



ΚΑΤΑ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ

According to John

Part 2

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λογος
και ὁ λογος ἦν προς τον θεον
και θεος ἦν ὁ λογος.

Divine titles proclaimed by or attributed to Jesus in the Gospel of John

- God: John 1:1

“In the beginning was the Word (λογος), (pre-existence)
and the Word (λογος) was with God, (distinction from God (the Father))
and the Word (λογος) was God. (nature of the Word; not ID)

- God: John 20:28 Thomas said to him, “My Lord and my God!”

ὁ κυριος μου και ὁ θεος μου

Word / Logos / λογος

The only other place in the NT that the titled “Word of God” appears is in Rev. 19:13.

But the term was also used in Greek philosophical thought.

- According to **Heraclitus** (6th cent. B.C.), the Logos was the eternal principle of order in the universe. The Logos is not personal.
- The **Stoics** saw the “word” as the mind of God, the principle of reason within the universe, controlling and directing all things. The Logos is not personal.

Word / Logos / λογος (cont.)

- **Philo** (Jewish writer, born c. 20 B.C.) attempted to explain Judaism in terms of Greek philosophy in order to give a rational account of the Jewish faith.
 - He spoke of the *logos* as an intermediary between God and his creatures, which gave meaning to the universe and was the instrument of God in creation.
 - He also presented the two powers of God as the creative power and ordering or ruling power.
 - The creating power is called God, and the ruling power is called Lord. In the Logos are the two powers of God, to create and to rule, and for this reason the *logos* can be called “God” and “Lord.”
 - The Logos has **no** distinct personality.
 - It is not linked with light and life.
 - The Logos is regarded as eternal, but is not thought of in personal terms.

New Testament Theology by Donald Guthrie, 1981, p.321-22, ‘Logos’

Word / Logos / λογος (cont.)

- In John, the description of the Word (*logos*) has further affinities with the Jewish concept of Wisdom as well.
- In Prov. 8:22-31:
 - Wisdom is said to have existed in the beginning,
 - Prior to the creation of the world
 - It was God's agent in creation
 - It brings light and life to those who accept it
 - It was rejected by most humans

Word / Logos / λογος (cont.)

- But the idea of God's Word (or God's speaking) has a Jewish context as well.
 - God created the world by speaking it into existence (Gen. 1; Ps. 33:6).
 - In the prophetic books, “the word of the Lord” is nearly personified as it is described as coming to a particular profit (Hosea 11; Joel 11).
 - The Word heals (Ps. 107:20),
 - Obedience to it brings life (Deut. 32:46-47)
 - It is a light that guides people to God (Ps. 119:105, 130)
 - The Logos **is** personal.

Word / Logos / λογος (cont.)

- What the gospel means in introducing the Word as “God” must be understood in light of the strict monotheism of Judaism that became the heritage of Christianity as well.
 - **Deut. 6:4**
4“Hear, O Israel! The LORD is our God, the LORD is one!
 - **Isa. 43:10**
10“You are My witnesses, declares the LORD, and My servants whom I have chosen, in order that you may know and believe Me, and understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, and there will be none after Me.
 - **Galatians 4:8-9** (NIV)
8Formally, when you did not know God, you were slaves to those who by nature are not gods.

Word / Logos / λογος

- In John, the Logos is the agent of creation (1:3) and the incarnate Logos is the agent of God's judgment.
- And also in John's Gospel, the Logos is confessed as Lord and God, an important designation for Jesus in Johannine theology.
- The Jewish category of **agency** is important. In rabbinic writings there is the “*saliah*” or the “one who is sent” (like ‘apostle’).
 - “A *saliah* was a surrogate sent on a task or mission with specific instructions and authority to carry it out.”
 - A common saying in the rabbi was “the one who is sent is like the one who sent him” or “a man’s agent is equivalent to himself.”

Word / Logos / λογος

John 8:58

In this verse, Jesus is not simply using a familiar divine name for Himself. His statement would not have been heard as “I am Yahweh.”

Why not???

- Rather Jesus claims to share in God's eternal existence. (‘before Abraham *was* born, I *am*’)
- He has life in Himself (5:26)
- He has the power to lay down His life and to take it again (10:17-18)
- He also has the power to give life to those who keep His word (8:51; 17:2)
- Thus, exercising the unique life-giving prerogative of God.

Word / Logos / λογος

John 8:58

In John 8:58, Jesus claims “before Abraham was, I am” contrasting Abraham’s **kind of life** which “came into being” (*genesthai*) with His own, which simply “is” (*ego eimi*; present tense).

Notice that in 8:24 (“...for unless you believe that **I am**, you shall die in your sins.” and 8:28 (“When you lift up the Son of Man, then you will know that **I am**), when Jesus uses the absolute “I am,” no one reacts, except in puzzlement.

It is not until He claims, in 8:48-58, to “have seen Abraham,” that is, to share in eternal life, that the people react:

Now He is claiming to have or give what God alone has and gives.

Word / Logos / λογος

John 8:58

The Johannine “I am” statements link Jesus' work and Person in the most intimate relationship with the divine Person and work.

These claims resonate with what is perhaps the central theme of the gospel: that Jesus has and mediates eternal life (20:30-31; also see 3:16, 36; 4:14, 53; 5:21-26; 6:33, 35, 44, 51-58, 68; 8:12; 10:10, 17-18; 11:25; 14:6; 17:2-3).

The Seven “I Ams”:

“I am the bread of life” (6:35)

“I am the light of the world” (8:12)

“I am the door for the sheep” (10:7,9)

“I am the good shepherd” (10:11, 14)

“I am the resurrection and the life” (11:25)

“I am the way, the truth, and the life” (14:6)

“I am the true vine” (15:1)