

Word Study THE LOGOS

Ian S Davidson (Motherwell)

The Greek word *logos* is found frequently in the N.T. Scriptures. Robert Young in his *Analytical Concordance to the Holy Bible* (A.V.) advises that it is translated "word" 208 times. *Logos* can be seen in such English words as logic, logarithm and logistics. It is interesting to note that almost all sciences append the suffix -*logy*, although not all words that end in -*logy* refer to sciences. Analogy, tautology, eulogy, trilogy are good examples of non-scientific words. Biology, archaeology, ornithology, entomology, geology, zoology, meteorology, physiology, bacteriology and psychology are good examples of scientific words. Theology is a word I wish to highlight. It comes from the two Greek words: *theos*, God and *logos*, word, speech, discourse. So theology is literally "the Word of God". Jesus is given this title in the book of Revelation. We read: "And He was clothed with a vesture dipped in blood: and His name is called The Word of God". (19:13). Christians are often asked to outline their theology on certain subjects. Actually, in the final analysis, the Christian's theology is a person - Christ Jesus. Theology riding a white horse! Now that's enough to confuse a lot of so-called modern theologians.

THE WORD WAS GOD

I wish to consider in this article the use of *logos* by John in the first chapter of his gospel record. We read: **"In the beginning was the Word (*Logos*), and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. 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 shines in darkness; and the darkness has not overcome it...And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."** (1:1-5, 14) These are undoubtedly some of the most outstanding verses of the Bible.

The apostle John wrote differently from Matthew, Mark and Luke, whose records are described as "the synoptic gospels". John compiled his gospel record at a later date. By then, the good news was facing challenges both from the Jewish world and the Gentile world. A major challenge came from the Gnostic philosophy, which was pagan in origin, and combined elements of Western intellectualism and Eastern mysticism. In fact, Gnosticism was more than a challenge: it was a very real danger to the early Church. Paul had already dealt with problems pertaining to circumcision; clean and unclean meats; the gift of tongues; the resurrection; etc. Now the apostle John had to address different issues. Personally, I believe that God spared John to deal the death-blow to the cult of Greek mysticism.

WORD, MIND AND REASON

The *Logos* had both a Jewish and Gentile background. To the Jews, words were powerful, creative things. This view goes right back to the book of Genesis. After all, we read again and again in Genesis 1, 'And God said...' The Greeks also believed that the *Logos* was the creating and guiding and directing power of God. But the *Logos* was not only the Word of God, he was also the Mind of God and the Reason of God. The Stoics, for example, said: 'All things are controlled by the *Logos* of God. The *Logos* is the power, which puts sense into the world; the power, which makes the

world an order instead of a chaos; the power, which set the world going and keeps it going in its perfect order...The *Logos* pervades all things'.

John declared that the *Logos* became a person, whom he had seen and with whom he had laboured for three years during His eventful ministry on earth. That person was none other than Jesus of Nazareth. Someone wrote of the Master: 'Jesus did not merely quote passages or read Scriptures, although He sometimes did both; but He translated the Word into life. The Word became virile, vital and vigorous. It lived and moved and had being.' I also copied these words from somewhere: 'We were made flesh by the Word of God, and then the Word was made flesh to become like us. He shared our lot so we could share His life. He came down that we might be lifted up.' God in human form – what a tale to tell! And John was willing to tell it despite resistance, hostility and persecution.

FULL OF GRACE AND TRUTH

The *Logos*, said John, was **"full of grace and truth"**. (1:14). I believe that when Jesus came into the world grace and truth came in perfection. Everything about Jesus was perfection. How then could the sinless or perfect one end up on a cross? This is a good question. It staggers the mind to think that many of His fellow human beings at the time could not see Jesus for what He truly was - the Messiah, the Son of the Living God. It equally staggers the mind to think that so many today still do not see Jesus of Nazareth as the Saviour of the world. What more could He have done to prove He was Immanuel (God with us)? I believe He did everything possible. Unbelievers, therefore, are without excuse. As Alexander Campbell once said: 'The infidel or unbeliever is but the incarnation of a negative idea. He is absolutely but a mere negation. He stands to Christianity as darkness stands to light. Is darkness anything? Is blindness anything but the loss of sight? Is unbelief anything but the repudiation of evidence?'

People learn best by demonstration. To see Jesus in action is to see God in action. Jesus Himself went on to say: **"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."** (John 1:18) In this world, Jesus simply went about doing good and we must do likewise. Everyone should look up to Him and try to follow in His footsteps. He has shown us the way. He has shown us how to live. He has shown us how to please God. He has even shown us how to die. His help, support and guidance are guaranteed for all those who love and serve Him. He promised the Holy Spirit to all those who obey Him and He has been true to His word and faithful to His promise. He will never leave us nor forsake us. In times of trial He will bring peace; in times of trouble He will bring comfort; in times of despair He will bring hope. There really is no one like Jesus. Everyone, therefore, should love Him, worship Him and serve Him.

CLOSING REFLECTIONS

Jesus is the *Logos* – the Word of God, the Reason of God and the Mind of God. Jesus, therefore, should influence our speech, our reasoning and our thinking. **"Let your speech be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that you may know how you ought to answer every man."** (Colossians 4:6); **"And Paul reasoned in the synagogue every Sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks."** (Acts 18:4); **"...casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalts itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ."** (2 Corinthians 10:5)