



Cherrequine Bible Doctrine Ministries
dikaosune.com

THE WORD (LOGOS)

The most usual Greek term for "word" in the NT is λογος (λογος) occasionally translated with other meanings (account, reason, motive); specifically in the prologue to the Fourth Gospel (John 1:1, 14) and perhaps in other θοηωννινε writings (I John 1:1; Revelation 19:13) it is used of the Second Person of the Trinity. In ordinary Greek parlance it also means reason.

According to John 1:1-18 the Logos was already present at the creation ("in the beginning" relates to Genesis 1:1), in the closest relationship with God ("with" = προσ, νοτ μετα ορ σπν). Indeed, the Logos is God (not just a "divine being". This relationship with God was effective in the moment of creation (1:2). The entire work of creation was carried out through (∇βψ∇ =δια, vs. 3) the Logos. The source of life (1:4, probable punctuation) and light of the world (cf. 9:5) and of every man (1:9, probable punctuation), and still continuing (present tense in 1:5) this work, the Logos became incarnate, revealing the sign of God's presence and his nature (1:14).

The prologue thus sets out three main facets of the Logos and His activity: His divinity and intimate relationship with the Father; His work as agent of creation; and His incarnation. In I John 1:1 "the Logos of life," seen, heard, and handled, may refer to the personal Christ of the apostolic preaching or impersonally to the message about Him. Rev. 19:12 pictures Christ as a conquering general called the Logos of God. As in Hebrews 4:12, it is the OT picture of the shattering effects of God's word, which is in mind.

Diverse factors give some preparation for John's usage. God creates by His Word (Genesis 1:3; Psalm 33:9) and His word is sometimes spoken of semi-personally (Psalms 107:20; 147:15, 18); it is active, dynamic, achieving its intended results (Isaiah 50:10-11). The wisdom of God is personified in His Word. The angel of the Lord is sometimes spoken of as God, sometimes as distinct (Judges 2:1). God's name is semi-personalized (Exodus 23:21; I Kings 8:29).

John chapter 1 differs radically from philosophic usage. For the Greeks, Logos was essentially reason; for John, essentially word. Language common to Philo's and the NT has led many to see John as Philo's debtor. But one refers naturally to Philo's Logos as "It," to John's as "He." Philo came no nearer than Plato to a Logos who might be incarnate, and he does not identify Logos and Messiah. John's Logos is not only God's agent in creation; He is God, and becomes incarnate, revealing, and redeeming.

The source of John's Logos doctrine is in the person and work of the historical Christ. "Jesus is not to be interpreted by Logos: Logos is intelligible only as we think of Jesus Its expression takes its suitability primarily from the OT connotation of "word" and its personification of wisdom. Christ is God's active Word, his saving revelation to fallen man. It is not accidental that both the gospel and Christ who is its subject are called "the word."

The apologists found the Logos a convenient term in expounding Christianity to pagans. They used its sense of "reason," and some were thus enabled to see philosophy as a preparation for the gospel. The Hebraic overtones of "word" were under-emphasized, though never quite lost. Some theologians distinguished between the Logos ενδιατηετος, or Word latent in the Godhead from all eternity, and the λογος προφηορικος, uttered and becoming effective at the creation. Οριγεν seems to have used Philo's language of the δευτεροσ τηεος. In the major Χηριστολογιχαλ controversies, however, the use of the term did not clarify the main issues, and it does not occur in the great creeds of the religious group.