

EXPLORING JOHN'S GOSPEL
with Vladika Lazar Puhalo.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. All things that have been created were created through Him. Nothing that has been created was created without Him (Jn.1:1-3).

There is a consensus among many scholars that the reference to the "Logos" at the beginning of John's Gospel is borrowed from Plato. However, most scholars have their own concepts of typology which are generally foreign to the typology of Scripture, Jewish or Christian. Nikolai Sergeevich Trubetskoy developed his doctoral thesis "The Doctrine of the Logos" around this idea. Let us begin by observing that "In the beginning" is something about which the ancient Greeks were ignorant. To my knowledge Christianity and Judaism are the only religions that espouse it.

Plato's concept of Logos as cosmic intellect or reason is not the first place in Hellenic and Hellenistic thought where we encounter the expression. Heraclitos (d.475 B.C.), seems to have originated the concept of Logos/wisdom (though certainly not as an attribute of a Supreme Deity, but as an expression of pantheism) though some concepts of Logos originated with the Stoics. Anaxagoras uses "Logos" interchangeably with $\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$, as a principle. The Logos idea occurs in Plato, but it is very difficult to see how the theological critics derived evidence of Platonic influence in John's Gospel, since the concepts in Plato bear no resemblance to the context of this Gospel. Plato was a dualist who had only contempt for the flesh (thus the heresies that arose from adaptations of his metaphysics). St Justin the Philosopher (*Apology. 1*) sought to influence the Greeks by connecting the stoic Logos idea with the Logos of Scripture, but only unfortunately and unconvincingly. For stoics, "Logos" was either potential Reason, or manifested Thought. They, like Plotinus a spiritual monist), were pantheist. Their construct is radically different from John's Incarnate Hypostasis of the One God. The idea that John's use of Logos is Platonistic is not altogether consistent with his identification of Logos with the hypostatic Word of God. The Greek Logos is not God nor personal; nor could the Greeks have imagined that He would become incarnate. They generally despised the flesh and it was unthinkable that God or the Logos would join themselves to Him. Likewise, His crucifixion was folly to them as it was a scandal to the Jews.

Metropolitan Antony Khrapovitsky suggests that there is a word usage in the Hebrew Scripture that would be more consistent with the concept of Logos in John's Gospel. The word is "dabhar," and we can look at Metropolitan Antony's reasoning on this subject.

Clearly, the Jews did not have a concept of a term which combined in itself both the idea of "word" and "reason," as did the Greek philosophical term "Logos". There is, moreover, no compelling reason to conclude that the author of the Gospel according to John intends his "Logos" to signify "intellect" or "reason". John speaks of the Logos in a context which more clearly means only "word", but with reference to passages in the Hebrew scripture. The passages more feasibly use "dabhar" in a manner that can apply to a reference to the incarnate Son of God as "the Word", just as the term "Memra" seems to do in Jewish apocryphal literature.

Here are the references given by Metropolitan Antony (and we will paraphrase Metropolitan Antony in the bridges between the references):
