eternal, he is distinct from God."

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- 3) The Divinity of the Word: "John mentions the phrase "the Word was God." According to this verse, the Word is not only eternally related to God, but is also essentially one with God. In other words, he is elevated from eternal existence to His distinct personality and then to His essential divinity."
- 4) The Creator of the Sensory world: John considers the Logos to be the medium of all of God's creative activities. Therefore, he states that "All things were created through him." ( Hale and Thorson, 2007: 339-340)

**3. The Source of John's Theology**

In the Bible and Christian tradition, the term "God" is used in three senses:

- A. To refer to Jesus Christ, who was incarnate according to the Gospel of John
- B. To mean the Gospel of Christ or the proclamation of Christ. Accordingly, this term refers to something that God has revealed through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.
- C. To mean the entire Bible that lays the groundwork for the appearance of Christ and the resurrection (McGrath, 2013 AD/1392 SH: 2, 261). Accordingly, readers of the Synoptic Gospels were already familiar with the term "Word of God," but they considered this term to be equivalent to the Gospel and the Good News, while the meaning of the word in the Gospel of John is a person, Jesus himself. He used this word alone and without suffixes. Different theories have been expressed about the root "Word," which is found in its absolute form and without suffixes only in the writings attributed to John. In a

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broad sense, we can say that there are two major approaches to the etymology of this concept in the Gospel of John: the extratextual theory and the intertextual theory.

#### **3.1. Extra-textual Theory**

Some scholars believe that the concept of Logos entered the Bible from a source outside the Holy Scriptures and that there is no evidence for it in the Old Testament. This group believes that the description of Jesus as the "Word" is the result of a fusion of Greek philosophical ideas and Christian teachings. The result of this fusion is that Jesus in Christianity has the same functions as Logos in philosophy. Those who hold this view are most influenced by the historical perspective and the prevalence of a Hellenistic atmosphere in the first century of Christianity, which was established by people like Philo. Greek-speaking Jews, due to their familiarity with Platonic and Stoic philosophy, considered the theory of Logos to be a kind of interpretation of the contents of the Torah and Genesis, according to which God created the world with His word and speech. This concept gradually spread from the cultural classes and social elites to the general public until finally the concept of Logos was fused with the concept of Christos (anointed one), i.e. the power that people were waiting for liberation and salvation (Robertson, 1999 AD/ 1378 SH: 155-156). Karl Barth states that At the time of the writing of the Fourth Gospel, myths and cultures were intertwined, and the believers did not have a systematic religion and a clear theological framework (Barrett, 1978: 34). Therefore, it can be said that, considering the influence of Hellenistic culture, the introduction to the Gospel of John was completely philosophical and metaphysical (Dwight, 1995: 11). Martin Hengel, who in his famous book

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entitled "Judaism and Hellenism," concludes with numerous evidence that scientific and cultural exchanges between Jerusalem and Alexandria had been ongoing since three centuries before Christ (Hengel, 1991: 65-78). Apart from the historical evidence, the most important argument for this theory is the similarities between the Word in the Gospel of John and Logos in Philosophy of Greek. Similarities such as the first creature, the power of creation, and some other attributes that were present in the Logos and the "Word" of John have led some biblical scholars and scholars to believe that the Word in the Fourth Gospel has its roots in the philosopher of Greece' Logos. For example, Rudolf Bultmann, a 20th-century New Testament specialist, sought the origin of the Word of John outside Christianity and Judaism. He believed that the early verses of the Gospel of John resembled pre-Christian ritual hymns, including Mandaean (Sabian) writings, which ultimately led to Gnostic sources. Finally Bultmann states that the Logos of John cannot be understood in the light of the Old Testament writings, because the concept of the word of God in the Old Testament is completely different from the Logos of John. In his view, if there is anything in Jewish writings, both the Old Testament and other Jewish writings that can be related to the Logos of John it is wisdom. Although in his view, even this wisdom has no roots in the sacred Hebrew text or Jewish writings, and ultimately originates from Gnostic sources (Lane, 2001 AD/1380 SH: 454-458). Not only in the modern era but also in the early centuries of Christianity, many Christian theologians sought the origin of the word in the Gospel of John in Greek philosophy. Among them, Heraklion interpreted the introduction to John in the light of Greek philosophy and applied the word

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not only to Jesus the Savior, but also to meanings that were already present in Greek philosophy (Rasimus, 2010: 202).

Meanwhile, many who believe that the nature of John's Logos is extra-Christian have emphasized the role of Philo in this regard. Although the word Logos is a Greek word, this concept entered the Hellenistic intellectual world, including the author of the Fourth Gospel, through Philo. J. Kanagaraj has argued in detail that the introduction to John is largely influenced by Philo and Greek philosophy (Kanagaraj, 1998: 47-55). Runia, in his book "Philo in Early Christian Writings," argues that not only the first verse of John's Gospel, but also the entire introduction to this Gospel is reminiscent of Philo's ideas about the Logos (Runia, 1993: 78-79). Historically, and as to whether John had access to Philo's ideas, Jeremias claims that Philo himself visited Jerusalem, which in itself could have provided a suitable context for the development of Alexandrian thought there (Jeremias, 1975: 69). Charles Harold Dodd Protestant scholar Similarities have been noted between Philo and John:

A) Use of symbolic language: The first similarity is the use of symbolic language by both authors. The main symbol in both works is light, as both Philo and John use this concept to show the connection between God and man. Next, both authors portray God as a shepherd in their works.

B) Emphasis on knowing God: Both Philo and the Gospel of John They have emphasized that knowing God brings many positive results for man. They have used the language of worship, love, and faith to show the blessings of knowing God.

C) Attention to the doctrine of the Logos: Dodd emphasizes that Philo's Logos influenced John's word in at least two ways, and these two are

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related. The first way is that the Logos is considered the mediator between God and the world, such that even the knowledge of God depends on the knowledge of the Logos, and John also believes in this. The second aspect is that Philo considers the perfect human to be the Logos and its embodiment. John used exactly the same concept. Instead of using the Aramaic phrase "Son of Man," he used the phrase "True Man" which Philo had used (Dodd, 1953: 69-71).

In this context, Wolfson believes that the term "Word" that John used and replaced Paul's term Wisdom or Holy Spirit is in fact a rewriting of the eternal Christ's plan in the form of Philo's philosophy (Wolfson, 2010 AD/ 1389 SH: 202). He clarifies that the attributes that John gave to describe the Logos are exactly the same attributes that Philo gave to the Logos, Paul gave to the eternal Christ, and the Wisdom of Solomon gave to the eternal Wisdom (ibid.). Accordingly, just as Paul called the eternal Christ the Son of God (Romans 8:3) and the firstborn (Colossians 1:15), and like Philo who also called the eternal Logos the Son of God and the firstborn, and like the Wisdom of Solomon who called the eternal Wisdom the only promised (Wisdom of Solomon 7:22), John also described the Logos as the only begotten Son of God (John 1:18), and just as Paul refers to the eternal Christ as the one who created all things (Colossians 1:15). 16; 1 Corinthians 8:6) And like Philo, who speaks of the eternal Logos as something through which the world was formed and formed, and like the Wisdom of Solomon, who speaks of the eternal Wisdom as the maker of all things (Wisdom of Solomon 7:22), John also speaks of the Logos as something All things were created through him (John 1:3).

**3.2. Intra-textual theory**

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According to this theory, the origin of the word John should be sought not in sources outside the Bible but in the Bible itself, especially the Old Testament. Many New Testament commentators believe that the word John refers to is reminiscent of the Old Testament and the opening verses of Genesis (Sacra, 1998: 4, 30). Accordingly, in the prologue of the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is introduced as the eternal Word made flesh, whose life and relative divinity derive from the accepted story of the invisible God revealed by the incarnation of the Word. In this story, the gift that had previously come through Moses with the Law is completed (Sacra, 1998: 4, 34).

Miller, in his commentary on the word John and its connection to the Book of Genesis, writes:

The word "Beginning" refers to the first verse of the Bible, "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." The Word had no beginning. When all the beings and the universe that exist in infinite space were created, the Word existed; for the Word was eternal. The interpretation and interpretation that wisdom gives to it in the book of Proverbs is applicable to the eternal Word of God... The Word is called Logos in Greek, which means both reason and speech. Greek philosophers used it in their works and writings to name the fundamental principles that maintain order and order in the world. But John uses it here as a name that manifests the invisible God... This verse does not mean that the Word was one of the gods; for God is one; nor does it mean that the Word includes all that exists in God; For the Word and God are not synonymous... What is meant is that the Word was a part of the Supreme Being. Human thought is incapable of



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understanding how such a thing is possible without believing in duality. Although the belief and faith of the Christian Church from its inception to the present has been that God is one and that the Word of God has divinity and is the Word of God (Miller, 1940 AD/ 1319 SH: 20).

Given the relative pervasiveness of Greek philosophy at the time the Gospels were written, proponents of this theory must, in addition to linking John's Logos to the Old Testament, also reject the possibility that it was influenced by Greek philosophy. They argue that although theories about the Logos of God were prevalent among Greek thinkers when John wrote the prologue to his Gospel, he did not attempt to explain these ideas. He simply wanted to express his beliefs, beliefs that were rooted in Jewish teachings about the Word of God, not in Greek wisdom (Bernard, 1999: 1). Some of them have pointed out the existence of differences and distinctions between the word of John and the logos of philosophers, especially the logos in Stoic philosophy, including: That in the Gospel of John the Logos and God are not identical and equal; but in Stoic philosophy this is not the case, everything is a simple whole and totality and the Logos is God (Kerferd, 1967: 5-6, 83). But according to John the Word was God and at the same time the Word was with God. Companionship conveys otherness and distinction. Therefore, John announces the existence of a form of plurality and plurality in the divines and goes to battle with the idea that the Word and God are one thing (Ahmadi, 2012: 100).

Furthermore, they believe that the Stoic Logos is an abstract thing, unlike what John intended, which is embedded in historical events and is not simply a transcendental idea. They finally argue that if the John who wrote

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the Gospel is the same John the son of Zebedee, a Palestinian Jew, then a Jewish conceptual framework must dominate the concepts of this book, as is the case in many other cases in this book (Köstenberger, 2002, 52).

#### 4. Review

Basically, the entire Gospel of John is conceptually distinct from the other Gospels. The vocabulary used in this Gospel is so unusual that if a few verses are quoted from it, it can be easily recognized that it is from John's works. Some words are repeated a lot in this Gospel, not because of the limitation of the vocabulary, but for emphasis. Some of these words, such as life, light, darkness, work, world, faith, body, have spiritual meanings, and some words, such as truth, truth, hatred, acceptance, beginning, knowledge, glory, and abiding, have almost philosophical meanings (Merrill C, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 217). John introduces Jesus as an eternal being who has been with God from eternity and is the creator of the world and gives light to people. He became incarnate so that humans could become children of God (John 1: 1-14). It is clear from the Gospel of John that Jesus was sent by the Father (John 5: 23 and 26) and is completely subordinate to the Father because he receives everything from Him (John 8: 39). He states that the Father is greater than I (John 14: 28). However, in some parts of his Gospel, John tries to reduce or eliminate the inequality of God with Jesus, so he quotes Jesus as saying that whoever has seen me has seen the Father (John 14: 9) and that I and the Father are one (John 10: 30).

Regarding the extent to which this Gospel was influenced by Greek philosophical schools, we must examine the extent to which John was influenced by the concept of Logos and the possibility of its application to

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Jesus. The term Word is not found in the other Gospels. Unlike the term Christ, which has a Jewish meaning, the terms Word and Logos have a philosophical meaning. Perhaps John is trying to give the Gospel and the message of Jesus a general and universal aspect. Apart from the word itself, there is not much evidence that this concept was derived from Greek philosophy and Philo. Those who believed in the extra-religious theory often emphasized that John was familiar with this concept through Philo and Middle Platonic philosophy. Although there is evidence indicating similarities between Philo's Logos and John's Logos, there are also significant differences (Gandomi, 2007 AD/1386 SH: 139). The differences between the two are:

- 1) Philo is completely in the realm of abstract thought, while John is objective and concrete in his thinking and moves in the realm of life and history. In other words, Philo's Logos is a pure abstraction or attribute of God and has no connection with human history, but John's Logos is with life and power from the very beginning, and the incarnation of God in Christ is the re-creation of the world and the re-union of man and God.
- 2) Philo's Logos has a mediating role, a tool that God used to create the world, but John's Logos is not an auxiliary or secondary one, but rather God Himself, and therefore is not a tool, but the primary agent in creation.
- 3) In Philo's thought, the personhood of the Logos is not certain and certain, and sometimes the impersonality of the Logos are used. This is while in John's words, the personality of the Logos is clearly emphasized.
- 4) In Philo's thoughts, the incarnation of the Logos has no place, and indeed, it seems impossible. This is exactly the opposite of John's theology, which

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emphasizes the incarnation of the Word and considers the incarnation of the Word not only possible but also necessary.

5) The God that Philo speaks of is unknowable, but since John emphasizes the incarnation of the Logos, he actually considers God knowable through it. That is, God has been manifested in Christ and is thus knowable to humans. The central theme of John's theory is the personification and incarnation of the Word. Of course, John, like Paul, leaves this issue vague and does not provide a clear explanation regarding the manner of incarnation of the Word. This ambiguity caused a doctrinal conflict among the Church Fathers, who ultimately concluded that it was a mystery. Unlike John, for Philo, the Logos exists in all humans and does not live on earth as a human being. John's Logos is completely personal and has personal relationships with God and humans, so it can be a historical figure, while, as mentioned, Philo's Logos is not personal except in the form of a metaphor. There is no doubt that Logos is a Greek word and therefore has a philosophical application. But the main debate is whether John's influence in using this word is only in the literal use of this word or whether it includes the concept of Logos beyond the words? There is no solid historical evidence that John borrowed the concept of the word from Greek philosophers. It should be noted, of course, that the Fourth Gospel was written in Ephesus, and probably in a non-Jewish environment. This is evidenced by the fact that the author, in various passages (John 3: 12; 4: 9; 19: 31), explains Jewish festivals and customs to non-Jews (Merrill C, 1983 AD/1362 SH: 1, 209). However, this alone does not prove that John used philosophical concepts, since there is also evidence that large groups of Jews were present in this city. As one of the churches of Asia Minor, Ephesus was a place of conflicts and conflicts

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between different groups. In these conflicts, in which John himself was also present, the debate was over whether the order of events in the Gospels was correct and complete, and whether these writings provided a valuable expression of the nature of Christ or not. In these disputes, many took an exclusive position and accepted only the Gospel of John or the Synoptic Gospels, considering the rest to be lacking the necessary authority or even heresy (Harnack, 2004: 71). These disputes have shown the existence of - different intellectual groups that lived in this region. Although the writing style of the Fourth Gospel has its own characteristics, one should not ignore John's Jewish background. It is in this regard that people like Borgen, after conducting research on John's Jewish and Hellenistic backgrounds have concluded that John, in his discussions, including the Logos discussion, benefited from the Palestinian Midrashic tradition of interpretation rather than being influenced by Philo's thoughts. Even in the influences he had on Philo, he benefited from his Jewish rather than Greek interpretations (Borgen, 1981: 3). He specifically mentions the sixth chapter of the Gospel of John, verses 31-58, and while specifying its Jewish sources, he tries to introduce it as derived from the Midrashic tradition (ibid: 205-229). Considering what has been said, it seems that both Philo and John used a word that was common in their time, and of course each of them used this word to establish their own specific ideas. Philo, based on his Greek thinking, gave a Greek color to his theory about the relationship of the divine intellect with the world, but John, due to his religious inclinations, concluded in the Logos the peak of God's manifestation to man, that is, the Incarnation. In other words, Logos has two meanings: Intellect and speech. There is no solid evidence that John used Logos in the sense of reason,

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rather, in order to avoid any flaw in the concept of monotheism in the Old Testament, he used it in the sense of word (Khawas, 2014: 310). Basically, in the subsequent cases in which the word Logos is used in the Fourth Gospel, it is always understood as the word of a human being or a message from God. The God of the Israelites is a God who speaks and His words can be heard. He creates with the word. Before the creation of the world, the Word, the Creator of God, existed, and this same word was revealed to the prophets, and John considers that word to be the same Jesus who was born of Mary at the appropriate time and took flesh. However, the process of the Gospel of John is not the same, and it does not distinguish between God and the Word everywhere, but the general conclusion of this Gospel is that it considers the word to be divinity. Another point that should be noted is the examination of the relationship between the incarnational theology of the Gospel of John and the books of wisdom. The opening verses of the Gospel of John bear a striking resemblance to passages book bin Sirach's Wisdom: "I came forth from the mouth of the Most High, and I sat down as a cloud upon the earth. I dwell in the heavens, and my shadow was a pillar of cloud." (24: 3, 4) Although the personification of wisdom is also found in other Greek wisdom books, this passage presents a theology that emphasizes that wisdom is closely related to God but distinct from him. It may be argued that these characteristics were later attributed to the Word and the Spirit, and that these expressions laid the foundation for Trinitarian theology. Although the language of these passages is apparently consistent with the Gospel of John, it should be noted that, first, this useful term is not divinity, since (being from God) applies to all Creatures and is not considered a specific characteristic. In addition, the wisdom discussed in

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this book is the universal presence of God that is revealed in Israel and has nothing to do with its incarnation (Wisdom of Ben-Sirach 1: 1-10, 4: 11-19, 6: 18-34). Although there is no solid evidence to link John to Philo and the Wisdom books, on the contrary, the Gnostic evidence, especially the metaphor of light and darkness, is very prominent in this Gospel (John 1: 5). John is above all trying to explain a savior. The savior he portrays has the characteristics of a Gnostic savior. He is a divine being sent to save mankind. In this regard, Bultmann states that the narrator of the Fourth Gospel borrowed his terminology from the myth of the Gnostic Savior (Ferguson, 2003 AD/ 1382 SH: 170). John's Savior, like the Gnostic Savior, is a knower of divine secrets and saving knowledge, who, by his descent, reveals it to sinful man and becomes the agent of his salvation (John 8: 19). In addition, the idea of duality is evident throughout this Gospel. Concepts such as light and darkness, truth and falsehood, high and low, God and Satan, God and the world are completely opposed to each other. Jesus introduces himself as light and the world as darkness (John 8: 12-13). He also extends dualism to the realm of divinity and introduces Satan as the ruler of the world (John 16: 11 and 14: 30). Even humans are subject to this dualism and are divided into two groups: the children of light, meaning those who know God and return to Him, and the children of darkness, meaning those who do not know Him and join the world or Satan (John 8: 24-25). Despite this evidence, it is not possible to speak with certainty even about John's influence on the Gnostics, since this gospel does not fully introduce the Gnostic dualistic system because although it considers the Word as the intermediary in creation, it nevertheless attributes it to God and not to the Creator God, who according to the Gnostics is hated and base. In



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short, it should be said that there are traces of John's influence from the Gnostic system and the Platonic school, but this influence is not coherent and systematic. John, like Paul, has used the thoughts of his time as an instrument and is seeking to establish his purpose, which is the incarnation of Jesus Christ. This purpose has preliminary elements. Although its preliminary elements are found in other sources, the conclusion, namely the incarnation, must be found only and only in the discourse of the New Testament itself and not elsewhere.

### **Conclusion**

In the Fourth Gospel, we encounter a special type of theology that, in addition to God the Father, speaks of the divinity of Jesus as the divine Word and Logos. Some scholars and Bible experts consider the source of this theology to be within the text and taken from other parts of the Bible, while many believe that this type of view of Christ has an extra-Biblical origin. Some, however, insist on tracing the source of the divinity of the Word to the Middle Platonist School and, in particular, to its representative in early Christianity, Philo. The author believes that what can be judged in the first place is that the origin of the divinity of the Word was outside the Old Testament and should be sought in the diverse cultural life of early Christianity. There is no solid evidence that John was specifically and maximally influenced by Philo for his use of the term Logos, although there is a possibility of the principle of influence. On the other hand, more evidence can be found that John was influenced by Gnostic dualism, although there are still differences in this regard. In conclusion, it should be said that it seems that the theology of the Fourth Gospel can be considered a

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combination of Greek and mystical elements found in the Middle Platonic and Gnostic schools, which were prevalent at the beginning of Christianity and the Hellenistic atmosphere in which the writing of the Gospels took place, and the author of this Gospel has provided the foundations for the Trinity.

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