

In the writings of Philo, scholars observe many similarities to the way Philo discusses the Logos and the opening verses of John's Gospel. The prologue to John's Gospel is the sole instance where John explicitly refers to Jesus as the Logos. However, John provides supporting evidence throughout the rest of his Gospel. Both John and Paul share similarities with Philo, leading most scholars to believe that the concepts found in the New Testament were already prevalent among first-century Jewish worshippers. This suggests that Philo likely influenced contemporary understandings of God and the cosmos.

“In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word (*Logos*) was with God, and the Word (*Logos*) was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.”

John 1:1-5

1. Philo describes God's Word (*Logos*) as being with God at creation and compares the Logos to the planning documents of a great architect (God) building a city.

*“Should a man desire to use words in a more simple and direct way, he would say that the world (cosmos) discerned only by the intellect is nothing else than the **Word (Logos) of God** when He was already engaged in the act of creation. For (to revert to our illustration) the city discernible by the intellect alone is nothing else than the reasoning faculty of the architect in the act of planning to found the city.”¹*

On the Creation of the World, 24

2. The Word (*Logos*) is God.

Here, Philo comments on the Greek Septuagint wording of Genesis 31:13, where God speaks to Jacob in a dream. Philo makes the determination that based on the unique wording that the title of God is given to God's Word – His *Logos*.

“Here it gives the title of “God” to His chief Word (logos)”²

On Dreams, 227-230

¹ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 21.

² Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 5, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 419.

3. All things came into being through the *Logos* (John 1:3).

In *On Cherubim*, Philo remarks about God being the cause of all things, but his divine Word (*Logos*), the instrument through which all things (the universe) came into being, thus declaring the goodness of God:

Because God is the cause, not the instrument and that which comes into being is brought into being through an instrument, but by a cause. For to bring anything into being needs all these conjointly, the “by which,” the “from which,” the “through which,” the “for which,” and the first of these is the cause, the second the material, the third the tool or instrument, and the fourth the end or object.”

*Let us leave these merely particular buildings, and contemplate that greatest of houses or cities, this universe. We shall see that its cause is God, by whom it has come into being, its material, the four elements from which it was compounded, its instrument, the **Word (Logos) of God**, through which it was framed, and the final cause of the building is the **goodness of the architect.**”³*

On Cherubim, 125, 127

4. The Word (*Logos*) is Light (John 1:4)

In the first place, God is light, for there is a verse in one of the Psalms, “The Lord is my illumination and my Savior” (Ps. 27:1). And He is not only light but the archetype of every other light, nay, prior to and high above every archetype, holding the position of the model of a model.

*For the model or pattern was **the Word (Logos)**, which contained all His fullness—light, in fact; for, as the lawgiver tells us, “God said, ‘let light come into being’” (Gen. 1:3), whereas He Himself resembles none of the things which have come into being.⁴*

On Dreams, 75

³ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 83.

⁴ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 5, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 335–337.

5. Struggle between light and darkness (John 1:5):

“After the kindling of the intelligible light, which preceded the sun’s creation, darkness its adversary withdrew: for God, in His perfect knowledge of their mutual contrariety and natural conflict, parted them one from another by a wall of separation. In order, therefore, to keep them from the discord arising from perpetual clash, to prevent war in place of peace prevailing and setting up disorder in an ordered universe, He not only separated light and darkness, but also placed in the intervening spaces boundary-marks, by which He held back each of their extremities: for, had they been actual neighbors, they were sure to produce confusion by engaging with intense and never-ceasing rivalry in the struggle for mastery.”⁵

On Creation, 33

6. Who can be called “Sons of God?” (see John 1:12):

*“But they who live in the knowledge of the One are rightly called **“Sons of God,”** as Moses also acknowledges when he says, “Ye are sons of the Lord God” (Deut. 14:1), and “God who begat thee” (ibid. 32:18), and “Is not He Himself thy father?” (ibid. 6).*

Indeed with those whose soul is thus disposed it follows that they hold moral beauty to be the only good, and this serves as a counterwork engineered by veteran warriors to fight the cause which makes Pleasure the end and to subvert and overthrow it.

*But if there be any as yet unfit to be called a Son of God, let him press to take his place under **God’s First-born, the Word (logos)**, who holds the eldership among the angels, their ruler as it were. (compare to Hebrews 1).*

*And many names are his, for he is called, “the Beginning,” and the Name of God, and **His Word (Logos)**, and the Man after His image, and “he that sees,” that is Israel.*

*And therefore I was moved a few pages above to praise the virtues of those who say that “We are all **sons of one man**” (Gen. 42:11). For if we have not yet become fit to be thought sons of God yet we may be **sons of His invisible image, the most holy Word (logos)**. For the **Word (logos)** is the eldest-born image of God⁶*

On the Confusion of Tongues, 145-147

⁵ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 1, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 25–27.

⁶ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 4, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 89–91.

7. While commenting on the Cherubim that sat above the Ark of the Covenant, Philo describes the three-fold nature of the Godhead and the *Logos* and that the *Logos* was conceived and manifest before them all:

“...while God is indeed one, His highest and chiefest powers are two, even goodness and sovereignty. Through His goodness, He begat all that is; through His sovereignty, He rules what He has begotten.

*And in the midst between the two, there is a third that unites them, Reason (Logos), for it is through reason (Logos) that God is both ruler and good. Of these two potencies, sovereignty and goodness the Cherubim are symbols, as the fiery sword is the symbol of reason (Logos). For exceeding swift and of burning heat is reason and chiefly so the reason of the (Great) Cause, for it (Logos) **alone preceded and outran all things, conceived before them all, manifest above them all**”⁷*

On Cherubim, 27-28

⁷ Philo, *Philo*, trans. F. H. Colson, G. H. Whitaker, and J. W. Earp, vol. 2, The Loeb Classical Library (London; England; Cambridge, MA: William Heinemann Ltd; Harvard University Press, 1929–1962), 25.