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AN INVESTIGATION OF LOGOS TOU THEOU IN  
THE NEW TESTAMENT

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A Thesis Presented to the Faculty  
of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis,  
Department of Exegetical Theology  
in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Divinity

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by

Glenn R. Zander

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Advisor

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## CHAPTER I

### WHAT IS THE WORD OF GOD?

#### The Problem and the Purpose

During this author's vicarage, The Lutheran Church--Missouri Synod experienced a unique crisis. Within a few months the Synod witnessed the suspension of the president of its largest seminary and the loss of all but a few of its professors and its students. One of the phenomena that accompanied the development of this crisis was a paper war where it seemed that everyone had something to say. One of the papers that was given to the author was a critique by Paul Bretscher of "A Statement of Scriptural and Confessional Principles" entitled "A Statement and Confessional Lutheranism, (The Doctrine of the Word of the God)". As a result of reading that critique, the author was interested in doing an exegetical study on the meaning of "Word of God" in Scripture to determine how Scripture defined the term. Vicarage did not allow the time needed for such a study so the study became a research elective.

At the suggestion of the author's guidance instructor for this study, the author limited his exegesis to the area of the New Testament. The original questions proposed at the beginning of the study actually fit into three areas. The first question was to determine the meaning of the Word of God in the New Testament. Is there only one meaning for the term? If not, what are the meanings of the term and how are they indicated? The second question was to relate the meaning or meanings of the Word of God in the New Testament with the Bible as we

commonly know it today. Is the Bible the Word of God? The third task was to compare the New Testament view of the Word of God with the Confessions' view of the Word of God.

### Scope, Assumptions, and Definitions

The immensity of the intended research project and the limit of time made it impossible to cover all of the proposed questions. As the study now stands, it includes an investigation of the use of the term "logos" in the New Testament and investigation of the term "logos tou theou" and some of its equivalents as they are used in the New Testament. An attempt to relate the data from these investigations with the identity of the Bible as the Word of God is also part of the thesis. Thus the first two questions originally proposed were examined. Although the third question was left unexamined, a glance at the list of characteristics of the Word of God at the end of chapter three will reveal a number of similarities with the characteristics of the Word of God as understood by the Confessions as listed in the Index of Tappert's edition of The Book of Concord, pages 714 to 715. Of course, further study is necessary to say anything definite.

It must be emphasized that this research project is merely the beginning of a study of the meaning of the Word of God in the New Testament. This study, of necessity, concerns itself with only the terms "logos tou theou", "ho logos" in the absolute sense, and those uses of logos that are used in reference to the Father, for example, "his word" or "the Father's word". A truly comprehensive study of the meaning of the Word of God in the New Testament would include an investigation of each use of the term logos. This study, therefore, is very

limited.

There are a few assumptions that the author is making. The first would seem to deny the need for this study. The author assumes that the Bible is the Word of God at least in the sense that it is to be the source, rule, and norm of his theology. Along with this assumption, it is assumed that the parts of the Bible should be taken at face value, whether literally, figuratively, allegorically or whatever, according to what the text itself demands in contrast to the demands of the author's logic or understanding. The author assumes also that the Spirit will work through the Word to teach him the truth.

One major assumption in this study is an exegetical assumption. One of the tasks of this study is to determine the meaning of several terms. To do that, the author has assumed that the context of the term will indicate the intended meaning of a term for that specific instance where the term is used. Sometimes, the context may not provide much information about the term; other times the context may provide a wealth of information about the term being considered.

There is only one word in the study that should be defined in advance; that is the word Gospel. Generally, it is used in the narrow sense of the word, in contrast to the Law. The reader is asked to remember this.

#### An Overview of the Thesis

The organization of this paper is quite simple. The second chapter consists of a discussion of the term logos in regard to its various meanings with examples to help the reader to understand the wide assortment of meanings this term has in the New Testament. The third chapter

consists mostly of a listing of each of the instances where the term logos tou theou or its equivalent is used. Each specific use is related to its context for the purpose of determining its meaning and/or characteristics. The fourth chapter is a discussion of the data from chapters two and three in relation to the Bible as the Word of God. Chapter five consists of a summary of the thesis.

#### Sources and Methodology

The basic primary sources and tools of New Testament exegesis were used. The Nestle--Aland Novum Testamentum Graece, 1969 printing edition, and the Concordance to the Greek Testament, edited by Moulton and Geden, 1963 edition were the most commonly used primary sources. Walter Bauer's A Greek--English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted by Arndt, and Gingrich, 1957 edition, was helpful in determining some of the more peculiar uses of the Koinē words. Two Greek grammars proved helpful in determining some of the unusual constructions found in the course of the study: A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament, by H. E. Dana and J. R. Mantey, 1957 edition and A Greek Grammar of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature by Blass and Debrunner, translated and edited by Funk in 1961. In addition to these primary sources, the Revised Standard Version translation and The Amplified New Testament proved helpful for determining the context of the passages quickly and for comparison purposes. All of the other sources, primary or secondary, used in this study appear in the bibliography.

Generally, the quotations from Scripture that appear are from The Oxford Annotated Bible with the Apocrypha, collete edition, 1962. When



the Revised Standard Translation did not translate the Greek literally enough to illustrate the point being made, the author has either substituted or modified the translation with his own. The underlined Scripture quotations or segments of quotations are the author's translations.

In chapter two, the author intentionally did not translate the term logos when it is quoted in the examples from Scripture. The purpose of this is to emphasize to the reader the wide variety of meanings this single word has in the New Testament. In addition, the reader is invited to test the judgment of the author by asking himself how he would translate the term in its given context.

The author used his own judgment in comparison with the above translations to determine the various meanings of logos. By doing this study, the author realized the difficulty in categorizing the uses or meanings of a word. Words do not always fit into well-defined categories. Where a specific use of logos did not fit well into any category, it was placed in the most appropriate category. The author has provided in the appendix a listing of all of the passages studied for this project for chapter two, each passage categorized according to the outline at the end of chapter two. If the reader finds that he disagrees with the author's judgment in a few cases, the author is willing to stand corrected. The point of chapter two is that the categories discussed do exist. Whether a few passages here or there belong in another category is not the main point.

#### Summary of Findings

The word logos, as it is used in the New Testament, refers generally to communication or speaking in some way. Sometimes logos is the direct

equivalent of the English "word" in the sense of an individual word. Other times it refers to something that is spoken, the content of speech. In contrast, it sometimes means the act of speaking. In a few cases, the same logos will relate to the act of speaking and the content of the speaking at the same time. The term logos is used in much the same way the English term "word" is used, but also in more ways.

The term logos tou theou and its equivalents investigated in this study primarily refer to the teaching of Jesus and the teaching of the Apostles and disciples. The latter consists primarily in instruction about Jesus Christ, about the Gospel, and exhortations to lead a Christian life. The term logos tou theou is also used in reference to specific parts of the Bible. At the same time, the use of the term does not limit the Word of God to the Bible. The Word of God is still God speaking and is still His teaching even if it is a man who is repeating His Word. One overriding characteristic of the Word of God is that the speaking or communication of the Word is God's means of accomplishing His Will.

## CHAPTER II

### THE USE OF LOGOS IN THE NEW TESTAMENT

The various meanings of the word logos in the New Testament, simply translated as "word", are relatively close to the various meanings of its literal equivalent in contemporary English. Apart from the meanings of the term "word" peculiar to our modern age, the description of the "word" in Webster's Third International Dictionary, unabridged, fairly well describes many of the meanings of logos as it is used in the New Testament. There are, however, several uses of logos in the New Testament which are not found in contemporary English. While the English "word" can refer to a saying, proverb, or maxim, it is not commonly used in reference to a corpus of sayings or a body of teaching. While "word" and logos both can mean "account" in the sense of a report or description of an event, logos can also mean "account" in the sense of a business "account". In addition, logos can mean a question, a sentence of judgment, or the "rational ground or motive" for a particular action. None of these meanings are generally found in connection with the English term "word".

Basically, all of the various meanings of the term logos in the New Testament fit into four categories. At times, logos will refer to an individual word, and in the plural, to individual words. Many times logos will refer to various forms of speech or the content of speech, both in the sense of "that which is spoken." In contrast to these first two categories, the term can also refer to the act of speaking. These three categories are easily described and distinguished. The fourth

category is more ambiguous in that it consists of those uses of logos that in some way are appropriate to both the second and third categories. Sometimes logos is used in such a way that it could be understood in two different ways. One way would fit into the second category; the other into the third. A few times, logos is used in such a way that the act of speaking and "that which is said" during the speaking are integrated.

Regardless of the category that a particular meaning of logos falls into, each use of the term has some reference to communication. Usually, it refers to communication in the form of speaking, but it can also refer to communication through written documents. With this basic understanding of logos, we begin our discussion of the various nuances of the term according to the categories described above.

#### Logos as an Individual Word

When logos is used in this sense, it is usually used in the plural and refers to "words." This use of the term is readily understood and does not need any special comment in regard to meaning.<sup>1</sup>

#### Logos as "That Which is Spoken"

This category is the most inclusive and has the widest variety of specific meanings. It consists of three sub-categories determined

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<sup>1</sup>The instances where logos is used in this sense are relatively the easiest to determine. Yet there are times when the intended meaning is not quite clear. For example, in Mark 13:31, Jesus is saying: "Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will not pass away." Does logos refer to his individual words or to his sayings? I have chosen the latter, since the "words" that Jesus would call His own would not be individual words which do not belong to anyone, but sayings which were peculiar to Him and, therefore, His own. Some might argue that logos, here, are the individual words that belong to Jesus in the sense that He spoke them. The text itself does not provide any clue to help us.

according to the content of "that which is spoken." These categories are:

1. "that which is spoken" consisting of some sort of instruction in the formal sense;
2. "that which is spoken" consisting of a description of an event or situation;
3. "that which is spoken" consisting of miscellaneous statements, sentences or messages.

Both "sayings" and "teachings" belong to the first sub-category in that they consist of precepts or concepts of instruction. "Sayings", as I have defined them, differ from "teachings" in that sayings are shorter, usually a sentence, and are often a unit of a teaching. A "teaching", on the other hand, is longer, may consist of a parable, a collection of sayings, or may even refer to a whole corpus of instruction.

Thus, logos may mean "proverb" or "saying" as in John 4:37: "For here the logos holds true, 'One sows and another reaps.'" Similarly, the short quotes from the Old Testament are also referred to as logos as in John 12:38ff:

It was that the logos spoken by the prophet Isaiah might be fulfilled: 'Lord, who has believed our report, and to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed?'"

Logos, in the sense of "saying", also is used in John 2:19,22 in reference to something Jesus said:

Jesus answered them 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up!' . . . His disciples remembered that he had said this; and they believed the Scripture and the logos which Jesus had spoken."

Sometimes logos refers to two or more sentences of instruction as in John 7:36:

What is this logos which he says?, 'You will search for me but you will not find me,' and, 'Where I am, you are not able to come?'"

In this case, logos in the singular can be understood as "teaching." In fact, logos is apparently used as a synonym for didachē in Luke 4:32: "And they were astonished at His teaching for the logos of Him was with authority."<sup>2</sup>

Not every "teaching" consists of "sayings", as in Mark 8:31-32:

And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. And He spoke the logos plainly."

Here the logos refers to what Jesus was teaching the disciples about His passion and His resurrection.<sup>3</sup>

Logos usually refers to a true teaching as in the examples just cited, but it also refers to a false teaching as in 2 Timothy 2:17. In verse 16 and following, Timothy is instructed to stay away from "such godless chatter, for it will lead people into more and more ungodliness, and the logos of them will eat its way like gangrene."

A similar concept of "teaching" as I have defined it above is

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<sup>2</sup> Some might regard this as an equivalent to our gerund and thus think it more appropriate in the third main category. I suppose this is one example of where our subjective judgment is necessary. One can study the language well enough to have a feel for it; unfortunately, one can develop only a feeling. Languages, like people, do not follow principles. Principles of behavior and grammar came only as a result of trying to understand people and languages. My subjective feeling for Koinē tells me to place this use of logos in the category "that which is spoken".

<sup>3</sup> Some might say that ho logos in Mark 8:32 should be understood in an absolute sense, in other words, "the word" here is the same "the word" mentioned in Mark 4:14 and following, the explanation of the parable of the sower. The similarity of form between "parrēsiai ton logon elalei" in Mark 8:32 with "elalouv ton logon tou theou meta parrēsias" in Acts 4:31, would support the taking of ho logos in Mark 8:32 in an absolute sense. The least we can say in agreement is that Mark 8:32 uses logos ambiguously.

"doctrine". The Revised Standard Version suggested this translation of logos in Hebrews 6:1: "Therefore, let us leave the elementary doctrines of Christ . . . ." More literally translated, it reads, "Let us leave the logos of the beginning of Christ . . .."

The second sub-category, as mentioned above, includes those things that are said which consist of a description of an event or situation. Of all the uses of logos in this sub-category, most of them can be called a "report" or an "account" as in a business "account". I considered a "report" to be a general description or explanation of an event that happened or was supposed to have happened. In contrast, an "account" is a description of a business or financial situation, or a spiritual situation, that is, the status of an individual's spiritual life. Logos, in this last sense, is usually identified by the verbs apodidō sunairō, didōmi or the noun lēm̄psis.

Thus, logos can mean "report" as in Matthew 28:11 and following, where "this logos" refers to the version of the "resurrection" that the guards were bribed into telling by the chief priests, namely that "His disciples came by night and stole Him away while we were asleep. . . . this word has been spread among the Jews to this day." Similarly, when Jesus heals a leper as told in Mark 1:40-45, the leper began "to preach much and spread widely the word so that Jesus could no longer openly go into a town. . . ." The logos or report about Jesus' healing made Him popular.

In contrast to the report spread about by the leper, logos can also refer to a negative report or complaint against someone. In Acts 18:11-17, some Jews bring Paul to the proconsul of Achaia and the tribunal with the charge that Paul was "persuading men to worship God contrary to

the Law." Gallio's reply, based on the technical use of ἀνεκλόγητος<sup>4</sup> was this: "If it were a crime or some evil wickedness, O Jews, I would be justified in accepting your logos." Logos is "complaint".

The use of logos in the introduction of Acts and in John 19:8, indicates that logos, in the sense of "report", does not imply any specific length. In John 19:8, logos refers to the report/complaint of the Jews against Jesus: "We have a Law, and by that Law He ought to die, because He has made Himself the Son of God."

At that short logos, Pilate became more afraid. In contrast, Acts 1:1 refers to the whole Gospel of Luke as a logos: "In the first logos, O Theophilus, I have dealt with all that Jesus began to do and teach."

Logos in the sense of "account" is fairly straight forward. In the business area of life, it evidently was not unusual for a king to settle accounts with his servants. This is shown by a parable of Jesus in Matthew 18:23-35, where the king wished to settle accounts with his servants by collecting what they owed him. Since this parable has a spiritual dimension, it implies that there is a spiritual "account". To settle "accounts" or to render "account" in the spiritual sense is made explicit as in Matthew 12:36: "Men will have to give back a logos for every careless ῥῆμα they will speak . . .". Hebrews 13:17 points out that the spiritual leaders "are watching over your souls, as those who will be giving back a word."

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<sup>4</sup>Walter Bauer, A Greek--English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature, translated and adapted by William F. Arndt and F. Wilbur Gingrich (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1957), p.65



There are three places in the New Testament where logos is used in a way more common to classical Greek. In Matthew 5:32 and some manuscript versions of Matthew 19:9, where Jesus talks about divorce, He points out that no one should divorce his wife "apart from logos of unchastity." In Acts 10:29, Peter asks Cornelius, "I ask you by what logos did you send after me?" In all three instances, logos is best understood as the "reason" or "basis" for the activity or situation being considered. Jesus points out that no one should divorce his wife except for the reason of unchastity; Peter is asking why he was sent. This use of logos admittedly does not fit well into this category, but it fits better here than in any other category in this study. Logos, in this case, does relate integrally to a specific situation or event, and this is related, though distantly, to logos in the sense of "report".

In addition to the uses of logos loosely defined as "that which is spoken" already discussed, there is a third use of logos that cannot be defined except as miscellaneous. To this category belong those uses of logos that have been or can be correctly translated as: "statement," "prayer," "greeting," "comment," a "command" of healing, "promise," "advice," "retort," "sentence of judgment," "questions," "command," "reply" and "message". Scanning the list, one can observe the wide variety of meaning and thus, the ambiguity of the word logos. Most of these uses of logos refer to a sentence that can be identified as imperative, interrogative, etc. In some uses of logos, the term refers to a group of sentences constituting advice or a message.

When the Syrophenician woman in Mark 7:25-30 approached Jesus to have him heal her daughter who had an unclean spirit, Jesus insults her by saying, "Let the children first be fed, for it is not right to

take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." The woman does not give up, but replies, "Yes, Lord, yet even the dogs under the table eat the children's crumbs." Her reply is referred to by Jesus as a logos. In Matthew 26:44 and Mark 14:39, Jesus "goes away again to pray, saying the same logos. . . ." The logos He spoke was a prayer. In Luke 1:29 and following, Gabriel comes to Mary with the greeting, "Hail, O favored one, the Lord is with you!" Mary is troubled at this logos and wonders what kind of aspasmos it is. In John 4:46-53, an official of Capernaum approached Jesus about his son who was close to dying and Jesus told the man, "Go, your son will live. The man believed the logos that Jesus spoke to him." Here, logos means "promise".

A logos is what Jesus asks of the chief priests and elders in Matthew 21:24 when they approach Him with a question about the authority for His actions. After Paul finished his farewell speech or message to the elders of Ephesus in Miletus, the people were filled with sorrow because of the logos he had spoken in Acts 20:18b-35. When a rich, young man approaches Jesus in Matthew 19:16-22 to find out what he needs to do in order to have eternal life, he is finally told to "sell what you possess and give it to the poor and you will have treasure in Heaven; and come follow Me." At this logos, or command, the young man went away sorrowful. The "logos of the oath" in Hebrews 7:28, is the "command of the oath" in Hebrews 7:21b: "thou art a priest forever."

#### Logos as the Act of Speaking

This category of the use of logos is best described as the equivalent of the English gerund "speaking" or the term "speech" in the sense of "speaking". This use of logos is more easily described than detected.

because of the fact that logos sometimes refers to the act of speaking and also to "that which is spoken", in other words, the content of speaking. To determine these instances of logos for this category, the question, "Does the context require the meaning 'act of speaking' and no other meaning?" was useful as a guide. One formula that was common in this usage was the reference to logos as a means of communication, namely, speaking.

Acts 15:27,32 and 2 Thessalonians 2:2,13, use the formula dia logou in the instrumental sense, while the same sense is implied with the instrumental dative in logōi pollōi in Acts 20:2. Thus, it is "through logos" or "through speaking" that Judas and Silas were to tell "the same things" to the people of Antioch which, in fact, they did through much logos or speaking. Paul in Macedonia encouraged the Christians of Ephesus "by much logos". The Apostle Paul wrote to the Christians of Thessalonica that they were not to be disturbed by the idea that the day of the Lord has come whether it comes to them through a Spirit, through logos or through a letter. Another example of logos when it means the act of speaking is 2 Corinthians 11:6 where the apostle does concede that he may be "unskilled in respect to logos," but he is not unskilled in his knowledge.

#### Logos as "That Which is Spoken" and/or The Act of Speaking

There are instances where logos is used in such a way that the term does not refer only to "that which is spoken" nor only to the act of speaking. In this use of logos, the best equivalent English term would be "speech" in the sense of speaking and in the sense of the content of speaking. One use of logos that is common to this category, is when it

is used in contrast to ergon, as in "word and deed." Jesus is described in Luke 24:19 by Cleopas as "mighty in deed and word before God and all people." The logos of Jesus was mighty in that the people of Nazareth in Luke 4:16-22 were amazed at His gracious words, that is, the content of His speech. Yet His speaking was mighty in that on the Sermon on the Mount, for example, Jesus "taught them as one who had authority." (Matthew 7:29) From this example, one can see that logos can refer both to the content of speaking and to the act of speaking.

Matthew 5:37a and Colossians 4:6 provide two good examples of logos used in such a way that it refers to both the content of speech and the act of speaking. Matthew 5:37a reads, "Let your logos be Yes, Yes, No, No . . ." In this case, the act of speaking is integrated with the content of speaking in that the act of speaking is implicit in the sentence at the same time that the content of speaking is explicit. Another way of translating this vers is, "Let 'that which is spoken' by you be Yes, Yes, No, No." "That which is spoken" refers to the content of speaking as described in the second category above, but it also reveals the action implied by logos in this instance. Colossians 4:6 is similar. Literally the passage is translated as, "Let 'that which is spoken' by you always be with grace." The key pattern in these two cases is logos and a form of the verb "to be."

1 Corinthians 12:8 is an example of yet another way logos is used in reference to the act of speaking and to the content of speaking. In this case, logos does not imply the act of speaking while explicitly referring to the content of the speaking, as above, but instead can refer to either the act of speaking or the content of speaking. A literal translation would be, "Through the Spirit, logos of wisdom is given to

one, to another, logos of knowledge . . . ." On the one hand, logos can be understood as the content of speaking, that is, "that which is spoken" in the sense of "message." Thus, to one is given a "message of wisdom", to another a "message of knowledge." On the other hand, logos can be understood as the act of speaking and translated as, "the speaking of wisdom is given to one through the Spirit, to another the speaking of knowledge." In this case, logos is understood as an explicit reference to the act of speaking while "wisdom" and "knowledge" explain the content of that speaking.

As an overview of the chapter, logos can be outlined as follows:

- I. Logos as an individual word
- II. Logos as "that which is spoken"
  - A. Formal instruction
    1. sayings
    2. teachings
  - B. Description of an event or situation
    1. report or complaint
    2. business "account"
    3. "reason or basis" for action
  - C. Miscellaneous: statement, comment, question, message
- III. Logos as the act of speaking
- IV. Logos as "that which is spoken" and/or the act of speaking
  - A. Logos used in the sense of "that which is spoken" while implying the act of speaking
  - B. Logos used so that it can refer to either the content of act of speaking

## CHAPTER III

### NEW TESTAMENT USE OF LOGOS TOU THEOU

From the previous chapter, we discovered that logos as it is used in the New Testament generally refers to some aspect of speaking or communication. It can refer to individual words, to the content of speaking, to the act of speaking, or in some way to both the content and act of speaking. The logos tou theou should then be expected to relate to any of these various nuances of meaning. Whatever the specific meaning might be, logos tou theou will refer to some aspect of God's speaking or communication. With this brief introduction, we now study the specific uses of logos tou theou and its equivalents, attempting to determine the meaning of the terms and any characteristics they might have in each of their occurrences.

Mark 2:2: and he was preaching the word to them.

This clause describes the context of the healing of the paralytic. Jesus was back in Capernaum, the people had heard about his presence, and had gathered together to hear him. There wasn't any way that the paralytic could be brought into Jesus except from above, through the roof. After the people had gathered together, but before the paralytic was lowered down, Jesus was speaking the Word to the people. The content of the Word is not indicated by this text alone, except that the text implies that the Word was attracting a number of people. For what reason, the text does not say. In any case, the situation described in the context of this passage strongly suggests the image that Jesus was teaching the people. The Word in this instance would consist of a teaching as defined in the

previous chapter.<sup>1</sup>

Mark 4:14-20, Matthew 13:18-23, and Luke 8:11-15: The explanation of the parable of the sower.

The Word in Mark is understood in this study to be the same as the "Word of the kingdom" in Matthew which is understood as the same as the "Word of the God" in Luke. The Word is compared to seed that has fallen in various types of soil. Some falls in the pathway where birds eat it up, some falls on rocky ground where the seed sprouts quickly but dries up quickly because of the shallow ground, some seed falls on ground with thorns that choke the seeds and kill their plants, and finally, some of the seed falls on good soil, grows, and produces fruit.

In this explanation of the parable we are told very little about the content of the Word, but we are told about its effects on those who hear it. In each Gospel, the seed or Word that is heard and understood, heard and accepted, or heard and held onto in a good and honest heart, produces fruit. Luke mentions that it also produces patience. A closer look at the explanations of the parable reveal several more descriptions of the effect of the Word, but in a negative way. Luke mentions that the Word that is snatched away would prevent the person from believing and being saved. Therefore the Word is that which will give a person faith and salvation. All three synoptic Gospels point out that the Word sown among the rocks is received with joy, but because of shallow roots, the people

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<sup>1</sup>A quick glance at this chapter of the study will show that Mark is somewhat peculiar in that he uses the term "the Word" to describe the content of what Jesus is teaching. Matthew and Luke don't correlate the term with Jesus' teaching except in the explanation of the parable of the sower. Even then, Matthew regards the Word as the Word of the Kingdom and Luke regards the Word as the Word of God. Mark doesn't qualify the term. Luke's only unqualified use of the term is in the introduction to his Gospel.

fall away. The Word then is also that which can produce joy and can prevent a person from falling away. The thorny soil represents those who hear the Word but let the riches and pleasures of the world choke the Word. The Word is also that which can be challenged by this world's priorities.

If the above description of the Word is analyzed in terms of the Law and the Gospel, it seems that the Word talked about in the parable is at least the Gospel if not also the Law. The Word is described as able to produce all of the things that the Gospel produces in the lives of people. It is the Word of God's Grace which is able to build up people and give them the inheritance among all those who are sanctified, according to Acts 20:32. Yet the description of the Word in the explanation of the parable does not necessarily exclude the Law. Since it is appropriate to say that the Law and the Gospel give faith in that the Law prepares the way for the Gospel, we can say that in this parable the Word refers to at least the Gospel if not also to the Law. In light of Mark 4:33 discussed below, it is quite likely that the Word here also includes the Law. The manner in which the seed is sown is not explained sufficiently for us to say that the Word in this instance would be a saying, a teaching, or a message.

Mark 4:33: With many such parables he spoke the Word to them, as they were able to hear it.

This passage sums up four small parables that were told apparently soon after the explanation of the parable of the sower above. The parables that Jesus used to speak the Word here are: the parable that nothing is made secret or hidden except to be made manifest or brought to light with the warning that "if any man has ears to hear, let him hear;" the parable that we should take heed as to what we hear for the measure we



give will be the measure we will get; the parable of the Kingdom of God where the kingdom grows from seed that is sown while the man who sowed the seed sleeps and wakes not knowing how the plant grows; and the parable of the Kingdom of God where the Kingdom is compared to a mustard seed which is small when planted, but large when grown. The Word in this case concerns itself with the fact that what is hidden will be brought out light, which systematically can be understood as a proclamation of Law. The Word also concerns itself with our hearing and the amount that will be given to us or taken away from us. In addition, the Word is concerned with the Kingdom of God and the fact of its growth and the size of its growth. The passage points out that Jesus used the parables to speak the Word so that each parable we have in the Gospels should be considered as communicating the Word. In this passage, the Word is specifically identified with a teaching activity of Jesus and can therefore be considered a teaching.

Mark 7:13: making void the word of God . . .

Matthew 15:6: you have made void the word of God.

Matthew and Mark have changed the wording but kept the same thought of Jesus' statement regarding the Pharisees and also the scribes in Matthew. In both cases Jesus is referring to two sayings or precepts, one of which is one of the Ten Commandments: "Honor your father and your mother" and "He who speaks evil of father or mother, let him surely die." In Matthew and in Mark these sayings are described as what God commanded or as a commandment of God. Mark also points out that it is what "Moses said". In both Gospels the sayings are referred to as the Word of God. The Word in this case would be defined as including these two commandments or sayings.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>There is some question about the text in Matthew. Some manu-

Mark 16:20: These disciples went out and preached everywhere. The Lord assisted them and ratified the Word through signs appearing with the Word.

The textual evidence for this passage is of course questioned, but its use of the term "Word" is consistent with the uses of the term elsewhere in the New Testament. In verse fifteen is another account of the great commission where the disciples are to

Go into all the world and preach the gospel to the whole creation. He who believes and is baptized will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned.

In this case the Word refers to the Gospel message of salvation and also to the warning to unbelievers. The term could be understood in the sense of teaching or message.

Luke 1:2: just as they were delivered to us by those who from the beginning were eyewitnesses and ministers of the word.

In the introduction to the Gospel of Luke, the author explains his purpose in writing and in so doing, makes reference to the Word. From this passage we can say only that the Word is something that was seen and served and that it is mentioned in connection with the effort to compile a narrative of the life of Jesus. The connection between the Word and the narrative of Jesus' life is not explicit. The mention of eyewitnesses suggests the concept of report in regard to the Word, but in this case the report would be a description of the Word. It was the Word that was eye-witnessed. The use of the term hupēretai in this passage is too ambiguous to say anything definite about whether the Word is a report, or anything else.

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scripts do have tēn entolēn or ton nomon instead of ton logon. Since Mark's text is unquestioned, the textual uncertainty of Matthew does not discredit these observations regarding the Word of God.

Luke 5:1: While the people pressed upon him to hear the word of God, he was standing by the lake of Gennesaret.

This is the beginning of a prologue to the calling of the fishermen into discipleship. The Word of God is what Jesus is speaking to the people, and again, the situation seems to be a teaching situation. The context of the passage, indicates that the content of Jesus' teaching here is probably the "good news of the kingdom of God" which he was sent to preach to the other cities also.

Luke 8:21: But he said to them, "My mother and my brothers are those who hear the word of God and do it."

This passage fits right at the end of a teaching session where Jesus is again surrounded by a crowd. When his mother and brothers came to get him, they couldn't get to him themselves and had to rely on someone else to pass the word on to him that they wanted him. Jesus took advantage of the situation and turned it into a lesson. The content of the Word is not specified, but one of its characteristics is given. The Word of God makes those who hear it and do it the mother and brothers of Jesus. Because the Word is something done, this passage suggests that the term refers to at least a precept if not a teaching.

Luke 11:28 But Jesus said, "Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it!"

Again Jesus takes a situation and makes it into a lesson. A woman who was listening to the teaching of Jesus exclaimed, "Blessed is the womb that bore you, and the breasts that you sucked!" Jesus replied with the above words. Again, the term is not defined for us, but we are told another characteristic of the Word. It makes those who hear it and keep it blessed. Here, the concept of obeying or observing the Word of God is brought out with the word phulassō. This suggests that the Word is a precept or a teaching.

John 5:38: In fact, you do not have his word abiding in you, for you do not believe him whom he has sent.

This passage fits into a long discourse Jesus had with the Jews who had criticized Him for healing a lame man on the Sabbath and for calling God His Father, making Himself equal with God. The "his" in this passage refers to the Father, and the "him" refers to Jesus. Note that I have chosen to translate the kai in an explicative sense. The reason for modifying the Revised Standard Translation in this case is because of the nature of logos. The term is related to communication. The two clauses preceding this clause are talking about the communication of God's voice and His form in that the Jews have not heard the voice of the Father, nor have they seen His form. The passage above seems to emphasize this lack of communication and to explain why the Jews had not heard the voice of the Father or seen His form.

The content of the Word is not given explicitly, but if the conclusion about kai in this passage is correct, we are told that the Word of God is a means of knowing about God; it is God's way of communicating.

In the context of the passage, Jesus is talking about the witnesses He has and the difficulties the Jews have in believing Him. One of the witnesses Jesus has is the works that the Father has given him to do (5:36). In verse thirty seven, Jesus seems to begin to talk about the second witness he has, namely the Scriptures or graphai. In talking about the graphai Jesus is emphasizing even more the fact that the Jews have not heard the voice of God nor seen His form and that, in fact, they do not have His Word living in them. The graphai apparently relate to the Word of God, but that relationship is not made explicit.

All we can say with certainty about this passage is that a person must have the Word of God abiding in them in order to see the witness

to Jesus and to believe in Him.

John 8:55: but I do know him and I keep his word.

Jesus is, again, in discourse with Jews who are critical of Him. The content of "his word" is not defined or suggested even from the context, except to say that God's Word is what Jesus was keeping. All we can say here is that God's Word is to be kept in the sense of following or obeying. As such the Word here would be a precept or a teaching.

John 10:35: If he called them gods to whom the word of God came (and scripture cannot be broken)

This time, the Jews were angry enough to stone Jesus, and this comment is part of His defense. The significant context is the preceding verse where Jesus quoted Psalm 82:6a and said, "Is it not written in your law, 'I said, you are gods'?" The Word of God is that which came to the people who were called gods and is identified with the graphē. God's Word is thus the saying that came to the people. What Scripture, or graphē, means is not indicated by the text. The term could refer to the portion of Psalms quoted, or the book of Psalms; to the Old Testament, or to the Septuagint. The first two possibilities exist because of the Gospel's use of both the plural and singular of the term graphē.

John 14:24: and the word which you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.

The content of God's Word is not described in detail, but we are told that the Word of Jesus is the Word of the Father. The two are synonymous; to study the Word of Jesus is to study God's Word. Jesus uses the term logos in a way that would be most appropriately described as the corpus of his instruction or his teaching.

John 17:6: they have kept thy word.

This is part of Jesus high priestly prayer to the Father. "Thy

word" of course is God's Word. The verses immediately following this clause suggest the result of keeping God's Word. The disciples had come to know that everything God had given Jesus was indeed from God, and to believe that God had sent Jesus. This suggests that the Word of God includes the teaching about this relationship between the Father and the Son.

John 17:14: I have given them thy word.

Again, this is part of the high priestly prayer. The thought of the passage parallels verse eight of this same chapter. Since verse eight is part of the context of verse six discussed above, the comments made there about God's Word are appropriate here also. In addition, the teaching of Jesus is again identified with the Word of God.

John 17:17: Sanctify them in the truth; thy word is truth.

At this point in his prayer, Jesus identified the Word of God as truth. Unfortunately, the study of the concept of truth is beyond the scope of this paper. All we can say is that God's Word is a teaching in which the disciples were to be sanctified.

Acts 4:4: many who heard the word believed.

Acts 4:29: grant to thy servants to speak thy word with all boldness.

Acts 4:31: they . . . spoke the word of God with boldness.

These three passages all relate to each other in that they appear in the same account of a reaction of the Jewish religious establishment to the preaching of the disciples soon after the Pentecost. The context of the first passage actually begins with chapter three where Peter and John heal a man lame from birth. With the healing, they had caught the attention of the people and then took advantage of their

attention to tell them about Jesus. While they were speaking, the priests, the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came by and were annoyed enough to lock them up. In spite of the fact that they were imprisoned, many who heard the Word believed. The Word thus relates back to the content of Peter's address in verses twelve through twenty-six.

The next day Peter and John were questioned by the Jewish leaders who were amazed at the boldness of the two. They advised the disciples to stop talking about Jesus, but received the reply, "we cannot but speak of what we have seen and heard." The leaders threatened them again and then let them go.

Peter and John returned to their friends and joined with them in praising God and praying. A part of their prayer included the petition quoted above in verse twenty-nine. The result of their prayer is given in verse thirty-nine which is also quoted in part above. The Word they asked to be able to speak boldly, and which they did speak boldly, is the Word that Peter was preaching in chapter three. That same Word of God is what they had "seen and heard" concerning Jesus Christ.

God's Word in this context would be teaching which includes the original instruction of Jesus and the relating of Jesus Christ with the Old Testament Scripture. It would also be a report in that it includes a description of what the disciples had "seen and heard."

Acts 6:2: It is not right that we should give up preaching the word of God to serve tables.

Acts 6:4: but we will devote ourselves to prayer and to the ministry of the word.

Acts 6:7: And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly.

These three passages are a part of the account of the choosing of the seven deacons; the whole account is a prologue to the narration of the charges against Stephan, his defense, and his martyrdom. The Word of God, or the Word in these three passages, is the Word that the twelve were preaching and serving and also the Word that multiplied the number of disciples in Jerusalem. The Word here is the same Word discussed above in Acts 4:4,29,31 above.

Acts 8:4: Now those who were scattered went about preaching the word.

Acts 8:14: Now when the apostles at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent to them Peter and John.

One of those scattered was Phillip who went down to Samaria where he proclaimed Christ, according to verse five, and where he preached "good news about the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ," according to verse twelve. His proclamation and preaching was the Word of God that was received in Samaria. The Word, here, includes the Gospel message in the narrow sense. It also includes whatever is meant by "the name of Jesus Christ." Unfortunately, this study did not allow enough time to investigate this. The Word, in this instance, should be regarded as a teaching. Note that the people who heard this Word and were baptized, had not yet received the Holy Spirit as is shown by verses fifteen and sixteen.

Acts 10:36: You know the word which he sent to Israel, preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ.

Acts 10:44: While Peter was still saying this, the Holy Spirit fell on all who heard the word.

Acts 11:1 Now the apostles and the brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word of God.

These three passages are a part of the account of Cornelius and the



Christian Jews' reaction to Gentile Christians. The first passage is part of Peter's address to Cornelius and the other with him about Jesus Christ. The second verse describes the effect of his address, and the third verse is a transition verse leading into Peter's defense for going to and eating with uncircumcised men, that is, Cornelius and the others. The first verse describes the Word as the good news of peace through Jesus Christ that was sent to Israel.

The context that immediately follows describes in more detail the content of that Word. Essentially, it is the same as the Word discussed in Acts 4:4,29,31 above. The Word mentioned in Acts 10:44 and 11:1, is the same Word. It can be pointed out that this time the proclamation of the Word was accompanied by the Holy Spirit falling on those who heard the Word. The Work of God is associated with His Word.

Acts 11:19: Now those who were scattered . . . traveled . . . speaking the word to none except Jews.

This passage refers to the scattering of the Jerusalem Christians after the stoning of Stephan, and seems to begin a new section of the Book of Acts. The context following this passage indicates that there were some who spoke to the Greeks also, "preaching the Lord Jesus." The text thus implies that to speak the Word is to be equated with preaching the Lord Jesus. This would indicate the meaning of teaching for the term "Word."

Acts 12:24: But the word of God grew and multiplied.

This is a transition verse between the death of Herod and the return of Barnabas and Saul from Jerusalem. The Word of God is simply described as growing and multiplying. Nothing more can really be said.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>There is some uncertainty regarding this passage and several

Acts 13:5: When they arrived at Salamis, they proclaimed the word of God in the synagogue of the Jews.

Acts 13:7: He was with the proconsul, Sergius Paulus, a man of intelligence, who summoned Barnabas and Saul and sought to hear the word of God.

The first four verses of this chapter tell about the selection and sending out of Barnabas and Saul for mission work. These two verses are a part of the account of their stay on Cyprus. Nothing from the immediate context really describes the content of the Word of God. In Acts, chapter fourteen, verse twenty-seven, the results of this mission are described to the church in Antioch and the results include the fact that God had opened a "door of faith to the Gentiles." This suggests that the Word they proclaimed was related to the faith of the Gentiles.

Acts 13:44: The next sabbath almost the whole city gathered together to hear the word of God.

Acts 13:46: And Paul and Barnabas spoke out boldly, saying, "It was necessary that the word of God should be spoken first to you. Since you thrust it from you, and judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, behold, we turn to the Gentiles."

Acts 13:48: And when the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of God; and as many as were ordained to eternal life believed.

These passages are part of the account of Paul and his group in Antioch of Pisidia that begins in chapter thirteen, verse fourteen. On their first Sabbath in Antioch, Paul and the others went down to the synagogue and were allowed to speak. They took advantage of the situation to speak about Jesus in the context of the history of Israel from

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others (Acts 13:44,48; 16:32) where some manuscripts read "Word of God" and others read "Word of the Lord." It seems that the uncertainty in these cases dates back relatively early in the history of the text. The significance of this is that the logos of God and the logos of the Lord appear to be synonymous.

from the time of the exodus. When Paul and his companions left the synagogue, the people begged that they would come back and tell "these things" on the next Sabbath. Verse forty-four describes what happened. The Word of God is evidently what Paul had spoken on the first Sabbath and what the people wanted to hear one week later.

The local Jews were jealous of the great following Paul and the others had acquired and verbally fought with them. Verse forty-six is Paul's reaction to their verbal attack. Again the Word of God is what Paul had spoken before and is, in fact, what he was preaching to the Gentiles. Paul's statement suggests that God's Word has some connection with eternal life, but that connection is not made clear.

Verse forty-eight is the Gentiles' reaction to Paul's rebuttal to the Jews. Here again, the Word is what Paul was speaking. The verse also suggests that the Word of God generate faith in those who were ordained to life. In each case, the Word would be understood in the sense of teaching.

Acts 14:25: And when they had spoken the word in Perga, they went down to Attalia.

The Word here is not described explicitly, but verse twenty-seven mentions the results of their mission in relation to the faith of the Gentiles. The Word, here, apparently is the same Word mentioned above in Acts 13:5,7.

Acts 16:6: And they went through the region of Phrygia and Galatia, having been forbidden by the Holy Spirit to speak the word in Asia.

The Word in this verse is not really defined by its context, nor is any specific characteristic suggested.

Acts 16:32: And they spoke the word of God to him and to all that were in his house.

This verse is found in the account of the conversion of the Philip-  
pian jailor who had charge over Paul and Silas in the jail. In response  
to seeing the prison doors open and seeing that the prisoners had not  
escaped, the jailor asked Paul and Silas what he had to do to be saved.  
Paul and Silas responded with, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will  
be saved, you and your household." The verse under consideration here  
describes what happened next.

One of the results of this whole incident is that the jailor and his  
household rejoiced that he had believed in God. This suggests that the  
response of Paul and Silas and their speaking of the Word to him was  
directly related to the jailor's faith and to his rejoicing. The sense  
of the Word here seems to be "teaching."

Acts 17:11: Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessa-  
lonica, for they received the word with all eagerness, examining  
the scriptures daily to see if these things were so.

Acts 17:13: But when the Jews of Thessalonica learned that the word  
of God was proclaimed by Paul at Berea also, they came there too,  
stirring up and inciting the crowds.

The Word in these two passages is the same Word that Paul and Silas  
had presented to the Jews in Thessalonica. According to the account of  
their preaching in Thessalonica, the Word included an argument from the  
Scriptures showing that Jesus had to suffer, die, and be raised from the  
dead and that Jesus was the Christ. Verse eleven, here points out the  
relationship between the graphai and the Word that Paul and Silas were  
speaking. Again the sense of the Word seems to be "teaching," a teach-  
ing supported by the graphai.

Acts 18:5: Paul was hard pressed by the word, testifying to the  
Jews that the Christ was Jesus.

Acts 18:11: And he stayed a year and six months, teaching the  
word of God among them.

These verses refer to Paul's ministry in Corinth where, according to verse five and those verses immediately following, Paul was having a difficult time preaching the Word to the Jews. The Word that Paul preached here was the teaching that Christ was Jesus. From the context, we can see that the Word was responsible for the conversion of many of the Corinthian people.

Romans 9:6: But it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel belong to Israel.

This passage is part of Paul's expression of sorrow over his fellow Jews who did not recognize Jesus as the Christ. Immediately preceding this comment of Paul's, the apostle describes the Israelites

to whom belong the sonship, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the worship, and the promises; to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ.

His description of his fellow race in these terms brings to mind the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures which were to lead the Jews to Jesus Christ. This suggests that the word Paul is referring to here, is at least the teaching of the Old Testament Scriptures about God's relationship with Israel and the coming Messiah, if not the Scriptures themselves.

I Corinthians 14:36: What! Did the word of God originate with you, or are you the only ones it has reached?

Paul is talking about spiritual matters in the larger context and about order in the worship gatherings of the Corinthians. The context of the passage does not indicate anything about the Word of God except that it did not originate from them. The reference to Paul's ministry to the Corinthians in Acts 18:1-11 discussed above and Paul's own reference to preaching the Gospel to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 15:1, suggests that Paul is talking about the Gospel when he mentions the Word.

In this case, the Word would have the sense of "teaching."

1 Corinthians 15:2: through it you are saved, by what word I preached good news to you.

The passage here is difficult to translate, but the Word evidently refers to the good news of the Gospel that Paul preached to the Corinthians. In the verse preceding this one, Paul mentions explicitly that he had preached the Gospel to the people. The Gospel Paul preached to them is described in verses three through eight and includes references to the atonement and the resurrection of Jesus according to the graphai, his appearances to the twelve and to Cephas and eventually to five hundred brethren, to James, the Apostles and to Paul himself. The Word here is a teaching and also a report since Paul describes the resurrection appearances of Jesus.

2 Corinthians 2:17: For we are not, like so many peddlers of God's word; but as men of sincerity, as commissioned by God, in the sight of God we speak in Christ.

The Word of God is not defined by this passage, but the context following it suggests that the Word is to be identified with the new covenant. Paul points out in chapter three, verses five and six that his sufficiency, and that of the others with him, to preach is from God who has qualified them to be ministers of a new covenant.

2 Corinthians 4:2: We have denounced disgraceful, underhanded ways; we refuse to practice cunning or to tamper with God's Word, but by the open statement of the truth we would commend ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God.

Verse one of this chapter indicates that Paul is still talking about the ministry he has been given as discussed above. The content of God's Word is identified in the passage itself with the truth and is further described by the following verses. The Word also includes the "Gospel of the glory of Christ," the fact that Christ is Lord, and the

teaching of the resurrection to life through Jesus Christ. The Word again is a teaching.

Galatians 6:6 Let him who is taught the word share all good things with him who teaches.

The Word here is not defined for us in any way except that it is considered a teaching. The context doesn't offer any explicit help.

Phillipians 1:14: and most of the brethren have been made confident in the Lord because of my imprisonment, and are much more bold to speak the word of God without fear.

Paul is talking about the advancement of the Gospel while he was in prison and the fact that his being imprisoned had actually helped the Gospel. The Word here is to be understood as the Gospel and as the preaching or the proclamation of Christ according to the context. Thus the Word is a teaching.

Colossians 1:25: of which I became a minister according to the divine office which was given to me for you, to make the word of God fully known.

The thoughts expressed here parallel the thoughts of the context of 2 Corinthians 2:17; 4:2 discussed above. The verse immediately following this passage begins with an appositional phrase modifying "the word of God." The phrase defines the Word as "the mystery hidden for ages and generations but now made manifest to his saints." The mystery is then described as "Christ is in you, the hope of glory." The content of Paul's proclamation is identified as Christ in verse twenty-eight. Again the Word is a teaching.

1 Thessalonians 1:6: for you received the word in much affliction, with joy inspired by the Holy Spirit.

From the passage itself we learn that the receiving of the Word was related to joy inspired by the Spirit. In verses nine and ten mention is made that the people turned away from idols to serving God, and to

wait for Jesus' second coming. According to chapter two, verses two and those following, it is the Gospel of God that Paul and his companions had preached to the Christians in Thessalonica. Paul and the others did more than merely speak the Gospel, they also taught the people how they were to live and to please God. This instruction, is not explicitly identified as part of the Word, however.

1 Thessalonians 2:13 And we also thank God constantly for this, that when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you accepted it not as the word of men but as what it really is, the word of God, which is at work in you believers.

The Word here is the same Word discussed above in 1 Thessalonians 1:6. One point that is emphasized in this passage is that the Word is God's Word. It is His speaking in a figurative sense, His teaching or what He would have us to know in a literal sense. It is a teaching from God himself.

1 Timothy 4:5: for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.

Verse three of this chapter mentions that the things of creation are to be received with thanksgiving by those "who believe and know the truth." Verse four and five seem to say the same thing in another way: "For everything created by God is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving; for then it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer." To believe and to know the truth is equated with prayer and the Word of God. The relationship between all of these does not get any clearer than that, however.

2 Timothy 2:9: the gospel for which I am suffering and wearing fetters like a criminal. But the wor of God is not fettered.

Paul is writing from prison. The content of the Word is not made



explicit but there is a strong suggestion that it is the Gospel because of the parallel between "the Gospel/Paul's fetters" and "the Word of God/its lack of fetters."

2 Timothy 4:2: preach the word, be urgent in season and out of season, convince, rebuke, and exhort, be unfailing in patience and in teaching.

These are instructions for Timothy. The preaching of the Word includes the items listed in the passage and also includes sticking to sound teaching and truth, according to verse three and four, and to do the work of an evangelist, according to verse five. In this use of the Word, more than just the promises of God or the Gospel are implied. Here the Word is a teaching incorporating the Gospel, and also the Law.

Titus 1:3: and he brought to light at the right time His Word in a proclamation which is entrusted to me according to a command of God our Savior.

The Word is that which is brought to light in Paul's proclamation, the proclamation that was entrusted to him by Jesus Christ. The Word is not defined any more than that either by its context or by the verse.

Titus 1:9: he must hold firm to the sure word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in sound doctrine and also to confuse those who contradict it.

The "sure" Word could be a reflection back to verse two of this same chapter where God is described as free from falsehood. A sure Word would be a Word that does not deceive. The Word also consists of sound doctrine, especially useful against those who contradict it such as the circumcision party.

Titus 2:5: to be sensible, chaste, domestic, kind, and submissive to their husbands, that the word of God may not be discredited.

This passage is part of Paul's bid to Titus that Titus teach what befits sound doctrine. This is found in verses one through ten of the

second chapter of Titus. The idea of teaching those things that befit sound doctrine seems to be paralleled not only in this passage and in verse one, but also in verse ten where slaves are told to "adorn the doctrine of God our Savior" with their actions. The Word thus is understood as sound doctrine and the "doctrine of God our Savior."

Hebrews 4:12: For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and spirit, of joints and marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

The passage here is part of a discussion on the rest that God invites people to enter into in contrast to being judged. This passage is emphasizing the judgment, and as such, it indicates the the Word of God functions to expose everything. In this verse and the one immediately following, the Word is emphasized as living so strongly that it seems to be more than a teaching. If it is simply a teaching, it is very active!

Hebrews 13:7: Remember your leaders, those who spoke to you the word of God; consider the outcome of their life, and imitate their faith.

The Word is what the leaders of the people being addressed in this letter spoke to the people. The next two verses suggest that this Word is about Jesus Christ who never changes so that there is no need to go to "diverse and strange teachings." Instead, "it is well that the heart be strengthened by grace." The Word here appears to be the Gospel teaching.

James 1:21: Therefore put away all filthiness and rank growth of wickedness and receive with meekness the implanted word, which is able to save your souls.

James 1:22: But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves.

James 1:23: For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror

Verse twenty-one describes the Word as though it were the Gospel, the promise of salvation, while the next two verses emphasize that the Word is something to be done. In fact, verse twenty-five parallels the image of a man looking in a mirror with looking into the "perfect law, the law of liberty." The same verse emphasizes again that the Word is something to be done. In terms of traditional Law/Gospel theology, this is confusing and deserves more study--study that was not allowed for in this project.

1 Peter 1:23: You have been born anew, not of perishable seed but of imperishable, through the living and abiding word of God.

From the passage itself we know that the Word is living and abiding and that it is instrumental in the regeneration of Christians. Immediately following this passage is a quote from Isaiah chapter forty, verses six and eight which is used to support the description of the Word as living and biding. What is significant is that the original Hebrew refers to the Word as dhebhar-'<sup>e</sup>lōhēnu which is translated as rēma kuriou in verse twenty four. Both are the same as logos theou which is the same as the "rēma good news" that was preached to the people this epistle is directed to.<sup>4</sup> This passage demonstrates the fact that this study is only the beginning of an investigation of the Word of God.

1 Peter 2:8: and "A stone that will make men stumble, a rock that will make them fall"; they stumble at the word, disobeying it.

Here the subject is those who do not believe in Jesus Christ, and stumbling at the Word is compare to stumbling on a rock, the living stone, Jesus Christ. The comparison is not so strong as to suggest that Jesus is the Word as in the Gospel of Joh, but the relationship between the two

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<sup>4</sup>The Septuagint translates '<sup>e</sup>lōhēnu as rēma tou theou.

is very strong. If one stumbles at the Word, one is stumbling at Jesus Christ. Again the Word is described as something to be obeyed and should probably be regarded as a teaching.

1 Peter 3:1: Likewise you wives, be submissive to your husbands, so that some, though they do not obey the word, may be won without a word by the behavior of their wives.

The Word is not defined clearly either by the passage of the immediate context except that it is something to be obeyed. Most likely it is the same Word found in 1 Peter 2:8, if not also in chapter one, verse twenty-three.

2 Peter 3:5: They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago, and an earth formed out of water.

2 Peter 3:7: But by the same word the heavens and earth that now exist have been stored up for fire, being kept until the day of judgment.

The Word here is the Word that God spoke to create and to establish everything including judgment. The impression given, if we take the passages on their own without regard to their context, is that the Word is a power of God, His means for accomplishing His will. This use of logos tou theou would be comparable to logos meaning the content of speaking with the act of speaking implied. God spoke a Word and by His speaking a Word, He created the Heavens.<sup>5</sup>

1 John 1:10: If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

The Word is related to the fact that we have sinned and that if we claim to have not sinned, we are calling God a liar. To make such a claim is to say that what God has said about us is false. God's Word

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<sup>5</sup>Hebrews 11:3 refers to the rēma theou as the means of creation.

teaches us that we have sinned.

1 John 2:14: I write to you, young man, because you are strong, and the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one.

Nothing definite can be said about the Word from this passage or its immediate context except to say that the Word abides in people. Some might say the clause, "you are strong," and the clause, "the word of God abides in you," are equivalent so that having the Word of God abide in you makes you strong, at least in a spiritual sense. This is not demanded by the text, however. It could be that the Word is to be understood as Jesus himself. This is possible, but again the text doesn't require it. Notice the same characteristic of the Word discussed above in 1 Peter 1:23.

Revelation 1:2: who bore witness to the word of God and to the testimony of Jesus Christ, as much as he saw.

This is part of the introduction to the Apocalypse. The clause, "as much as he saw," suggests that the Word of God and the "testimony" John refers to is what he saw and what is in the Apocalypse. The Word would therefore be what God had communicated to John via the angel and would consist of the teaching contained in this book.

Revelation 1:9: I John, your brother . . . was on the island called Patmos on account of the word of God and the testimony of Jesus.

John was in exile because of the Word and because of the "testimony of Jesus" which he defines as the "spirit of prophecy"(Rev. 19:10). All that can be said is that the Word is probably distinct from the testimony of Jesus. The text and context fail to suggest anything else.

Revelation 3:8: I know that you have but little power, and yet you have kept my word and have not denied my name.

Revelation 3:10: Because you have kept my word of patient

endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial.

These passages are a part of God's message to one of the seven churches so that "my" refers to God. The Word is not defined except it is a Word of patient endurance that this church has kept. In chapter fourteen, verse twelve, there is a "call for the endurance of the saints, those who keep the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus". Perhaps this call is similar to the Word of patient endurance, and the Word mentioned in verse eight is to be identified with the commandments of God and the faith of Jesus. This might be stretching the significance of "endurance" in these passages, however. Further study is required.

Revelation 6:9: When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness they had borne.

The Word is not really defined at all except that it is related to the martyrdom of the people. A connection between martyrdom and the "testimony of Jesus" can be made. In all but one of the places in the Apocalypse where the testimony of Jesus is mentioned, it is mentioned in the context of persecution. What this relationship means, if it is a valid one, is still a question. Here again we have the Word of God contrasted with the witness.

Revelation 17:17: for God has put it into their hearts to carry out his purpose by being of one mind and giving over their royal power to the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

This passage is unique in that it refers to the words of God instead of the Word of God. The only other place this occurs is in chapter nineteen, verse nine. The emphasis here seems to be on what God has spoken, that is to be fulfilled in contrast to what God has spoken as a teaching for instance. The former would be closer to the Word of II Peter 3:5-7, while the latter would be closer to Revelation 1:1,9.

Of course, logos is understood in the sense of individual words.

Revelation 19:9: And the angel said to me, "Write this: Blessed are those who are invited to the marriage supper of the Lamb." And he said to me, "These are true words of God."

The Word of God here is the words that the angel had John write down. Although the Word could be called a blessing, logos is understood in the sense of individual words.

Revelation 19:13: He is clad in a robe dipped in blood, and the name by which he is called is The Word of God.

The imagery in verses eleven through sixteen identify even further the Word of God in this passage with Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Word of God. He is also called "Faithful and True"; he judges and makes war in righteousness. He has a sharp sword issuing from his mouth with which to smite the nations that he will rule. His name is also "King of kings and Lord of lords". This use of logos does not really find any counterpart in the general use of logos in the New Testament. This understanding of logos tu theu is significant in that logos is never understood as a personification when it is used in a general colloquial context. A special study of logos in this personified sense as it is used here and by the Gospel of John should try to relate this specialized use of logos to its more common use, if such a relationship exists.

Revelation 20:4: Also I saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their testimony to Jesus and for the word of God, and who had not worshiped the beast or its image.

The Word of God is related to those who had not worshiped the beast and who came to life and reigned with Christ a thousand years, according to verse four. This suggests a relationship between having the Word of God and reigning with Christ, but the relationship is not made explicit. Again the Word of God is contrasted with the testimony of Jesus.

We can see that the Word of God is primarily understood in the sense of a teaching. Sometimes it is the teaching by Jesus himself, sometimes it is the teaching of the Apostles or disciples about Jesus. As a teaching, the Word is often described as the Gospel. The Word proclaimed by the Apostles and the disciples was also a report in so far that it described the life of Jesus. In a few cases, the Word of God refers to individual words that God spoke to accomplish His will. In one case the Word is understood as referring to both the content and the act of speaking. God's Word is also a saying, as in the two commandments of God regarding one's parents. The use of the Word of God in the personified sense and referring to Jesus Christ is unique in that it doesn't have its counterpart in the common usage of logos.

We also find that the Word of God has quite a few characteristics, even from this relatively brief study. The Word is said to produce fruit, patience, and joy in the lives of people. Those who do the Word are made blessed. Faith, salvation, regeneration, and the expectation of the Second Coming are all given by or related to the Word. The Word can even prevent a person from falling away, while it can also be challenged by the priorities of this world. The Word is the means to knowing about God; to stumble at the Word is to stumble at Christ also. The Word was quite popular when Jesus taught it. The disciples are sanctified in the Word which is the truth. The Word is God's Word even though it is spoken through men. It is a living and abiding Word. God's Words are fulfilled. The Word that is the proclamation about Jesus is supported by the graphai. The one characteristic that seems to tie in with all of these other characteristics is that God accomplishes His will by means of speaking His Word.



## CHAPTER IV

### LOGOS TOU THEOU AND THE CONTEMPORARY BIBLE

If we take a closer look at the data we have obtained in the previous chapter, we can begin to make some claims about the relationship of the Bible and the Word of God. First of all, our data pointed out that there are some documents that are called the Word of God, namely, the Apocalypse and at least a portion of the Psalms, if not the entire book of Psalms or the Hebrew Old Testament and possibly even the Septuagint. From the data collected thus far, we can say that these portions of our Bible should be called the Word of God.

Sometimes, the Word is identified as the Word of God by virtue of the fact that it is a Word that God spoke. The two commandments Jesus mentions in Mark 7 are what God commanded and thus God's Word. The Words of Creation are what God said and thus God's Word. From this information, we can say that the two commandments Jesus mentioned and the Words of Creation contained in the Bible are Word of God.

The teaching of Jesus is called the Word of God for a similar reason. Jesus was not speaking His own Word, but the Word of His Father who sent Him. Apart from Jesus' identity in the Trinity, the teaching of Jesus is the teaching of God and thus God's Word. We can, therefore, claim that the teaching of Jesus in the Gospel is also God's Word.

In the New Testament, a primary identification of the Word is in reference to the proclamation and exhortation of the Apostles and the disciples. Their teaching of what they had "heard and seen" about Jesus

Christ and from Jesus Christ is called the Word. The Gospels, in their entirety, should be considered the Word of God in that they are a report of what the disciples had heard and seen. The epistles of the New Testament are part of the proclamation and exhortation of the Apostles and the disciples and, therefore, should also deserve to be called the Word of God. One could equate the witness of the graphai, mentioned in John 5:38, with the proclamation about Jesus and consider the graphai, as understood by John's Gospel, to be the Word of God.

The only part of the New Testament not covered so far is the Acts of the Apostles. The book does contain some of the proclamations of the Apostles and their exhortations, and to that extent, it, too, should be considered the Word of God. There is a question, however, about the narrative portions of the book of Acts. Are these portions a proclamation of the Gospel or instruction in what God would have us do? If they are, then the whole book should be considered the Word of God; if not, then only the parts of the book that do meet the criteria of our data should be considered the Word of God.<sup>1</sup> Some might say that the whole book is intended as an exhortation, and that it therefore should be considered the Word of God. That conclusion would have to rest on further investigation into the purpose of the book of Acts, which is beyond this study.

One point of significance that stems from our data is that the Word of God does not refer simply to the Bible as we know it. To be sure, parts of our Bible are or can be identified as the Word, but the Word of

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Of course, the data in this study is not the only source of criteria for considering something to be the Word of God. Here, the author is talking only in reference to the data of this study. Personally, he believes there are other criteria for considering the book of Acts to be the Word of God, namely apostolicity and inspiration.

God also refers to Jesus Christ and to the proclamation of the Gospel and the exhortations by the Apostles and disciples of the early church. The Word refers to particular writings, to a person, and to a teaching.

The fact that the Word also refers to a teaching is significant in itself that wherever that teaching is repeated, regardless of who is repeating it, it is just as much the Word of God as if God Himself were speaking it. Even today, where the proclamation and exhortations of the Apostles and disciples are spoken, the Word of God is being spoken.

This aspect of the Word of God in relationship to the Bible does not downgrade the value of the Bible. In fact, the importance of the Bible is supported by the data in this study which points to parts of the Bible as the Word of God. In this way, at least parts of the Bible are identified as our source of the Word of God. Some of the parts of the Bible are the Word because it is God who spoke the Word either directly or through human mouths. Some of the Bible can be called the Word of God because it is the proclamation and exhortation of the Apostles and the disciples. The Word is to be identified with parts of the Bible, yet the Word remains the Word even when repeated by men.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY

In chapter two of this paper, the use of the term logos in the New Testament was compared with the use of the term "word" as it is generally used in the contemporary English language. Although the two terms often can be used to translate each other, there are instances where logos is used in a way that does not compare with the American English use of "word". To help the reader understand the variety of meanings logos has in the New Testament, the term was evaluated according to its usage. Examples of the use of the term showed that sometimes it will refer to an individual word, at other times to "that which is spoken", such as some formal instruction, a description of an event or situation, or some miscellaneous sentence or message. Other examples demonstrated that logos can refer to the act of speaking, and at times, can refer to the act of speaking and/or "that which is spoken."

The information from chapter two was applied in chapter three to a study of God's logos to determine what the New Testament meant by the term logos tou theou and some of its equivalents. Each use of the term and some of its equivalents was examined individually to determine from the context of the term its meaning and any characteristics the Word of God might have. It was concluded that the predominant meaning of the term referred to the communication of God through the teaching of Jesus, and the teaching of the Apostles and the disciples about Jesus. The logos tou theou was also found to have a number of characteristics: of all of its characteristics, the most inclusive is that God accomplishes His

will with His Word.

The data from chapters two and three were examined to determine the relationship between the Bible as we know it and the use of the term logos tou theou in the New Testament. While the data point to parts of the Bible as the Word of God, some parts of the Bible are not pointed to at all. One point of significance is that the use of the term logos tou theou in the New Testament indicates that the Word also refers to Jesus Christ and to the teachings of the Apostles and early disciples. The last meaning of the term suggests that the Word of God still remains the communication of God even when it is spoken by men.

The fact that this is a limited study needs to be emphasized once again. The term logos tou theou seems to be equated with other terms as logos kuriou, rema theou, rema kuriou, logos tes basileias, logos aletheias, logos sotērias, and logos pisteōs to mention the more common terms. Any comprehensive study of the meaning of the English term "Word of God" or the Koine term logos tou theou, will have to include a study of each use of logos. This study is only the beginning of such a comprehensive investigation.

## APPENDIX

### The Uses of logos in the New Testament as Catagorized in Chapter Two

- I. Logos as an individual word: Matthew 12:37; 15:23; 22:46; 24:35;  
Mark 8:38; 10:24; 13:31; Luke 1:20; 9:26,44; 21:33; 24:44;  
John 7:40; 10:19; 19:13; Acts 2:22,40; 5:5,24; 15:15; 16:36  
Romans 3:4; 1 Corinthians 2:13; 14:19; Ephesians 5:6;  
1 Thessalonians 4:18; Hebrews 12:19; Jude 15; Revelation 1:3;  
21:5; 22:6, 7, 9, 10, 18, 19.
- II. Logos as "that which is spoken"
  - A. Formal instruction
    1. sayings: Matthew 19:11; Luke 3:4; 4:22; 9:28; John 2:22  
4:37; 12:38; 15:20, 25; 18:9; Acts 7:22; 15:24;  
Romans 13:9; 1 Corinthians 2:4b; 15:54; Galatians  
5:14; 1 Timothy 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Timothy 1:13; 2:11;  
4:15; 2 Peter 2:3; 1 John 2:7.
    2. teachings: Matthew 7:24, 26, 28; 15:12; 19:1; 22:15;  
26:1; Mark 8:32; 12:13; Luke 4:32; 6:47; 20:20; John  
4:41; 6:60; 7:36; 12:48; 15:3, 20; Acts 2:41; 8:21;  
15:6; 18:15; 2 Corinthians 1:18; Colossians 2:23;  
Ephesians 6:19; 2 Thessalonians 2:17; 2 Timothy 2:17;  
Titus 3:8; Hebrews 2:2; 6:1; 2 Peter 1:19.
  - B. Description of an event or situation
    1. report or complaint: Matthew 28:15; Mark 1:45; 5:36;  
9:10; Luke 1:4; 7:17; John 4:39; 19:8; 21:23; Acts 1:1;  
11:22; 18:14; 19:38; 20:24.
    2. business "account": Matthew 12:36; 18:23; 25:19; Luke  
16:2; Acts 19:40; Romans 14:12; Philippians 4:15,17;  
Hebrews 4:13; 13:17; 1 Peter 4:5.
    3. "reason or basis" for action: Matthew 5:32; 19:9;  
Acts 10:29.
  - C. Miscellaneous: statement, comment, question, message:  
Matthew 8:8,16; 12:32; 19:22; 21:24; 26:44; Mark  
7:29; 10:22; 11:29; Luke 1:29; 4:36; 7:7; 10:39;  
20:3; 23:9; 24:17; John 4:50; Acts 6:5; 7:29; 13:15;  
20:38; 22:22; Romans 9:9, 28; 1 Corinthians 14:9;  
Ephesians 4:29; 1 Thessalonians 2:5; 2 Thessalonians  
3:14; Titus 2:8; Hebrews 7:28; 13:22; 1 Peter 3:15  
3 John 10.

- III. Logos as the act of speaking: Acts 14:12; 15:27, 32; 20:2, 7;  
1 Corinthians 1:5, 17; 2:1, 4a; 2 Corinthians 8:7; 10:10; 11:6;  
1 Thessalonians 1:5; 2 Thessalonians 2:2, 15; 1 Timothy 5:17;  
1 John 3:18.
- IV. Logos as "that which is spoken" and/or the act of speaking
- A. Logos used in the sense of "that which is spoken" while  
implying the act of speaking: Matthew 5:37; Luke 24:19;  
Romans 15:18; 2 Corinthians 10:11; Colossians 3:17; 4:6;  
1 Timothy 4:12; Hebrews 5:11; James 3:2.
- B. Logos used so that it can refer to either the content or  
act of speaking: 1 Corinthians 4:19, 20; 12:8; Revelation  
12:11.

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