

## **The Chiastic Structure of John 1:1-18**

By Jeffrey L. Staley

### **A) The relationship of the Word to God, creation, and humankind (John 1:1-5)**

In the beginning was the Word,  
and the Word was with God,  
and the Word was God.

He was in the beginning with God;  
all things were made through him,  
and without him nothing was made  
that that has been made.

In him was life,  
and the life was the light of all people.  
The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness has not grasped it.

### **B) The (negative) witness of John (John 1:6-8)**

There was a man  
sent from God,  
whose name was John.

He came for testimony,  
To bear witness to the light,  
that all might believe through him.

He was not the light,  
but came to bear witness to the light.

### **C) The negative effect of the Light/Word's journey (John 1:9-11)**

The true light that enlightens every person  
was coming into the world.

It was in the world,  
and the world was made through it,  
yet the world did not know him.

He came to his own home,  
but his own people did not receive him.

**D) The gift of empowerment (John 1:12-13)**

But to all who received him,  
who believed in his name,  
he gave power to become children of God;

who were born, not of bloods  
nor of the will of the flesh  
nor of human will, but of God.

**C) The positive effect of the Light/Word's journey (John 1:14)**

And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us,  
full of grace and truth.  
And we beheld his glory,  
glory such as an only son receives from his father.

**B) The (positive) witness of John (John 1:15)**

John bore witness to him, and cried,  
“This was he of whom I said,  
‘The one coming behind me is ahead of me,  
for he was before me.’”

**A) The relationship of the Word to humankind, re-creation, and God  
(John 1:16-18)**

And from his fulness have we all received,  
grace upon grace.

For the law was given through Moses;  
But grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.

No one has ever seen God;  
the only Son who is [reclining] at the breast of the Father,  
he has made him known.

## AN ARTISTIC STRUCTURE TO THE GOSPEL OF JOHN

By Jeffrey L. Staley

There are many ways of outlining the structure of John's Gospel. Most scholars outline it in terms of: Prologue 1:1-18; Jesus' public ministry or "book of signs" 1:19-12:50; Jesus' private ministry or "book of glory" 13:1-20:31; and Epilogue 21:1-25. Some outlines try and follow the book's plot—this happens and then this, and then this. Some outlines try and follow particular themes. Some outlines see John as a book built on chiasms. The outline below is somewhat different from all of these in that it focuses on an ever enlarging, repetitive, and concentric structure built around a journey motif. Building on the chiasm of the prologue, the gospel opens with the witness of John, which is "B" in the prologue. You read until John appears again (John 3:25-36), and you have the end of the first "circle."

The story immediately following John's final "live appearance" in the gospel is Jesus' journey into Galilee by way of Samaria, where he has conversations about drinking and eating. The journey of Jesus is "C" in the prologue. Again, you read until you find a conversation about eating and drinking. This brings us to another journey (6:66-71), and the end of the second "circle." You get the picture.

Near the center of all these concentric "ministry tours" ("D") are stories that emphasize Jesus' power—the Christological signs and gifts of empowerment—which is also the center and theme of the chiasmatically structured prologue.

- I. Prologue 1:1-18
  - A. The relationship of the Word to (vv. 1-5)
    - 1. God
    - 2. Creation
    - 3. Humankind
  - B. The negative witness of John (vv. 6-8)
  - C. The negative effect of the Light/Word's journey (vv. 9-11)
    - D. The gift of empowerment (vv. 12-13)
    - C. The positive effect of the Light/Word's journey (v. 14)
    - B. The positive witness of John (v. 15)
  - A. The relationship of the Word to (vv. 16-18)
    - 3. Humankind
    - 2. Re-creation
    - 1. God
- II. First Ministry Tour 1:19-3:36
  - B. The Witness of John (he is characterized as standing) 1:19-1:42
  - C. The Journey of Jesus 1:43-1:51
  - D. The gift of empowerment 2:1-3:21
    - 1. At Cana 2:1-11

- (sojourn in Capernaum 2:12)
    - 2. At the Jerusalem temple 2:13-
    - 3. In Jerusalem 2:22-3:21
  - C. The Journey of Jesus 3:22-24
- B. The Witness of John (he characterizes himself as standing) 3:25-36
- III. Second Ministry Tour 4:1-6:71
  - C. The Journey of Jesus (characterized by Jesus departing) 4:1-45
    - (a discussion about drink and food) 4:7-38
    - D. The gift of empowerment 4:46-6:21
      - 1. At Cana in Galilee 4:46-54
        - (a visitor from Capernaum 4:47-53)
      - 2. At the Jerusalem temple 5:1-47
      - 3. At the Sea of Galilee 6:1-21
        - (a discussion about food and drink) 6:22-65
    - C. The Journey of Jesus (characterized by departing disciples) 6:66-71
  - IV. Third Ministry Tour 7:1-10:42
    - C. The Journey of Jesus (characterized by Jesus being “in” places) 7:1-13
      - 2. In the Jerusalem temple 7:14-8:59
    - D. The gift of empowerment 9:1-10:21
      - (in Jerusalem, outside the temple)
      - 2. In the Jerusalem temple 10:22-39
        - (characterized by Jesus being “in” the Father)
    - C. The Journey of Jesus 10:40-42
  - V. Fourth Ministry Tour 11:1-21:25
    - C. The Journey of Jesus (characterized by love) 11:1-16
    - D. The gift of empowerment 11:17-44
      - (raising of Lazarus)
      - Preparations for Jesus’ death 11:45-12:11
        - 3. Jesus’ final public presentation in Jerusalem 12:12-50
        - 3. Jesus’ final private presentation to his disciples 13:1-17:26
      - Preparations for Jesus’ death 18:1-19:42
        - In a garden 18:1-3
        - Fulfillment of prophecies 18:4-27
          - (The “other disciple” is present)
          - The “King of the Jews” 18:28-19:6
          - The “Son of God” 19:7-11
          - The “King of the Jews” 19:12-22
        - Fulfillment of prophecies 19:23-37
          - (The “beloved disciple” is present)
        - In a garden 19:38-42
      - D. The gift of empowerment 20:1-21:14
        - (resurrection of Jesus and appearances)
      - C. The Journey of Jesus (characterized by love) 21:15-23
  - VI. Epilogue 21:24-25