

λόγος

logos/word

(1) Introduction

John 1:1-5 was the passage discussed in my JWCG's Bible Study this month. Through the discussion, below are some of the thoughts that emanated in my mind about the meaning of the "**Word (λόγος)**".

If you are flummoxed by parts (2) & (3) below, which represent just a brief (not comprehensive) attempt at trying to understand the "**Word (λόγος)**", do not pull your hair out in despair. It is something not straightforward to understand, for even Bible scholars have varied views. You can just skip these 2 parts and jump to part (4). 😊

This encounter of grappling with an interesting yet perplexing part of Scripture is a lesson to me on why despite not understanding 100% some things about God, we can still live by faith while giving ourselves room to explore further knowledge through a whole-of-Scripture approach.

(2) Trying to understand the "**Word (λόγος)**"

In the beginning was the **Word**, and the **Word** was with God, and the **Word** was God. (Jn 1:1)

What is meant by "**Word**", translated into English from the Greek **λόγος** (logos)?

The same word **λόγος** is used in Rev. 19:13, “He is dressed in a robe dipped in blood, and his name is the **Word [λόγος]** of God.”

A concordance search of **λόγος** (Strong’s Greek #3056) and its variants suggests that there is a wide range of contexts for its usage. Unsurprisingly, there are many propositions among scholars about its plausible meaning as used by John.

I note that in the Chinese Bible, Jn 1:1 reads as “太初，**道**已经存在，**道**与上帝同在，**道**就是上帝。” - in which the translation **道** (*dào*) for the “**Word**” (**λόγος**) clearly does not have the meaning of an element of human speech in the ordinary dictionary definition. Translated back from Chinese to English, **道** (**λόγος**) can mean principle, truth, morality, reason, wisdom, etc.

(3) Trying to understand the “**Word (λόγος)**” in relation to God

Jn 1:1 tells us that the **Word (λόγος)** was with God – meaning that the **Word (λόγος)** was distinct from God Himself.

Then the next part of the verse tells us that the **Word (λόγος)** was God – meaning that the **Word (λόγος)** was God Himself.

Besides, the opening of John’s Gospel mentions the **Word (λόγος)** existing “in the beginning”, and then refers to creation in Jn 1:3-4.

Comparably, the opening of Genesis mentions “in the beginning” relating to God’s creation when there was nothing else existing BUT the Spirit of God (Gen 1:1-2). Further, Gen 1:3, 6, 9, 11 ... relate what “*God said*” with the creations that came into the picture.

We read further:

- In the OT, “By the **word** of the LORD the heavens were made, their starry host by the breath of his mouth. – Ps 33:6
- In Jewish writings after the OT, “Thine Almighty **word** leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction” – Wisdom of Solomon 18:15, Apocrypha)

(4) Accepting my un-omniscient mind

Whatever the depths or subtleties of meanings embedded in John's choice of the term **λόγος**, or whatever meaning best represents John's message, I surmise that the **Word (λόγος)** does refer to some divine aspect of God that we find great difficulty to express full clarity in the limited human languages. It is just like how we find great difficulty to enunciate the full divine sense of the Trinity with three Persons within the Godhead: Father, Son and Holy Spirit; being three Persons, yet One God.

I see a certain gap in my ability to comprehend God by my un-omniscient mind, and what falls in this gap shall be to me a mystery that I can live with just as in my accepting of the mystery of the Trinity. There are mysteries, there is knowledge; the knowledge as God grants is ample for us to ground our faith to pivot on His grace.

We live by God's grace through our faith, not through an impeccable understanding of everything relating to God. Despite there being room for us to seek wisdom more, it is sufficient for us to embrace the crux of the message in John 1:1-18 ("*The Word Became Flesh*") that the **Word (λόγος)**, in a certain perspective embodying the breath of God's power, became manifest (and distinct) in the Person of Jesus Christ, the Son of God and our Messiah who:

- was with God in the beginning and through Him all things were made (Jn 1:1-3)
- came into the world as the true light to give light to everyone (Jn 1:9)
- is Himself God and in closest relationship with the Father (Jn 1:18)
- gives us who believe in Him the right to become children of God (Jn 1:12)

Thanks be to God for His gift of His Son!

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