

**What is
"the Word of God?"
Part 2**

We finished with *John 1:1*...

In the beginning was the Word...

It turns out that another first century writer was the first to use "Logos" in reference to God.

Philo of Alexandria, a Hellenistic Jew who lived in the first century

- in Alexandria, Egypt

- born cir. 15BC – died cir. 45AD

- was a devout Jew, but also a serious student of Plato.

Philo is part of the movement that is called "Middle Platonism."

- David Runia, a great scholar of Philo, thinks he was a Christian.

This philosophical school took the writings of Plato about God and heaven to the next level.

..."We are all sons of one man...we are grieved by war, and delighted in peace, being the sons of one and the same father, who is not mortal but is immortal, the man of God, who being the "Word" [ὁ λόγος] of the everlasting God, is of necessity himself also immortal."

Confusion of Languages 41

Philo is seen as the first ancient writer to use "Logos" in a direct reference to God.

Philo uses "Logos" as the link connecting the utterly transcendent "God" with humans.

"Logos" for Philo was kind of like "the Force" in Star Wars.

Many scholars believe that John has been influenced not by Philo directly, but indirectly.

But how?

Take a look at Acts 18.

=====

18 After this, Paul left Athens and went to Corinth.

[This is Paul's first time to be in Corinth.]

2 There he met a Jew named Aquila, a native of Pontus, who had recently come from Italy with his wife Priscilla, because Claudius had ordered all Jews to leave Rome...

[We will look into that this couple is very important in Paul's circle.]

11 So Paul stayed in Corinth for a year and a half, teaching them the word of God....

18 Then he left the brothers and sisters and sailed for Syria, accompanied by Priscilla and Aquila.

19 They arrived at Ephesus, where Paul left Priscilla and Aquila... [and Paul went on to Antioch in Syria.]

24 Meanwhile a Jew named Apollos, a native of Alexandria, came to Ephesus. He was **a learned man**, with a thorough knowledge of the

Scriptures. 25 He had been instructed in the way of the Lord, and he spoke with great fervor and taught about Jesus accurately, though he knew only the baptism of John. 26 He began to speak boldly in the synagogue.

When Priscilla and Aquila heard him, they invited him to their home and explained to him the way of God more adequately.

So Apollos came from Alexandria.

In the text above he is described as "a learned man," a Greek phrase

that indicates he was formally trained in philosophy and rhetoric.

He was already a Christian...
a Hellenistic Jewish Christian.

If you read *1 Corinthians* closely you will see that Apollos and Paul became co-workers.

He was a very important person in Paul's team.

If you read the Letter to the *Hebrews* closely...

there is good evidence that Apollos was the one who wrote that letter.

The writer to the *Hebrews* was by far THE most educated of all NT writers.

The Greek is close to classical Greek – significantly better than Paul's Greek.

And *Hebrews* has some passages that look and sound a lot like Plato.

[15 min]

8:5 [*Speaking of the priests in the Temple*] They serve at a sanctuary that is **a copy** and shadow **of what is in heaven**. This is why Moses was warned when he was about to build the tabernacle:

“See to it that you make everything according **to the pattern** shown you on the mountain.” *Hebrews 8:5*

The Son is the **image** of the invisible God... *Colossians 1:15*

[“Ὅς ἔστιν **εἰκὼν** τοῦ Θεοῦ]

"...within the NT itself we have Paul's repeated description of Christ as the *eikon* of God (2 Cor.4:4; Col. 1:15)...believers should be conformed to the *eikon* of the Son of God (Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Col. 3:10)."

FF Bruce, *NIV Commentary on The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Eerdmans 1990), p.235.

In the footnote he cites James Moffatt pointing to a passage in Plato and in Philo where these philosophers use Greek phrases very close to what the NT writers use, (p.235n10).

What we have here are more examples of how Hellenization influences the NT and the Gospel.

My personal opinion is that Apollos studied under Philo > who studied Plato. Apollos becomes a Christian [maybe Philo as well].

Apollos is mentioned 12 times in the NT:

Acts: 4x

Paul mentions Apollos: 8x

1 Cor – 7x; Titus – 1x

Paul equates Apollos to himself as a "servant" of the Lord.

There is a passage in the Mishna (oral tradition of the rabbi's) that Gamaliel had half of his students fully focused on the Torah (the Law) and the other half were to study the Law, but also to read Greek philosophy.

Paul is recorded in *Acts 17* using Stoic language and he does so in *Romans 1-2*.

I think Apollos learned from Paul...
and Paul learned from Apollos.

I do think Apollos wrote the letter to
the *Hebrews*.

So you can see, when John says
"In the beginning was the Word
[Logos]. The Word was with God
and the Word was God."

He has also been influenced by
Philo somehow...

Perhaps through the influence of
Apollos...we don't know for sure,
but that makes sense.

In NT studies it is called
"Logos theology."

So...is the Bible the Word of God?
NO.

The Bible is the conduit that brings
us the Word of God.

Is Jesus somehow the
personification of the Bible?
NO.

He is the personification of the
Message of God...in that sense,
yes, He is the Word of God.

So...

ANY QUESTIONS?