is a crossing or reversing pattern (as seen earlier, p.112 in reference to 1:1-5).

The Chiastic Structure of John 16:28

(A) I came from the Father  
(B) and have come into the world;  
(B') again, I am leaving the world  
(A') and going to the Father.

The chiastic structure of the prologue is far more intricate, but the following parallels can be detected in vocabulary, subject, or theme.

The Chiastic Structure of the Prologue

1-2    18    The Word with God  
3    17    What came through the Word  
4-5    16    What was received from the Word  
6-8    15    John announces the Word  
9-10   14    The Word enters the world  
11    13    The Word and his own people  
12a    12c   The Word is accepted  
12b    12c   The Word's gift to those who accepted him

The pivot of the prologue, therefore, is the conferring of the status “children of God” on those who believed in Jesus. In the debate with the synagogue authorities, such a designation may have had a particular importance for the Johannine community. It defined their status and identity as the true community of the children of God.

The Relationship of the Prologue to the Rest of the Gospel

The most important function of the prologue is to prepare readers to read the rest of the Gospel. In the prologue, the narrator speaks, introducing the reader to the protagonist (Jesus), clarifying his origin and identity, and foreshadowing the plot and themes of the story that is about to be told. Jesus is introduced as the divine Logos, and throughout his public ministry he will do

“signs” that point to his identity. The prologue affirms that all things were made through him, so when Jesus changes water to wine or walks on water later in the Gospel, what he does confirms what the narrator has said about who he is. The result is that the narrator’s credibility grows, and the reader is led to believe “that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God” (20:50-51).

After affirming the creative role of the Logos, the prologue introduces the witness to the light, the entry of the light into the world, and the rejection of the light. The plot is therefore foreshadowed in metaphorical terms. Only at the end of the prologue does the narrator use the name of Jesus (v. 17), and even then the reader must draw the connection between Jesus and what has been said about the Logos, the light, and the only Son. In many respects, the prologue is comparable to a table of contents for the Gospel. The first part of the Gospel (John 2-12) tells of the witness of John the Baptist, the coming of Jesus, the rising hostility toward him, and his rejection by his own people. The second part (John 15-20) tells of his ministry to “his own”: he washes their feet, teaches them, prays for them, and then goes out and dies for them. His death is his return to the Father.

Bultmann compared the prologue to a musical overture: “And yet the prologue is an introduction in the sense of being an overture, leading the reader out of the commonplace into a new and strange world of sounds and figures, and singling out particular motifs from the action that is now to be unfolded.” The importance of the themes that are announced in the prologue and taken up later in the Gospel can be seen in the following list:

Preexistence of the Logos: “He was in the beginning with God.” (vv. 1-2)
John 17:5—“... glorify me in your own presence with the glory that I had in your presence before the world existed.”

Life: “What has come into being in him was life.” (v. 4)
John 5:24—“... anyone who hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life, and does not come under judgment, but has passed from death to life.” (cf. 5:25-26)
John 11:25—“I am the resurrection and the life.”
John 14:6—“I am the way, and the truth, and the life.”
**The only Son:** “...the glory as of a father's only son...” (v. 14)

John 5:16—“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son...”

**Moses:** “The law indeed was given through Moses...” (v. 17)

John 5:45-46—“Your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me.”

John 6:32—“I tell you, it was not Moses who gave you the bread from heaven, but it is my Father who gives you the true bread from heaven.”

John 9:28-29—“You are his disciple, but we are disciples of Moses. We know that God has spoken to Moses, but as for this man, we do not know where he comes from.”

**Seeing God:** “No one has ever seen God.” (v. 18)

John 5:37—“You have never heard his voice or seen his form.”

John 6:46—“Not that anyone has seen the Father except the one who is from God; he has seen the Father.”

Because so much of the vocabulary and so many of its themes introduce strands of thought that will be important in the body of the Gospel, it is significant that some elements of the prologue do not recur later. “The Word” is not used later as a title for Jesus. Two significant terms—*grace* and *fullness*—do not appear again in the Gospel. Furthermore, the poetic quality of the prologue is not equaled anywhere else in the Gospel.

The prologue plays an important role in orienting the reader to the Gospel story that follows. The narrator speaks authoritatively, introducing the divine Logos and describing the role of the pre-existent Logos in the creation. The prologue, therefore, provides the lens through which, or the perspective from which, the reader views Jesus. From the outset, the reader understands Jesus in light of his origin with God, his role in creation, the Incarnation, and his mission to reveal the Father. Jesus' role is also defined in relation to Moses and John the Baptist, who will bear witness to him. The opposition is established between those who reject Jesus and those who believe on his name, and the latter are identified as the “children of God.”

The authoritative voice of the narrator, the privileged informa-
tion that is conveyed in the prologue, the scriptural allusions, the “primacy effect” of this perspective on Jesus— all these powerfully condition the way in which the reader will respond to the rest of the narrative. The reader is drawn to the narrator’s confession that the divine Logos was incarnate in Jesus. All that follows in the Gospel’s account of what Jesus does and says serves to confirm the prologue’s declaration that “the Word became flesh and lived among us” (1:14).

JOHN 1:19-51

John 1:19-51 (or 1:19–2:11) constitutes a second, narrative introduction to the Gospel. Just as the Gospel seems to have two conclusions (at the end of John 20 and at the end of John 21), so it has two beginnings.

The narrative beginning of the Gospel introduces the testimony of John the Baptist and the calling of the first disciples. The themes sounded in the prologue begin to be developed in the narrative. This section has numerous contacts with the Synoptic Gospels—the preaching of John, Jesus’ baptism, and the calling of the disciples—but it does not depend directly on any of them. Traditional material is developed in characteristically Johannine form, reflecting both on the ministry of Jesus and on the situation of the Johannine community. What happened in the ministry of Jesus provides direction for understanding the present, especially through reflection on the Christological significance of the historical events.

This section falls into two parts (1:19-54 and 1:55-51), and each part has two subsections (19-28, 29-54; 55-42, 43-51).

The Testimony of John the Baptist (1:19-34)

The testimony of John introduces two significant elements: the trial motif and the fulfillment of messianic expectations. John was introduced in the prologue as a witness, and here he begins to fulfill that function. “The Jews from Jerusalem” sent emissaries to John. The wording reminds us that John too had been sent (cf. 1:6). The question is, “Who are you?” The expected answer is a claim to be one of the expected messianic figures, but John denies each one, thereby leaving the fulfillment of these figures to Jesus. The narrator’s emphatic description of John’s