THE PAULINE CONCEPT OF THE "WORD"

by

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The Apostle Paul frequently used "the word" and "the word of God" in his writings; however, what the word entails is not specifically explained. The objective of this study is to ascertain what Paul meant when he used these expressions.

Two Greek words λόγος and ῥῆμα are translated "word." Paul used the word λόγος 80 times and ῥῆμα 9 times in his writings. In order to find out Paul's concept of these words, a thorough examination of the possible Greek and Hebrew influences will be made.

Though Paul wrote in the Greek language it was from his Hebrew background that he gained his concept of the word. The Septuagint used λόγος and ῥῆμα to translate דָּבָר. The Old Testament writers used the Hebrew word דָּבָר in a very concrete sense. The primary attribute of דָּבָר is that it is true. Not only does it have content but God's דָּבָר always has the power to accomplish its purpose--there is no limit to its power; therefore, whatever God says will be perfectly carried out. Both the written and the spoken דָּבָר have the same power. The Old Testament use of דָּבָר is so concrete as to appear almost as an independent entity. The Targums and other Hebrew Apocryphal writings are seen to further develop that concept.

Paul's use of λόγος does not reflect the Greek philosophers' philosophical reasoning. Their use is very abstract. The similarities that are found between Paul's letters and the Greek λόγος is seen to be very superficial. The use by Philo proves to be no better.

After examining all other New Testament writers as to their use of λόγος and ῥῆμα, everyone of them proves to be indebted to the Hebrew, not the Greek use of the word. They all reflect the two aspects seen in דָּבָר very distinctly.

All through the Pauline epistles, the word of God is seen to have as its content the gospel. Continually that content is given the primary characteristic that it is true. This word which God has given Paul is not limited in power for it will accomplish the purpose for which God sent it. The Pauline word, which is about Christ and what He has done, is the same whether he spoke it in person or wrote it in a letter. Though Paul does not develop the concept of the word as far as John, there is complete harmony between Paul and all other New Testament writers.

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Advisor

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Bible is called the Word of God by most Christians. But some have said that the Bible only contains the Word of God; parts of it are the words of men. To them the task is to separate the two in order to know the original message from God. The issue of whether all or only part of the Bible contains God's words is a very important one. Man does not want to place the future of his personal destiny into any other hands than God's.

The object of this investigation is to see what the Apostle Paul meant when he spoke of the word or the Word of God. Since he did not grow up in a vacuum, but was steeped in the culture around him, he must have borrowed the expression from the culture. Part of the task is to examine his frame of reference as it applies to the word.

There are several influencing factors, but the predominant influence upon Paul was his Hebrew background and, in particular, the Old Testament from which he drew the meaning for his concept of the Word of God. Even though Paul wrote his epistles in Greek, his training as a Pharisee thoroughly acquainted him with the Hebrew perspective.

Paul's concept of the word does not reflect the

abstract philosophical reasoning that was so prevalent among the Greek philosophers. To Paul the Word of God was very concrete and real, to the point that at times it seemed to have a certain independence. This is so consistent with the Old Testament word.

The content or message that the Word of God is communicating is the gospel message of Jesus. That is the central message of all of Paul's letters.

Paul's concept of the word is consistent with the other New Testament authors. He did not develop one of his own.

To show that Paul drew from his Hebrew background and did not borrow his concept from the surrounding Greek influences, both concepts of the word will be traced.

In Chapter Two the Hebrew word דָּבָר is examined. This word is used not only in the Old Testament, but it is used frequently in other Jewish writings and the Targums. Also the Septuagint is a helpful link between the Old Testament Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament Greek. It is from these sources that the Hebrew concept of the word will be developed.

There were a few philosophers who were instrumental in developing a Hellenic concept of the word. Heraclitus was really the first to use "the word" as "a cosmic reason which gives order and intelligibility to the world."[1] Though others

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[1] D. D. Runes, "λογος," A Dictionary of Philosophy (New York: Philosophical Library, n.d.).

wrote on the subject, it was not until the time of the Stoics that λόγος was developed more fully. They conceived "of the world as a living unity . . . and animated by an immanent and purposive reason."[1]

The examination would not be complete without looking at the work of Philo, a Jew living in Alexandria who tried to interface the Hebrew concept of God with the Greek concept of the Logos. Many commentators of the New Testament have felt this to be the bridge whereby the Greek concept of λόγος became the New Testament concept of the word.

Each of these areas, because of their potential influence on the word, will be scrutinized as to its actual contribution. After the background of the word has been determined, a careful study of the major sections in the New Testament will be examined to see that Paul's view of the word was not unique with him, but, in fact, he was simply reflecting the concept of the word that was held by all New Testament writers.

To analyze the word as it is used in Paul's own letters, a classification will be shown whereby every nuance of λόγος and ῥῆμα will be classified.

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[1]Runes, "λόγος."

CHAPTER II

THE "WORD" IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

Girdlestone says, "The most ordinary Hebrew terms
setting forth the divine utterances are <u>amar</u> (אָמַר), to say,
and <u>davar</u> (דָּבָר), to speak. The former refers rather to mode
of revelation, and the latter to the substance."[1] The
normal renderings for אָמַר are "utterance, speech, word."[2]
The word אָמַר "is used only poetically, as is also אֲמָרִים."[3]

The known forms of this word are most usually
translated in the Septuagint as λόγος (20 times) and ῥῆμα
(29 times). The poetic meaning is very clearly separated
from the verbal idea of אָמַר "to speak" or "to say."[4] אָמַר
is one of the most common words in the Old Testament.

Etymology Of The "Word"

In looking at the etymology of the word אָמַר, Koehler

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[1]Robert Baker Girdlestone, <u>Synonyms of the Old Testa-ment</u> (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1897), p. 205.

[2]Francis Brown; S. R. Driver; and Charles A. Briggs, <u>A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament</u> (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907; reprint, 1977), p. 57.

[3]O. Procksch, "λόγος," <u>Theological Dictionary of the New Testament</u>, Vol. IV, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans., and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967), p. 91.

[4]<u>Ibid</u>.

and Baumgartner say that all the words with אָמַר as their root have as their basic meaning "to be bright, make visible, make known."[1] But Tenney says, "The root דָּבָר yields the classical Hebrew term for 'word.'"[2] It is by far the most common of the words. Brown, Driver and Briggs point out that the "word of God, as a divine communication in the form of commandments, prophecy and words of help to his people, is used 394 times."[3] Of these two words, אָמַר is not only less frequent, but it is chiefly in poetry while דָּבָר occurs in all periods and styles of Hebrew.[4] It will be to this word דָּבָר that attention will be given.

The original root meaning of this word is considered dubious by some[5] while strongly proported by others.[6] If it is correct, the etymology would be to see the "back" or the "background of a particular thing." For example, the word דביר, the inner sanctuary of Solomon's temple (the

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[1]L. Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, _Lexicon in Veteris Testamenti Libros_, Vol. I (Ledier: Brill, 1958), p. 63.

[2]Merrill C. Tenney, ed., _The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible_, Vol. V (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1975), p. 956.

[3]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, _Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament_, p. 182.

[4]George A. Buttrick, ed., _The Interpreter's Dictionary R-Z_, Vol. IV (New York: Abingdon Press, 1962), p. 868.

[5]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, _Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament_, p. 182.

[6]O. Procksch, "λόγος," p. 92.

Holy of Holies) is seen to give the meaning of the "back room"[1] and מִדְבָּר "the wilderness" is thought to give the idea of "hinterland."[2]

Being behind something or in back position places one in the position of exerting pressure, pushing or driving something forward; therefore, Walter Roehrs sees the development of such derivatives as דֹּבֶר (pasture) and מִדְבָּר (pasture-land), the place where a shepherd is in back of the flock driving them.[3] He also suggests דְּבוֹרָה (bee) and דֶּבֶר (pestilence) because of the way they might have seen them as driving forces on man.[4]

A similar relationship can be seen in other Semitic languages; for example, in Arabian "dubr" means "back" and "dabara" means "to have on one's back." Ethiopian "tadabbara" has the idea "to put on one's back" while the Aramian "debar" means "to be behind." Procksch, in discussing this, said,

> Whereas אֹמֶר and אִמְרָה denote a saying or expression in the indefinite sense, דָּבָר is regarded as the definite content or meaning of a word in which it has conceptual background. No thing is דָּבָר in itself, but all things have a דָּבָר a "background" or "meaning."[5]

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[1] O. Procksch, "λόγος," p. 92.

[2] George A. Buttrick, ed., The Interpreter's Dictionary R-Z, p. 868.

[3] Walter R. Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," Concordia Theological Monthly, 32:5 (May, 1961), p. 265.

[4] Ibid.

[5] O. Procksch, "λόγος," p. 92.

In light of these root meanings, דָּבָר "pre-eminently denotes not a thing in itself, but that which is behind a thing, first locally, and then in a transferred sense, namely its meaning."[1]

The Septuagint Translation Of The Word

In the Septuagint, the two main Greek terms for דָּבָר are λόγος and ῥῆμα. In the Pentateuch, λόγος is used 56 times, whereas ῥῆμα 147 times, so that ῥῆμα has by far the greater usage. In Joshua, Judges and Ruth, the figure is 26 λόγος and 30 ῥῆμα, making them almost equal. In the historical books, the proportion is 365 λόγος and 200 ῥῆμα, and in the poetical books 159 λόγος and 72 ῥῆμα. Finally, in the prophetic books, we find 320 λόγος and 40 ῥῆμα. Therefore, in the Old Testament, λόγος occurs eight times more than ῥῆμα. Λόγος definitely is the preferred rendering except in the Pentateuch. דָּבָר can be seen to have both meanings in that דְּבָרִים = ῥήματα when referring to the historical event itself, whereas דְּבָרִים = λόγος when it is referring to the meaning. Both the thing and the meaning can be expressed in the Hebrew דָּבָר.[1]

Concordance Statistics Of The Word

The concordance statistics will give additional insight. The noun דָּבָר is in the construct singular form

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[1]Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," p. 265.

[2]Procksch, "λόγος," p. 93.

followed by the divine name 244 times: 234 times the divine
name is Yahweh and 10 times elohim or adonai. Of these 244
occurrences, 225 of them are the communications with the
prophets either for their instruction or for them to in-
struct others. The formula "the Word of the Lord came unto"
occurs 112 times (Jeremiah 30 times and Ezekiel 50 times).
The plural construct of דָּבָר followed by the divine name
appears only 20 times in the whole Old Testament. In over
300 other occasions, דָּבָר is linked with God either by a
suffix or in a direct context.[1]

The Composition Of The Word

Procksch sees two main elements in the term דבר of
particular theological significance. The first is the
dianoetic element: דָּבָר always contains a thought. A thing
is known and is represented by a דָּבָר.[2] It is the way one
refers to things, the way they are discussed and come to be
understood. The other element is the dynamic. Perhaps it
is here that the root meaning contributes the most in its
connotation of being behind and pushing forward; for, it is
the power behind a thing which achieves a designed purpose.
"Dabar could then be defined as the projection forward of
what lies behind, that is to say, the transition into the

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[1]The tabulation was compiled by Grether (Names und
wort Gottes im A. T., ZAW, Beiheft 64) - translated and
presented by Walter Roehrs in "Theology of the Word of God
in the Old Testament," p. 266.

[2]Procksch, "λόγος," p. 92.

act of what is at first in the heart."[1]

Procksch says,

Every דָּבָר is filled with power which can be manifested in the most diverse energies. This power is felt by the one who receives the word and takes it to himself. But it is present independently of this reception in the objective effects which the word has in history.[2]

In keeping with the meaning thus far developed and consistent with the etymological meaning suggested, it can be seen that the Word of the Old Testament as a revelatory act of God perfectly accomplished its purpose.

The Dianoetic Aspect Of The Word

Roehrs points out,

That God's dianoetic purpose[3] is achieved perfectly should a priori be evident by the fact that dabar is followed by the modifier "of God." It must be true of this dabar what is said of the dabar of God which resulted in the creation of the universe: "And God saw that it was good" - the result was exactly what God intended it to be.[4]

Procksch says, "the most important attribute of דָּבָר and of λόγος and ῥῆμα as translations, is truth."[5] אֱמֶה is normally rendered "firmness, faithfulness, truth."[6] God's

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[1]Edmond Jacob, Theology of the Old Testament (London: Holden and Stoughton, 1958), p. 128.

[2]Procksch, "λόγος," p. 92.

[3]Underlining mine.

[4]Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the Old Testament," p. 267.

[5]Procksch, "λόγος," p. 93.

[6]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament, p. 54.

word is commonly referred to as truth as in 2 Samuel 7:28, "And now, O Lord God, Thou art God, and Thy words are truth and thou has promised this good thing to thy servant." Jesus' words recorded in John 17:17, "sanctify them in the truth, thy word is truth," make a similar statement. There is a relation between "word" and "thing," and it should be equal in truth; therefore, the word belongs to the moral sphere. The דָבָר accomplishes its dianoetic purpose per-fectly because it is true. It is true in everything it says about itself, and it represents the thing exactly as it is.

When Joseph demanded that his brothers bring Benjamin to him, it was for the purpose of testing their דְבָרִים (words) to see if they were אֱמָר (true) (Gen. 42:16,20).

It should be noted that the major distinction God makes between His real prophets and the false prophets is that His prophets tell the truth (Jer. 28:12-17). The false prophets tell lies and their predictions do not come to pass. "When a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not come about or come true, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken . . ." (Dt. 18:22; cf. 13:1-5). The false prophet could give favorable words to those who asked for them, but the true prophet could only say what God commanded. Micaiah said, "As the Lord lives, what the Lord says to me, that I will speak" (1 Ki. 22:14). The prophet can not help but speak out. "A lion has roared!

Who will not fear? Adonai, Yahweh, has spoken, who shall
refuse to become a prophet?" (Amos 3:8).

With God, His word and the thing or event itself
are perfectly matched. Even when God pronounced His curse
upon the trespassers of His instructions, all the people
are in unison to say אָמֵן (Amen). In the Hiphil, אָמַן has
the meaning "stand firm, trust, believe."[1] In other words,
when the people said אָמֵן, they were confirming that God's
words are reliable, and trustworthy; they knew it was going
to happen just that way. This correspondence shows up fre-
quently in the Old Testament, whether it is a man examining
another man's words (1 Ki. 10:6,7) or it is predicted events
coming true "according to the word of the Lord" (cf. 2 Ki.
1:17).

There is no difference whether the דְּבַר־יְהוָה is oral
or written; it is denoted by the same term. Josiah is told
by the prophetess Huldah that he can know what the Lord
will do by "all the דְּבָרִים of the book which the king of
Judah has read" (2 Ki. 22:16).

Not only is the דָּבָר true, but it is complete and
adequate to communicate to man God's will. In fact, in
Deuteronomy 4:2, it says, "You shall not add to the דָּבָר
which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you
may keep the commandments of the Lord your God which I

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[1]Brown, Driver, and Briggs, Hebrew and English Lexi-
con of the Old Testament, p. 53.

command you." Therefore, when it is understood that God's
דָּבָר conveys completely God's will for man, only then can it
be seen that God is not unjust when He passes judgment upon
the one who disobeys "because he has despised the דָּבָר of
the Lord and has broken His commandment. . . ." (Num. 15:31).

The Dynamic Aspect Of The Word

Not only does the דָּבָר accomplish its dianoetic pur-
pose, but it does so because the דָּבָר is dynamic in all of
its aspects.[1] That is to say, the דְּבַר־יְהוָה is not only true
and complete in all it teaches of God's will for man, but
the דְּבַר־יְהוָה is totally capable of accomplishing it--it is
not limited in its power. "Not one דָּבָר of the good דְּבָרִים
which the Lord had made to the house of Israel failed; all
came to pass" (Josh. 21:45). "By דְּבַר־יְהוָה were the heavens
made . . . He spoke (אָמַר) and it was done; He commanded, and
it stood fast" (Ps. 33:6, 9).

> In modern languages, or at least in modern European
> languages, the most exclusive function of the word as
> an aggregate of sounds is to convey meaning. This
> noetic function of the word, the conception of it as
> bearing and conveying an intellectual idea, is, however,
> far from covering the meaning which language had for
> ancient peoples.[2]

Van Rad goes on to say that ancient peoples made "no dis-
tinction between spiritual and material--the two intertwined

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[1]Roehrs, "The Theology of the Word of God in the
Old Testament," p. 268.

[2]Gerhard Van Rad, Old Testament Theology, Vol. II
(New York: Harper and Row Publishing Company, 1965),
p. 80.

in the closest possible way; and, in consequence, he is also unable properly to differentiate between word and object idea."[1] He goes too far in suggesting they were "unable" to do it "properly." The fact is they did not choose to.

The written דָּבָר has the same dynamic as the spoken. In Deuteronomy 32:45-47, after Moses finished restating the written law, he warns them not to see it as without power.

> Take to your heart all the דְּבָרִים (words) with which I
> am warning you today, which you shall command your sons
> to observe carefully, even all of the words of this
> law. For it is not an idle (רִיק = empty) דָּבָר (word)
> for you; indeed it is your life. And by this דָּבָר you
> shall prolong your days in the land. . . .

The דָּבָר of God has power to melt ice and cause the wind to blow. The written דָּבָר of God brings life and death. "But the דָּבָר is very near you, in your mouth and in your heart, that you may observe it. See, I have set before you today life and prosperity, and death and adversity" (Dt. 30:14-15).

Many other examples could be given to show how the דָּבָר of God is depicted with power. They will not be pursued but only mentioned:

1. It is portrayed as controlling events in time to bring about God's purposes (Isa. 45:23).

2. There is hypostatization[2] of the word in many passages.

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[1] Van Rad, Old Testament Theology, p. 80.

[2] According to Mowinckel (in Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart, ed. Gunkel and Zscharnack, ed., II (1927) - col 2065), "an hypostasis is that which is of divine origin and

3. It has the power to punish (Jer. 23:29, "Is not My word as a scorching fire, and as a hammer which shatters rocks?").[1]

4. It has the power to heal and save from death (Ps. 107:20).

The Relationship Of The Old Testament

Scriptures To The Word

Procksch makes an interesting statement in the way the דָּבָר of God is equated with the whole Old Testament.

> The books of the writing prophets are often opened by the formula דְּבַר־יְהוָה אֲשֶׁר הָיָה אֶל־ (Hos. 1:13; Mi. 1:1; Zeph. 1:1, cf. Mal. 1:1) . . . It certainly implies that the whole book is regarded as דְּבַר־יְהוָה. In the written form no distinction is made between the divine voice in the prophet and its expression in poetry, saying and address. We have here the final view that not merely the prophetic book, but in the last resort, the whole of the Old Testament is the Word of God.[2]

The relationship between the spoken דָּבָר and the written דָּבָר is best explained in the prophecy of Jeremiah. The prophet had been relaying messages from God to the king and to his people by various means. Jeremiah had preached: he had argued or debated false prophets and others. Then, in

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appears partly as an independent entity and partly as a form of revelation to denote the personification of an attribute, a function, or a member of the deity." Roehrs, 269 (See Theology of the Old Testament, Hernisch on Word Personified, p. 124).

[1]Paul Hernisch, Theology of the Old Testament (Collegeville, Minnesota: The Liturgical Press, 1955), p. 124.

[2]Procksch, "λόγος," p. 96.

Jeremiah 36:1, 2, it says the "דבר of the Lord" came to Jeremiah. He was told, "take a scroll and write on it all the words which I have spoken to you . . . from the day I first spoke to you . . . even to this day." So Jeremiah dictated these words to his scribe Baruch. Even though this one was destroyed in Jeremiah 36:27-28, God tells Jeremiah to write it out again just like he had done before, and, without a doubt, this became the basis for the Book of Jeremiah in the Old Testament.[1]

Merrill Tenney, speaking on these verses, said,

Although the process by which the utterances of the other prophets were transmitted is not described in equal detail, their constant reference to "the word of God" implies that they also transcribed their prophecies in the same general fashion as did Jeremiah. Through this procedure the Old Testament reproduced the Word of God.[2]

Summary

It has been seen that the דָּבָר has both a dianoetic sense of revealing the knowledge of God's will adequately and completely. It also has a dynamic content so that God's will can be perfectly carried out. The דָּבָר is present revelation. It carries within it the power of performance; therefore, authority is naturally inherent in the דָּבָר of God. God has the right to speak, and He has the right to

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[1]Merrill Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1968), p. 18.

[2]Ibid.

expect obedience to all He says.

> I will raise them up a prophet from among their brethren, like unto thee; and I will put my words in his mouth . . . And it shall come to pass that whosoever will not hearken unto my words which he shall speak in my name, I will require it of him (Dt. 18:18-19).

It is because the דָּבָר of God is both true and powerful that wisdom is rightfully attributed to the דָּבָר of God.

> The wise men are put to shame,
> They are dismayed and caught;
> Behold, they have rejected the word of the Lord,
> And what kind of wisdom do they have? (Jer. 8:9).

CHAPTER III

THE "WORD" IN JEWISH LITERATURE, IN THE

APOCRYPHA, AND IN THE TARGUMS

In the inter-testamental period, there can be ob-
served a continuing development of the use of the Hebrew
word דָּבָר. It was seen in the previous chapter on the Old
Testament canon, how the writers used the phrase "word of
God," but in the uninspired writings now under consideration,
they simply used "the word." Lovelady when addressing the
reason for this change says, it is

> perhaps the result of yielding to extra-Jewish pressures
> in a world that was rapidly becoming cosmopolitanized.
> In the Judaistic thought of this era, there was felt
> the need for some term to express God, not in His abso-
> lute Being, but in His manifestation and active connec-
> tion with the world.[1]

Jewish Literature And Apocrypha

To represent God in the detached sense, they used
either "the Word" or "the Word of the Lord." In Ecclesiasti-
cus 42:15 the Word is shown to be active in creation:

> I will now make mention of the works of the Lord,
> And speak fully of what I have seen;
> Through the words of the Lord, arose his works.

There is a close similarity with Psalm 33:6, "By the Word of

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[1]Edgar J. Lovelady, "The Logos Concept in John 1:1,"
(Bachelor of Divinity Thesis, Grace Theological Seminary,
1963), p. 73.

the Lord were the heavens made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." The activity of God at times is represented in the Old Testament by the Word of the Lord, but it becomes predominant in the Apocrypha.

Other examples where the word is presented as active in creation can be found in 2 Esdras 6:43, "For as soon as thy word went forth, the work was."[1] Yet, it is in the Wisdom of Solomon that one can see the development of the word reaching its height during the Inter-testamental period. In 9:1 it says: "O God of my Fathers, and Lord of Mercy, who didst make all things by thy word . . ." In 16:12 the word is stated to have a dynamic power to heal whomever it wished: "And truly, it was neither herb, nor plaster, that restored them to health; but thy word, O Lord, which healeth all things." Without a doubt no passage in the Apocrypha reaches as far in the detachment of the Word from God Himself as the personification of the Word in Wisdom of Solomon 18:15-16:

> For while all things were in deep silence, and night was in the midst of her swift course, thine almighty word leaped down from heaven from thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of the land devoted to destruction bearing thine unfeigned commandment as a sharp sword; and standing it filled all things with death; and while it touched heaven, it stood upon the earth.

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[1]This particular book was not included in the Septuagint; therefore in the strictest sense, it is generally not classified as an apocryphal writing but instead Jewish Apocalyptic literature.

Lovelady calls this "rhetorico-poetical personifica-tion."[1] The word is a soldier or warrior who zealously goes to execute the judgment of God which is an errand of doom. Whether this passage was influenced by Hosea 6:5 is hard to say, but at least the similarity can be seen: "Therefore I have hewn them in pieces by the prophets; I have slain them by the words of my mouth; and the judgments on you are like the light that goes forth."

Both reflect the dynamic aspect of God's word which can accomplish the task for which God sent it. Except in the Wisdom of Solomon, the added feature is that the word is hypostatized more here than any other passage. But if the Apocryphal literature expressed the Word of God with more detachment from God than the Old Testament, it still did not go as far as the Targums.

<div align="center">Targums</div>

The Targums are the Aramaic translation of the Old Testament which is a part of the Jewish traditional litera-ture. A paraphrase of the Hebrew scripture, they preserved the simplest and earliest forms in which the term "the Word" was employed in connection with God.[2] Westcott says, "They were most probably not committed to writing, in the shape in

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[1]Lovelady, "The Logos Concept in John 1:1," p. 73.

[2]B. F. Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1950), p. xvi.

which we find them, till some time after the Christian
aera (sic), but all evidence goes to shew that they embody
the interpretations which had been orally current from a
much earlier time."[1]

When Hebrew ceased to be a spoken language, the
rabbis would still read it in the services of the synagogue,
not at all unlike what the priests of the Roman Catholic
church did up until a few years ago and some are still
doing today. The Targums were considered a "concession to
the weakness of the flesh," for they were the result of
custom to give a running translation in Aramaic after the
Hebrew was read so the people could understand.[2] As stated
earlier, they were more of a paraphrase so as to supply the
sense to the passage. They were produced at a time when a
strong reverence and fear of weakening the third commandment
gripped the Jews. It became so strong, they ceased from
pronouncing the divine name of God altogether. Instead,
when they would come to this name in the Hebrew, the readers
and translators would substitute some other expression which
they felt would better reflect reverence for God, such as
"the Holy One" and "the Name."[3] One of the most common is

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[1]Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. xvi.

[2]Leon Morris, The Gospel According to John, in The
New International Commentary on the New Testament (Grand
Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1971; 3d
printing, 1975), p. 119.

[3]Ibid.

to substitute "Word of God" for "God."

This would happen very commonly "where the Hebrew represents God as speaking, acting, or manifesting Himself in a manner which seemed too anthropomorphic to Jewish thought."[1] It seems the Divine name had become so sacred to the Jew, that he did not feel free to even pronounce the word lest his mortal lips cause the word to lose its absolute purity.[2]

Westcott observes that,

In connexion with this usage it must also be observed that "a man's word" is used as a periphrasis for "himself" . . . the "word" is in fact the active expression of the rational character, and so may well stand for the person from whom it issues. As applied to God, the term was free from any rude anthropomorphism, while it preserved the reality of a divine fellowship for man.[3]

The two most popular that are preserved today are the Targum of Onkelos and the Jerusalem Targum. Substitutions of Word of God or Lord for a direct reference to God can be observed in the following quotations from the Scriptures and the Targum of Onkelos:[4]

Genesis 3:8: "And they heard the voice of the Lord God . . ."

Onkelos: "And they heard the voice of the Word of the Lord God . . ."

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[1]C. F. Burney, The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1922), p. 38.

[2]Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. xvi.

[3]Lovelady, "The Logos Concept in John 1:1," p. 75.

[4]Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. xvi.

Genesis 3:10: "I heard thy voice . . ."

Onkelos: "I heard the voice of Thy Word . . ."

Genesis 6:7: "For it repenteth Me . . ."

Onkelos: "Because I have repented in My Word . . ."

Leviticus 26:12: "I will be God for you . . ."

Onkelos: "My Word will be God for you . . ."

There can even be seen a variance between the two Targums. This could well be an indication that the Targum of Onkelos is older than the Jerusalem Targum,[1] because in the Jerusalem Targum, one can see a further substitution of "Word of the Lord" for "the Lord."

Exodus 12:29: Targum of Onkelos: "The Lord struck down all the first-born."

Jerusalem Targum: "The Word of the Lord struck down all the first-born."

Numbers 10:35 Onkelos: "May the Lord manifest Himself . . . may the Lord dwell again.

Jerusalem Targum: "May the Word of the Lord manifest itself . . . may the Word of the Lord dwell again."

The date at which the practice of substitution was first done is difficult to determine. Burney, after a long discussion on the matter, concludes by saying "the fact that it [the use of a Targum] became customary long before the Christian [era] is at any rate not in dispute."[2] The practice is very ancient. Some scholars, such as Harris,

[1]Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. xvi.

[2]Burney, The Aramaic Origin of the Fourth Gospel, p. 22.

McNamara, and Bultmann, have tried to show that John's reference to a personal λόγος in his gospel is directly from the influence of the Targums. Leon Morris in his footnote comments on McNamara:

> He can go so far as to say, "Johannine tradition may yet well prove to be mainly influenced by liturgical Jewish tradition, particularly of the form found in the Targums." This may be going too far, but the influence of the Targums on John should certainly not be overlooked.[1]

Hartman, however, shows a very strong difference between John and the Targums.

> This memra (Aramaic term for Word) is not an intermediary being between Yahweh and His creatures, but it denotes His Word or reason or will and it is often nothing else than a circumlocution for the personal pronoun or a substitution for the name Yahweh.[2]

John does represent the Word as an intermediary between God and man, but it is very different from the Targums.

The Targums were in existence during the first century when the New Testament was being written and for the Jewish mind they would have definitely contributed to what a Jew would understand when he heard reference made to the Word in some connection with God.

Summary

The "word" was used in the inter-testamental period to represent God in places where the Old Testament spoke of

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[1]Morris, The Gospel According to John, p. 120.

[2]Louis F. Hartman, Encyclopedic Dictionary of the Bible, trans. and adapt. of A. van den Born's Bijbels Woordenboek, 1954 (New York: McGraw Hill Book Company, Inc., 1963), p. 2600.

Him directly. There is a definite sense in which the word takes on a certain independence from God as an intermediary between God and man. Though personification of the word is observed, there is never a suggestion that it is anything more. In the prologue of John, the Word is actually a title for Christ Himself.

CHAPTER IV

THE "WORD" IN THE HELLENIC WRITINGS

AND PHILO

Though the Apostle Paul was a Hebrew, he wrote and
(one can obviously assume) spoke fluent Greek. If a proper
understanding is to be had of what Paul meant when he re-
ferred to the "word," a look into the possibility of Greek
influence must be made.

Background Of Greek Influence

The Greeks and their philosophy, as it is known
today, have so influenced our present culture and our way
of thinking, that it would be hard to over-state the case.
One of the major influential contributions they made is
their stress upon impartiality of judgment. With this they
examined themselves, their institutions, their universe and
their religion so as to arrive at what they thought was
really the truth.

Lovelady makes this comment:

It is this impartiality in combination with a strong
sense of reality, and an equally strong power of ab-
straction, that enabled them at a very early date to
recognize their religious ideas for what they really
are--creations of artistic imaginations--and to see a
world of ideas in place of a mythological world, a
world built up by strength of independent human thought,

the logos, which could claim to explain reality in a natural way.[1]

This Hellenic doctrine of the logos which they developed has strongly influenced both philosophical and Christian thought. A brief survey of some of the major contributions to this doctrine will help to clarify if there was any Hellenic influence upon the New Testament "word."

Heraclitus (544-484 B.C.)

Heraclitus was a Greek scholar who was born in Ephesus. After the destruction of Miletus by the Persians (494 B.C.), Ephesus became the most powerful city in Asia Minor and contained the world famous shrine of Artemis--a symbol of the fusion of Oriental and Greek culture.[2] He was a born aristocrat; therefore, he was free to withdraw into the solitude of the shrine of Artemis. He developed real contempt for the actions and attitudes of other men, even the ones who were considered the great thinkers of his day. His independent thinking resulted in his giving answers to problems without any explanation. The rise of figurative and oracular euphorisms were so heavily employed that this method earned him the nickname "Obscure."[3]

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[1]Lovelady, "The Logos Concept in John 1:1," p. 47.

[2]Edward Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, rev. Dr. Wilhelm Nestle and trans. by L. R. Palmer (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, LTD, 1963), p. 44.

[3]Ibid., p. 45.

Only fragments of his writings remain; yet, in them one can see the pre-Socratic philosophy: a system developed by him which came primarily from his observation of nature. He comprehended nature as a uniform whole; things have neither come into being nor do they ever pass away. To him it was a spiritual principle which he called the Logos.[1]

The world around Heraclitus was in constant change. It was this instability that left its mark on him. Nothing is permanent: everything is flowing and passing into something else. To him the essence of all things was fire, because fire seemed to be the substance which had the least stability and the least tolerance of stability in others. Heraclitus called it Logos. The law is the original fire itself. It is a wisdom that directs the course of nature. That is why he can say, "It wills and it wills not to be called Zeus."[2] It was the principle of continual becoming.

There are only a few fragments which reflect that Heraclitus used the word λόγος with a greater meaning than word. Here are a few examples:

> It is wise to listen not to me but to the word (λόγος) and to confess that all things are one.[3]

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[1]Zeller, Outlines of the History of Greek Philosophy, p. 45.

[2]Gordon H. Clark, The Johannine Logos (n.p.: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1972), p. 16.

[3]Heraclitus on the Universe, Vol. IV, trans. by W. H. S. Jones (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1959), p. 471.

> This word which is ever true, men prove as incapable of
> understanding when they hear it for the first time as
> before they have heard it at all. For although all
> things happen in accordance with the word, men seem as
> though they had no experience thereof, when they make
> experiment with such words and works as I relate, divid-
> ing each thing according to its nature and setting forth
> how it really is. The rest of men know not what they
> do when awake, just as they forget what they do when
> asleep.[1]

> Therefore one must follow the common. But though the
> word is common, the many live as though they had a
> wisdom of their own.[2]

With the reading of these few examples, it can be
seen that Heraclitus used λόγος with a connotation that was
more than just the simple known word.

Stoics

Other philosophers who followed Heraclitus developed
this idea, but they did not call it "logos" but by Νους
"mind." It was the Stoics who are credited with giving the
logos doctrine its prominent place in Hellenic history. It
is not easy to give a concise statement of what the Stoics
believed in regard to the logos; for the simple reason, it
was a school of thinkers not just the thoughts of one man.
The school of philosophy was founded by Zeno around 300 B.C.[3]

Stoicism's chief goal was to find a rational basis
for ethics. They said that one cannot understand the meaning

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[1]Heraclitus on the Universe, Vol. IV, p. 471.

[2]Ibid., p. 499.

[3]Frank Thilly, A History of Philosophy, 3d ed. (New
York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1957), p. 130.

of good unless there is a criterion of truth and a theory
of the universe. For their basis of ethics, they went to
Heraclitus whose concept of physical laws appealed to them.
They too felt that in the world there were only manifesta-
tions of the only primary substance: the original fire.[1]
They also followed Heraclitus in his thinking that there was
a law which governed nature which also ought to govern
human relations--the logos.

Though this metaphysical concept started monasti-
cally, it developed into pantheism. The world's system
functions as a result of reason; therefore, it is the uni-
versal reason that is the ultimate basis of the world.
Since reason is the same to all persons, all should have
the same rights and do have an equal part in the world-soul.[2]
The universal logos expresses itself in the lower instincts
in the same degree that it does in reason.

They also maintain that there is nothing that cannot
be explained; for, there is a reason (logos) for everything
in the world. The reason in each individual is the same as
that found in the universe. Therefore, man has the capacity
to understand it all. The logos is the impersonal world-
reason by which the physical universe is governed. It is
to that order that every man is to submit so he can be in

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[1]Alan Carlsson, "The Anticedents of the Logos Concept
in the Prologue of the Gospel of John," (Thesis: Trinity
Seminary, 1954), p. 20.

[2]Thilly, A History of Philosophy, p. 137.

unity with it. It is not hard to see that the Stoics have little in common with the Hebrew concept of a supreme God who created the universe. The Stoic god is not a free personality or a free creator of the world but the substance from which everything proceeds.[1] Nor do they see the word as containing the power to exercise and accomplish the will of that supreme God as it is expressed in the Old Testament, let alone to try to imagine this being some foundation for the logos concept in John 1 as some do.[2]

Philo

After a development of the word as used in the Old Testament and a quick survey of its use in the Hellenic writings, there is one last writer to examine who might contribute to the concept of the word--Philo. Kennedy says this about Philo:

> Philo stands out as one of the landmarks in the history of religion. His career lies on the boundaries between the Old World and the New. Born not later, in all probability, than 20 B.C. and dying sometime after 41 A.D., possibly not until the fifth decade of our era, he was a contemporary both of Jesus and of Paul. These facts

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[1]Alan Carlsson, "The Anticedents of the Logos Concept in the Prologue of the Gospel of John," p. 23.

[2]C. H. Dodd says, "The historian of Greek thought can trace a true continuity running through all its stages in which the New Testament forms a vital link. It is in fact even more than the Septuagint is a department of Hellenistic Literature. C. H. Dodd, The Authority of the Bible (Harper and Brothers, Publishers, 1958), p. 198.

alone mark his significance for students of early Christianity.[1]

There is no evidence that can trace Philo as having contact with Jesus or any of his apostles or for that matter Christianity at all. There is a tradition that Philo and Peter met in Rome, but it seems to be purely legendary.[2]

There is reason to believe that Philo belonged to the sect of the Pharisees. Eminent for his learning and eloquence, he had developed extensive knowledge of Greek philosophy which he had the perfect opportunity to acquire considering he lived in Alexandria at a time when it was one of the learning centers of Hellenism in the world.[3]

The fact that he was an orthodox Jew who held to the Jewish Scriptures, and that he was under the influence of Greek philosophy, it is not surprising that Philo tried to syncretize the two. It is difficult to try to place him in either the position of a Greek philosopher or a Jewish thinker. Westcott clarifies the issue:

> Three currents of thought in fact met in Philo's doctrine of "the Logos," the Stoic, the Platonic, and the Hebraic. He was nothing less than a creative genius. He felt rightly that the revelation of the Old Testament contained implicitly the harmony of the manifold

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[1]A. A. Kennedy, Philo's Contribution to Religion (New York: Hodder and Stoughton, 1919), p. 6.

[2]Ibid., p. 7.

[3]John McClintock, and James Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, Vol. VIII (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1879; reprinted, 1970), p. 110.

speculations of men and he therefore adopted boldly the thought of Greek philosophy for interpretation of its language. He found a "Logos" in the Greek Bible which he accepted as the record of revelation, and applied to that what Greek writers had said of the "Logos," without thinking it necessary to inquire into the identity of the terms. At one time he borrows from Plato when he speaks of the Logos as "the archetypal idea," or as bearing "the idea of ideas." More commonly he uses the Stoic conception of the Logos, as the principle of reason, which quickens and informs the matter.[1]

While it seems Philo borrowed the title of the Logos as Reason from the Hellenic writers, he sought to confirm his views from the Old Testament. Philo demonstrated an unwavering faith in the letter of the Jewish law; yet he abandoned the divine position of the Jew. Westcott goes on to say,

> The whole scope of the writers of the Old Testament is religious. They move in a region of life and history. Their idea of God is that of the Lord who rules the world and His chosen people, not simply as the Author of existence, but as One who stands in a moral relation to men, "speaking" to them. The whole scope of Philo on the other hand is metaphysical. He moves in a region of abstraction and thought. His idea of God is pure being. With him the speculative aspect of the Logos doctrine overpowers the moral . . . It is perhaps less significant that he speaks of it now as if it were personal, and again as if it were impersonal, now as an attribute and now as "a second god."[2]

He taught that God is incorporeal, invisible and cognizable only through reason, for he is the most universal of beings. God is the most excellent of everything, for He is above virtue, goodness, beauty, etc. Philo contends that God must be worshipped as though He were personal; yet

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[1]Westcott, The Gospel According to St. John, p. xvii.

[2]Ibid.

he communicates God as being as the most general of exis-
tences. Philo has God so far removed from the universe that
God can have no contact with the material universe or he
would be defiled. In fact man, because he is a part of the
material universe, "can only know that he [man] is not what
he [God] is."[1]

Since Philo sees God as separate, it becomes neces-
sary to have some sort of intermediary between God and man.
To him this intermediary (Logos) is the "reflection, the
first-born Son of God; the second God; the sum of the ideas,
which are the original types of all existence."[2] He is the
archangel, who destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah, spoke to Jacob,
and to Moses in the burning bush, and all the other theo-
phanies in the Old Testament. It is because of Philo's
development of this intermediary that some scholars have
tried to say that the Apostle John is simply referring to
and developing what Philo started.

At first one is struck by some of the similarities
of Philo with the Christian view, but there are some very
essential differences. Philo's doctrine never itself sug-
gests "the application of the idea of the Logos to any his-
torical appearance whatever; for the revelation of the Logos
refers not exclusively to any single fact but to everything

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[1]McClintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical
Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, p. 113.

[2]Ibid.

relating to the revelation of God in nature and history."[1]

Edgar Lovelady, who develops the differences between the Logos of Philo and the Logos of John's Gospel, quite extensively concludes with this comment, "In alliance with the foregoing argument there is the indisputable fact that John's Gospel is noticeably un-Philonic in content even though verbal forms and superficialities render these as similarities."[2]

Rather than Philo being a contributor to the New Testament concept of the word, it would probably be better to say that Philo, along with John and the other New Testament writers, had as a common background the Old Testament. They all drew upon this as their source rather than Philo being a further literary medium.[3] Philo found the Greek word Logos in the Septuagint as a common translation of the word in the Old Testament and no doubt was familiar with the usage of the word in the Targums. When he saw the common usage of Logos by the Hellenistic writers of his day, it was natural for him to syncretize these two major systems of thought; yet, the ambiguity that was required to do it revealed clearly the impossibility. No doubt he would have been ignored and forgotten except for the similarities seen in

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[1]McClintock and Strong, Cyclopaedia of Biblical Theological and Ecclesiastical Literature, p. 113.

[2]Lovelady, "The Logos Concept in John 1:1," p. 84.

[3]William Sanday, The Criticism of the Fourth Gospel (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905), p. 191.

John's writings by the early church fathers who were also under the Greek philosophical influence and preserved his writings.

Summary

In the Hellenic writers, as well as Philo, some similarities can be found with the New Testament use of the word. But they are very superficial when they are compared with the differences. Therefore, one must conclude that the New Testament writers and in particular Paul did not draw their concept of the word from any other source than the Old Testament use of the word.

CHAPTER V

THE "WORD" IN THE SYNOPTIC GOSPELS

It is the purpose of this section to examine how
the writers of the synoptic gospels used the term λόγος to
see what they understood: as it relates to Jesus Christ
personally and to His words or speech. Frost made this
comment in his introduction of the subject: "We talk all
too glibly today about the Word of God and with too little
knowledge of what Jesus and the New Testament writers had--
and had not--to say about it."[1] This chapter will look at
the first part of Frost's accusation: What did Jesus say
about the "word" in the Gospels.

Jesus' Comments On His Words

There are three occasions when Jesus explicitly
made reference to His attitude about His own words:

1. "Whoever will save his life will lose it and
whoever loses his life for my sake and the gospel's will
save it . . . whoever is ashamed of me and my words, of him
will the Son of man be ashamed" (Mk. 8:35-38; also Lk. 9:26).
There is no missing the paramount importance that Jesus
places upon His own words. Distinctive authority is ascribed

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[1]G. Frost, "The Word of God in the Synoptic Gospels,"
Scottish Journal of Theology, 16:2 (June, 1963), p. 186.

to Jesus' words so that one cannot ignore the content.
Jesus' words are vitally linked with Jesus personally. It
would seem that Jesus felt His words perfectly represented
Him.

2. "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words
will not pass away" (Mk. 13:31; also Mt. 24:35 and Lk. 21:33).
It is this kind of statement one would expect to hear in the
Old Testament when it speaks of the Word of God; for, only
God could make such an astounding statement. The one attri-
bute of the Word of God in the Old Testament is that God's
word is true--eternally true. Jesus is placing His words
on the same level as the Word of God. The words that are
being referred to specifically are the prophetic material
which Christ gave in the previous verses. In a larger sense,
however, there seems to be no limitation placed on the scope
of His words; therefore, one can assume Christ is placing
this statement on everything that He has said.

3. "Everyone who hears these words of mine and does
them will be like a wise man who built his house upon the
rock . . ." (Mt. 7:24-27). Not only does Jesus say that
His words are true and dependable, but a wise man will not
ignore what He has to say. He will not only listen, but he
will respond obediently to the words of Christ. Only in
them is there safety. To ignore His words is disastrous.

Jesus Comments On His Preaching

In these three verses where Jesus speaks of His own

words, there can be little question of the crucial importance
He places on them. There are two other verses that give
striking examples of how Jesus viewed his own preaching.
Both of them are in Luke.

1. "My mother and my brother are those who hear the
Word of God and do it" (Lk. 8:21). Though Jesus does not
indicate directly that He is talking about His own preaching,
the context indicates He is. Jesus never suggests that He
is just like the Old Testament prophets who were merely
spokesmen for God passing on what God said. Jesus' own
personal statements are equated with God.

2. "Blessed are those who hear the Word of God and
do it" (Lk. 11:28). This is very much like the first verse,
though here it is harder to tell if Jesus meant this to
refer to His own preaching or to the Old Testament itself.
Kittel says that the Word of God mentioned in these two
verses could be the word of God spoken by God through the
prophets and the Law rather than his own message. He says,
"It is hardly possible, then, to draw from the Lucan passages
the historical conclusion that Jesus Himself actually used
the word and applied it to His own preaching."[1] Yet in con-
text it does not seem to be inconsistent with the other
synoptic teachings of Jesus to think that that was His intent.

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[1]Gerhard Kittel, "λογος," Theological Dictionary of
the New Testament, Vol. IV, ed. by Gerhard Kittel, trans.
and ed. by Geoffrey W. Bromiley (Grand Rapids: Wm. B.
Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1967; reprint 1977), p. 121.

There is another interesting use of the phrase

ὁ λόγος τοῦ θεοῦ in one of the arguments Jesus had with

the Pharisees. Jesus concludes that because of their tra-

ditions, they had "invalidated the word of God" (Mt. 15:6;

also Mk. 7:13). It is obvious what Christ holds as supreme.

It is God who spoke through Scripture and nothing can be

done to improve on His instructions and directions to man.

The Pharisees, by adding new laws that reflected their own

wisdom, were in direct conflict with what God had said.

The "Word" Of John The Baptist

A common expression in the Old Testament is "the Word

of God came unto"; yet, it only occurs once in the New

Testament and then it is in reference to John the Baptist.

Frost makes this notation: "John is the last of that line of

men to whom the Word of God came at distinct, precise times,

and in different and varied places: in this line John is

the immediate precursor of the Christ."[1] One wonders why

such a common expression as "the Word of God came to," as

used in connection with the Old Testament prophets and John

the Baptist, never was used to refer to Christ.

No where in the account of Jesus is there a reference

to the Word of God, to a Word of God or anything like that

being given to Him. No where in the gospels is there written

of a time when a specific declaration of God is imparted to

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[1]Frost, "The Word of God in the Synoptic Gospels,"
p. 189.

Christ as the Word of God. Kittel says there were many occasions when a reference of that kind would have been very natural, e.g. the garden of Gethsemane, at Christ's baptism, at His transfiguration. He goes on to give a reason why he feels it did not happen:

> There can be only one reason why the idea of a detailed Word of God imparted to Jesus Himself has not found its way into the record. This is that such an idea was felt to be inappropriate and inadequate to describe the relationship of Jesus with God . . . Such phrases as πάντα μοι παρεδόθη ὑπὸ τοῦ πατρός μου and τόν πατέρα ἐπιγινώσκει (Mt. 11:27) set the unity of Jesus with the Father, and also with the Word of God on a completely different basis which goes far beyond isolated impartation.[1]

The only other place where Jesus uses the word is in the interpretation of the parable of the sower (Mt. 13:9-13; Mk. 4:14-20; Lk. 8:11-15). Though the occurrences are infrequent, the synoptic writers used the Word of God in two senses. They applied it as a reference to the Old Testament and to the preaching of Jesus.

The Dianoetic Aspect Of The
Words of Jesus

As it was evident in the Old Testament, the word carried dianoetic content. The same is true with the words of Jesus in the synoptic gospels. Jesus' words had substance that was unique to the listeners. Some of His hearers were displeased (Mk. 10:22), and others took offense (Mk. 15:12). It was not just because what He said

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[1]Kittel, "λογος," p. 114.

was hard to understand, but it was the claims He was making about Himself. It was unheard of and some thought them to be blasphemous.

After a long and instructive discourse by Jesus, Matthew says, "the result was that when Jesus had finished these words,[1] the multitudes were amazed at His teaching; for he was teaching them as one having authority,[1] and not as the scribes" (Mt. 7:28-29). The words of Jesus were different from the scribes. It was not just the authority of a rabbi but of the Son of God. As seen earlier, how one responds to Christ and His words is of the highest importance (Mk. 8:38). In fact, Christ's words are equated with the same authority as the Old Testament when He said, "You have heard that the ancients were told 'You shall not commit murder' . . . but I[1] say to you . . ." (Mt. 5:21-22). Jesus was not explaining the Old Testament; He was exercising authority to add new insight and revelation. He had no hesitancy amending the Old Testament wherever He saw fit.

The Dynamic Aspect Of The
Words Of Christ

His words not only had the same dianoetic content as the Old Testament, but they also carried the same dynamic aspect. There was effective power in Jesus' words to accomplish all that He intended.

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[1]Underlining mine.

A very interesting example is given in Luke 7. It is the story of a centurion who recognized that if one truly has authority, then there is power that stands behind the words. Therefore, when he requested Jesus, through some friends, to heal his slave, he said, "just say the word and my servant will be healed" (Lk. 7:7). Kittel points out that "It is in no sense true that the word and work of Jesus are distinct as two separate functions of His manifestation . . . it is evident that His Word is a working and active word."[1] This dynamics can be seen in many of Jesus' activities. It is by Christ's spoken word that He forgives sins (Mk. 2:5). Many doubted that He could do that, for that was an act only God Himself had power and authority over. Therefore, to prove that He had such authority, He again exercised His spoken word to demonstrate His power of healing (Mk. 2:5-7).

There were many other occasions when Christ's words were shown to have power. He spoke to raise a young man from the dead (Lk. 7:14 ff), to control demons (Mk. 1:25 ff), and to calm the winds and sea (Mk. 4:39). The Word of Jesus and the power in His word were not operative in the spiritual realm only, but in the physical as well. His word demonstrated that Jesus is Lord over the physical as well as the spiritual.

One of the best demonstrations between the Old Testament

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[1]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 107.

use of "word" and the New Testament is in the term λόγος,
but another Greek word which is also used to translate דָּבָר
is ῥῆμα. In Luke the announcements and the birth of John
the Baptist and of Jesus are recorded in the first two
chapters. It is there that the Greek ῥῆμα is used in the
same way as דָּבָר. Just as דָּבָר may mean either spoken word
or thing, an event or concept, so is ῥῆμα.[1]

When the angel told Mary that a Savior would be born
from her womb, the angel encouraged her by saying, "No word
(ῥῆμα) from God shall be void of power" (Lk. 1:37). Mary
responded, "Be it done to me according to your word (ῥῆμα)."
In this context "word" is the authoritative declaration ex-
pressing revealed truth.[2] A little later in Luke, the
shepherds of Bethlehem are informed by the angels of Jesus'
birth, and they say to each other, "let us go straight to
Bethlehem then, and see this thing (ῥῆμα) that has happened"
(Lk. 2:15).

Tenney makes this comment:

> The utterance is united with the event; the angelic
> proclamation is accepted as a fulfilled fact . . .
> Luke's use of rhema may indicate that he was familiar
> with the dual significance of the Hebrew dabur, and that
> he was deliberately following the style of the Old
> Testament in his writing . . . The Word of God is thus
> not only a means for conveying information, but is also

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation,
p. 19.

[2]Ibid.

a creative power that produces a positive effect. Utterance and deed are inextricably connected.[1]

This view of Tenney, that Luke carries over the Old Testament word of דָּבָר in the Greek word ῥῆμα, is further supported by the fact that when the Scripture says, "The Word of God came unto John" (Lk. 3:2), ῥῆμα is used and not λόγος. This is the same formula used many times of the prophets when they received revelation from God in the Old Testament. The term ῥῆμα, as used by Luke in the early chapters of his gospel, is concerned with the act of God's revelation in Christ.[2]

The Relationship Of Λογος And Ρημα

Though the subject will be developed further in the section on the Gospel of John, in the early chapters of Luke some help is given to the question--What is the relationship between the two terms λόγος and ῥῆμα? Are they identical in meaning, contrasted, or in any way related?

In Luke, λόγος occurs some thirty times, and four times in the first chapter. Ῥῆμα appears in Luke 1:37 as shown earlier: "No word of God shall be void of power." The "word" here is seen by the context as referring back to the prophecy of the virgin birth. In verses 2, 4, 20, and 29, λόγος is used. In verse 29, λόγος is used of the

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation, p. 19-20.

[2]Ibid., p. 22.

same identical thing as ῥῆμα of verse 37. This supports the position that as a statement of intellectual content, these two terms in no way differ.[1]

Summary

Looking back over the usage of "the Word of God" as examined here, λόγος means the message that God is conveying whether written or spoken to others, whose content is true and containing sufficient power to accomplish all that is promised. The term ῥῆμα carries exactly the same meaning as λόγος as far as the content is concerned. The uniqueness of ῥῆμα will be developed later.

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[1]Clark, The Johannine Logos, pp. 43-44.

CHAPTER VI

THE "WORD" IN THE JOHANNINE WRITINGS

In the writings of John, particularly in his Gospel, the "word" is used in a sense unparalleled any place in the New Testament, for the word is applied to Christ, Himself-- the Incarnate Word. God's self-expression in the Old Testament came to men through selected agents of God in the form of His word. Now God is expressing Himself in the form of His Son. The creative Word of God "became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory" (Jn. 1:14). Tenney puts it this way:

> Christ is, therefore, the Word expressed in flesh, using a human body and human consciousness to reveal to men the nature and will of Deity. His character, His actions, and His teachings are the overt declaration of divine truth . . . In Him the dynamic communication of God found a perfect vehicle through whom it could be transmitted to men. Through Him they could hear God speaking.[1]

In the rest of his Gospel, John gives carefully selected evidence for this opening proposition. It was not John's intention to write a biography of Jesus, but rather to select a few "signs" that Jesus performed so that "you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God; and that believing you may have life in His name (Jn. 20:31).

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation, p. 22.

The Relationship Between Jesus' "Word"

And The Old Testament "Word"

To support his thesis, John shows that the words
and deeds of Jesus are parallel with the attributes of the
word of God in the Old Testament. The first such instance
is in John 2:22. After cleansing the temple at the beginning
of His ministry, Jesus said to the Jewish leaders, "Destroy
this temple and in three days, I shall raise it up" (Jn.
2:19). Though it was not understood at the time, later
when "He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered
that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the
word which Jesus had spoken" (Jn. 2:22). The word of Jesus
and the Old Testament Scripture are equated with the same
degree of believed truth.

In fact what Jesus taught was frequently equated
with the word of God the Father. In John 5:38, "you do
not have His [the Father's] word in you, for you do not
believe Him [Christ] whom He sent." In John 8:55 Jesus
claimed to keep the Word of God because He knew the Father
personally. But not only did Jesus keep the Father's word,
but the disciples did also (John 17:6). "They have kept
thy word," the word which Jesus gave to them (John 17:14).
The word which Jesus gave which was from the Father is the
truth" (John 17:17).

The word of God is also equated with the Old Testa-
ment revelation to the Jews in John 10:35. Clark says,

> The prophets were men to whom the <u>logos</u> of God came,
> and this <u>logos</u> as written in the Scripture cannot be
> broken . . . The idea that the <u>logos</u> is something
> that can be written down on papyrus, parchment, or
> vellum is important, even if only because it is so
> distasteful to the dialectical theologians.[1]

It is not necessary to go through all the verses of the epistles of John, for many of the expressions are the same as his Gospel and offer really nothing new. It will be sufficient to show a few to see the parallels. In 1 John 1:10, "If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar and His word is not in us." The word which is characterized by truth is not dwelling in them. In 1 John 2:7, ὁ λόγος is used in the same sense that John and others used it--not as the personified Λόγος, but as the word of God.

The Relationship Between Jesus' Word

And God's Word

In John the term "word of God" and the term "My Word" stand along side each other in equal value, yet different. Jesus' words were never meant to be anything different from God's word; for, John 14:24 says, "the word which you hear is not mine, but the Father's who sent Me." The fact that it is called the word of Jesus gives the distinct impression that the word of Jesus takes precedence over the former statements which God has made through His word.

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[1]Clark, <u>The Johannine Logos</u>, p. 41.

Therefore, it is now a matter of importance for individuals to hear what the Son has to say--not only hear but believe it (Jn. 5:24; 8:43), to keep this word of His (Jn. 8:51, 52; 14:23, 24; 15:20) and to abide in it (Jn. 8:31). For those who reject it will one day be judged (Jn. 12:48).[1]

Harnack makes this notation about the word in John.

> Obviously it is not a question of individual words, although the word contains new commandments, nor of a group of such words, but the main content of the word of Jesus is the knowledge of the relationship of the Father to the Son, of the Son to the believers, and the complete surrender to this relationship in love.[2]

He goes on to observe in his summary:

> It is true that "My word" and "God's word" appear so closely connected in the Fourth Gospel as to become identical; but as the distinction is still maintained within this identity--just as the Son, with all His dependence on the Father, still possesses a specific independence - "my word" comes to something independent existing alongside God's word, and, since its essential content is the Son, the transition from λόγος to Λόγος can be understood.[3]

The Dianoetic Aspect In John's "Word"

It is Clark's view that λόγος in John means "a sentence, a proposition, a doctrine, an object of intellectual apprehension."[4] He supports this view by systematically

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[1]Adolf Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), p. 346.

[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid., p. 349.

[4]Clark, The Johannine Logos, p. 38.

listing every occurrence of λόγος in the Gospel of John and showing how many times in the context, a proposition or declarative sentence had just preceded to which λόγος is directly referring.

A few examples will be sufficient to show the point. The first example is John 2:22, "When therefore He (Christ) was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this, and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had spoken." What did the disciples remember? It was that He had said, "Destroy this temple, and in three days I shall raise it up" (Jn. 2:19). This is "the word that Jesus had said." The word is this declarative sentence which the disciples remembered.

The next case in which this can be observed is John 4:37, "For in this case the saying [word] is true, 'One sows and another reaps.'" This one is particularly clear because the adage is stated to be true and the only thing that can be true is a proposition or declarative sentence.

One more verse should adequately represent the point Clark is making. In Chapter 6 Jesus says that He is "the bread of life" (35) and "he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me" (57). It is after this that "Many of his disciples, when they heard this said, 'This is a difficult statement [word] who can listen to it?'" (60). In reference to this verse, Clark translates word "doctrine." He has this to say about it:

> Logos, here, although in the singular, must not be
> translated by "a Word." Nor even by "a sentence."
> The reference is to the whole sermon. And if anyone
> dislikes the translation, "This doctrine is diffi-
> cult," he may translate it, "This sermon is difficult."
> But the meaning is the same, for it was the intellectual
> content that caused the displeasure of the audience.[1]

In other instances when λόγος is used, there is no definite

sentence quote; yet it appears that the reference is clearly

to previously spoken sentences. For example, in John 5:24,

Jesus said, "He who hears My word and believes Him who

sent Me has eternal life." Again quoting Clark, he says:

"The phrase, "He who hears my word" can equally be trans-

lated, "He who hears my doctrines;' and it can be inter-

preted as, 'He who accepts my doctrine or theology.'"[2]

The primary thrust of John's writings is to empha-

size the content of the word. God is saying something

that deserves the attention and demands the response of all

who hear.

The Dynamic Of John's "Word"

The one striking feature of the Johannine word is

the absence of the stress on the power of the word of God.

The only place John ever seems to portray the dynamic of

the word is in John 15:3. Jesus is talking to the dis-

ciples about the process of sanctification but lest they

confuse it with justification, Jesus said, "You are clean

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[1]Clark, The Johannine Logos, p. 39.

[2]Ibid.

because of the word which I have spoken to you." The word
which Jesus gave to them had the power to cleanse them by
the forgiveness of sins. This is the only reference where
any suggestion is made of an aspect that is so predominant
in the other New Testament writers. This absence makes
his use of the "word" unique.

The Relationship Of Λόγος and Ῥῆμα

The contemporary theologians tried to distinguish
between the λόγος and the ῥήματα: between the "Word" and
the "words" as used in the Gospel of John. For them the
Word is in some sense divine. The Bible contains it or
somehow mediates it to man. The Bible was authoritative,
though to them it was not infallible. To the liberal scholar,
reception of the word is a kind of mystical experience with-
out intellectual content, while words are human, fallible,
and mythological.[1] In summing up the liberal scholar's
view, Clark says,

> The supernatural truth of God is so different from human
> truth that they do not coincide at a single point and
> not even omnipotence has the power to express it in
> human language; therefore, the words, the concepts,
> are mere pointers to an unknowable object.[2]

How different is ῥῆμα from λόγος as it is used in
the Gospel of John? For one thing, Jesus is never called
ῥῆμα as He is called λόγος. For ῥήματα, in the very literal

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[1]Clark, The Johannine Logos, p. 42.

[2]Ibid.

sense, are the sounds that come out of a person's mouth when he speaks. They are not the thoughts themselves, but they are the sounds in the air; they are the symbols of the thoughts. On occasions it is profitable to distinguish between the thought and the symbol or the proposition and the sentence. Yet, one must keep in mind that in the end, it is an interest only in semantics, for one cannot stand without the other. Truths can only be conveyed by symbols. One cannot separate thoughts from words or vice versa. Therefore ῥήματα are not on any lower level than λόγος.[1]

Because of the importance of the relationship between λόγος and ῥῆμα a close look at how John uses these two words in conjunction with each other is necessary. John 3:34-35 says, "He who has received His witness has set his seal to this that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words (ῥήματα) of God for He gives the Spirit without measure." The emphasis here is that God is truthful; therefore, God's words are true and so are the Son's words because God gave Him the Spirit without measure or limit. The ῥήματα of Jesus had the limitless authority of the Holy Spirit.[2]

In John 5:45-47 Jesus points a stern finger at the Pharisees and exclaims,

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[1]Clark, The Johannine Logos, p. 43.

[2]Ibid.

> Do you think that I will accuse you before the Father.
> The one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set
> your hope. For if you believed in Moses, you would
> believe Me; for he wrote of Me. But if you do not
> believe his writings, how will you believe My words
> (ῥήματα)?

Christ attributes to Moses' written words the attribute of
truth. Because the Pharisees did not believe Moses' written
words, they could not believe Christ's spoken words. The
message Christ was speaking was earlier called λόγος (5:24).
It is the same message; they designate the same thing.

John 6:63 and 68 are especially helpful to see that
ῥήματα has the same intellectual substance as λόγος. As
explained earlier in Chapter 6, Jesus said He was the bread
of life and if any man would eat of it, he would have
eternal life. In verse 60 this discourse is referred to
by λόγος. After some disciples grumbled, Jesus said, "The
Spirit is the one who gives life . . . the words that I
have spoken to you are spirit and are life" (6:63). Λόγος
and ῥῆμα cannot be separated as far as content is concerned.
The spoken, audible words that Jesus had spoken were the
agents the Spirit had used to give life. God did not
place behind the audible words some thought which the
words were not able to perfectly represent. To have these
words is to have eternal life.

Many of the disciples did not believe Jesus and
started to desert Him. But Simon Peter said, "Lord to
whom shall we go? You have words of eternal life. And we
have believed and have come to know that you are the Holy

One of God" (Jn. 6:68-69). It was through ῥήματα that they came to believe. It was not through some mystical, anti-intellectual experience that they came to know who Christ was and believed it.

The combination of λόγος and ῥῆμα occurs together in John 12:47-48. Notice how it is used. Jesus cried out and said, "if anyone hears my sayings (ῥήματα) and does not keep them, I do not judge him; . . . He who rejects Me, and does not receive My sayings (ῥήματα) has one who judges him; the word (λόγος) I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." The λόγος is something that is spoken; therefore, it consists of words--ῥήματα. The fact is λόγος can be a spoken word as well as a written word or thought.

In summary Clark states his argument well when he says,

> These rheemata therefore are not just human words in-
> fected as they may be, with sin and error; these
> rheemata are given by the Father to the Son. These
> same divine words the Son gives to his disciples.
> They do not change in the two givings. They are
> transmitted in toto and without alteration from the
> Father to the Son to the disciples. Therefore the
> text of the Gospel diametrically contradicts the dia-
> lectical theology and all else that minimizes the grasp
> of intellectual, intelligible truth (there is no other
> kind) in favor of pictorial mythology and meaningless
> mysticism.[1]

Summary

There are some outstanding features of John's use of the word that makes it somewhat unique from all other

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[1]Clark, The Johannine Logos, p. 46.

New Testament writers. He is the only writer who ever refers to the Word as a title for Christ Himself. Though other writers express the word as a somewhat independent agent; yet never is it carried as far as John.

It is also in John that the power of God is not strongly portrayed. It is not that John was not aware of it which can be seen in John 15:3. It was the dianoetic aspect that John wished to place strong emphasis. Over and over John records Jesus talking about His teachings as "My word."

John has one message to communicate to his readers. God has something to say which is perfectly expressed in the person of His Son.

CHAPTER VII

THE "WORD" IN THE NON-PAULINE WRITINGS

Already the word has been examined in the Gospels, but to have a complete picture of the use of the term in the New Testament, an examination of how the other New Testament writers used λόγος is necessary before turning to the Pauline writings. This section will cover Acts, Hebrews, James and 1 and 2 Peter.

Acts

Though Acts has the same author as the Gospel of Luke, there is a difference in his use of λόγος. The expression the word of God (of the Lord)[1] occurs twenty-two times and the word appears by itself with the same sense as the word of God fourteen times. Harnack says,

> The meaning of the expression "the word" (of God) is never precisely defined by Luke, and therefore its content cannot be more exactly determined than by the words which he has concluded his book, 'preaching the Kingdom of God and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ.'[2]

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[1]"Of the Lord" is almost as frequent as "of God." There seems to be no apparent difference in the use of these two expressions and are therefore synonyms used interchangeably. It seems that "Lord" certainly means God and not Christ. The only exception would be 16:32, but even there there is a variant reading "of God" in some ancient manuscripts. In any case it is not necessary to assume that Christ is meant.

[2]Harnack, The Constitution and Law of the Church in the First Two Centuries, p. 336.

The fact that Christ is clearly a major element, if not the sum total, can be seen in Acts 18:5, "Paul began devoting himself completely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that Jesus was the Christ."

The genitives used in relation to the word are "grace" (Acts 14:3; 20:32), "salvation" (Acts 18:26), and "gospel" (Acts 15:7). Though these kinds of modifiers of the word will be more completely handled in the chapter on the Pauline letters, it can be said now that each of these genitive expressions is simply pointing out some characteristic of the word of God. The word of God is that of divine grace unto salvation and good news. "Boldness" and "speaking boldly" are frequently combined with "the word," because it gives courage and power to those who are proclaiming God's good news.

Old Testament Influence on Luke's "Word"

In Acts it can also be observed a similar use of the word as that which occurs in the Old Testament and the Targums. The Word takes on almost an independent existence from God. On numerous occasions Luke uses the expression "the word of God increased" (Acts 6:7; 12:24; 19:20). He also speaks of the "ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4) and describes some kind of participation in the word (Acts 8:21). Luke continues with this hypostatization when he says "when the Gentiles heard this, they began rejoicing and glorifying the word of the Lord" (Acts 13:48). It is as if the word

of the Lord were God or Christ Himself. Also observe how
Luke uses the word as almost a second entity along side
God when he has Paul saying, "I commend you to God and to
the word of His grace" (Acts 20:32). This is totally in
line with how the Hebrews used the Word in the Old Testament.

It is also interesting to observe that it is Luke,
a Gentile, who seems to be so steeped in Hebrew expressions
of the word that they quite naturally appear all through
his writings. He is the one synoptic writer that refers
to the word of God outside of the parable of the sower. Yet
one should not lose sight of the fact that in comparison to
Acts, Luke used the expression the word of God in his Gospel
surprisingly few times, especially in light of the fact it
is such a favorite expression of his in Acts.

The Relationship Between Λόγος And Ῥῆμα

In Acts there is no real difference in the content
of λόγος and ῥῆμα. In several occurrences of ῥῆμα, λόγος
could easily have been used; for example, in Acts 5:20
"speak to the people in the temple the whole message (ῥήματα)
of this life." Also in Acts 11:14 ῥήματα is used in the
same sense that λόγος σωτηρίας was used in Acts 13:26: "and
he shall speak words to you by which you shall be saved"
(Acts 11:14). This is the only time the word of the Lord
is used with ῥήματα. It is not like the others in that it
refers to a specific saying of Christ (Acts 11:26).

It should be noticed also that Luke says "λόγος"

can be preached (Acts 17:13); it is not just content which

cannot be perfectly expressed in symbolical words. Tenney

sums it up this way:

> In general usage "the word (logos) of God" means His
> message, whether written or spoken. Whereas the term
> rhema is used by Luke in the earlier chapters of his
> gospel concerning the act of God's revelation in Christ,
> his references to preaching in Acts uses logos.[1]

Hebrews

There is one key passage in the use of λόγος in

this book--Hebrews 4:12-13:

> For the word of God is living and active and sharper
> than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the
> division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow,
> and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the
> heart. And there is no creature hidden from His sight,
> but all things are open and laid bare to the eyes of
> Him with whom we have to do [literally, "is our word"].

In all of the New Testament, this may well be the highest

personification of the word. A familiar construction can

be found in the Old Testament personification of the word.

It has even closer similarity to writings during the inter-

testamental period where the personification of the word

was more developed.

"The word of God" is graphically pictured here as

dynamic--with power--"full of living energy to carry out

the will of God."[2] Lenski goes on to describe the dynamic

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation,
p. 22.

[2]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of the Epistle
to the Hebrews and the Epistle of James (hereinafter referred
to as Hebrews - James), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing
House, 1966), p. 141.

element portrayed here in the word by saying,

> What folly to treat the word of God as though it is
> subject to our minds, our "views," our opinions! It
> is electric and smites him who tampers with it; it is
> electric to light him who bows beneath it. Who can
> escape its blasting power when he scorns its threats?[1]

It is hard to decide whether the word of God here
is the Christian message or the Old Testament: Hebrews
utilizes the Old Testament in so much of its content and
particularly in the introduction of Hebrews. The author
viewed the Old Testament to be how God spoke to the Jews;
that is until He spoke "to us in His Son" (Heb. 1:2).
Tenney says,

> Although the direct reference may be to the Old Testa-
> ment, the confidence and urgency of his appeal indicates
> that he was consciously perpetuating that Word in his
> own exhortation.[2]

Therefore, not only is the Old Testament the word of God
but the New Testament also. "Thus the old covenant and the
new are combined as God's word . . . this implies their
unity so that fundamentally the Old Testament word is on the
same level as the New Testament word. Both are the word of
God."[3]

But the efficaciousness of the word, to be beneficial
to an individual, must be appropriated by faith as pointed
out in Hebrews 4:2, "For indeed we have had good news preached

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[1]Lenski, Hebrews - James, p. 141.

[2]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation,
p. 26.

[3]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 112.

to us just as they also; but the word they heard did not profit them because it was not united by faith in those who heard." It can also be seen in this passage that the word is equated with that which was preached to the Jews of the Exodus as well as to the Christians He was talking to. To prove the word's effectiveness, the author of Hebrews says, "Remember those who led you, who spoke the word of God to you; and considering the outcome of their way of life, imitate their faith" (Hebrews 13:7). Hebrews also confirms the dianoetic content in the word. "For every one who partakes only of milk is not accustomed to the word of righteousness for he is a babe. But solid food is for the mature" (Hebrews 5:13-14). The word has real substance to it which can only be handled by the mature.

In Hebrews there are some interesting uses of ῥῆμα. In the very first chapter, ῥῆμα is used in reference to Christ's omnipotent power which He exercises. Though "the word" is not specifically mentioned in Colossians 1:17, the close association can hardly be missed. The dynamic power ascribed to God's word is also given to Christ's word. Lenski says, "This is not his gospel word but the utterance of his omnipotence . . . During the days of his humiliation he uttered many words of omnipotent power when he was working his miracles."[1] It is this power that He uses to hold all things together, not just a few miracles.

[1]Lenski, Hebrews - James, p. 39.

Another occurrence of ῥῆμα is in Hebrews 6:5. The context described men who had been enlightened and who had been partakers of the Holy Spirit. The word "tested" implies at least an awareness with the revelation and power of God, if not more. However one interprets this passage, the dynamic force can be seen in this word of God.

The last passage to be considered in Hebrews is 11:3. Nothing new can be added to the understanding of ῥῆμα except in comparison to Hebrews 1:2, the word here is looking to the original creative act of God in Genesis one while the former refers to the preserving work of Christ's word.

James and I Peter

There is a very helpful section in James 1 where a very vital concept lies within James' instruction in 1:18, 21-23. James ascribes a reproductive power to the word of God. "In the exercise of His will He brought us forth by the word of truth so that we might be as it were the first fruits among His creatures" (Jas. 1:18). The dynamic aspect James attributes to the word is life changing. It is the agent by which a transformation of the soul takes place. Also the dianoetic content, which has been seen so many times, is again expressed. The word that changes has as its central ingredient truth.

The word of God has the power to accomplish what it set out to do; for the Christian is told "in humility receive

the word implanted, which is able to save your souls" (Jas.
1:21). The word is already in them, for verse 18 says that
God already had brought them forth by the word. Therefore,
James is telling them that if they are to continue to grow
in maturity, they must continue to draw upon the word of
God by doing what the word says (Jas. 1:22-23). It is "this
man [who] shall be blessed in what he does" (Jas. 1:25).

Peter develops the dynamic of the word of God fur-
ther. For Peter speaks of being "born again not of seed
which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the
living and abiding word of God" (1 Pet. 1:23). All through
this first chapter, Peter gives numerous allusions to the
transformation of one's personality by the power of Christ.
The channel by which all of this comes about is the word of
God.[1] Peter identifies the λόγος of God; for, it "is the
word (ῥῆμα) which was preached [as good news] to you" (1 Pet.
1:25). Peter equates the word of God, mentioned in Isaiah,
with the gospel he and others have preached. In no way is
the New Testament word any different in character from the
Old Testament word. Peter shows the content in λόγος and
ῥῆμα to be the same. Kittel has this to say about the usage
of these two terms:

> So far as can be seen, there is no similar fixity of
> usage in the case of ῥῆμα (as is the case with λόγος).
> To be sure, similar expressions occur, so that one
> cannot say that ῥῆμα is avoided in this connection.

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word of Revelation,
p. 26.

But they are both less frequent than those with λόγος and also much looser, so that we never have an expression of a fixed term.[1]

Λόγος is definitely used to indicate the whole general message of God both in the New Testament and the Old; so that, it can be expressed by itself as simply "the word." Ῥῆμα can never be said to be used in quite the same way; it seems to always have a specific word or expression in mind.

2 Peter

The prophetic word, which Peter refers to in 2 Peter 1:19 helps to clarify how the apostles saw the word that they were preaching: the prophecy of Christ in the Old Testament. It is equated with a lamp shining in a dark place, because it did not originate from within mortal men, but "men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God" (2 Pet. 1:21).

In 2 Peter 3 Peter is trying to encourage the believers not to listen to those who deny the Second Coming of the Lord; therefore, he reminds them to "remember the words spoken beforehand by the holy prophets and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles" (2 Pet. 3:2). The words of the prophets must be the statements they made in the Old Testament, for Peter uses the perfect tense to indicate the permanence of the words spoken. He also appeals to the commandment of Christ Himself. Both of these are sources of the word of God.

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[1]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 116.

In John 1:1 Christ is called "the Word," for he is the complete revelation of God and in Him is everything God wanted to say. In Him, in a sense, is God's final and complete word of revelation about Himself. Therefore, anything He would say is just as authoritative as the prophets.

Peter says the real issue is these mockers do not really believe God's word about the Second Coming, for they say, "Where is the promise of His coming? For . . . all continues just as it was from the beginning of creation" (2 Pet. 3:4). They are doubtful that God will keep His promise; yet, Peter notices they do propose that they believe in the creative act of God. It is here that Peter points out the flaw in their thinking. It was by the word of God that creation took place and it was by the word of God that judgment came upon the earth by a flood. How could they question God's word? God has sufficiently shown to anyone's satisfaction that His word has all the power necessary to accomplish its purpose. God has proved that His word is sure and true. There is ample evidence. Both the prophets of old who spoke God's word and Christ Himself said it would happen. The proof is in the fact that God has said it. Once Peter establishes that fact, it is a simple matter to take an obvious example, such as God's creative word, to show those who are wavering how sure His word really is.

He then warns the Christians, that not to trust God's

word brings with it a stiff penalty, for he says in verse
7, "By the same word the present heavens and earth are
reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and
destruction of ungodly men" (2 Pet. 3:7).[1] The same power-
ful creative word that created the world and brought the
first judgment will just as surely finish its task of bring-
ing the last judgment. The first creative act, the first
judgment by wrath, and the last judgment by fire are not
different declarations by God. They are all the result of
the initial creative word of Genesis one. The periphrastic
perfect τεθησαυρισμένοι emphasizes the duration of the ef-
fect of the word of God of verse 5. God has sent forth His
creative word, and it will not have completed its purpose
until the judgment by fire has taken place.

There is no need for a new word to be spoken. God
does not need to be continuously putting forth divine energy
to keep His present creation functioning. The original
creative word was sufficient. When God speaks and sends
forth His word, it is totally capable of accomplishing the
task for which it was sent. Nothing new needs to be added
along the way to help God's original word to accomplish its
task.

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[1]I take τῷ αὐτῷ λόγῳ to mean the same word not His
word because it would seem for it to be His word, it would
have to be τῷ αὐτοῦ. See Tyndale New Testament Commentaries:
The Second Epistle General of Peter (Grand Rapids: Wm. B.
Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1968).

Summary

All through the non-Pauline writings, it becomes apparent that the same concept of the word of God that is communicated in the Old Testament is continued here. The content of the word of God is true and it demands not only attention but a response from those who hear it. It is a word of truth which inspires boldness and confidence in those who proclaim it. They have no reason to fear; for, since it is true, whatever the word says will come to pass.

It will come to pass because the word is laden with power to accomplish all that it has promised. It can create life and transform personality. It is alive and convicts men and calls them to a saving knowledge of Christ. The word also has the power to create the universe and preserve it until its purpose is complete.

Every possible source for Paul's concept of the word has been consulted. His contemporaries have been examined. There is but one task left--the examination of Paul's own use of the word.

CHAPTER VIII

THE "WORD" IN THE PAULINE WRITINGS

A careful look at all of the possible uses of λόγος
in the other New Testament writings was not pursued. How-
ever, to be thorough with the Pauline writings, all uses
will be classified according to the various ways Paul em-
ployed them. To develop a background for the complete
understanding of λόγος and ῥῆμα an examination of the major
lexicons will help to put the two terms in perspective.

The Lexicographical Definition

Of The "Word"

There are two primary Greek words used in the New
Testament which are translated "word." The first task will
be to look at each of the words separately, and then to see
how they relate to each other. Of the two terms, λόγος
appears over twelve hundred times in the New Testament,
whereas ῥῆμα only sixty times. Within the Pauline epistles,
λόγος is used 80 times as opposed to 9 times for ῥῆμα.

The Term λόγος

For a lexicographical definition, Cremer defines it
this way:

Λόγος, ὁ, the word, - not however, in a grammatical
sense, for which ῥῆμα, ὄνομα, ἔπος is used, but always

like vox, of the living spoken word, the word not in
its outward form, but with reference to the thought
connected with the form, Passow; in short, not the
word of language, but of conversation, of discourse;
not the word as a part of speech, but the word as a
part of what is uttered.[1]

Cremer sees the New Testament usages in two ways.
The first is a formal sense without laying stress upon what
is said but denoting that something is said. Second is a
material sense, the word as that which is spoken: that
statement both of single declarations and of longer speeches
or conversations, expositions, explanations, etc.[2]

For a little different explanation Thayer says,

Those things which are put together in thought, as of
those which, having been thought i.e. gathered together
in the mind, are expressed in words. Accordingly a
twofold use of the term is to be distinguished: one
which relates to speaking, and one which relates to
thinking.
I. As respects speech: 1. a word, yet not in gram-
matical sense (i.q. vocabulum, the mere name of an
object) but language, vox, i.e. - a word which, uttered
by the living voice embodies a conception or idea;
hence it differs from ῥῆμα and ἔπος . . . What someone
has said, discourse, what is communicated by instruction,
a narration, a matter under discussion.
II. Its use as respects the mind alone, reason, the
mental faculty of thinking, meditating, reasoning,
calculating, etc. . . . . account, reckoning, explanation,
reason.[3]

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[1]Hermann Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of
New Testament Greek (Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1962),
p. 390.

[2]Ibid., pp. 390-391.

[3]Henry Thayer, ed., rev., and enl., Greek-English
Lexicon of the New Testament (New York: American Book
Company, 1889; reprint ed., Grand Rapids: Zondervan Pub-
lishing Company, 1963), pp. 380-381.

Possibly to make it a little easier to understand these two dimensions, the first would be the word or at least the outward form by which the inward thought is expressed. For example, when one speaks he may use a word that represents a conception or an idea; it is then that he is using the first aspect of λόγος. The second would be the inward thought itself; when one is exercising his mental capacities.

It combines both the Latin "oratio"--"that which is said or spoken, word, language, talk" and the "ratio"--"the power of the mind which is manifested in speech and reason."[1]

Λόγος came from λέγω, "to speak." Boman says, "The basic meaning of the root Leg--is, without a doubt, 'together,' and indeed not to gather pell-mell, but to put together in order, to arrange."[2] This basic meaning is the explanation for the three principle meanings in the concept of λόγος: speak, reckon, and think.[3] Though the word was formerly used very infrequently, by the time of the New Testament, it became one of the most frequent words in the entire Greek language.[4] The deepest level of meaning in λόγος, in Boman's opinion is, "thus nothing which has to do

[1]Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, p. 562.

[2]Thorlief Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1960), p. 67.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Ibid.

with the function of speaking - neither dynamic spokenness,
as was the case in the entire Orient, nor the articulate-
ness of utterance - but the meaning, the ordered and
reasonable content."[1] The Greeks did not have the dynamic
force in λόγος that is observed in the Hebrew word דָּבָר. As
it was seen earlier, in the classical Greek period any
religious implications in λόγος were insignificant. Not
until the Hellenistic Age, Neo-Platonism, and Stoicism, does
the term surface in religious importance. The Greek root
meaning of λόγος is important to keep in mind. The reason
λόγος was used to translate דָּבָר in the LXX is the corres-
pondence between the basic meaning of λόγος for the Greeks
and the Hebrews dianoetic content seen in דָּבָר. "As an act
of the mind, Dabhar is very akin to the Greek logos idea."[2]
The added meaning that the Hebrews placed on λόγος is the
dynamic aspect: that which is laden with power. This extra
dimension is the potential for the hypostatization.

The Term Ῥῆμα

The term ῥῆμα is less frequently used, but it is
also much simpler in its basic meaning. The sense of this
word is definitely non-durative; it is to state something
specifically. It is "that which is said or spoken, that is,
a word of discourse or speech such as word of prophecy,

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[1] Boman, Hebrew Thought Compared With Greek, p. 67.

[2] Ibid., p. 69.

instruction or command."[1] Cremer states ῥῆμα is "that which

is said, utterance, word."[2] The Latin word would be "ver-

bum." Thayer says, it is "that which is or has been

uttered by the living voice, thing spoken, word."[3]

Vine probably gives the clearest explanation:

> It denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in
> speech or writing; in the singular a word, e.g. 2 Cor.
> 12:4; 13:1 in the plural, speech, discourse, e.g.
> Romans 10:18 it is used of the gospel in Romans 10:8
> (twice), 17, R.V., "The word of Christ" (i.e. the word
> which preaches Christ); of a statement, command, in-
> struction, e.g. Matthew 26:75, Luke 1:37, R.V., (No
> word from God shall be void of power); verse 38: Acts
> 11:36, Hebrews 11:3.[4]

Λόγος In Its General Uses

Formal Sense

Cremer's first main category is the use of λόγος in

a formal sense: not looking at what is said so much, but

the fact that something has been said. Sometimes λόγος repre-

sents the single units of expression forming part of what has

been spoken. Though generally in this use, it is in the

plural. Paul uses λόγος in this fashion when he says, "In

the church, I desire to speak five words with my mind, that

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[1]G. Abbott-Smith, Manual Greek Lexicon of the New
Testament (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1956), p. 397.

[2]Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament
Greek, p. 267.

[3]Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament,
p. 562.

[4]W. E. Vine, The Expositors Dictionary of New Testa-
ment Words (Old Tappan: Fleming H. Revell Company, 1940;
reprinted 1966), p. 230.

I may instruct others also, rather than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Cor. 14:9, cf. 2:4, 13; Eph. 5:6).

At other times it is a word as an expression which serves for a particular occasion. Cremer explains it as "the language which one adopts, one's manner of speaking."[1] When Paul says, "Let no unwholesome word proceed from your mouth" (Eph. 4:29), he is using "word" in that manner. This use appears very frequently in his writings when he expresses concern on how one should speak (cf. Col. 4:6; 1 Cor. 1:17; 2:1; 15:2; 2 Cor. 10:10, 11; 11:6; 1 Th. 1:5, 2:5; 2 Th. 2:2, 15; 3:14; 2 Tim. 2:17).[2]

Finally, λόγος is used to represent a word or speech, looking at the act of speaking itself and not at the end result. That is what Paul is referring to when he says, "whatever you do in word or deed . . ." (Col. 3:17). "Word" is singling out the outward expression itself, not particularly the content (cf. Rom. 15:18; 1 Cor. 1:5; 4:19, 20; 14:9; 2 Cor. 1:18; 8:7; Eph. 6:19; Col. 2:23; 2 Th. 2:17; 1 Tim. 4:12).

Technical Sense

Also λόγος is used in a very technical sense pointing

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[1]Cremer, Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek, p. 390.

[2]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Galatians, to the Ephesians and to the Philippians (hereinafter referred to as Galatians - Philippians), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1937), pp. 678-680.

to the inward thought itself:[1] the mind alone as opposed
to the verbal form that it takes. It looks to the mental
faculty of thinking or reasoning. Paul uses the word in
the sense of a reasoned accounting.[2] There are very few
occasions where Paul uses λόγος in this way. The first
occasion is in Romans 14:12, "So then each one of us shall
give account (λόγος) of himself to God." Here it is giving
an answer or explanation in reference to judgment.

In the second occasion λόγος is used of giving an
account in the form of a settlement. This use is found in
Philippians 4:15: "no church shared with me in the matter
(λόγος) of giving and receiving but you alone." Literally
this means of debit and credit.[3] Just two verses later the
term is used again in a similar manner, "Not that I seek
the gift itself, but I seek for the profit which increases
to your account" (Phil. 4:17). Moulton and Milligan, in
referring to Greek documents of the New Testament period,
say "In our documents, which are so often of a monetary
character, λόγος = 'account' in the sense of 'reckoning,'
'score,' meets us constantly."[4]

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[1]Abbott-Smith, Manual Greek Lexicon of the New
Testament, p. 271.

[2]Thayer, Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testa-
ment, p. 381.

[3]William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich, A Greek-
English Lexicon of the New Testament (Chicago: University
of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 479.

[4]James H. Moulton and George Milligan, The Vocabu-
lary of the Greek Testament (Grand Rapids: Wm. B. Eerdmans
Publishing Company, 1963), p. 379.

Special Sense

Paul uses λόγος also in describing that which is spoken. It is a statement both referring to single announcements and also of longer messages or conversations.[1] The singular form quite commonly precedes a statement from the Old Testament (Rom. 9:9; 1 Cor. 15:54); a statement from the New Testament (Rom. 13:9; Gal. 5:14); a revelation from the Lord (1 Th. 4:15); or just to point to a definite declaration (1 Cor. 12:8; 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:6, 9; 5:17; 2 Tim. 2:11; Ti. 2:8; 3:8). In the plural, it gathers up in one expression what has been spoken at different times or in a long message.[2] Paul says, after writing an extensive exhortation to the Thessalonians, "Therefore comfort one another with these words" (1 Th. 4:18; cf. Rom. 3:4; 1 Tim. 6:3; 2 Tim. 1:13; 4:15).

The singular form of λόγος many times is used as a substitute for the plural form. The purpose is to bring attention to an exposition or to be a comprehensive term to represent a wider concept. "Word" is used in that manner in 1 Corinthians 12:8: "For to one is given the word of wisdom . . . and to another the word of knowledge." Lenski sees a better translation of λόγος in this passage to be

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[1]Cremer, _Biblico-Theological Lexicon of New Testament Greek_, p. 391.

[2]_Ibid._

"expression."[1] The gifts are clearly to be used to benefit others; therefore, λόγος is that ability to convey in words or in conversation the wisdom and knowledge of God.

Λόγος As The Word Of God

This is a unique expression that is found primarily in the New Testament (30 times). There are only a few occurrences in the Old Testament (Jud. 3:20; 1 Chr. 25:5; Ps. 56:4, 10). As it was observed, the Old Testament expression was "the Word of the Lord." In the New Testament this expression seldom occurs. There are also instances where λόγος is used by itself (40 times). There seems to be no real distinction in the usage of these three terms in Paul or anywhere else in the New Testament.[2]

A good example to see the interchange between these three terms is in 1 Thessalonians. Paul is writing to the Christians expressing his excitement over the way they received the witness of the Lord and then shared it with others. Paul says they "received the word" (1:6) and, he continues, "the word of the Lord has sounded forth from you" (1:8) and then lastly Paul says he thanks God because they accepted his message "for what it really is, the word of God" (2:13). A possible reason for the expression of the word of the Lord

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[1]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistles to the Corinthians (hereinafter referred to as Corinthians), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 501.

[2]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 115.

being less common than the other two (when it is used so frequently in the Old Testament) "may be due to the fact that it can also be used to introduce the sayings of Jesus."[1] 1 Thessalonians 4:15 is one of those occasions where it seems to be pointing to specific statements by the Lord Himself.

The Content Of Λόγος

Paul is constantly saying that someone "received the Word" (1 Th. 1:6) or those who received it sent "the Word" (1 Th. 1:8) or some other similar expression (cf. 1 Cor. 14:36; Gal. 6:6; 2 Th. 3:1). Paul uses this expression many times without an explanation as to what he is referring. Therefore the word has become an expression to represent a set body of content.

The Word of God has real content for it can be preached (2 Tim. 4:2, cf. Phil. 1:14), it can sanctify (1 Tim. 4:5), and it can be dishonored (Ti. 2:5). It is something one can hold on to (Ti. 1:9).

The thing that Paul is proclaiming is particularly clear in Colossians 4:3. He asks the Christians at Colossae to pray for an open "door for the word, so that we may speak forth the mystery of Christ." The content of the word is further explained to be "the mystery which has been hidden from past ages . . . but has now been manifested . . .

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[1]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 115.

which is Christ in you, the hope of glory" (Col. 1:25-27).
Paul goes on to say that proclaiming Christ is the whole
purpose for which he labors (Col. 1:28-29; cf. 1:5; Eph.
1:13). Paul says that he is doing this to fulfill the word
of God (Col. 1:25).[1] The same expression is in Romans 15:19:
"I have fulfilled the gospel of Christ."

Word And Gospel

The relationship between the Gospel and the Word
points to a strong demarcation between the Hellenic conno-
tation as opposed to the Hebraic. Theologians who see λόγος
with an Hellenic connotation in the New Testament have λόγος
and Gospel associated with the intelligible structure and
order of the world. Lehmann says, "The relation between
Gospel and logos was understood and explicated primarily as
a relation of intelligibility. Indeed, logos functions in
this enterprise as the possibility and the principle of
intelligibility of Gospel."[2] Yet other theologians see "the
word's" relationship with the Gospel as having a Hebrew
background, because it is God's self-communication through
Jesus Christ in a personal and concrete action.[3] C. H. Dodd

[1]R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's
Epistles to the Colossians, to the Thessalonians, to Timothy,
to Titus and to Philemon (hereinafter referred to as Colos-
sians - Philemon), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House,
1961), p. 76.

[2]Paul L. Lehmann, "The Logos in a World Coming of
Age," Theology Today 21:3 (October, 1964), p. 276.

[3]Ibid.

has said,

> In so far as the Greek term _logos_ means reasonable or
> considered speech, it approaches the meaning of the
> Hebrew term _dabhar_, "word," and is fittingly used to
> translate it. Beyond that common area of meaning,
> however, the denotation of the Hebrew term expands in
> a different direction from the Greek . . . No such
> concrete meaning ever attaches to _logos_ in a properly
> Greek context; but this is integral to the Hebrew term.[1]

Therefore the relationship of λόγος to Gospel is Christologi-
cal in character and revelatory in action.

1 Corinthians 15:1-5 is a great help in understanding
the relationship between the two terms; for, Paul puts them
in parallel form in the first two verses.

> Now I make known to you brethren, the gospel which I
> preached[2] to you which also you received, in which
> also you stand, by which also you are saved, if you hold
> fast the word which I preached[2] to you.

Paul is saying that the word is the gospel. They are in-
separably linked together--one and the same. Then Paul goes
on in verses 3-5 to describe what the content of the Word
is. It is essentially "that Christ died for our sins,
according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and
that He was raised on the third day according to the Scrip-
tures and that He appeared" to many people personally both
individually and in large groups. Paul has given the very
fundamental content of the word preached by himself and
others. Paul emphasizes that his message is centered on

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[1]F. L. Cross, ed., Studies in the Fourth Gospel
(London: A. R. Mowbray and Company, Ltd., 1957), p. 11.

[2]Underlining mine.

Christ who fulfilled the prophecies of Scripture (the Old Testament).

Paul, who had not known Christ, in all probability, during his earthly ministry, was quite aware of the basic facts of His life (1 Cor. 1:23-25; 15:3-11). Tenney says,

> These facts constituted the foundation of his gospel to which he alluded frequently (Romans 1:16; 2:16; 16:25; 2 Corinthians 4:3; II Thessalonians 2:14). He called it also "the gospel of God" (Romans 1:1; 15:16; II Corinthians 11:7; I Thessalonians 2:2, 8, 9), thereby asserting that he preached a message of divine origin and authority.[1]

At times Paul calls it "my gospel" while at other times, "the gospel of God." The former expression notes his personal acceptance while the latter emphasizes the source by which Paul received this gospel or word.[2]

The Source of Paul's Word

He leaves no room for confusing the word with something Paul personally devised. He distinguishes sharply between the word of man and the word of God; the word Paul was preaching he had received directly from God. In speaking to the Thessalonians, he said, "We constantly thank God that when you received from us the word of God's message, you accepted it not as the word of men, but for what it really is, the word of God" (1 Th. 2:13; cf. Gal. 1:11).

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[1]Tenney, The Bible: The Living Word Of Revelation, p. 25.

[2]Ibid., p. 26.

The Use of λόγος And The Old Testament

When λόγος is used in reference to the Old Testa-
ment, there are times when it refers to a specific passage
rather than the general concept of God's communication with
man. It is possible here to translate λόγος as "statement"
rather than word. In these cases the genitive, of God, is
not necessarily used. Observe the following: (1) "For
this is a word of promise: 'At this time I will come, and
Sarah shall have a son'" (Rom. 9:9; cf. Rom. 13:9). "Then
will come about the saying (word) that is written, 'Death
is swallowed up in victory'" (1 Cor. 15:54; cf. Gal. 5:14).

Yet, there is one case in Paul's writings in which
word of God could mean an individual passage in the Old
Testament: "But it is not as though the word of God has
failed. For they are not all Israel who are descended from
Israel" (Rom. 9:6). Paul is trying to clear up a difficulty
some earnest Christian may be facing because of the promise
God had given Abraham about the prosperity of His descend-
ants. Paul is answering what happened to God's promise.
It would also seem reasonable to see this as a reference to
God's word in general as it relates to Israel. Lenski's
comment on this verse states it this way:

> When one looks at the many unbelieving Israelites,
> he would be sadly mistaken to think that God's Word has
> dropped out and now is ineffective and unfulfilled.
> Paul uses the wide term "the Word of God," for the

whole of it is involved in what happened to the Israelites.[1]

This seems to be more consistent with the context: what the word of God has said about Israel has not failed.

The Use of Ῥῆμα And Its Distinction
From Λόγος

There are only nine occurrences of ῥῆμα in the Pauline writings and four of these are in the same context. Paul is talking about justification by faith, not by the keeping of the law. Then he quotes a portion of Deuteronomy 30:14, "The Word (ῥῆμα) is near you in your mouth and in your heart" (Rom. 10:8). Lenski gives some background that is helpful to understand the use of ῥῆμα here: "At one time the Jews from very childhood onward learned the law by the Word uttered and taught to them; it was put into the 'mouth' of each one."[2] That is the way they learned what God had said to them through the Old Testament. The uttered word that they learned went to their heart to give them guidance as they acted upon it by faith. Paul says that same uttered word of God is what he was preaching. Lenski goes on to say, "The discussion is not about the contents of the λόγος but about God using 'utterance' or uttered word as his means

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[1] R. C. H. Lenski, The Interpretation of St. Paul's Epistle to the Romans (hereinafter referred to as Romans), (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1961), p. 590.

[2] Ibid., p. 654.

for conveying what we call the contents."[1] Therefore as
the divine word placed law into the mouth and heart, so
now word does this through the gospel according to the faith
exercised upon it both in the heart and on the lips. The
continued use of ῥῆμα is seen again in the same verses 17
and 18. Again there is a strong emphasis placed upon the
outward expression. The way one comes to have faith and
confidence in Christ is to hear the gospel concerning Him.
Notice that first the Psalmist says, "their voice" then in
parallel to this "their words." Each time the expression
occurs in Romans 8, the emphasis is on the vocalized sounds
as the medium to the content; that is why ῥῆμα is used here
and not λόγος.

As far as content of the expression, λόγος could
have been used but the stress would have been taken off of
the outward manifestation. Second Corinthians 12:4 is
similar to this; stress is on the fact that it was heard.
In all cases the fact of the occurrence is shown by the
stem on ῥῆμα; for -μα is a term expressing result (the
thing uttered) as opposed to -ις which is the action of
uttering.[2] Because of the material force which word takes
on in 2 Corinthians 13:1, ῥῆμα is better translated as "fact,"
not "word." The outward manifestation being that the main
emphasis is seen by the fact. Paul is concerned about what

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[1] Lenski, Romans, p. 655.

[2] Ibid., p. 669.

he will find. The focus is on the tangible.

The last two verses that use ῥῆμα are two of the
most difficult to determine, from context, what they mean.[1]
Yet, these two verses are so frequently quoted to support
different views. Whatever position one takes on Ephesians
5:26 or 6:17, ῥῆμα is the uttered gospel. As it has been
observed in other chapters, the content of ῥῆμα and λόγος
is precisely the same. Therefore the content of λόγος is
the gospel. The difference is only in the stress; for λόγος
is primarily upon the substance of the word while ῥῆμα places
more emphasis on the reality of its verbalization. Lenski
makes this reference when speaking of Ephesians 6:17:

> God's 'utterance' (no article) is purely qualitative.
> Paul does not use logos, which points to substance, but,
> as in 5:26 and notably in the temptation account in
> Matthew 4:4, ῥῆμα = "utterance." It is because it
> leaves God's mouth. So one need no (sic) think of the
> writing in Scripture although this records the utter-
> ance by inerrant inspiration; nor of "the preached word,"
> for although it is the same utterance, when it is
> preached, it passes through our mouth; nor of the idea
> of meaning (logos), for no utterance of God is devoid
> of meaning.[2]

The Dianoetic Aspect In The Pauline Word

As in the Hebrew word דָּבָר, the Pauline word has real
content. Kittel remarks of λόγος, "it is obvious that the
main emphasis of the term is always on saying something."[3]

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[1]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 117, n. 193; p. 113, n. 183.

[2]Lenski, Galatians - Philippians, p. 673.

[3]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 102.

The Old Testament word frequently stressed that God's word had substance which Paul does also. He points to the difference between the content of man's word and God's word. Man's word apart from God's is described as empty (Eph. 5:6). Paul also commends the Thessalonians for receiving his word to them as the word of God, not man's (1 Th. 2:13). When Paul refers to the word he was given from God, he frequently ascribes certain innate attributes to the content of the word.

Word Of Truth

As shown previously, the one outstanding feature of the word in the Old and New Testament is that God's word conveys reality. Both passages in Paul's letters refer to the Word of truth as the gospel--the message of salvation (Eph. 1:13; Col. 1:5). Eadie, commenting on Ephesians 1:13, notes,

> The Word has truth, absolute truth for its essence. The idea was familiar to the mind of Paul (Romans 1:18, 2:8; Colossians 1:5; 2 Th. 2:12). This special truth is adapted to man's spiritual state . . . The Gospel is wholly truth and that very truth which is indispensable to a guilty world.[1]

The Word is the gospel and the gospel reveals salvation. One of the concerns of Paul for Timothy was to encourage him to "handle accurately the word of truth" (2 Tim. 2:15; cf. 2 Cor. 6:7) and to "avoid worldly and empty chatter

[1]John Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1953), pp. 63-64.

for it will lead to further ungodliness" (2 Tim. 2:16).

Why does it lead them to ungodliness? Because it has "gone

astray from the truth."[1] It is empty.

Word Of Life

In the book of Philippians, Paul exhorts the Christ-

ians to get a firm grip on the "word of life" (Phil. 2:16).

All through the New Testament, the word is described as

being alive. 1 Peter 1:23 refers to the "living and abiding

word of God" (cf. Heb. 4:12; 1 Jn. 1:1). Jesus says, "The

words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (Jn.

6:63). It is the word that brings life and keeps believers

alive to God. Apart from this word, all is spiritually

dead. "The word is not to be taken as the preached word,

but the word which is the divine medium through which one

receives eternal life."[2] If the word not only gives life,

but also sustains life, then it is natural to see why Paul

says that if Timothy will point out to the brethren the things

he wrote to him, he "will be a good servant of Jesus Christ,

constantly nourished on the words of faith" (1 Tim. 4:6).

These words of faith and sound doctrine express the

truth mentioned back in verse 3 and the word of God in verse

4. The word has content that provides nourishment for the

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[1]Eadie, Commentary on the Epistle to the Ephesians,
p. 64.

[2]Lenski, Galatians - Philippians, p. 805.

Christian who will draw upon it.[1] Vincent helps by pointing out that "life" is the "genitive of contents . . . that which has in itself a principle as well as a message of life."[2]

There are other descriptions that reveal the content of the word of God. In 1 Corinthians 1:18, "the word of the cross" sounds foolish to those who are perishing, "but to us who are being saved, it is the power of God." It is also a "word of reconciliation" (2 Cor. 5:19). The word tells how the enmity of God can be removed against a man and how he can be restored. The enmity was removed at the cross. Plummer says, "In determining the meaning of λόγος in Paul, one must always keep in mind 1 Corinthians 2:2: "I determine not to know anything among you, save Jesus Christ and Him crucified."[3]

The Word And Christ

As it has been pointed out earlier, the content of the word is the gospel (Col. 1:5; 1 Cor. 15:1-5). The gospel in the word is none other than Christ Himself. Paul says to Timothy that a man is conceited and has no understanding

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[1]Lenski, Colossians - Philemon, p. 628.

[2]Marvin R. Vincent, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Epistles to the Philippians and to Philemon (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1955), p. 69.

[3]Alfred Plummer, A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Second Epistle of Paul to the Corinthians (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1948), p. 184.

if he "advocates a different doctrine and does not agree
with sound words, those of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Tim.
6:3). Here is the only reference of Jesus being the basic
doctrine;[1] however, the concept of the word being not only
what Christ did but also what he said stands behind many
other passages (Rom. 10:17; Col. 3:16).

Though not in the Pauline writings, in Acts it is
recorded that Paul said, he "began devoting himself com-
pletely to the word, solemnly testifying to the Jews that
Jesus was the Christ" (Acts 18:5). To be testifying solely
of the word is to proclaim Jesus as Christ.

In a summary statement on this whole point, Kittel
concludes,

> The missionary preaching of Peter, Paul and the other
> apostles, whose content is simply Jesus Christ, was
> always this Word of God to Israel and the Gentiles.
> The Word of God is the Word about Jesus.[2]

Though Paul never goes so far as to call Christ "the Word,"
there can be no doubt that the step to doing so would have
been a short one.[3]

The Dynamic Aspect In The Pauline Word

Power being within the word of God permeates Paul's
writings. In Romans 9:6 Paul makes clear that the word of
God has the power to do what it set out to do. The word of

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[1]Kittel, "λόγος," p. 109.

[2]Ibid., p. 116.

[3]Morris, The Gospel According To John, p. 124.

God has not failed, but men have failed to understand the
Word of God. God is the one who stands behind His word:
"For the Lord will execute His word upon the earth thor-
oughly and quickly" (Rom. 9:28; a quote of Isa. 10:23).
Paul's word has power because it is not his own but God's
word. It is a concept he stressed frequently (1 Th. 2:13;
1 Cor. 1:18; 2 Cor. 2:17; 4:2).

The word is also efficaciously working in the life
of the believers; for, when he commends the Thessalonians
for accepting his word as the Word of God, he points out
that it is the word of God "which also performs its work
in you who believe" (1 Th. 2:13). The word also has power
to give life and continue to nourish those who continue by
faith to trust it (1 Tim. 4:6). "And my message [word] and
my preaching were . . . in demonstration of the Spirit and
of power" (1 Cor. 2:4). So much was God's word noted for
its power, that Paul used it as a check against men claiming
to preach God's word. He points out that men can be im-
prisoned like himself, but the word of God cannot be impri-
soned; no power is strong enough to do it (2 Tim. 2:9). In
1 Corinthians 4:19-20,

> But I will come to you soon, if the Lord wills, and I
> will find out, not the words of those who are arrogant,
> but their power. For the kingdom of God does not con-
> sist in words, but in power.

At first this may seem to be a contradiction to the
assertions that the Word of God is noted for its power.
Here, it seems, Paul is contrasting words with power. But

Lenski offers an explanation that solves the difficulty in this verse as it is translated here:

> We should note the expression: οὐκ ἐν . . . (ἐστί), ἀλλ᾽ ἐν κτλ., which means neither "consists in," "rests on," nor "is conditioned by"; for ἐν denotes the accompanying circumstance which in this case happens to be also a mark of recognition.[1]

Word and power are not in contrast, but Paul is looking to see if what always accompanies God's word--His power--is there. The concern of Paul is that "he will meet only words, assertions, empty display, sham power."[2] He makes it clear that that is not the kind of word he preached: "For our gospel did not come to you in word only, but also in power and in the Holy Spirit and with full conviction" (1 Th. 1:5). Paul's concept of God's word always has with it a dynamic as observed in the Hebrew דָּבָר.

The Word Of God And Scripture

The source of Paul's and the other apostles' words is not from human wisdom, but it was taught by the Spirit (1 Cor. 2:13).

> The very words which the apostles speak are taught them by the Spirit. He is their teacher even as to the words. This is proof positive for Verbal Inspiration which is taught throughout the Scriptures and is actually and factually apparent in the Scriptures. The Spirit of the logoi in regard to all that the apostles spoke and hence also in regard to all of the gospel which they wrote, for the two are identical.[3]

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[1] Lenski, Corinthians, p. 201.

[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid., p. 114.

Paul exhorts Timothy to "retain the standard of sound words which you have heard from me, in the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus" (2 Tim. 1:13). Paul received the word by revelation of Jesus Christ. These sound words which Timothy received from Paul are the ones he is to retain. These are to be the "standard" by which he is to judge all others. Paul is telling Timothy that his words are unique and authoritative.

In 2 Thessalonians Paul makes an interesting comment: "So then brethren, stand firm and hold to the tradition which you were taught, whether by word of mouth or by letter from us" (2 Th. 2:15). For Paul, word of mouth or word of letter was no different to him. In both they are to stand firm without wavering. Those who would try to make Paul's spoken word different from his written word make distinctions Paul never made (cf. 2 Cor. 10:11). In the same letter he makes his point even stronger; "And if anyone does not obey our instruction [word] in this letter, take special note of that man and do not associate with him, so that he may be put to shame" (2 Th. 3:14). Paul's words were serious and to reject them called for severe measures.

Paul was communicating the word of God, the gospel in written form. His epistles were the word of God. They had as their purpose "to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified" (1 Cor. 2:2) which is gospel.

The gospel controlled his life to the extent that he could say, "I have been crucified with Christ, it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Gal. 2:20). Therefore anything that Paul would speak or write would be Christ.

The word of God has been shown to be the gospel; inasmuch as the epistles of Paul have as their primary function to communicate the gospel of Jesus Christ; the Pauline Epistles, therefore, are the word of God. And by the same reasoning one could conclude that all New Testament writings are the Word of God.

This does not mean that every time a person communicates the gospel of Christ that he is adding to Scripture. But that is a separate study which would be properly covered in the doctrine of bibliology; therefore, it does not fall within the scope of this thesis.

CONCLUSION

The concept of the "word" in the Pauline epistles
is Hebrew in origin. The word has its origin in God Him-
self; therefore it is of the same essence as God. The
fundamental character of the word is that its content is
true whether λόγος or ῥῆμα. As the Old Testament word
was given by revelation from God to man, so was the word
given to Paul. Just as the Old Testament word had the power
of God within it, so did the Pauline word. The dynamic
within the word had no limits or boundaries that would keep
it from accomplishing its purpose. The overlap with the
Hellenic concept of the word is minor, whereas their dif-
ferences are so fundamental that the similarities could be
said to be superficial.

Though Paul does not develop the concept of the
word as far as John who called Christ the Word, Paul is in
agreement with all of John's teachings regarding the Word.
The same is true of all of the other New Testament writers:
no difference could be found except the extent the writer
developed and used the concept of the Word. The content
of the Pauline word was specifically the gospel which is
Christ and what He has done. The gospel is the burning mes-
sage upon the mind of Paul no matter what letter is read.

It was the one message that concerned him whether he spoke it in person or he wrote it in a letter. To him both had the same purpose: to proclaim the revelation with which he had been entrusted--the gospel of salvation. The Pauline concept of the word is important because it is God's concept; therefore, no one can afford to ignore it.

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