



The Church as the New Creation in the Fourth Gospel: A Study of the Theology of John 1:1-2:11

Pablo Muñoz

The author of the Gospel of John attempts to align the beginning of the Gospel (John 1:1–2:11) with the Genesis creation story (primarily Genesis 1, but with a connection drawn between John 2:1–11 and the story of Adam and Eve) in order to interpret the beginning of the Gospel as the story of (a) the new creation and (b) more specifically, the creation of the church. The alignment proceeds chronologically, in such a way that the seven days of creation are used to structure the sections and events of this section of John. On each “day” of the new creation, accordingly, an “essential element” of the church is evoked and thus brought into being. The new creation concludes with the alignment of the wedding at Cana with the story of Adam and Eve, presenting this story as the new Eve leading the new Adam to redemption through her (i.e., Mary’s) perfect obedience.

Keywords: *John, Genesis, New Creation, Church, Seven Days, Prologue*

Introduction

In this essay, I will present a theology of the chapter one and first eleven verses of the chapter two of the Fourth Gospel (FG). Vast literature has been written about one of the most wonderful hymns of the New Testament—the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel—just as the commonly known “first week,” which follows it, has motivated many to try to disclose the secret truths the Evangelist wanted to transmit. Widely accepted is the idea that the author of the FG intended to convey the

theology of a new Creation sprouting from the Incarnation of the λόγος. Raymond Brown stated: “If the Gospel begins with ‘In the beginning,’ it is because the coming of Jesus will be presented as a new and definitive Creation.”¹

The working hypothesis is that the Church is presented as the new Creation of the Incarnated λόγος and how in each of those initial six days,² there is an essential element of the Church being shaped.³ This study will show how this theology of the Creation of the Church is intrinsically connected with the Ecclesiology of the Johannine community. It may seem contradictory to talk about the intention of the Evangelist of showing the Creation of the Church in a Gospel in which the term ἡ ἐκκλησία cannot be found even once (unlike the other Gospels) and that has been long considered as a mystical, eschatological and individualistic way of presenting Christianity.⁴

Schnackenburg presents a very different perspective affirming that “in fact, the idea of the Church is much more deeply rooted in Johannine thought, and indeed, is indispensable to this independent, magnificently devised theology, with its concentration on the essential.”⁵ We will observe how the process of the Creation of the Church is shown as intentionally having the structure and progressive character of the first Creation in Genesis, even putting side by side the different elements of the Creation in Genesis and their corresponding elements in the Creation of the Church in the Fourth Gospel.

Relationship between Creation in Genesis and Creation of the Church in John 1

Firstly, let me justify briefly the connection between Genesis and the first chapter of the FG. I do not need to expand much since it is commonly agreed by scholars that it is impossible to think that the writer of the FG did not have in mind the Book of Genesis when he used in his Gospel the very same words with which the former

¹ Raymond E. Brown, *An Introduction to the Gospel of John* (New York: Doubleday, 2003), 245.

² The sequence of the days will be taken up below.

³ The importance of this first chapter as a summary of the faith of the Johannine community in Jesus can be clearly seen in the “abundance of titles given to Jesus just in the first chapter of the Gospel alone: Word, God, Light, Light of Men, Only Son, Word made flesh, the One nearest to the Father’s Heart, the Lamb, God’s Chosen One, Rabbi/Teacher, Messiah/Christ, Son of God, King of Israel, Son of Man.” See Thomas E. Crane, *The Message of John: The Spiritual Teaching of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Alba House, 1980), 37.

⁴ Rudolf Schnackenburg, “Is there a Johannine Ecclesiology?” in *A Companion to John* (New York, Alba House, 1977), 247.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 247.

starts: “Ἐν ἀρχῇ...” (In the beginning...).⁶ Boismard confirmed, in his wonderful work on the Prologue, the view mentioned earlier by Brown:

This reference to Genesis has been accepted from the time of St. Irenaeus and of Tertullian and is still generally acknowledged today. A comparison with the Greek translation of the Septuagint is particularly striking: in the first three verses of Genesis and in the first four of the Prologue the same expressions are found Ἐν ἀρχῇ, ἐγένετο, σκότος, σκοτία, φῶς, εἶπεν, ὁ λόγος.⁷

Though the “ἀρχῇ” of the FG means an earlier beginning than the one in the narrative of the Genesis,⁸ it actually reaffirms the truth already mentioned in the Creation narrative that “everything was very good” (1:31)⁹ because everything was created by the Word and there is nothing that exists that was not created by the Word. The darkness is also presented in both narratives as something already existing. The light, in turn, both in the Genesis as in the Prologue, does not take away completely the darkness but it limits its power and its dimension. It means there is a power stronger than the darkness and that is the light (Gen 1:2, Jn 1:4-5).¹⁰

In addition to the connection of both narratives’ Creational sense, some authors have identified this new Creation in the FG as the Creation of the Church.¹¹ Thomas Barrose, for instance, even identified the essential elements of the Church being created in those six first days.¹² Those elements are “the Precursor, the Savior, the disciples, the Chief Apostle, the apostles and the believing Israel. The seventh day, the first sign at Cana, is then seen as symbol of the great eschatological banquet and manifestation of the Church.”¹³ Stephen Bedard agrees with the concept of the Creation of the Church but differs with Barrose in the identification of the days, giving a wider perspective of the Creation all throughout the Gospel.¹⁴ And so many other authors have tried to identify the days of that new Creation which the Evangelist seems to refer to in the first part and even throughout his Gospel.

⁶ T. Evan Pollard, “Cosmology and the Prologue of the Fourth Gospel,” *VigChr* 12 (Amsterdam, 1958), 148.

⁷ M. E. Boismard, *St. John’s Prologue* (London: Blackfriars Publications, 1957), 6.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

⁹ All English quotations from the Bible in this essay are from New International Version (US, 1984).

¹⁰ Walter Lowrie, *The Doctrine of St. John* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1899), 115-118.

¹¹ The common scope for the Creational week goes from v.19 of the first chapter up to the v.12 of the second chapter.

¹² T. Barrosse, “The Seven Days of the New Creation in St. John’s Gospel” *CBQ* 21 (Washington, 1959), 507-516.

¹³ Stephen J. Bedard, “The Johannine Creation Account” available from <<http://www.biblicaltheology.com/Research/BedardSJ03.pdf>>, 1.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*

Relationship between the Prologue and the Rest of the Gospel

Before taking a look at that partition of days and the elements being formed in each one of them, it is necessary to dedicate a few words to discuss the connection between the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel. The originality of the hymn as well as the possible later addition of the text to an already finished Gospel has been long debated. It is not the purpose of my paper to discuss the process of elaboration of the final writing as we have it now but rather to disclose its theology and the intention of the final editor of the Gospel. Need just to mention now that this essay follows the opinion of numerous scholars, one of them being Thomas Crane, that the Prologue is intrinsically connected with the rest of the Gospel¹⁵ and not only with the rest of the Gospel but even with the rest of the chapter as well,¹⁶ since the style and tone are typically Johannine and it is itself part of the first week in the intention of the Evangelist as we will see in the development of this essay. Fuller reinforces this argument by stating:

The Prologue is immediately followed by the witness of the Baptist to the inner meaning of Jesus' baptism. This means that the Prologue is a commentary not on the birth of Jesus, but in the first instance, on the baptism and more remotely on the ministry of Jesus in its entirety. It cannot be other than a commentary on what follows, not on what is absent from the book.¹⁷

The themes and words which we find in the Prologue, thus, will be unfolded throughout the Gospel by the Evangelist as if the Prologue (προλόγος) was table of contents or a window through which one can foresee what is going to be the flow of the entire Gospel. Accordingly, the light and the darkness will be a widespread theme in the Gospel (3:19, 5:35), even Jesus declares himself as the light (9:5); John the Baptist will appear again in chapter three and is mentioned by Jesus as well as the one who testified about him (5:33-36); the theme of the rejection of Jesus by the world is so prominent in the Gospel that we will refer to in John 15:15-27 as an example among many other passages; the same can be said about the tension between the ones who believed and those who did not (6:66-71). Due to this indissoluble connection between the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel, Boismard even extended the idea of new Creation to the whole Gospel: "In the Prologue as in the rest of the Gospel, St. John, then, presents the work of the Messiah as a new Creation."¹⁸

¹⁵ Thomas E. Crane, *The Message of John: The Spiritual Teaching of the Beloved Disciple* (New York: Alba House, 1980), 31.

¹⁶ C.H. Dodd, *The Interpretation of the Fourth Gospel* (Cambridge University Press, 1953), 292.

¹⁷ Reginald H. Fuller, *The Foundations of New Testament Christology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1965), 247-50.

¹⁸ Boismard, *St. John's Prologue*, 109.

Structure of the Seven Days of Creation in the First Chapter of the Forth Gospel

Taking, thus, the opinion of the unity and fundamental connection between the Prologue and the rest of the Gospel, let me now go farther in delimiting the first week in the FG, identifying the elements described in each day, connecting the days with the first chapter of the Genesis and finally correlating those elements with the Johannine Ecclesiology.

The most widely accepted approach of counting the days of the first Creational week of the FG starts with the appearance of John and his testimony in front of the Priest and Levites coming from Jerusalem (1:19) and ends with the wedding at Cana where Jesus performed the first sign revealing his glory (2:1-12).¹⁹ That the common understanding since the sequence “Τῇ ἐπαύριον” (1:29.35.43) – “the following day” – flows from the moment of John’s testimony until the culminating expression before the wedding at Cana “Καὶ τῆ ἡμέρα τῆ τρίτῃ...” (2:1), commonly translated as “two days after” since in the Hebrew, way of counting the days the first and the third are part as well of the three days.²⁰ Therefore the total counting is of seven days (or six according to other authors) from the appearance of John and his witnessing until the wedding at Cana.²¹ In that way, the Prologue (1:1-18) is considered a kind of summary of what is going to be unfolded in the Gospel.

Interestingly, the rearranging of the sequence of days proposed by Witherow²² starts from the Prologue itself as the real “beginning” of the new Creation followed by the rest of chapter one and beginning of chapter two as a unified succession of seven days.²³ Thus, the Prologue is not left behind in the counting but is rather included already as part of the first day. In the next table, we can see how Witherow perceives the passing of days –compared with Barrose, mentioned earlier– and their relationship with the Creation story in Genesis:

	Genesis	Witherow view of John	Barrose view of John
	1:1 In the beginning ...	1:1: In the beginning ...	1:1: In the beginning ...
Intro.	1:1 ... God created the heavens and the earth.	1:2-3: All things were made through him.	1:2-18: Prologue

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 107.

²⁰ “This way of counting is the reason why we say Christ was raised on the third day: Friday and Sunday are inclusive while Saturday is passed over.” See Greg Witherow, “The Gospel of John, Creation and Liturgy.” Therefore the real meaning of the expression would be “the day after tomorrow.”

²¹ Another point of discussion is the different interpretation given to *πρῶτον* in v. 41. I will deal with that in the fifth day of the new Creation in the FG.

²² Greg Witherow, “The Gospel of John, Creation and Liturgy,” available from <www.holytrinityparish.net/Links/The_Gospel_of_John2.pdf>, 1.

²³ *Ibid.*

Day 1	Light is created	v.4-28: Christ declared to be the light of the world.	v.19-28: Precursor: John
Day 2	The waters are separated.	v.29-34: Christ is baptized with water.	v.29-34: Savior: Jesus
Day 3	Fruit bearing plants come into being.	v.35-42: Christ's ministry bears fruit as he acquires his first disciples.	v.35-40: Disciples
Day 4	The stars rule the heavens.	v.43-51: Christ rules with his first command "follow me."	v.41-42: Chief Apostle: Peter
Day 5	Birds and fish are created.	Silence.	v.43-51: Apostles and Believing Israel
Day 6	Adam and Eve created in marriage.	2:1-11: A marriage feast is celebrated in Cana.	Silence
Day 7	Sabbath rest is established.	v.12: Christ rests in Capernaum.	2:1-11: Symbol of Eschatological Banquet

While I agree with Witherow in the inclusion of the Prologue as part of the counting of days, I find, too, a very sharp identification of key elements by Barrose. In this essay, there is a proposal of some changes in the sequence of the days and some retouching in the identification of the key elements of the Church, though generally agreeing with that of Barrose. In this chart, we can see how the sequence of days would be divided with this new arrangement of the week and a historical progression in the foundation of the essential elements of the Church:

	Genesis	Sequence in John	Historical Progression in the Foundation of Church and Essential Elements of Johannine Ecclesiology
	1:1 In the beginning...	1:1 In the beginning...	
Day 1	Light is created.	v.1-18: The <i>λόγος</i> declared to be the light of the world.	God- Immanent <i>λόγος</i>
Day 2	The waters above and below are separated.	v.19-28: John separates the Revelation above and below.	Old Testament preparing/ witnessing/ expecting Him
Day 3	God creates the land and separates it from the seas.	v.29-34: Jesus appears and will become the land of the Church.	Incarnated <i>λόγος</i> Sacramental Dimension
Day 4	Sun and Moon shed light over the earth.	v.35-40: First two disciples will shed light over the Church.	Witnesses of the Incarnated <i>λόγος</i>

Day 5	Creatures of the seas are created.	v.41-42: Jesus finds Simon and appoints him as Peter	Chief Apostle Structure of the Church
Day 6	Adam and Eve created in the image and likeness of God.	v.43-51: Philip is called and does the work of Jesus: he calls Nathanael to “come and see.” Nathanael’s confession of faith	Activity of the Church: Personal experience Carrying our Jesus mission Profession of faith
Day 7	Sabbath rest is established.	Rest Before Cana	Silence
	Gen 3: Sin of Disobedience	2:1-11: Mary rouses obedience	New Adam, New Eve

Thus, the main differences of this proposal with other theories are the following: the inclusion of the Prologue as the first day of the Creation narrative, the beginning of the second day in the verse 19 with the appearance of John the Baptist, the ending of the week before Cana and the perspective of the first sign of Jesus as a counterpart reading of that of the disobedience of Eve and Adam.

Creation of the Church with Her essential elements

Let us then, begin to examine from this perspective the day by day re-Creation of the world or Creation of the Church, deepening on the sequence of days given, comparing it with the Genesis narrative and explaining the meaning of the key foundational elements in the Johannine ecclesiology:

1. First Day: Let there “was” God.

John 1:1-18: In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. ²He was with God in the beginning. ³Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. ⁴In him was life, and that life was the light of men. ⁵The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it. ⁶There came a man who was sent from God; his name was John. ⁷He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all men might believe. ⁸He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light. ⁹The true light that gives light to every man was coming into the world. ¹⁰He was in the world, and though the world was made through him, the world did not recognize him. ¹¹He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him. ¹²Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God— ¹³children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born

of God. ¹⁴The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth. ¹⁵John testifies concerning him. He cries out, saying, “This was he of whom I said, ‘He who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’” ¹⁶From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. ¹⁷For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. ¹⁸No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father’s side, has made him known.

This section is titled “Let there ‘was’ God.” With this “confusing” grammar the intention is to point out that the first essential element the Evangelist introduced to us in the Prologue was never created since it is God himself, the true light, and more concretely, the eternal and divine *λόγος* (v.1-2).²⁴ He is the foundation and light of the Church. Without him, there is nothing (v.3-5), let alone a Church. Considering the creation of light in the very first day in Genesis and the identification of the *λόγος* as the light of every human being (1:4-5), it is likely that the Evangelist intended to regard the Prologue as the first day of his new Creation. That would explain why he intentionally “makes the effort” to include the most significant words of the first day in the Genesis account in those first verses of the Prologue (see footnote 14 above). Otherwise, it would be difficult to explain the exceeding similarity of both beginnings if he would, afterwards, leave behind the Prologue by not including it as the first day. It is possible, thus, that the intention of the Evangelist is to include the first eighteen verses of the Gospel as the first day of the new Creation. God created everything solely by his *λόγος* in the beginning and now, it is this same *λόγος* who is starting the re-Creation of everything.²⁵

What can we say, then, of the rest of the verses in the Prologue which seem to go farther than a simple definition of the *λόγος* as the light of the Church? The following verses until the end of the Prologue (v.6-18) forms a chiasmic structure with the remaining verses of the chapter one (v.19-51). Thus, it is a summary of the new Creation that will be explained in detail from the verse 19 to the end of the chapter. Many scholars have already studied the chiasmic structure of the Prologue and the repetitions starting from the Prologue all throughout the Gospel.²⁶ In the following table, we can see how the verses 6-18 can be paired with the verses 19-51 as if the Evangelist tried to stress the reality that the *λόγος* is truly behind the new Creation

²⁴ Lowrie, *The Doctrine of St. John*, 115-8.

²⁵ Ansgar Wucherpfennig, “Torah, Gospel, and John’s Prologue,” *TheolDgst 50 F’03* (St. Louis, 2003), 213.

²⁶ Jeff Staley, “The Structure of John’s Prologue: Its Implications for the Gospel’s Narrative Structure,” *CBQ 48/1,2* (Washington, 1986), 250.

arising and that new Creation that will emerge later is presented beforehand as planned intentionally by the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$.

John 5-18	John 19-51
v.6-8: John as witness of the Light.	v.19-28: John witnesses about the One to come.
v.9-11: The true Light comes to the world but they do not know him.	v.29-34: Jesus appears and is not recognized by anyone except by John, whom did not know him himself before.
v.12: The ones who receive Him become Children of God.	v.35-40: First two disciples start living in the "house" of Jesus.
v.13: They are born not from flesh, blood or human desire but from God.	v.41-42: Jesus finds Simon and appoints him as Peter, without him doing anything at all.
v.14-18: The Word became flesh and we have seen his glory. ²⁷	v.43-51: Philip is called personally and calls Nathanael to "come and see." Nathanael's confession of faith

We can see how verses 6-18 foretell the Creation of the Church highlighting clearly the action of the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$. The Church is, thus, introduced as willed by the $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, prepared by Him and created by Him; He is sending John, He is the true light, He came into the world, He came to his own, He gave to the ones who believed the right to become children of God, He became flesh and He dwelt among us. The $\lambda\acute{o}\gamma\omicron\varsigma$, who is God, and He alone is the foundation of the Church. It is "a day" in which the whole activity of God is being summarized. As stated by Fuller earlier (see footnote 24), the Prologue introduces to us what is going to be unfolded afterwards. Thus, by starting the Prologue referring to the light, the same reality created in the first day in Genesis, the Evangelist starts his Creational story, as well, by identifying God as the only True Light of the Church, through whom everything will come into being.

Finally, we find a very interesting reading in the Psalms summarizing the whole creational activity of God as if done in just one day: "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. You turn men back to dust, saying; "Return to dust, O sons of men." For a thousand years in your sight are like a day that has just gone by, or like a watch in the night." (Ps 90:2-4).

²⁷ Farther explanation should be given to the different subdivisions of the verses 14-18 but it is not the purpose of the essay neither essential in the discussion so it will not be entertained in this study.

2. *Second Day: Let there be History of Salvation- Precursor*

John 1:19-28: Now this was John's testimony when the Jews of Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was.²⁰ He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, "I am not the Christ."²¹ They asked him, "Then who are you? Are you Elijah?" He said, "I am not." "Are you the Prophet?" He answered, "No."²² Finally they said, "Who are you? Give us an answer to take back to those who sent us. What do you say about yourself?"²³ John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the desert, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'"²⁴ Now some Pharisees who had been sent²⁵ questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?"²⁶ "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know.²⁷ He is the one who comes after me, the thongs of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie."²⁸ This all happened at Bethany on the other side of the Jordan, where John was baptizing.

The second day in the Creation of the Church starts with the appearance of John and, together with him, all the expectations of the People of Israel. Surely we need to explain before proceeding what is my basis in order to make the appearance of John the Baptist the beginning of the second day when, in fact, there is no reference to that in the narrative of the Evangelist, who simply starts the verse with the introduction "Καὶ αὕτη ἐστὶν ἡ μαρτυρία τοῦ Ἰωάννου..." (v.19)

As it is mentioned before, it is commonly accepted that the author of the FG intentionally refers to the Genesis narrative in order to give the idea of a new Creation. The question is: how far does this Creation theme go side by side with that of the Genesis? It is interesting to take a look at the second day in the Creation story in the Genesis in order to understand the role of John the Baptist in the theology of the Evangelist. There we see that God's Creation on that day was the *רָקִיעַ*, the "firmament," that will divide the waters above and the waters below. God seems to have a daily routine in the Creation: He creates; He divides and finally, He gives a name. God usually separates two realities that are distinct from each other (day-night, land-seas, seed-bearing plants and trees, sun-moon, sea creatures-air creatures) and names the things that has been separated not the "separator" (Gen 1:1-31).

Only in the second day does the "separator" itself receive a name *שָׁמַיִם* (Gen 1:8) – "sky" – and not the separated realities that happened to be the same above and below: waters. It is very striking to see that this witness who was sent by God has a name, John, and this witness separates the waters of Revelation, the waters above and the waters below. This reality of "being from above" or "being from below" is one of the keynotes found throughout the Gospel; "If you are not born from above you

cannot enter in the kingdom of heaven” (3:3), “You are from below, I am from above. You are of this world, I am not of this world.” (8:23), “I came from the Father and entered the world, now I am leaving the world and going back to the Father” (16:28), “Jesus knew that the time had come for him to leave this world and go to the Father” (13:1). And even in the first eighteen verses of the Prologue, we find that the role of John’s witnessing clearly marks a division between the realities existing beforehand and the event of the Incarnation (v.6-10), the waters above (Immanent λόγος) and the waters below (Incarnated λόγος). Crane, in fact, defines John as “the bridge between the former Creation and the new one.”²⁸

Boismard sees John the Baptist as the last of the prophets of the Old Testament with all its promises and hopes pointing out to Jesus of Nazareth as the Messiah expected by the Jewish people.²⁹ Jose Manuel Martin-Moreno, as well, describes John’s role like this: “In the mouth of the Baptist it is condensed the whole witnessing of the Old Testament pointing out to the New. He is the last link of the chain of witnesses of the light.”³⁰ He is not the light but simply witness to the light and recognized Jesus as the fulfilment of the promises written in the Old Testament. The whole History of Salvation is anxiously expecting the coming of the Messiah—Jesus—the one who will be preceded by the second coming of Elijah, who happened to be John.³¹

For the Evangelist and the Johannine community, the History of Salvation represented by John is an essential element of the Church as preparation and prediction of the emerging new Creation.³² We find throughout the Gospel many other allusions to the Old Testament, always pointing out to the supremacy of Christ over the Patriarchs, the Law and the main figures of the Israelite Faith: Jesus greater than Moses and the Law (1:17.45, 5:46), greater than John the Baptist (1:30, 5:36), greater than Jacob (1:51, 4:12-13), the Messiah-Christ (1:41), the Son of God and King of Israel (1:49), greater than Abraham (8:57-58), he is the one bringing new wine (2:10), he is the new Temple (2:21), he is a Teacher coming from God (3:2), greater than the Sabbath and making himself equal to God (5:18), the Good Shepherd (10:11) and the Resurrection and the Life (11:25).³³

²⁸ Crane, *The Message of John*, 34.

²⁹ Boismard, *St. John’s Prologue*, 128.

³⁰ Juan Manuel Martin-Moreno, *Personajes del Cuarto Evangelio* (Bilbao: Desclee de Brower, 2001), 58.

³¹ Boismard, *St. John’s Prologue*, 127.

³² C. Clifton Black, “St. Thomas’s Commentary on the Johannine Prologue: Some Reflections on Its Character and Implications,” *CBQ* 48/3,4 (Washington, 1986), 693.

³³ Rudolf Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John Vol. 1-4* (New York, Herder & Herder, 1968), 124.

Thus, we can see that the creation of the firmament that divided the waters above and the waters below on the second day in Genesis and the appearance of John as the one dividing the existence of the immanent λόγος and his coming into the world seem to be much more than a simple coincidence, but rather a continuation of the parallelism of both Creational narratives. It would be awkward to start the “second day” with the same pattern used for the following ones “Τῆ ἑπαύριον,” since he was describing before the immanent realities. Even though he could not use the same term to express the beginning of a “new day” in his Creation story, in my opinion, he makes that transition by making an abrupt change in the sequence of the story.

3. *Third Day: Let there be Incarnation-Savior*

John 1:29-34: The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, “Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world! ³⁰This is the one I meant when I said, ‘A man who comes after me has surpassed me because he was before me.’ ³¹I myself did not know him, but the reason I came baptizing with water was that he might be revealed to Israel.” ³²Then John gave this testimony: “I saw the Spirit come down from heaven as a dove and remain on him. ³³I would not have known him, except that the one who sent me to baptize with water told me, ‘The man on whom you see the Spirit come down and remain is he who will baptize with the Holy Spirit.’ ³⁴I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.

On the third day, Jesus appeared in the world: Incarnation of the λόγος. As stated, Jesus needed the witness of John to be recognized as the one who is to come. John himself received very concrete instructions on how to identify the one who will come after him. The Incarnation of the λόγος is the main focus of Johannine theology and everything is rooted in that mystery as Matera affirmed:

There are other dimensions to John’s Christology that could be explored. But everything Jesus says and does in this Gospel ultimately rests on his claim that the Father sent him into the world to reveal the Father to the world. This claim, in turn, depends on the Gospel’s proclamation that ‘the word became flesh.’ All Christology titles and statements are now measured by the preexistence and Incarnation of the eternal Word of God.³⁴

The things that Jesus will do, according to the testimony of John, are to be the Lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world and to be the one who will baptize with the Holy Spirit (1:29.33). The realities of the Incarnation and the sacraments are put together in the same day: Incarnation, Eucharist, forgiveness of sins and Baptism with the Holy Spirit are all in the Incarnated λόγος. This is

³⁴ Frank J. Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul and John: A Study in the Diverse Unity of New Testament Theology,” *TheolStds* 67 (2006), 251.

the creation on the third day and another essential element of the Church for the Johannine community.

The Fourth Gospel and the entire Johannine literature is specially rich and different from the Synoptics in the way of approaching the sacramental reality. For the Johannine community, the sacramental reality lies not merely in the installation by Jesus of concrete sacraments, taken merely as “rituals”—like Baptism or Eucharist—but it is rather a whole reality intrinsically united both to the mystery of the Incarnation and to the bringing to perfection the Father’s plan by the *λόγος* as stated in the *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary*: “The life-giving sacraments of Eucharist and Baptism, described as flowing down upon the nascent Church from the King lifted up on his throne, are for the Johannine community the presence of the absent one.”³⁵ On this topic of the sacramental theology of the Johannine community the view of Schnackenburg’s is worth noting: “Baptism and Eucharist are basically understood... at least in chapters three and six... and in 19:34... The sacraments would then be means (in Johannine theology) of importing into the present time the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus which they recall as they bring his power into play.”³⁶ To Baptism and Eucharist, we could even add the giving of the Holy Spirit to the disciples and the power to forgive sins with which Jesus endowed them after the Resurrection (20:22-23) as part of the whole sacramental reality for the Johannine community.³⁷ Schnackenburg also added that the Johannine communities “were churches in which liturgical and sacramental life was flourishing.”³⁸

If we take a look at Genesis, third day of Creation is the time when God grouped the waters and the dry land appeared and he called the land earth and the waters seas (Gen 1:9-13). It is the time in which God started to fashion the world below the sky, the waters below. God moulded the realities below firstly by letting the ground appear, a solid foundation where the new Creation would be solidly established. That solid ground in the Johannine theology is the Incarnation of the *λόγος*—as we have seen in Matera’s words—and His unending presence among us in the sacramental reality—as pointed out by Schnackenburg—and it is in being rooted in this experience of the Incarnated *λόγος* through the sacramental reality that everything is going to bear fruit.

³⁵ R. E. Brown, J. A. Fitzmyer and R. E. Murphy, *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* (London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1989), 1426.

³⁶ Schnackenburg, *The Gospel According to St John*, 160-2.

³⁷ Schnackenburg, “Johannine Ecclesiology,” 250.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 254.

4. Fourth Day: Let there be Witnesses of the Incarnation

John 1:34-40: I have seen and I testify that this is the Son of God.”³⁵The next day John was there again with two of his disciples.³⁶When he saw Jesus passing by, he said, “Look, the Lamb of God!”³⁷When the two disciples heard him say this, they followed Jesus.³⁸Turning around, Jesus saw them following and asked, “What do you want?” They said, “Rabbi” (which means Teacher), “where are you staying?”³⁹“Come,” he replied, “and you will see.” So they went and saw where he was staying, and spent that day with him. It was about the tenth hour.⁴⁰Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus.

On the fourth day, two disciples heard the testimony of John and went after Jesus. They became the first witnesses of the new life God wanted to bring through the Incarnation of the *λόγος*. In the Ecclesiology of the Johannine community the eye witnesses are of primary importance, they are in fact the ones whose testimony about Jesus will be the foundation of the faith of the next generations of the Church. John Painter made a wonderful work revealing the extreme importance that the witnesses have in the FG. He discovered that “witness terms appeared 47 times in John, used in the strict sense of giving firsthand evidence while they only appear 6 times in the Synoptics, 4 of which refer to the false witnesses at the trial of Jesus.”³⁹ The FG is flooded, thus, with references to all those who are actually witnessing about Jesus: the Baptist (1:7.8.15.32.34, 3:26, 5.33), the woman of Samaria (4:39), Jesus’ works (5.36, 10.25), the Father (5:37, 8:18), the Scriptures (5:39ff), the crowd (12:17), the Paraclete (15:26), the Apostles (15:27) and the Beloved Disciple (19:35, 21:24).⁴⁰

A few readings from the Johannine literature, as well, will show how the witnesses of the Incarnated *λόγος* are, in fact, the keystone for the testimony to be credible for the next generations. In the Gospel itself, two readings stress the truthfulness of the testimony given because of the fact of having been transmitted by an eye witness.⁴¹ Thus we read in John 19:35, “The man who saw it has given testimony, and his testimony is true. He knows that he tells the truth, and he testifies so that you also may believe,” and as well in John 21:24, “This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true.” The first letter of John starts with the same emphasis in the testimony of those who were eye witnesses confirming that the Ecclesiology of the Johannine community is founded in that witnessing:

³⁹ John Painter, *Witness and Theologian* (London: SPCK, 1975), 8.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 10.

⁴¹ Matera, “Christ in the Theologies of Paul,” 247.

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete (1 Jn 1:1-4).

On the Fourth day of the story of Creation, the Sun and the Moon were being fashioned by God with some functions described as “separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth” (Gen 1:14-19). Hence, one will give light during the day and the other will illumine during the night so that Creation will always have direction.

The author of the FG, seemingly, brings all these elements of the Genesis Creation story to the little detail in his narration in chapter one. There are two witnesses who heard John’s witnessing and followed Jesus. One is identified as Andrew while the other fades in the story; nothing is said about him. It is commonly agreed among scholars that the anonymous follower could refer to the Beloved Disciple since he declares himself as a witness of the life of Jesus.⁴²

Why does the Evangelist not identity this disciple who eventually vanishes from the narration? Fascinatingly, we find an answer again if we follow the correlation with the Genesis as we have been doing. One star will shine and govern during the day while the other star will have its turn to shine and govern during the night. Andrew appeared again a couple of times during the “day” of the life of Jesus; we find him in the scene of the miracle of the loaves (6:8) and also introducing the Greeks who wanted to see Jesus (12:22).⁴³ Andrew, then, governs and illumines the narrative when we are in the “day” of Jesus ministry and suddenly disappears when the “night” of Jesus’ ministry starts; we will not see him anymore in the last chapters of the Gospel.

All of a sudden, a new figure starts to govern the “night,” the Beloved Disciple (BD), who was not mentioned before during the “day” of Jesus. His name is mentioned for the first time in the verse 23 of the chapter 13 at the same time that the Evangelist specifically points out that “it was night” (v.30). He was not mentioned before, it was not his time, like the moon during the day who is present but totally

⁴² J. Mateos and J. Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan: Análisis Lingüístico y Comentario Exegético* (Madrid: Ediciones Cristiandad, 1979), 119.

⁴³ Mateos and Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan*, 119.

unobserved so the BD was there from the beginning but completely unnoticed until his time arrived, the time to preside over the night. And, interestingly enough, he will be the one to give light to the whole Church when the rest of the disciples feel lost and abandoned by the Lord. Is it merely a coincidence or is it beautifully orchestrated by the author of the FG? It seems that the connection with the first week of Creation and the elements created go far beyond than a simple metaphor. The Evangelist truly intended to show the new elements of the Church in close connection with those of the Creation of the Universe.

5. *Fifth Day: Let there be Chief Apostle- Structure in the Church*

John 1:41-42: The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, “We have found the Messiah” (that is, the Christ).⁴² And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, “You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas” (which, when translated, is Peter).

The following day, the fifth day, we find basically just one activity; the finding of Simon by Andrew and his change of name by Jesus. There is no common agreement among the scholars if verses 41-42 are still part of the same day together with the verses 34-40 or really the narration of the following day. The disagreement arises because of the “confusing” expression of the Evangelist at this point *εὕρισκει οὗτος πρῶτον* (v.41).⁴⁴ I adopt in this paper the interpretation that refers to *πρῶτον* as the first thing Andrew did the following morning since it completes the data given by the Evangelist in previous verses specifying that “it was the tenth hour”—around 4 in the afternoon—when they found Jesus and they “stayed with him the rest of that day” (v.39).

Looking at the way Jesus appointed Peter as the “Rock,” it is striking to see how there is not a thing in him to deserve such a credit. The Evangelist presents Peter in the story as the only one among the five followers Jesus met the first days who does absolutely nothing; he is found by his brother Andrew, he is brought to Jesus, he is seen by Jesus and he is simply appointed by Him without having said or done anything to deserve it and with no “paying forward” as we see that Philip will do.

It is his way to introduce the Hierarchy of the Church not as a result of personal merits but, rather, simply as grace and service to the Community. This is

⁴⁴ Three different interpretations are given to the meaning of *πρῶτον* by the scholars. The first interpretation is “first,” supposing that the other disciple found as well afterwards his brother too (supposing John, the brother of James is the other disciple). The second possible interpretation refers to “firstly” in the sense that Andrew himself is the one finding “secondly” Philip in the v.43. The third possible interpretation is the one who sees *πρῶτον* as the first thing Andrew did the next day. This is actually the interpretation found in the old Syriac version. See, R. V. G. Tasker, *St. John: An Introduction and Commentary* (London: The Tyndale Press; 1960), 58.

his intention in placing the appointing of Peter here and not as a consequence of his proclamation of Jesus as Messiah as done in the Synoptics (Mt 16:16-18, Mr 8:27-30, Lk 9:18-21). We see how the Evangelist introduces Peter as someone who knows less than the BD in the last Supper (13:24); someone who does not understand Jesus in the washing of the feet and in his arrest (13:6-10, 18:10-11); who runs slower than the Disciple whom Jesus loved (20:4-6); and who did not recognize Jesus at once after the miraculous fishing and had to be told by the BD that “it is the Lord” (21:7), just to mention a few of the instances. For the Johannine community, then, the service of authority has absolutely nothing to do with the merits done by the person appointed neither with his personal holiness of life but it is simply a grace coming from God.⁴⁵

Much has been written about the “supposed-to-be anti-clerical” perspective of the FG but, in fact, the Evangelist clearly re-affirms the will of Jesus of appointing Peter as Head of the Church.⁴⁶ In the instances mentioned in which the BD seems more a model disciple than Peter, we see as well the respect he showed for him in letting him enter first in the tomb and “provoking him” to go towards Jesus ahead of them after the miraculous fishing.⁴⁷ Finally the author of the FG shows the re-affirmation of Jesus to Peter, in front of the other disciples, as the Head—Rock—of the Church.⁴⁸

Urs Von Balthasar identifies “two ecclesiologies” of the Church from his reading of the Gospel of John that he calls the *official Church* and the *Church of love*. He draws out the distinction between the two as reflected in the figures of Peter—the official Church—and John—the Church of love—and these two govern the Church “in harmonious tension: office working for love, love respectfully giving precedence to office.”⁴⁹ We see that the Hierarchy and the structure of the Church is the next essential element of the new Creation for the author of the FG and the Johannine Community.

Taking a look in the story of Creation in Genesis we find in the fourth day that God created the big creatures in the sea and the creatures in the air (1:20). We cannot avoid making a metaphorical connection between the creatures in the

⁴⁵ As we have seen above in the table in page 383 the parallel in the Prologue of the appointment of Peter is verse 13 “children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband’s will, but born of God.”

⁴⁶ Mary Ann Getty, “Peter and the Gospel of John,” *BibleT* 43 (2005), 231.

⁴⁷ Crane, *The Message of John*, 110.

⁴⁸ Schnackenburg, “Johannine Ecclesiology,” 252. Schnackenburg also clarifies, “even if this chapter perhaps did not belong to the original plan of the gospel, it certainly belongs to the evangelist’s tradition,” 252.

⁴⁹ Hans Urs Von Balthasar, “Official Church and Church of Love (According to the Gospel of John),” in *The Balthasar Reader* (New York, Medard Kehl and Werner Löser, 1997), 276-277.

sea and the person of Peter since many are the references in the FG picturing such correlation, already known through the Synoptics, between Peter and the realm of the sea. Mateos and Barreto make an interesting reflection on the fact that Peter was from Bethsaida:

The name Bethsaida means ‘Fisheries/fishing spot.’ In mentioning John the common origin of Philip and the two brothers Andrew and Peter, he suggests for the three a relationship with this office. In fact, you can refer to a historical fact—found in the Synoptics—but this does not exclude a figurative sense of the fishing itself, attracting adherents to the message of Jesus.⁵⁰

And he continues by picturing the, “I go fishing” (21:3) of Peter as the beginning of his mission among the pagans. Moreover, it is also interesting to see Peter throw himself into the water when recognizing Jesus on the shore (21:7). Figuratively we could even say that he was fished by Jesus as the disciples saw a fish being cooked when they reached the shore (v.9); could that fish refer to Peter? Indeed, Jesus fished the fisherman.

Hence, on the fifth day, Jesus gave structure to his Church by appointing Peter as the Chief Apostle. Fascinatingly, all these elements found in the building up of the Church as the new Creation happened to coincide with the historical chronology of the formation of the different elements of the Church and the essential elements as well, without which we could no longer talk of the existence of such a Church, in the same way that the Genesis unfolds the Creation of the essential elements of the world without which the world would not exist.

6. *Sixth Day: Let there be Apostles and Confession of Faith*

John 1:43-51: The next day Jesus decided to leave for Galilee. Finding Philip, he said to him, “Follow me.”⁴⁴ Philip, like Andrew and Peter, was from the town of Bethsaida. ⁴⁵Philip found Nathanael and told him, “We have found the one Moses wrote about in the Law, and about whom the prophets also wrote— Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.” ⁴⁶“Nazareth! Can anything good come from there?” Nathanael asked. “Come and see,” said Philip. ⁴⁷When Jesus saw Nathanael approaching, he said of him, “Here is a true Israelite, in whom there is nothing false.” ⁴⁸“How do you know me?” Nathanael asked. Jesus answered, “I saw you while you were still under the fig tree before Philip called you.” ⁴⁹Then Nathanael declared, “Rabbi, you are the Son of God; you are the King of Israel.” ⁵⁰Jesus said, “You believe because I told you I saw you under the fig tree. You shall see

⁵⁰ Mateos and Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan*, 126.

greater things than that.”⁵¹ He then added, “I tell you the truth, you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man.

The next day, on the sixth day, we find the first disciple called personally by Jesus to follow him. We know well how on the sixth day of the story of Creation in Genesis God created human beings in his image and likeness (1:26-27), ready to live in the same way God himself lives. We see exactly that reality in the narrative of this sixth day. Bultmann points out how Philip “finds Nathanael and announces to him, as Andrew did to Simon “εὕρηκαμεν.”⁵¹ Moreover, Philip pronounced almost the same words Jesus uttered before to the first two disciples “ἔρχου καὶ ἴδε” (1:46) and the last detail being said about Philip links him to Peter as well, they were from Bethsaida (v.44). Is it not remarkable to see how Philip is linked with Peter and Andrew and uttered almost the same words that were said before by Andrew and Jesus? As if he is a summary of what has happened before in the story. As if the Creation is now completed in the image and likeness of God by the “breath” of the personal calling and the Church is now fully equipped to carry out the same work Jesus came to do.

Now it is the time in which Jesus can rest—as he did after this last day with Philip and Nathanael—when the Church is already perfectly shaped with all the essential elements that will guarantee the perseverance of her children through the centuries and the preservation of the message of salvation for all generations. Philip is inaugurating the time of the Church. And the first mission is to announce the Good News to the Jews represented in Nathanael. Mateos and Barreto present the figure of Nathanael in a very interesting way:

Philip goes to find Nathanael. This character, unlike others, does not need of a presentation by the Evangelist. However, he is mentioned as a character known (in Greek, with the article). This, together with the meaning of his name: ‘God has given,’ makes him a representative figure. In fact, speaking to him, Jesus speaks in the plural (1:51). The rest of the pericope confirms that Nathanael personifies the group of the believing Jews.⁵²

This group of believing Jews professed their faith in Jesus and the Son of God through the words of Nathanael (v.49). This is another of the essential elements of the Johannine community as we can see in the first letter of John in several instances: “And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent His Son to be the Savior of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in him

⁵¹ Rudolph Bultmann, *The Gospel of John: A Commentary* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1971), 103.

⁵² Mateos and Barreto, *El Evangelio de Juan*, 127.

and he in God” (4:14-15) or, “Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God” (5:5) and also, “I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life” (5:13).

In addition, after the confession of faith of Nathanael—the believing Jews—Jesus evokes the dream of Jacob (Gen 28:12-19) by comparing himself to the stairway bridging the heavens and the earth. In that dream God promised Jacob that his “descendants will be like the dust of the earth, and you will spread out to the west and to the east, to the north and to the south. All peoples on earth will be blessed through you and your offspring” (Gen 28:14). In this way, Jesus is opening the mission of the Church to the Gentiles and to all nations and giving to the Church the same commission God gave to human beings as He created them: “Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground” (Gen 1:28).

Jesus finishes, thus, his new Creation and we can see that none of the essential elements of the Church is missing. If we recapitulate all of them we have: God (and with God the perspective of eternal life), the Old Testament preparing, creating expectations and pointing out to Jesus, the Incarnation of the *λόγος* and the sacramental reality intrinsically united to Him, the witnesses who give credibility to the message and link the whole Church to the event of our salvation, the structure of the Church represented in the appointing of Peter as the Rock of the Church and finally the “breath” of the calling of God to the Church to do the “works he has done and even greater ones” (Jn 14:12) by bringing first the Jews to the confession of faith in Jesus as the Son of God and multiplying by proclaiming the message to all nations and making them part of the “flock” of Jesus (Jn 10:16). Remarkably the succession of each of the elements follow the order in which historically and chronologically actually happened.

Wedding at Cana: Redemption of Adam and Eve

John 2:1-12: On the third day a wedding took place at Cana in Galilee. Jesus’ mother was there,² and Jesus and his disciples had also been invited to the wedding.³ When the wine was gone, Jesus’ mother said to him, “They have no more wine.”⁴ “Dear woman, why do you involve me?” Jesus replied. “My time has not yet come.”⁵ His mother said to the servants, “Do whatever he tells you.”⁶ Nearby stood six stone water jars, the kind used by the Jews for ceremonial washing, each holding from twenty to thirty gallons.⁷ Jesus said to the servants, “Fill the jars with water;” so they filled them to the brim.⁸ Then he told them, “Now draw some out and take it to

the master of the banquet.” They did so,⁹ and the master of the banquet tasted the water that had been turned into wine. He did not realize where it had come from, though the servants who had drawn the water knew. Then he called the bridegroom aside¹⁰ and said, “Everyone brings out the choice wine first and then the cheaper wine after the guests have had too much to drink; but you have saved the best till now.”¹¹ This, the first of his miraculous signs, Jesus performed at Cana in Galilee. He thus revealed his glory, and his disciples put their faith in him.¹² After this he went down to Capernaum with his mother and brothers and his disciples. There they stayed for a few days.”

Coincidentally, the narrative of the Genesis in the first chapter does not mention the seventh day; it is only mentioned as part of the beginning of the following chapter. In the end of the story of the first encounters with Jesus, there is no further addition; nothing is being said of the seventh day. It is only in the beginning of the next narrative that we find the expression “Καὶ τῇ ἡμέρᾳ τῇ τρίτῃ...” (2:1) “in the third day...” As mentioned earlier (see footnote 27) it can be interpreted in fact as the day after tomorrow which leaves a day—the seventh day—in between the calling of Philip and the wedding at Cana; a day in which nothing is being said about the activity of Jesus. The seventh day silence is very surprising. It does not say that Jesus rested and it does not say either that Jesus worked. It was simply silence; we know nothing about it. Even in that silence the evangelist resembles the narrative in the Genesis. According to Balthasar:

The Father spoke for the first time when he created the world. For he created it solely ‘through’ the Word (Jn 1:3), in him, and for him (cf. Col 1:16). He created it by a sevenfold word that was spoken six times, but whose seventh utterance was silence (Gen 1:1-2:4).⁵³

A magnificent bringing together of the Genesis creational narrative and the one in the FG. It is as well a very wonderful way for the Evangelist to harmonize in this Creational week the rest of God in the Creation story and the Johannine theology of the never-resting God (Jn 5:17) since it is not yet the time to enter in such a conflicting issue. A splendid way, indeed, of bridging these two contradictory views that will be presented afterwards in the Gospel. Jesus finished his new Creation and in the seventh day... silence.

An unexpected surprise to find the mother of Jesus immediately after the implicitly mentioned seventh day of Creation. Could it be a coincidence that right after the story of Creation suddenly the Mother of Jesus and Jesus himself, accompanied by the new-born Church, appear in a story in which obedience is one

⁵³ H. U. von Balthasar, *The Christian States of Life*, 394.

of the main messages being conveyed by the Evangelist? Is it not a way of presenting the new Adam and the new Eve as models for the new Creation, the Church, and showing how are we supposed to live the new life in Christ?

Mary is presented in the story as the physical mother of Jesus and the one who truly knows Him; as Jesus himself will acknowledge in his dialogue with the Samaritan woman “If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water” (4:10). Is that not precisely what Mary did in the wedding at Cana? She knew who Jesus is and she asked Him because she was convinced that He would give them the new wine, the living water.

It is likely that this first sign of Jesus is presented as a counterpart of that first sin of Adam and Eve. It is very fascinating to see the first sign of Jesus coming true through the mediation of the actions and words of the mother of Jesus. She is the one who teaches obedience to the servants because she was the perfectly obedient one. The words “Do whatever he tells you” presume that she herself is doing “whatever he says”. The way Mary is presented visibly presupposes that everyone knows how Mary was obedient herself. She is presented as the new Eve who leads the new Adam to perform his first miracle. In the same way that Eve influenced Adam to disobey in the narrative of the first sin in this narrative we can clearly see how it is the new Eve who persuades the new Adam to manifest God’s glory. Brown brilliantly summarizes these ideas and put them together,

“The title “woman” becomes more understandable in the background of Genesis. There are many references to Genesis in this first week if Jesus’ activity: (a) the prologue begins with “In the beginning”—the words which are the title for Genesis in the Hebrew Bible; (b) the prologue tells of the coming of the light into darkness; (c) at the baptism the Spirit descends and remains on Jesus just as the spirit of God moved over the face of the primeval waters; (d) the time from the baptism to Cana, the beginning of the work of the new Adam, is sometimes seen as seven days matching the seven creative days of Genesis. In this light we can compare the woman in the Garden of Eden who led Adam to the first evil act with the woman at Cana who leads the new Adam to his first glorious work. In the prophecy of Genesis we hear that God will put enmity between the woman and the serpent and that her seed will crush the serpent. In calling his mother “woman”, Jesus may well be identifying her with the new Eve who will be the mother of his disciples as the old Eve was the “mother of all the living.” She can play her role of intercession, however, only when her off-spring on the cross has crushed the serpent.”⁵⁴

⁵⁴ Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel and Epistles of John: a Concise Commentary*. (New York: The Liturgical Press, 1988), 28-9.

Because she is called to be the Mother of the Church and the Mother of all Nations she is presented with a new role now^{3/4}different from that in the Gospel of Luke^{3/4}not just the obedient woman and mother of Jesus but the one who provokes obedience in the Church showing the way of living this new life in Christ. Thus Bortoloni states that in Cana “the new humanity is born. The task of the new humanity will be to obey and serve Jesus.”⁵⁵

Conclusion

The richness of the theology of the Fourth Gospel knows no end. Using the image of the Evangelist in the ending of his Gospel we could say that even if we write enough books to fill the whole world about the theology contained in the FG we would still fall short in comprehension and explanation of the message contained in it. This essay has been a humble attempt to shed light on the theology contained in the beginning of the Gospel which is intrinsically connected with the whole as well.

The guiding question of this study has been: “How far goes the theme of the Creation or new Creation in the intention of the Evangelist when he started his Gospel with the words Ἐν ἀρχῇ? Was he trying to simply bring to memory the Book of Genesis as a “romantic” way of beginning his Gospel or did he intend to convey a message deeply rooted in the Creation narrative? The work done in this paper intended to show a serious possibility that the Evangelist was in fact referring to a new Creation by following step by step the same pattern used in the Genesis narrative.

A second step was given in identifying this new Creation as the Church and discovering how just as the first Creation came forth in a chronological and progressive manner so did the Church. The main differences of the hypothesis presented in this essay with other theories are the following: the inclusion of the Prologue as the first day of the Creation narrative, the beginning of the second day in the verse 19 with the appearance of John the Baptist, the ending of the week before Cana and the perspective of the first sign of Jesus as a counterpart reading of that of the disobedience of Eve and Adam.

In each of the six symbolic days presented by the author of the FG there is a new essential element of the Church being created which happen to be in chronological order with its historical foundation and goes in parallel, as well, with the correspondent one in Genesis. The parallelism goes as far as containing both the

⁵⁵ Jose Bortoloni, *Cómo leer el Evangelio de Juan: el camino de la vida* (Madrid, Editorial San Pablo, 2002), 33.

succession of six days—or symbolic days—within the first chapter of their narratives and mentioning the seventh day only as the beginning of the following section or chapter. Moreover, the study has showed how those elements are in accord with the ecclesiology found in the Johannine theology all throughout their writings.

As a result we have been able to identify the λόγος—God—as the light of the new Creation, John and the Old Testament as the firmament dividing the waters above (Immanent λόγος) and the waters below (Incarnated λόγος), Jesus and the sacramental reality as the land where the Church is founded, the first witnesses as the Sun and the Moon which shine and guide the whole Church, Peter as the Chief Apostle and head of the missionary “fishing” of the Church and finally Philip as the culmination of a Church created in the image and likeness of the Incarnated λόγος—a Church which first endeavor was to bring to faith in Jesus as the Son of God the Jewish community, represented by Nathanael and open to the procreative mission God gave to go and multiply by announcing the Gospel to all nations.

Accordingly the wedding at Cana is presented as the counterpart of the disobedience at the Garden of Eden. In the latter the disobedience of Eve brought along the disobedience of Adam while in Cana the obedience of the new Adam is being introduced by that of the new Eve. The old humanity has been redeemed, the new wine is overflowing and the new Creation will never fade since it is “born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or man's will, but born of God.”■

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Bro. Pablo Muñoz is a *Verbum Dei* Spanish missionary born in 1974. He became a missionary at the age of 21. After finishing his Bachelor in Theology he professed his Perpetual Vows in 2002 in Madrid, Spain, and was assigned in Cebu, Philippines, where he was dedicated for 8 years to the apostolate of forming lay evangelizers. Last 2010 he was transferred to Manila as Formator of the *Verbum Dei* postulants for one year. He finished his Licentiate in Biblical Theology in LST last April 2013 and is now currently assigned in Rome for apostolic work. He can be contacted at pablmunozsh@yahoo.es.