

Christ, The Living Word

An Essay on Christ, The Logos

by David Morsey

From the depths of frustration and despair, Job, the legendary symbol of adversity, cries out, ***“Oh that I knew where I might find Him!”*** He thus echoes the cry of man from the beginning of civilization, as he pursues relentlessly the meaning of his existence. While on the one hand this search may be seen as a universal cultural phenomenon, yet on the other hand it is too vital an issue to be relegated to the wasteland of philosophical wool-gathering. The pursuit of God is not a subject for the casual, what-shall-we-talk-about-next social vacuum. It does not yield before flippant inquiry. Usually the truth of God comes from travail and emerges from the matrix of desperation. It is really to the desperate that the following lines are written—to those who are seeking God with all their heart. For it is to these that the promise comes through the prophet Jeremiah: ***“And ye shall seek Me, and find Me, when ye shall search for Me with all your heart.”***

We must come to grips with the true Christ of Scripture. There is so much careless thinking about Him; so much trivia, so much misconception which reduces Christ to a “handy retainer,” who lives to accommodate the whims and indulgences of man! Often He is looked upon as the benevolent guardian who is expected to solve all the problems of life on earth and then to provide His charges with splendid villas in the sky for an eternity of self-indulgence. Unfortunately, for many this concept has given rise to the absurd notion that if a Christian has the faith, he should be delivered from all adversity. This in turn leads to the practice of gauging one's spirituality by his well-being. So then, if God does not deliver from every affliction and illness, it is assumed that there is something wrong either with God or with oneself. This produces either doubt about God's care (we do not dare admit to doubt about His existence!), or to guilt feelings about one's own spirituality or faith. In addition to being totally unsupported by Scripture, and unworthy of the Lord of the Universe, these ideas often reflect something of “spoiled-bratism.” Such attitudes hinder the maturing processes. We never get to know God as long as we are imposing upon Him our own image of what He ought to be like. It is time for us to quit the practice of fashioning our own God and come openly to the Scripture (not to tradition) to let the Spirit show us what Christ is really like. But how can we know God? How can the finite know the infinite? How can that which is locked in nature, know the supernatural? It is impossible apart from a revelation from God Himself. But even with such a revelation, how can God communicate such truth to man? What human language can He use that does not beggar His own matchless glory? The solution of God to the predicament is found in Christ, the Logos—the Living Word. God became His own revelation!

In the following pages, we shall explore the revelational link between God and man, which according to the Bible, is Christ, the Logos—the Living Word. There is no term in all the

Bible more basic to the meaning of Christ. Logos is a Greek term which is translated by "Word." However, in the Greek concept, there is much more than our limited definition. The Logos is portrayed as a living projection of the Godhead, which brings to His three-dimensional creatures the capacity to enter into union with the One who is infinite and eternal. This then is the aspect of Christ that we shall be considering. ***"May God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, grant unto us the spirit of wisdom and revelation in the knowledge of Him."*** (Ephesians 1:17)

LOGOS DEFINED

Two texts in the Scripture will introduce the term. John 1:1 says ***"In the beginning was the Word (Logos) and the Logos was with God, and God was the Logos;"*** and Hebrews 4:12—***"For the Logos of God is living and energizing and sharper than any two-edged sword and piercing unto the dividing of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the inner feelings and inner thoughts of the heart."*** These words give life to the Logos. They lift divine revelation out of the realm of the propositional and make of it a vital, life-giving reality. In fact, the Logos is none other than Christ Himself, the Living Word! But what does it mean, the Living Word? To find out we must examine the history of "Logos." It is, of course, a Greek word. We meet it in the Greek Classical literature a thousand years before Christ. To the Greek, it had a veritable treasury of meaning. There is really no adequate English equivalent. To the businessman, it was the heart of his business—"the accounting;" to the mathematician, it was proportion and ratio; to the artist and poet, it was rhythm and balance. But to the philosopher, whose world was ideas, it was the "soul of the universe," from which came all energy and wisdom. To Plato, the Logos was the realm of the "Ideal," or mental, which was to him the only eternal reality. To the Apostle John, aflame with the Spirit of Christ, the Logos, was alive—God's Living Witness to man. It was not only a word spoken by God, but God Himself, projected to man in the Spirit of Christ. To the ancient Greek, the Logos meant as much the idea itself as the articulation or the expression of the idea. Thayer's Greek Lexicon (a universally accepted authority) defines the word as follows: "Logos denotes the essential Word of God, i.e. the personal (hypostatic) wisdom and power in union with God, His minister in the creation and government of the universe, the cause of all the world's life, both physical and ethical, which for the procurement of man's salvation put on human nature in the person of Jesus, the Messiah, and shone forth conspicuously from His words and deeds" (p. 382). Thus whenever Christ is considered as the Word (or Logos) the essential meaning is the projected revelation from God, the living communication to man which embodies divine energy and so affects the spirit of man as to empower him to receive the revelation. This power remains in the Spirit of man in the form of the Holy Spirit (which is the Spirit of Christ) as a life-giving and active force. Thus Hebrews 4:12, ***"the Word of God is living and energizing . . ."*** Jesus appropriately uses the figure of the seed in symbolizing the Word. The seed is a living, growing thing—so the Word grows within us.

LOGOS REVEALED

The principal development of the meaning of the Logos is found in the first chapter of John, which we shall explore. ***“In beginning was the Word (the Logos) and the Logos was with God and God was the Logos. All things were made by Him and without Him was not anything made that was made. In Him was life and the life was the light of men and the light shined in the darkness and the darkness did not appropriate it.”*** (John 1:1-5) In this passage the Logos is revealed as 1) existing in the beginning with God; 2) existing as God Himself; 3) creating all things; 4) being the source of all life and light.

IN BEGINNING - This expression also begins the Old Testament. It signifies that point at which God projected Himself out of the infinite, absolute, into a space-time realm. He started the time clock. There is no way that man can know anything of what went before, because it belongs to a dimension he can not accommodate, especially with a mind which, through the fall, has been reduced to about 5% efficiency. ***“Now I know in part; then shall I fully know even as also I have been fully known.”*** (I Corinthians 13:11). It is futile to try to determine anything of God prior to that time, because we are involved in speculation only. To ponder the question of where God came from or when He began, etcetera, etcetera, is useless. Some day we will be freed from our space-time prison and in our glorified state, we will know all things. We will not even have to ask.

THE WORD WAS GOD - not “a God” as some false teachers say. These false teachers have drawn erroneous conclusions from the fact that there is no definite article before the word “God” in the Greek text. Such teachers obviously have a limited knowledge of Greek. Actually the usage of the definite article in Greek is different than in English. This fact escapes the amateur who merely parrots a few misconceived words from a language he has never really studied. The fact is that in this same chapter, the name “God” occurs without the definite article, also in verses 6, 12, 13 and 18, where the only possible meaning is ***“the one and only God.”*** Do not be misled by amateurs with a sketchy knowledge of the Word. Better to have heart surgery on the temporal body by a quack doctor than to trust the spirit to an amateur teacher of the Word. The foregoing statements were important because we are dealing with the vital question of the deity of Christ, the Logos. John tells us that what we believe concerning Christ is the test of our salvation. See 1 John 4:1-3. Make no mistake, the Logos of John 1 is none other than God Himself. He is the very Spirit of the Godhead, projected into the world. ***“That was the true light, which, while coming into the world lights every man.”*** (John 1:9)

IN HIM WAS LIFE - the revelation is living and life-giving. It is like a seed planted in the heart and growing up into everlasting life. The word of man is limited to the affecting of the mind. The Word of God gives life to the Spirit. ***“So shall My word be that goeth forth out of My mouth; it shall not return unto Me void, (Hebrew - empty, ineffective) but it shall accomplish that which I please.”*** God's Words are not like human chatter. That Word from the mouth of God is the breath of God, the energy of God, the Spirit of God—the Logos.

THE LIFE WAS THE LIGHT OF MEN - the Logos is the light of the world. The Word of God is the projected energy of God. It is light-energy. In the beginning, God spoke and light came into the world. That light was the Logos. ***“God, who commanded the light to***

shine out of darkness, hath shined in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the presence of Jesus Christ.” (2 Corinthians) The Word was projected from God into our very spirits and abides there in the person of the Holy Spirit, furnishing for us, all the energy we need for life and growth.

THE DARKNESS DID NOT APPROPRIATE IT - The Living Word came from God—a light to all the world. But not all received Him. **“The natural man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know, because they are discerned spiritually (in the spirit).”** (1 Corinthians 2:14) It is a free choice of the human will. God did not make a world of puppets. **“But as many as received Him, He gave to them the authority to become the children of God; to those who believe on His name.”** (John 1:12) The Living Word gives to men the power to appropriate the revelation that He brings. Apart from that power, there is only perplexity. The indwelling Logos, the Christ, the Spirit of God, transforms us from children of darkness into children of light.

AND THE WORD BECAME FLESH - **“The Word became flesh and dwelled temporarily amongst us and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.”** (John 1:14) The eternal Godhead projected Himself in a Living Revelation. That Living Revelation was Christ, the Logos—creating a world of men and then taking the physical form of the being He created. He lived among men, translating the glory of the infinite Godhead into human terms. Thus, the unfathomable love of God, which is beyond knowing, becomes a reality in the hearts of men. **“For this cause, I bow my knees to the Father, out of whom every family in the heavens and upon earth is named, that He may grant to you according to the riches of His glory, to be strengthened with power through His spirit in the inner man, that Christ may settle down in your hearts through faith in order that you, being rooted in love and having a foundation in love, may be utterly able to appropriate with all the saints what is the breadth and length and height and depth and to know the love of Christ which goes beyond knowledge, that you may be filled with all the fulness of God; to the one who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all things which we ask or think according to the power which energizes us.”** (Ephesians 3:14-20)

LOGOS APPLIED

Imagine the Godhead—greater than the universe; the Eternal Spirit, encompassing all the universe and sustaining its existence. Imagine that Eternal Spirit—absolute, complete within Himself—projecting Himself in the creation of a finite world. Imagine that projection as a living communication—the Word: Christ, the Logos. And imagine that Living Revelation taking a human form, whom we know as Jesus, and walking in the world He made, to translate the revelation of the infinite Godhead into human terms. This is the dimension of God's revelation to man in the Logos.

In the beginning the Word went forth in creation. The absolute infinite God expressed Himself in that creation. This expression was in a word and this Word was Christ. Colossians 1:15 tells us that all things were made by Christ and for Him. In Genesis 1:1 we are told that the maker is God (**Elohim**). So **Elohim** was none other than Christ.

Moreover in Romans 8:9, the Spirit of Christ is identified as the Spirit of God. In fact, all that we ever see or know of the Godhead is Christ. Every manifestation of the Godhead in the Old Testament is Christ, whether **Elohim** of creation, or **El Shaddai** of Abraham, or **Yahweh** of the burning bush, or **Pele'**, the awesome Messenger of Manoah. All is Christ and Christ is the living expression of the Godhead. We may here set forth the thesis that every expression of God in the Old Testament is part of the Living Revelation, which is Christ, the Logos. The Godhead, as such, is beyond the reach of our finite minds. Thus, the revelation must be given to us through a mediator. 1 Timothy 2:5 says, **“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus . . .”**

Let us now examine the thesis in the light of some of the names for God in the Old Testament.

ELOHIM - This is the first name used for God in the Bible. In fact, it is the third word in the Hebrew text. It is simply translated “God,” but is very rich in meaning. The word is plural in form, but uses a singular verb. This means that there is diversity in the unity. It reveals a God of many facets and expressions of Himself. This multifaceted Being is said to be the creator of all things, but in Colossians 1:15 in the New Testament, Christ is identified as this creator: **“who (Christ) is the image of the invisible God, the first emerging one of all creation because by Him all things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, things visible and things invisible, whether thrones or lordships, or rulers, or authorities. All things were created through Him and for His sake; and He Himself is before all things and all things hold together in Him.”** This text, of course, supports John 1:1-2—**“In beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God and the Word was God. All things were made by Him and without Him there was not anything made.”**

YAHWEH (Jehovah) - Most people know the name Jehovah. Actually in the Hebrew text, it is **Yahweh**. This name and **Elohim**, with its derivatives, are the most commonly used names for God in the Old Testament. The name **Yahweh** was too sacred for the Rabbis to speak aloud, so whenever they came to it, they read Lord (**Adonai**) instead. The vowels for **Adonai** were placed with the consonants for **Yahweh** to indicate that the substitute should be used. The consonants for Jehovah—**JHVH**—are the same in Hebrew as **YHWH**. In the King James version, you find the name Lord used for **Yahweh** after the tradition of the Rabbis. In later versions, Jehovah was adopted (the combination of **Yahweh** and **Adonai**)—both are translations of **Yahweh**.

We have gone into this in some detail because we want there to be no misunderstanding. **Yahweh** and Jehovah are the same. In order to bring out the depth of meaning of the name, we must use the original term **Yahweh**. This name is first introduced in Genesis 2:4 but later, more fully revealed, in Exodus 3:14. Moses, of course, had encountered God at the famous flame in the wilderness. Here he had received his commission to deliver the children of Israel from Egypt. When he asked God by what authority he should do this, God said, **“Tell them that ‘I am’ hath sent you.”** The name **“I am”** is a form of the name **Yahweh**, “The Eternally Existent One.” Jesus takes this name for himself throughout the Gospels, but one of the most revealing instances was when He was confronted by the Pharisees who were challenging His relationship to Abraham. They said, **“You are not yet 50 years old, and you have seen Abraham?”** Jesus responded, **“Before Abraham was, ‘I am’.”** (John 8:57,58) He used here the Greek equivalent of the Hebrew name in Exodus

3—(Ego eimi). Thus Jesus directly identifies Himself with **Yahweh**, or Jehovah, of Moses at the burning bush, in a clear reference to His own eternal existence.

ALMIGHTY (El Shaddai) - Abraham was blessed with a number of appearances from God. These were often in human form as the “friends” who visited him at his tent. On one of these occasions (Genesis 17), the visitor identified himself as “The Almighty.” He used the name **El Shaddai**. Hebrew scholars, later translating this passage into Greek (a version of the Old Testament called the Septuagint, which Jesus Himself used) translated the Hebrew El Shaddai by the Greek equivalent Pantokrator. In Revelation 1:7, 8 we have an undisputed reference to Jesus Christ. **“Behold He comes with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, even those who pierced Him and all tribes of the earth shall wail over Him. Yes, truly. I am the Alpha and the Omega, says the Lord God, who is, who was, and who is coming, the Almighty (Pantokrator).”** The name is again applied to Jesus Christ in Revelation 4:19.

WONDER – PELE’ - This name means “awesome or mysterious.” It is the name by which God identifies Himself to Manoah, the father of Samson, when the birth of the child was announced. The story is in Judges 13. There was a divine appearance to Manoah and his wife, bringing the message of the birth of Samson. The Hebrew word for messenger is clearly used as a reference to the very Word of God, the Logos, in Exodus 23:21. The Messenger of God is promised to go before Israel. This Messenger is said to be one whom the people should obey; is said to have the power to forgive sins, and to have in his inner being (Hebrew: B^eQIR^eBO), the name of God. As the Messenger was leaving, Manoah asked him his name in order that he could do him honor. Note that when an angel appeared to John in Revelation 19:10, John wanted to do him honor, but he refused on the grounds that he was only a messenger and not divine. In this instance with Manoah, the Messenger did not refuse, but instead, said to him **“Why do you ask my name?” – “It is ‘awesome’ (Pele’)** (not secret, as in A.V) Judges 13:18. This name is given to Jesus in the prophecy concerning him in Isaiah 9:6, **“For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given; and His name shall be called Pele’—Wonder—Awesome** (not wonderful) . . .” Thus Jesus, the incarnation of the Logos, is the divine Messenger of Manoah.

FATHER - This name is, of course, one of the most common names in the Scripture for God. The entire concept of fatherhood is a human relationship and belongs to the nature of Christ, the Logos. Remember that the Godhead—Absolute, Eternal, Unknowable—is Spirit and only relates to the material universe through the Logos, the Living Revelation. Thus, Christ is at once the Father and the incarnation of the Father. Jesus is simply the embodiment of the Father as He is the embodiment of the Word, or the Logos. Thus, Jesus both reveals the Father and is the Father. When, as the Son, He addresses the Father, He is addressing the Father within Him. This is why He can say to Philip, **“He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father. How do you say, show us the Father? Do you not believe that I am the Father and the Father in Me?”** (John 14:7-9) The most conclusive confirmation that Christ is the Father is in Isaiah 9:6. Referring to the child that shall be born, the text says, **“His name shall be called . . . Everlasting Father (Father of eternity).”**

THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS (Yahweh, Tsidkenu) - In Jeremiah 23:5, 6 we have a remarkable identification of Christ with Yahweh in a name which is clearly applied to Him throughout the New Testament. Jeremiah is giving a prophecy concerning the

coming of Christ. **“Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth. In His days Judah shall be saved, and Israel shall dwell safely: and this is His name whereby He shall be called, THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS.”** In the New Testament, the prominent identification of this name is in Chapters 5 and 7 of Hebrews, where Christ is presented as Melchizedek. This name means “King of Righteousness.”

There are, of course, many other names that could be explored, but the above should suffice to establish the truth that every expression of the Godhead, as set forth in both the Old and New Testaments, is Christ. The only one we shall see in glory is Christ. **“For in Him dwells all the fulness of the Godhead in bodily form.”** (Colossians 2:9) Christ is the living revelation of all the facets of the Godhead. He is **Elohim**; He is **Yahweh**; He is **El Shaddai**; He is Father; He is Righteousness; in Him the fulness of the Godhead dwells. The Spirit of God is the Spirit of Christ, and the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ. Christ is all and in all.

SUMMARY

The understanding of the meaning of the Logos is basic to the understanding of Christ. In summary, the study of the concept of Logos brings the following conclusions:

- 1) Logos, or Word, used as a name for Christ has a far deeper meaning than a simple unit of communication.
- 2) Going back to the ancient usage and adding to it the Biblical usage, the name denotes a living and life-giving revelation from God to men.
- 3) As a Living Revelation, the Word is God Himself. As a life-giving revelation, the Word penetrates the spirit of man bringing life and growth.
- 4) Since all of the revelations of God in the Old Testament are within the frame of human understanding, and since the Godhead itself is beyond human understanding, we conclude that these revelations are themselves the Living Word—Christ—the Logos.
- 5) Each name for God in the Old Testament is linked with Christ in the New Testament.
- 6) All that we experience of God is through Christ. The human mind is not capable of grasping the meaning of God outside of Christ.
- 7) Jesus was the earthly embodiment of Christ, the Logos. The resurrection body of Jesus is permanently a part of Christ. Thus the expression Jesus Christ is an appropriate name to use for Him throughout eternity.
- 8) All that we shall ever see of the Godhead is Jesus Christ.
- 9) The Holy Spirit, the agent of Christ on earth today, is himself the Spirit of Christ. Thus, to be filled with the Spirit is to be filled with Christ.
- 10) In view of the previous discussion, the focus of all our relationship to God is Jesus Christ.

CONCLUSION

The elevation of Christ is a matter of utmost importance. There is much confusion about His place in the Godhead. Many tend to emphasize the name, Jesus, over Christ. Still others feel that the Holy Spirit replaced Christ. There is also uncertainty as to Whom one addresses in prayer, or to Whom one is relating in daily living. Let it be clearly understood, there is only one to whom we relate—Jesus Christ. Jesus was the earthly manifestation of Christ, the Word, but is now absorbed in Christ. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of Christ occupying the hearts of men on earth. The entire Godhead is embodied in the glorified Christ. When we are glorified, all we shall see is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ will be seated on the eternal throne. Underlying that blessed visible presence, is the invisible Godhead; the Spirit Who encompasses the entire universe, of which the heavenlies are a part.

There is no need for confusion. Simply identify with Jesus Christ, and you will be identified with the Godhead. You may call Him God, or Father, or Lord, or Christ, or Jesus, or Holy Spirit. He is all of these and no one more than another. The Bible insists that Christ be glorified because everything in creation is by Him and for His sake. Even the Holy Spirit, now the primary agent of Christ in the world, came to glorify Christ and not Himself. To be filled with the Holy Spirit, is to be filled with Christ; and to be filled with Christ, is to be filled with the Living Word of God.

Scripture passages are translated from the original Greek and Hebrew by the author, who has spent thirty years in the original texts, both as student and teacher.

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