|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| PORTION | DATE | HEB DATE | TORAH | NEVIIM | RENEWED |
| B’reisheet | 14 Oct. 2017 | 24 Tishri 5778 | Gen. 1:1-6:8 | Isa. 42:5-43:10 | John 1:1-18 |

**Genesis 1:1-6:8**

**Chapter 1**

Verse 1: “In the beginning” – We will study these words from different angle to shed different paths yet same path that many have taken. In Jewish Publication these words start as “When Elohim began to create.” This rendering of the Hebrew looks to verse 3 for the completion of the sentence.

It takes verse 2 to be parenthetical, describing the state of things at the time when HaShem first spoke. Support for understanding the text in this way comes from 2:4 and 5:1, both of which refer to Creation and begin with “When.” The word *be-re’shit* is a noun in constructive state with a finite verb (*bara’*).

The traditional English translation, “In the beginning” renders the verse as an independent sentence complete in itself, a solemn declaration that serves as an epitomizing caption to the entire narrative. It take the initial word *be-re’shit* to mean “at the beginning of time” and thus makes a momentous assertion about the nature about HaShem: That He is wholly outside of time, just as He is outside of space, both of which He proceeds to create. In other words, for the first time in the religious history of the Near East, HaShem is conceived as being entirely free of temporal and spatial dimensions.

‘Elohim’ – Unlike the pagan cosmologies, Genesis exhibits no interest in the question of God’s origins. His existence prior to the world is taken as axiomatic and does not even require assertion, let alone proof. There is no definition of God or any mystical speculation about His nature. God’s nature finds expression not in philosophical abstractions but through His acts and through the demands He makes on human beings.

‘create’ – The Hebrew stem *b-r-* is used in the Bible exclusively of divine creativity. It signifies that the product is absolutely novel and unexampled, depends solely on HaShem for its coming into existence, and is beyond the human capacity to reproduce. The verb always refers to the completed product, never to the material of which it is made.

As Ibn Ezra notes*, “bara”’* does not of itself denote the creation of something out of nothing (*creatio ex nihilo*). This doctrine seems to have been first articulated in the late Second Maccabees: “Look up to heaven and earth and see all that is therein, and know that God made them out of things that did not exist.” (7:28).

The repeated biblical emphasis upon HaShem as the exclusive Creator would seem to rule out the possibility of preexistent matter. Finally, if *bara’* is used only of HaShem’s creation, it must be essentially distinct from creation. The ultimate distinction would be *creatio ex nihilo*, which has no human parallel and is thus utterly beyond all human comprehension.

‘heaven and earth’ – The definite article in the Hebrew specifies the observable universe. The use here of a merism, the combination of opposites, expresses the totality of cosmic phenomena, for which there is no single word in biblical Hebrew. The subsequent usage of each term separately refers to the sky and the dry land in the more restricted and concrete sense. We are not told how the cosmos came into being, but other texts point to a tradition of its creation by means of divine fiat. Thus, Psalm 31:6, 9 declare: “By the word of YHWH the heavens were made, / by the breath of His mouth, all their host . . . / For He spoke, and it was; / He commanded, and it endured.” In Second Esdras 6:38 has the same notion: “I said, O LORD, You have indeed spoken from the beginning of creation; on the first day You said: ‘Let heaven and earth be made,’ and Your word accomplished the work.”

Verse 2: ‘unformed and void’ – Hebrew *tohu va-vohu* This compound phrase appears again in the Bible in Jeremiah’s prophetic vision of the return of the primal chaos (Jer. 4:23-27), thus leaving no doubt that the phrase designates the initial chaotic state of the earth. That HaShem should create disorganized matter, only to reduce it to order, presents no more of a problem than does His taking six days to complete creation instead of instantaneously producing a perfected universe. The point of the narrative is the idea of ordering that is the result of divine intent. It is a fundamental biblical teaching that the original, divinely ordained order in the physical world has its counterpart in the divinely ordained universal moral order to which the human race is subject.

‘darkness’ – Throughout the Bible darkness is often a symbol of evil, misfortune, death, and oblivion. Here it seems to be not just the absence of light but a distinct entity, the origin of which is left unclear. Isaiah 45:7, however, explicitly ascribes its existence to divine creation.

‘the deep’ – The Bible says nothing about how or when this watery mass came into existence. Proverbs 8:22-24 makes it one of HaShem’s creations.

‘sweeping’ – Hebrew *r-h-f* appears otherwise in Deuteronomy 32:11, where it describes an eagle hovering over its young, but in Jeremiah 23:9 it refers to bones trembling or shaking. The basic idea of the stem is vibration, movement. Hitherto all is static, lifeless, immobile. Motion, which is the essential element in change, originates with HaShem’s dynamic presence.

Verse 3: ‘Elohim said’ – The divine word shatters the primal cosmic silence and signals the birth of a new cosmic order. Divine fiat is the first of the several modalities of creativity employed in this account. “Elohim said” means “Elohim thought” or “Elohim willed.” It signifies that the Creator is wholly independent of His creation. It implies effortlessness and absolute sovereignty over nature.

‘light’ – It is the symbol of life, joy, justice, and deliverance. The notion of light independent of the sun appears again in Isaiah 30:26 and Job 38:19-20. Most likely it derives from the simple observation that the sky is illuminated even on cloudy days when the sun is obscured and that brightness precedes the rising of the sun.

The source of this supernal, non-solar light of creation became a subject of rabbinic and mystical speculation. Genesis Rabba 3:4 expresses the view that this light is the effulgent splendor of the Divine Presence. Psalms 104:12 with its theme of creation, describes HaShem as “wrapped in a robe of light.”

Verse 5: ‘YHWH called’ – In the ancient Near East, possessing no name was equivalent to nonexistence. An Egyptian texts describes precreation as the time “when no name of anything had yet been named,” and Enuma Elish similarly designates primeval chaos as the period “when on high the heaven had not yet been named, and below the firm ground had not yet been given a name.” Name-giving was thus associated with creation and for one who gives a name has power over the object.

Verse 11: ‘Let the earth sprout’ – Here the earth is depicted as the mediating element, implying that HaShem endows it with generative powers that He now activates by His utterance.

Verse 20: ‘living creatures’ – Hebrew *nefesh hayyah* means literally “animate life,” that which embodies the breath of life. It is distinct from plant life, which was not considered to be ‘living’. Thus the ‘animate life’ received the blessing of HaShem whereas the plant life was not.

Verse 26: “man” – Hebrew *‘adam* is a generic term for humankind; it never appears in Hebrew in the feminine or plural. The term encompasses both man and woman, as shown in verses 27-28 and 5:1-2, where it is construed with plural verbs and termination.

Verse 27: ‘male and female’ – No such sexual differentiation is noted in regard to animals. Human sexuality is of a wholly different order from that of the beast. The next verse shows it to be a blessed gift of HaShem woven into the fabric of life.

There is only one human species. The notion of all humankind deriving from one common ancestry directly leads to the recognition of the unity of the human race, notwithstanding the infinite diversity of human culture. The sages said that HaShem, in order to promote social harmony, intended that no person have claim to unique ancestry as a pretext for asserting superiority over others.

Verse 30: HaShem makes provision for the sustenance of man and beast – a reminder that man is still a creature dependent on the benevolence of HaShem. The narrative presupposes a pristine state of vegetarianism. Isaiah’s vision of the ideal future in 11:7 and 65:25 sees the carnivorous animals becoming herbivorous.

**Chapter 2**

Verse 3: This blessing is undefined and pertains to time itself. The day becomes imbued with an extraordinary vital power that communicates itself in a beneficial way. That is why the routine day-formula is here omitted. HaShem, through His creativity, has already established His sovereignty over space; the idea here is that He is sovereign over time as well. Through his weekly suspension of normal human activity, man imitates the divine pattern and reactualizes the original sacred time of HaShem, thereby recovering the sacred dimension of existence. He also rediscovers his own very human dimension, his earthliness, for the Sabbath delimits man’s autonomy, suspends for a while his creative freedom, and declares that on that one day each week nature is inviolable.

Verse 16-17: The threat of death would have been intelligible to the man only if he had witnessed the demise of animals and bird. Even without understanding the meaning of death, he would have inferred that disobedience incurs divine disapproval.

**Chapter 3**

Verse 1: ‘to the woman’ – She, rather than her husband, is approached because she has not received the prohibition directly from HaShem. She is therefore the more vulnerable of the two, the more susceptible to the serpent’s insidious verbal manipulation.

‘say’ – The serpent subtly softens the severity of the prohibition by using this word in place of the original ‘command.’ Then it deliberately misquotes HaShem so that the woman cannot give a one-word reply but is drawn into conversation that forces her to focus upon the forbidden tree that he had not mentioned.

Verse 3: ‘or touch it’ – In correcting her enquirer, she either unconsciously exaggerates the stringency of the divine prohibition or is quoting what her husband told her. Either way, she introduces into her own mind the suggestion of an unreasonably strict HaShem.

Verse 4-5: The serpent emphatically contradicts the very words HaShem used in 2:17. In this way it removes her fears. It then proceeds to ascribe self-serving motives to HaShem, thus undermining His credibility in her eyes. Finally, it appeals to an attractive standard of utility: eating of the tree’s fruit elevates one to a higher plane of existence.

Verse 6: The word of the serpent prevails over the word of HaShem. The allure of the forbidden has become irresistible. Now, good has become debased in the woman’s mind. Its definition is no longer HaShem’s verdict but is rooted in the appeal to the senses and in utilitarian value. Egotism, greed, and self-interest now govern human action.

‘and he ate’ – The woman is not a temptress. She does not say a word but simply hands her husband the fruit, which he accepts and eats. In speaking with the woman, the serpent consistently used the plural form (in Hebrew text). This suggests that the man was all the time within ear’s reach of the conversation and was equally seduced by its persuasiveness. In fact, the Hebrew texts here literally means, “She also gave to her husband with her (*‘immah*),” suggesting that he was a full participant in the sin, thereby refuting in advance his later excuse.

Verse 16: ‘he shall rule over you’ – It is quite clear from the description of woman in 2:18, 23 that the ideal situation, which hitherto existed, was the absolute equality of the sexes. The new state of male dominance is regard as an aspect of the deterioration in the human condition that resulted from defiance of divine will.

**Chapter 4**

Verse 3-5: The two sons, unlike their parents in Eden, subsisted the toil of their hands. In the fruits of their labors they recognized divine blessing, and they felt gratitude to HaShem for His bounty. Their offerings were spontaneous, not a response to divine command. The reason for HaShem’s different reactions may be inferred from the descriptions of the offerings: Abel’s is characterized as being “the choicest of the firstlings of his flock”; Cain’s is simply termed as coming “from the fruit of the soil,” without further detail. Abel appears to have demonstrated a quality of heart and mind that Cain did not possess. Cain’s purpose was noble, but his act was not ungrudging and openhearted. Thus the narrative conveys the fundamental principle of Judaism that the act of worship must be informed by genuine devotion of the heart.

Verse 13: ‘my punishment’ – Hebrew *‘avon* means both sin and its penalty because in the biblical world view the two are inseparable, the latter inhering in the former. For this reason, the text contains an ambiguity. Apart from the translation given here, it can also be rendered “My sin is too great to be forgiven” or “Is my sin too great to be forgiven?”

Verse 15: ‘a mark’ – The reference is not to a stigma of infamy but to a sign indicating that the bearer is under divine protection. Hebrew *‘ot* here probably involves some external physical mark, perhaps on the forehead, as in Ezekiel 9:4-6, serving the same function as the blood of the paschal lamb smeared on the lintels and doorposts of each Israelite house in Egypt.

**Chapter 5**

The genealogy of mankind. A new narrative begins, enumerating the generations from Adam to Noah. The genealogy begins with Seth, for it was through him that the human race survived. Abel died without issue, and Cain’s descendants perished in the Flood.

Rambam explains why the people of that era lived such long lives. As Hashem’s handiwork, Adam was physically perfect and so were his children. As such it was natural for them to live a long time. After the Flood, however, a deterioration of the atmosphere caused a gradual shortening of life until it would appear that in the time of the Patriarchs, people lived a normal life span of seventy and eighty years, while only the most righteous lived longer.

Verse 2: “Male and female He created them” – the Talmud comments that a man without a wife is not a man, for it is said, “Male and female He created them…and called their name Man (only when a man is united with his wife can he be called Man) (Yevamos 63a).

Verse 3: “In his likeness according to his image” – The verse mentions this to indicate that Hashem gave Adam, who himself was created in Hashem’s likeness, the capacity to reproduce who were also in this noble likeness. This is not mentioned concerning Cain or Abel because, since their seed perished, the Torah did not wish to prolong the description of them (Rambam).

The ten generations from Adam to Noah:

Adam – died in the year 930 from Creation,

Seth – born in the year 130 from Creation; died in 1042. After his time, people began to do evil.

Enosh: 235-1140

Kenan: 325-1235

Mahalalel: 395-1290

Jared: 460-1422

Enoch: 622-987

Methuselah: 687-1656

Lamech: 874-1651

Noah: 1056-2006; Thus Noah was born 126 years after Adam died; Lamech was the farthest descendant Adam lived to see.

Verse 29: This was said [prophetically] in reference to the invention of farming tools, which was attributed to Noah. Until his time, in consequence of the curse decreed upon Adam (3:18), the earth produced thorns and thistles when one planted wheat. In Noah’s days this ceased.

**Isaiah 42:5-43:10**

This haftarah is part of a collection of prophecies addressed to the Judean community in Babylonian exile (mid-sixth century B.C.E.). It attempts to inspire national awareness and confidence in their divine destiny. The haftarah is composed of several speeches and prophecies. These emphasize the universal dominion of HaShem and His special concern for the redemption of Israel, created to be “My witnesses” among the nations. HaShem’s power to create or destroy is combined with His will to strengthen Israel and protect her in travail. Israel’s own liberation is a light that radiates HaShem’s redemptive purposes to all people.

Part 1. Creation and its ends (42:5-9)

The haftarah begins with a pronouncement by HaShem that He is the creator of all things and that He has “created” and “appointed” His servant to open blind eyes and rescue prisoners in confinement. This is His glory as YHWH, for transcending mute and impotent idols. To underscore this point, the section concludes with a prophecy that these “new things” will come to pass just as former predictions have already been realized.

Part 2. YHWH’s advent and Israel’s joy (42:10-13)

In response to HaShem’s power and predictions, there follows an invocation to the people by the prophets to sing His praises throughout the earth (v. 10-12). This call to “tell” HaShem’s glory responds thematically to His pronouncement (v. 8-9) that His own “glory” includes “foretelling” salvation. The prophet then envisages the realization of this prophecy in the form of a divine warrior rising to battle (v. 13).

Part 3. YHWH’s purpose and punishment (42:14-25)

1. 42:14-17 HaShem arises in passion to “lead the blind by a road they did not know” and to “turn darkness before them to light.” Thus begins the realization of the pronouncement in verse 7, where the Elohim promises to open “eyes deprived of light.” The threat to punish those who believe in “idols” (v. 17) counterpoints HaShem’s earlier promise that He “will not yield His renown to idols” (v. 8).
2. 42:18-21 HaShem turns directly to the deaf and blind, calling upon them to “listen” and “see.” They include His servant who, though having ears and eyes, hears and sees nothing (v. 18-20). The prophet then apparently speaks – concluding the section with the assurance that YHWH desires His servant’s vindication, so that His own Teaching of salvation may be magnified (v. 21).
3. 42:22-25 The prophet goes on to reflect that the people are despoiled, yet remain inattentive to His call, continuing to disregard for His Torah that resulted in their punishment. “It burned among them, but they gave it no thought” (v. 25).

Part 4. YHWH the Creator and Redeemer (43:1-10)

1. 43:1-8 YHWH renews His address to the people, strengthening them with the statement that He is their creator and redeemer and the promise that He will be with them through fire and flame. The divine assurance that the people will not be burned (v. 2)) echoes the earlier reference to the burning of punishment (42:25), marking an end to divine wrath. There is even a suggestion that the redemption will be unilateral – a redemption of Israel “created . . . for My glory,” “blind though it has eyes and deaf though it has ears” (v. 7-8). Earlier themes are thus underscored and affirmed.
2. 43:9-10 In conclusion, the nullity of the nations’ power is contrasted with absolute divine might, “I am He: before Me no god was formed, and after Me none shall exist” (v. 10). Only HaShem can foretell the future. Israel is HaShem’s proof – His living witness, attesting through their history to the providential glory of YHWH.

**John 1:1-18**

Commentary on Yochanan (John)

Author: In the book itself the author is simply called “the talmid who Yeshua loved” (21:20, 23, 24). The author has a detailed knowledge of Jewish Halachot (customs) (2:6; 7:23, 37-39; 18:28 etc.) with Jewish Mysticism (as shown in many cases in the commentary below), and with the geography of Eretz-Yisrael (the Land of Israel) (1:44, 46; 5:2). Several of the ancient “Church Fathers” identified Yochanan the Talmid as the author including Theophilus (c. 180), Irenaeus (c. 200), Clement of Alexandria (c. 220), Tertullian (c. 220) and Origen (c. 250). The author always refers to himself with undue humility using euphemisms like “the talmid who Yeshua loved” rather than refer to himself by name. Because of this it seems likely that he was one of the two talmidim of Yochanan that Yochanan the immerser directed toward Yeshua (1:35-40) (the other of these two was Andrew (1:40). This would mean that the author (Yochanan the Talmid) was almost certainly from an Essene background.

Original Language*: The Goodnews according to Yochanan* was originally written in the Aramaic language and later was translated into Greek, Latin and other languages. This is well demonstrated by Charles Fox Burney:

Thus it was that the writer turned seriously to tackle

the question of the original language of the Fourth Gospel;

and quickly convincing himself that the theory of an

original Aramaic document was no chimera, but a fact

which was capable of the fullest verification...

- Charles Fox Burney***; The Aramaic Origin***

*of the Fourth Gospel;* 1922; p. 3

Audience: Yochanan, being from an Essene background, wrote his account for an Essene audience. This is evidenced by the fact that only Yochanan reveals the fact that Yochanan the immerser had an (Essene) community of talmidim living with him in the wilderness (Yochanan 1). This is further evidenced by the mystical nature of Yochanan’s account. (The Essenes were mystics and in fact many scholars see the roots of what we now call “Kabbalah” as stemming from the Essenes.).

Theme and Purpose: Yochanan writes his account on the sod (mystical) level. Unlike the synoptic gospels Yochanan’s theme is not the Kingdom offer. Yochanan covers the Kingdom offer in Chapter 3 only briefly and never touches on the subject again. Yochanan’s theme is mystical. His theme is that of the Messiah as the incarnate Word, both as Elohim and as the personification of Torah. A secondary theme is that of Messiah as the Passover lamb.

Jn. 1:1-14 *The only begotten light*

The Zohar sheds light on this section of Yochanan:

*Concerning this, too, it is written: “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. I, 3). Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word “light” in this verse? The answer is that the first “light” refers to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is destined for the “end of days”; while the second “light” refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right. The next words, “And God saw the light that it was good” (Gen. 1, 4), refer to the pillar which, standing midway between them, unites both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, “it was good”, since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove the strife between Right and Left, as it is written, “And Elohim separated between the light and between the darkness” (Ibid.).*

*(Zohar 2:167a)*

This is the Middle Pillar: Ki Tov (that it was good) threw light above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of YHWH, the name which embraces all sides.

(Zohar 1:16b)

According to the Zohar the Middle Pillar of the Godhead is the Son of Yah:

Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off.

*This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the Godhead,*

*which is the Son of Yah.*

*(Zohar 2:115)*

The Middle Pillar is the Ki Tov (That which is good), the light, and the Son of Yah.

The fact that the Son of Yah is the Middle Pillar, the light that is called in Genesis “Ki Tov” (That which is good) helps us to understand Yeshua’s exchange with the man who called him “Good Rabbi”, as we read:

16 And behold, one came near, and said to Him, Good Rabbi, and what good thing shall I do, that I may acquire the life of the world to come?

17 And He said to him: Why ask you me concerning what is good? There is none good but one: there is a good, and that is El. And if you desire to enter into the life of the world to come: keep the commandments of El.

(Matthew 19:16-17 HRV)

Messiah was acknowledging that this man was identifying him rightly as the Ki Tov, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead, the Son of Yah, the only begotten.

Now let us seek to understand the process whereby the light was “begotten”. The Zohar tells us much more:

(1) And Elohim said Let there be light, and there was light (Gen 1:3).

(2) From here is the beginning for finding treasures, how the world was created in particular.

(3) For until now, it was general, and it then returns to speaking in general terms so that it will be general, specific, general.

(4) Until now everything was suspended in the air by the secret of Ayn Sof.

(5) Once its power spread into the upper temple, the secret of Elohim, ‘utterance’ is written, “And Elohim said,” for above utterance is not written in particular, even though “In the beginning” is an utterance, it does not say, “and He said.”

(Zohar 1:16b)

The Zohar is saying that up until this point the Torah has given only generalities but not specifics as to how the world was created. In addition, there is a double meaning in the actual Aramaic, that up until this point the universe had only a general existence without specific parts. The text points out that the first statement in the Torah “In the beginning Elohim created the heavens and the earth…” although it is not preceded by the words “And Elohim said” is still regarded as a creative utterance. (The tradition of the Zohar is that the universe was created by ten utterances, each corresponding to the ten sefirot. While the phrase “He said” appears only nine times in the creation account, the first phrase of Torah is said to be an utterance as well).

The Zohar continues:

(6) This, “and He said,” establishes questions and knowledge.

(7) “And He said,” a power that was raised and lifted up silently, from the mystery of Ayn Sof, in the mystery of thought.

(8) “And he said,” now the temple begat, of that which she conceived from the holy seed, and she begat silently, and that which was begotten was heard from without, and the one giving birth gave birth silently and was not heard at all; once that which went forth from it went forth, a voice was made that was heard from without.

(9) “Let there be light.” Everything that emerged went forth by this mystery.

(Zohar 1:16b)

Here we are told just how the light was begotten. A power was raised and lifted up silently from within the very mind of Ayn Sof (the Infinite One) as a “holy seed” into the heavenly Temple from which it was begotten.

Like Yochanan, the Zohar tells us that everything (all creation) came into existence through this “light” which was begotten.

The Zohar continues:

(10) Yehi (יהי) (let there be) concerns the mystery of the Father and Mother symbolized by the letters Yod He became now a starting-point (symbolized by the second Yod) for further extension.

(Zohar 1:16b)

Here we are told that the Hebrew word Yehi (יהי) “let there be” points to the mystery of the begetting of the light. The first two letters spell YAH יה and consist of the letters yud י and heh ה. We are told that these two letters represent the Father and the Mother, and that the second yud י represents the light which was the starting point of creation.

So now when you read the first fourteen verses of Yochanan you will understand what it means when it identifies the Messiah as the “light” and as the “only begotten” and says that “Everything existed through Him, and without Him, not even one thing existed of that which existed.” Just as the Zohar tells us that “Everything that emerged went forth by this mystery.”

Messiah is the Son of Yah, the only begotten, the Ki Tov, the light, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead, and everything which emerged in creation went forth through Him.

Such is the testimony, not only of Yochanan, but of the Zohar as well.

Jn. 1:1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with Eloah and Eloah was the Word

**In the beginning –** These are the opening words of the Torah, though in Hebrew and Aramaic it is only one word. There is a great deal of significance to this first word of the Torah. Several pages of the opening of the Zohar are dedicated to discussion of the sod level meanings of just this one word. Many hidden meanings have been found in the word . For example, through Notarikon the Rabbis have seen the message:

“In the beginning Elohim saw that Israel would accept Torah”



Jewish Kabbalist Solomon Meir Ben Moses, who had converted to Christianity in 1665, believed he had found several such messages in the word  which he successfully used to bring about the conversion of another Jew who had been an anti-Christian apologist. Without endorsing any of these I simply relate them below:

“The Son, the Spirit, the Father, a Trinity, a perfect Unity”



“You shall worship My first-born, My first, whose name is Yeshua”



“When the master shall come whose name is Yeshua, you shall worship”



“I will choose a virgin worthy to bring forth Yeshua, and you shall call her blessed”



“I will conceal myself in cake [baked with] coals, for my body, Yeshua, you shall eat”



**The Word -** The primary theme of Yochanan’s account is to establish that Messiah is the “Word” incarnate. This has two major implications both of which Yochanan will continue to elaborate upon as his book continues.

**The Word** (Torah incarnate) - The first implication of the concept of the Messiah as the “Word” is the concept that Messiah is the Torah incarnate. To begin with the Torah is the “Word of YHWH”:

…For the Torah will go out from Zion;

and the ***Word*** of YHWH from Jerusalem.

(Is. 2:3)

Note that in this passage the words “Torah” and “***Word*** of YHWH” are used in Synonymous Poetic Parallelism as synonyms. Thus, the Messiah is the Torah incarnate. The Tanak tells us that the Torah is the ***Word*** (Is. 2:3), the Light (Prov. 6:23; Ps. 119:105; Is. 8:20; 51:4), the Truth (Ps. 119:142, 151) and the Way (Deut. 9:12; 11:22-28; 30:15-16) and Yochanan will tell us that the Messiah (being the Torah incarnate) is also is the ***Word*** (Jn. 1:1-3, 14-18; Rev. 19:13), the Light (Jn. 1:4-5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46; 14:6), the Truth (Jn. 14:6) and the Way (Jn. 14:6). Since the Torah is the substance of who the Messiah is, one cannot reject the Torah while accepting Messiah. To reject the Torah is to reject the substance of who the Messiah is.

According to Jewish tradition the entire running text of the Torah is one of the names of Elohim and the Torah is a living being:

…the entire Torah was in fact nothing else than the

Great Name of God Himself. In it God expressed his own

being insofar as His being pertained to creation and insofar as it was able to manifest through creation. Thus the divine energy chose to articulate itself in the form of the letters of the Torah as they express themselves in God’s name. … the Torah… served as an instrument of the creation. Thus, the Torah is a structure the whole of which is built on one fundamental principle, namely, the Ineffable Name. It can be compared to the mystic body of the Godhead, and God Himself is the soul of its letters. … The weaving of the Torah from the Ineffable Name suggests the analogy that the Torah is a living texture, a live body in the formulation of Azriel of Gerona and the Zohar. … The Torah has been passed on with the understanding that it is a living structure… The Torah is like a human body that has a head, torso, heart, mouth,

and so forth…

(***Kabbalah***; Gershom Scholem; 1978; pages 170-171)

**The Word** (YHWH incarnate) - This brings us to the concept of the Memra, the “***Word***”.

The concept of the “Word” (Greek: LOGOS; Aramaic: MEMRA; Hebrew: DAVAR) already had a very special and unique meaning in the Second Temple Era. The LOGOS/MEMRA was a very important concept in the Second Temple Era, and if we are to understand what Yochanan (John) is saying, we must understand this concept.

PHILO

Philo was an Alexandrian Jew who was born nearly 20 years before Yeshua and died around 20 years after his death. Philo was a “Hellenist Jew”. Not like the Hellenists of the Maccabean period who abandoned Torah for Paganism, but like Stephen (Acts 7) and the Hellenists in Acts 6. These Hellenists were Greek speaking Jews who remained Torah Observant (at least in their own understanding) while accepting Greek culture.

Josephus’ comments about Philo are so brief that we can quote them here in full:

“There was now a tumult arisen at Alexandria, between the Jewish inhabitants and the Greeks; and three ambassadors were chosen out of each party that were at variance, who came to Gaius. Now one of these ambassadors from the people of Alexandria was Apion, who uttered many blasphemies against the Jews; and, among other things that he said, he charged them with neglecting the honors that belonged to Caesar; for that while all who were subject to the Roman empire built altars and temples to Gaius, and in other regards universally received him as they received the gods, these Jews alone thought it a dishonorable thing for them to erect statues in honor of him, as well as to swear by his name. Many of these severe things were said by Apion, by which he hoped to provoke Gaius to anger at the Jews, as he was likely to be. But Philo, the principal of the Jewish embassage, a man eminent on all accounts, brother to Alexander the alabarch, and one not unskillful in philosophy, was ready to betake himself to make his defense against those accusations; but Gaius prohibited him, and bid him begone; he was also in such a rage, that it openly appeared he was about to do them some very great mischief. So Philo being thus affronted, went out, and said to those Jews who were about him, that they should be of good courage, since Gaius’s words indeed showed anger at them, but in reality had already set God against himself.” (Antiquities of the Jews, xviii.8, 1)

Rabbinic Judaism has forgotten Philo. He is never mentioned or cited in the Rabbinic literature which makes no great mention of any Alexandrian Jews.

Philo is very important to us because he writes much about the Second Temple Era Jewish concept of the “Word” (Greek: LOGOS). We should not seek to understand John 1:1-3, 15 1and Jn. 19:13 in a vacuum. Remember, Philo lived and wrote at the same time as the “New Testament” events were taking place. However, Philo was far away in Alexandria Egypt, and apparently unaware of the budding Nazarene movement which had not yet come to Alexandria.

In order to understand Philo’s concept of the Word, we must understand Philo’s concept of Elohim. Philo saw a conflict within Elohim. On the one hand, he saw Elohim as beyond man and far removed from the finiteness of this universe. He refers to this concept in Greek as TO ON (that which exists) and TO ONTOS ON “that which alone truly exists”. This concept of Elohim is conceived as virtually outside this universe with no real contact with it. This unknowable Elohim appeared from Ex. 20:21. In Rabbinic Judaism (i.e. Kabbalah) this unknowable Elohim is called in Hebrew EIN SOF (without end/border; The Infinite One).

For Philo the Word (Logos) was a sort of bridge between the unknowable remote Elohim and the universe. The Word was a manifestation of the unknowable Elohim in this universe, an intermediary or mediator between man and Elohim. One can immediately see that Philo’s Word parallels Rabbinic Judaism’s (Kabbalah’s) SEFIROT.

Philo writes much about the concept of the “Word” (Greek: Logos)

…So that the Word (Logos) is, as it were, the charioteer of the powers,…

(On Flight and Finding XIX 101)

This is very important, as we have a first century Jew revealing to us the mystery of the throne-chariot.

The Mishna tells us:

They do not expound upon…

Ma’aseh Bereshit before [more than] two, or Ma’aseh Merkavah before [more than] one unless he was a sage and understands of his own knowledge.

(m.Hagigah 2:1)

In the Mishnah the Ma’aseh Merkavah (account of the throne-chariot) was a secret. But Philo tells us all about the secret, he tells us that the charioteer is the Word (Logos). It is generally accepted that the mysteries of the Ma’aseh Merkavah (account of the chariot – i.e. Ezek. 1-2) and Ma’aseh Bereshit (account of creation) were the material that later came to be referred to as “Kabbalah”. Philo tells us that the big secret of the chariot is that the charioteer is the Word.

Philo says:

…Every man in regard of his intellect is connected with Logos (Word), being an impression of, or a fragment or emanation of that blessed nature…

(Philo; On Creation LI (146))

Philo gave a very detailed description to the Word (Logos). To Philo the Word was the creator:

As therefore the city, when previously shadowed out in

the mind of architectural skill had no external place, but

was stamped solely in the mind of the workman, so in

the same manner neither can the world which existed in

ideas have had any other local position except the

Logos (Word) which made them…

(Philo; On Creation V (20))

Philo taught that the Word (Logos) was the shadow of God and was the instrument of creation.

…But the shadow of God is his Logos (Word),

which he used like an instrument when he was

making the world.

(Philo; Allegorical Interpretation III XXXI (96))

Not only does Philo speak of this “Word” but the ancient Targums do so as well. The Targums were Aramaic paraphrases of the books of the Tanak. Throughout the Targums we read of this entity called the “Word” (Aramaic: MEMRA). On many occasions the Targums paraphrase YHWH with the phase “Word of YHWH” and on some occasions the Word (MEMRA) is mentioned in the paraphrase where YHWH is not mentioned. The term is applied to YHWH in Targum Onkelos 179 times, the Jerusalem Targum 99 times and Targum Pseudo-Jonathan 321 times.

This “Word of YHWH” was, according to Targum Jonathan, the Creator:

And the Word [Memra] of YHWH created man in his likeness,

in the likeness of YHWH, YHWH created,

male and female created He them.

(Targ. Jonathan Gen. 1:27)

This idea is also put forward in the Jerusalem Targum:

And the Word [Memra] of YHWH said to Moses:

“I am He who said unto the world ‘Be!’ and it was:

and who in the future shall say to it ‘Be!’

and it shall be.” And He said: “Thus you shall say

to the children of Israel: ‘I Am’ has sent me to you.”

(Jerusalem Targum Ex. 3:14)

The Fragmentary Targum of the Torah also expresses that the Word of YHWH was the Creator:

The first night, when the “Word of YHWH”

was revealed to the world in order to create it,

the world was desolate and void,

and darkness spread over the face of the abyss

and the “Word of the Lord” was bright and illuminating

and He called it the first night.

(Fragmentary Targum Ex. 12:42)

That the Word of YHWH was the Creator can also be seen in the Tanak itself:

By the Word (DAVAR) of YHWH were the heavens made,

and all the hosts of them by the Spirit of His mouth.

(Ps. 33:6)

Whenever the Targums come to passages where YHWH is anthropomorphized or seen, or where two or more YHWHs are indicated by the text, the Targums will substitute “The Word [Memra] of YHWH” for YHWH. For example, in Gen. 19:24 the Tanak has:

And YHVH rained brimstone and fire upon Sodom and upon Gomorrah, from YHVH, from the heavens.

(Original Bible Project preliminary edition)

The Hebrew grammar here indicates that one YHWH rains fire from another YHWH. But Targum Jonathan substitutes “The Word of YHWH/the L-RD” for the first of the two YHWHs as follows:

And the Word of the YHWH caused to descend upon the peoples of Sodom and Gomorrah, brimstone and fire from the YHWH in heaven.

In another example the Torah has:

Ex. 24:1a (YHWH is the speaker, see Ex. 20:1-2)

Now He [YHWH] said to Moses, “come up to YHWH…”

But Targum Jonathan paraphrases the speaker in Ex. 20:1 with the substitution “the Word [Memra] of YHWH” in place of “YHWH.”

“And the Word of the Lord spoke all these glorious words…”

So, it would seem that one of these entities called “YHWH” in these Torah passages was actually understood by the Targumists as being the “Word of YHWH.”

Moreover, Abraham prayed in the name of the Word of YHWH:

And Abraham worshipped and prayed

in the name of the Word [Memra] of YHWH,

and said, “You are YHWH who does see,

but You cannot be seen.”

(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 22:14)

Note that here Abraham prays “in the name of the Word of YHWH” to the YHWH who “cannot be seen.” Here two YHWH’s are very apparent. Abraham is praying in the name of the Word of YHWH but is praying to the YHWH who cannot be seen. This idea is reinforced elsewhere as follows:

And Hagar praised and prayed in the name of the Word [Memra] Of YHWH who had revealed Himself to her…

(Jerusalem Targum Gen. 16:3)

Of this very incident Philo writes:

But Hagar flees out of shame. And a proof of this is, that the angel, that is the WORD of God, met her, with the intent to recommend her what she ought to do, and to guide her in her return to her mistress’s house. For he encouraged her, and said unto her: “The Lord has heard the cry of thy humiliation,” which you uttered, not out of fear, nor yet out of hatred. For the one is the feeling of an ignoble soul, and the other of one which loves contention, but under the influence of that copy of temperance and modesty, shame.

(On Flight and Finding (5))

It was this Word of YHWH that Jacob also trusted in:

And Jacob vowed a vow, saying, “If the Word [Memra] of YHWH will be my support, and will keep me in the way that I go, and will give me bread to eat, and raiment to put on, so that I come again to my father’s house in peace; then shall the Word [Memra]of YHWH be my Elohim.

(Targum Onkelos on Gen. 28:20-21)

Philo’s concept of the “Word” (Logos) is the “image of Elohim” which served as the pattern for the creation of man in Gen. 1:26-27. Philo writes:

…For God does not seem to have availed himself

of any other animal existing in creation as his model

in the formation of man; but to have been guided,

as I have said before, by his own Word (Logos) alone…

(Philo; On Creation XLVIII (139))

But the divine Word (Logos) which is above these

does not come into any visible appearance,

inasmuch as it is not like to any of the things

that come under the external senses,

but is itself an image of God,

the most ancient of all the objects of intellect

in the whole world, and that which is placed

in the closest proximity to the only truly existing God,

without any partition or distance being interposed

between them:

(On Flight and Finding XVIII (101))

Now, Bezaleel, being interpreted, means God in his shadow.

But the shadow of God is his Word (Logos), which he used

like an instrument when he was making the world.

And this shadow, and, as it were, model, is the archetype of other things. For, as God is himself the model of that image which he has now called a shadow, so also that image is the model of other things,

as he showed when he commenced giving the law to the Israelites,

and said, “And God made man according to the image of God.”[Gen. 1:26] as the image was modeled according to God, and as man was modeled according to the image, which thus received the power and character of the model.

(Allegorical Interpretations III 96)

For if it was necessary to examine the mortal body

of the priest that it ought not be imperfect through

any misfortune, much more was it necessary to look

into his immortal soul, which they say is fashioned

in the form of the living God. Now the image of God

is the Word (Logos), by which all the world was made.

(The Special Laws I, 81)

What is the man who was created? And how is that man

distinguished who was made after the image of God? (Gen. 2:7).

This man was created as perceptible to the senses,

and in the similitude of a Being appreciable only by the intellect;

but he who in respect of his form is intellectual and incorporeal,

is the similitude of the archetypal model as to appearance,

and he is the form of the principal character;

but this is the Word (Logos) of God, the first beginning of all things,

the original species or the archetypal idea,

the first measure of the universe.

(Q & A on Gen. I, 4)

Why is it that he speaks as if of some other god,

saying that he made man after the image of God,

and not that he made him after his own image? (Gen. 9:6).

Very appropriately and without any falsehood

was this oracular sentence uttered by God,

for no mortal thing could have been formed

on the similitude of the supreme Father of the universe,

but only after the pattern of the second deity,

who is the Word (Logos) of the supreme Being;

since it is fitting that the rational soul of man should bear it

the type of the divine Word (Logos); since in his first Word (Logos)

God is superior to the most rational possible nature.

But he who is superior to the Word (Logos) holds his rank

in a better and most singular pre-eminence, and how could

the creature possibly exhibit a likeness of him in himself?

Nevertheless he also wished to intimate this fact,

that God does rightly and correctly require vengeance,

in order to the defense of virtuous and consistent men,

because such bear in themselves a familiar acquaintance

with his Word (Logos), of which the human mind is

the similitude and form.

(Q & A on Gen. II 62)

This parallels what we read in the Targum:

And the Word (Memra) of YHWH

created man in his likeness,

in the likeness of YHWH, YHWH created,

male and female created He them.

(Targ. Jonathan Gen. 1:27)

ADAM KADMON

We said before that Philo’s Word (Logos) parallels the SEFIROT of the Kabbalah in Rabbinic Judaism. In Kabbalah the SEFIROT are said to be manifested in “Adam Kadmon”. According to Genesis, man was created in the “image of Elohim”. This “image of Elohim” was a manifestation of the Godhead, which served as a model for Adam.

…the form (image) of G-d in which He created man is actually G-d’s blueprint form for man. This “form” or “blueprint” consisted of G-d’s first thought in creation, and hence the highest level of creation. This is referred to as “Adam Kadmon” (Primeval Man).

(Bahir; Aryeh Kaplan; p. 95 in Kaplans commentary to Bahir 7)

“Adam Kadmon” means “before Adam” and refers to the “image of Elohim” after which we were created. Gershom Scholem writes:

In His active manifestations, the Godhead appears as the dynamic unity of the Sefiroth, portrayed as the “tree of the Sefiroth,” or the mystical human form (‘Adam Kadmon), who is none other than the concealed shape of Godhead itself.

(On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead; Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah; p. 39)

However, the Sefiroth do not appear only in the shape of the tree. They also appear in the form of Primal Man (‘Adam Kadmon),which corresponds to that of earthly man.

(ibid p. 43)

Thus, he is not just the Tree and the Sefirot, he is Adam Kadmon, the image of Elohim:

The Holy One, blessed be He, has a son, whose glory (tifret) shines from one end of the world to another. He is a great and mighty tree, whose head reaches heaven, and whose roots are set in the holy ground, and his name is “Mispar” and his place is in the uppermost heaven,… as it is written, “The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory (tifret) of God” (Ps. 19:1). Were it not for this “Mispar” there would be neither hosts Nor offspring in any of the worlds.

(Zohar 2:105a)

Adam Kadmon, however, was not just the image of Elohim. He was actually Elohim himself, as Gershom Scholem writes:

…God entered into the form of the Adam Kadmon…

(Kabbalah by Gershom Scholem p. 116)

The Adam Kadmon was “the likeness like the appearance of a man” which Ezekiel saw upon the throne (Ezek. 1:26) in his Merkavah vision (vision of the divine throne-chariot).

Remember, Philo tells us:

…So that the Word (Logos) is, as it were, the charioteer of the powers,…

(On Flight and Finding XIX 101)

In the so-called “New Testament” the “Word” is the Messiah Yeshua, of whom we read:

…the Messiah, who is the likeness of Elohim.

(2Cor. 4:4)

[his Son] who is the image of the invisible Elohim..

(Col. 1:15)

[the Son] who is the radiance of his glory,

and the image of his being…

(Heb. 1:3)

The identification of Messiah Yeshua with Adam Kadmon is also reflected in 1Cor. 15:45 where Yeshua is called “the last Adam”.

In order to understand Philo’s concept of the Word (Logos) it is important to understand Philo’s concept of Elohim. Philo says:

“The primal existence is God, and second the God-Word”

(Allegorical Interpretation II, 86)

“The Creator of the world sends out His powers

from an eternal and invisible place”

(Q&A on Genesis, II, 48)

Philo raises the question

“…regarding its Creator, asking of what sort this Being is so difficult to see, so difficult to conjecture. Is He a body or incorporeal or something exalted above these? Is He a single nature… Or a composite Being?…and seeing that this is a problem hard to pursue, hard to take in by thought, he prays that he may learn from God Himself what God is.”

(Flight and Finding, 164)

Philo doesn’t answer this question here, but he does answer these questions elsewhere. In “On the Confusion of Tongues”, 62, He calls God “incorporeal” and in a later section, he describes God as a “Triad” (Trinity). He refers to God as “…the Lord God of three natures…”(Philo; On the Change of Names II, 11). He also says:

…it is reasonable for one to be three and for three to be one, for they were one by a higher principle… …in the place of one, He makes the appearance of a triad [trinity]… He cannot be seen in his oneness without something [else], the chief Powers that that exist immediately with him… the Creative, which is called “Elohim” and the Kingly, which is called “Lord”… he begins to see the sovereign, holy, and divine vision in such a way that a single appearance appears as a triad [trinity], and the triad [trinity] as a unity.

(Philo; Questions on Genesis, IV, 2)

According to Philo God appears as a Triad — himself and his two Powers: Creative and Ruling. To the “purified soul,” however, God appears as One.

… the Father of the universe, who in the sacred scripture is called by his proper name,

‘I am that I am’; and the beings on each side are those most ancient powers which are always close to the living God, one of which is called his Creative Power, and the other his Royal Power. And the Creative Power is God, for it is by this that he made and arranged the universe; and the Royal Power is the Lord, for it is fitting that the Creator should lord it over and govern the creature. Therefore, the middle person of the three, being attended by each of his powers as by body-guard, presents to the mind, which is endowed with the faculty of sight, a vision at one time of one being, and at another time of three; …

(Abr. 119-123).

The reconciliation of these two opposing “powers”, the central power is the Word (Logos):

…the Divine Word (Logos)…fills all things and becomes a mediator and arbitrator for the two sides….from the Divine Word (Logos), as from a spring, there divide and break forth two powers. One is the creative through which the Artificer placed and ordered all things. This is named “God”. And the royal, since through it the Creator rules over created things. This is called “Lord” And from these two powers have grown the others. For by the side of the creative power there grows the propitious of which is named “beneficial” while (besides) the royal the legislative, of which is aptly named “punitive”. And below these and beside them is the ark.”

(Philo on Q&A on Exodus, II.68)

As we stated earlier Philo’s “Word” (Logos) parallels Kabbalah’s SEFIROT.

According to the Sefer Yetzirah there are ten sefirot:

Ten Sefirot of Nothingness ten and not nine ten and not eleven…

(Sefer Yetzirah 1:4)

The ten sefirot are arranged on a chart known as the “Tree of Life” under three columns known as the “three pillars of the Godhead”.

As we read in the Bahir:

Why are they called Sephirot?

Because it is written (Psalm 19:2),

“The heavens declare (me-SaPRim) the glory of God.”

And what are they?

They are three. Among them are three troops and three dominions.

(Bahir 125-126)

The Zohar describes the three pillars of the Godhead as follows:

Concerning this, too, it is written: “Let there be light, and there was light” (Gen. I, 3). Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word “light” in this verse? The answer is that the first “light” refers to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is destined for the “end of days”; while the second “light” refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right. The next words, “And God saw the light that it was good” (Gen. 1, 4), refer to the pillar which, standing midway between them, unites both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, “it was good”, since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove the strife between Right and Left, as it is written, “And Elohim separated between the light and between the darkness” (Ibid.).

(Zohar 2:167a)

This is the Middle Pillar: Ki Tob (that it was good) threw light above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of Tetragrammaton, the name which embraces all sides.

(Zohar 1:16b)

**THE SON AND METATRON**

Philo Writes of the Word (Logos):

For there are, as it seems, two temples belonging to God; one being this world, in which the high priest is the divine word, his own firstborn son. The other is the rational soul, the priest of which is the real true man,

(On Dreams 215)

And if there be not as yet anyone who is worthy to be called a son of God, nevertheless let him labor earnestly to be adorned according to his Firstborn Word, the eldest of his angels, as the great archangel of many names; for He is called, “the Authority”, and “the Name of God”, and “the Word”, and “man according to God’s image”, and “He who sees Israel”. . . For even if we are not yet suitable to be called the sons of God, still we may deserve to be called the children of his eternal image, of his most sacred Word; for the image of God is his most ancient word.

(On the Confusion of Tongues XXVIII:146-147)

Thus, indeed, being a shepherd is a good thing, so that it is justly attributed, not only to kings, and to wise men, and to souls who are perfectly purified, but also to God, the ruler of all things; and he who confirms this is not any ordinary person, but a prophet, whom it is good to believe, he namely who wrote the psalms; for he speaks thus, “The Lord is my shepherd, and he shall cause me to lack Nothing;” (Ps. 23:1.) and let everyone in his turn say the same thing, for it is very becoming to every man who loves God to study such a song as this, but above all this world should sing it. For God, like a shepherd and a king, governs (as if they were a flock of sheep) the earth, and the water, and the air, and the fire, and all the plants, and living creatures that are in them, whether mortal or divine; and he regulates the nature of the heaven, and the periodical revolutions of the sun and moon, and the variations and harmonious movements of the other stars, ruling them according to law and justice; appointing, as their immediate superintendent, his own right reason, his first-born son, who is to receive the charge of this sacred company, as the lieutenant of the great king; for it is said somewhere, “Behold, I am he! I will send my messenger before thy face, who shall keep thee in the Road.”(Ex. 23:20.)

(On Husbandry 50-51)

According to the Zohar, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead is also known as the “Son of Yah”:

Better is a neighbor that is near, than a brother far off.

This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the godhead,

which is the Son of Yah.

(Zohar 2:115)

The Middle Pillar is also known as “Metatron”:

The Middle Pillar [of the godhead] is Metatron,

Who has accomplished peace above,

According to the glorious state there.

(Zohar 3:227)

And in the Zohar we are also told that Metatron is “the firstborn” and the “ruler of all He has” and “committed to Him the government over all His hosts”:

“And Abraham said to his oldest servant of his house…” (Gen. 24:2) Who is this of whom it said “his servant?” In what sense must this be understood? Who is this servant? R. Nehori answered:

“It is in no other sense to be understood than expressed in the word “His servant,”

His servant, the servant of Elohim, the chief to His service. And who is he? Metatron, as said. He is appointed to glorify the bodies which are in the grave. This is the meaning of the words “Abraham said to His servant” that is to the servant of Elohim. The servant is Metatron, the eldest of His [YHWH's] House, who is the firstborn of all creatures of Elohim, who is the ruler of all He has; because Elohim has committed to Him the government over all His hosts.

(Zohar 1:129b)

This recalls not only what Philo has said about the “Word” (Logos) but also a statement by Paul in his letter to the Colossians:

Who is the image of Eloah, which is invisible, and the Firstborn of all creation? And by him was created everything that is in heaven and on earth, all that is seen and all that is not seen, whether thrones or sovereignties or principalities or authorities. Everything through him and by him was created. He was from before, and all and everything by him was established. And he is the head of the Assembly, because He is the head, And the Firstborn from among the dead, that he might be first in all.

(Col. 1:15-18)

Philo makes a very interesting comment concerning the Torah command of the cities of refuge (Num. 35:6-28; Josh. 20:1-9). The Torah says:

And the assembly shall deliver the manslayer, out of the hand of the avenger of blood, and the assembly shall restore him to his city of refuge, where he was fled. And he shall dwell therein until the death of the High Priest, who was anointed with the Set- Apart oil.

(Numbers 35:25)

Philo makes an interesting observation on this passage, he writes:

The fourth and last of the points which we proposed to discuss, is the appointing as a period for the return of the fugitives the death of the high priest, which, if taken in the literal sense, causes me great perplexity; for a very unequal punishment is imposed by this enactment on those who have done the very same things, since some will be in banishment for a longer time, and others for a shorter time; for some of the high priests live to a very old age, and others die very early, and some are appointed while young men, and others not until they are old. And again of those who are convicted of unintentional homicide, some have been banished at the beginning of the high priest’s entrance into office, and some when the high priest has been at the very point of death. So that some are deprived of their country for a very long time, and others suffer the same infliction only for a day, if it chance to be so; after which they lift up their heads, and exult, and so return among those whose nearest relations have been slain by them. This difficult and scarcely explicable perplexity we may escape if we adopt the inner and allegorical explanation in accordance with natural philosophy. For we say that the high priest is not a man, but is the Word (Logos) of God, who has not only no participation in intentional errors, but none even in those which are involuntary.

(On Flight 106-108)

Elsewhere he writes:

XXVI. (82) But Melchisedek shall bring forward wine instead of water, and shall give your souls to drink, and shall cheer them with unmixed wine, in order that they may be wholly occupied with a divine intoxication, more sober than sobriety itself. For the Word is a priest, having, as its inheritance the true God, and entertaining lofty and sublime and magnificent ideas about him, “for he is the priest of the most high God.”{38}{Genesis 14:18.} Not that there is any other God who is not the most high; for God being one, is in the heaven above, and in the earth beneath, and there is no other besides Him.”{39}{Deuteronomy 4:39.} But he sets in motion the notion of the Most High, from his conceiving of God not in a low and grovelling spirit, but in one of exceeding greatness, and exceeding sublimity, apart from any conceptions of matter.

(“De Allegoriis Legum,” iii. 26).

Philo thus concludes that the true High Priest is the Word (Logos). If we follow Philo’s logic through, then through the death of the Word, these exiles are set free.

**MELCHIZADEK**

Philo’s true “High Priest” (The Word) ties in well with a document found among the Dead Sea Scrolls known as The Melchizadek Document (11Q13). 11Q13 speaks of this Messiah as a figure called “Melchizedek.” In this document Is. 61:2 is quoted with “Melchizedek” substituted for YHWH. Furthermore, the terms EL and ELOHIM are in 11Q13 applied to the Melchizedek/Messiah figure.

11Q13 Col. 4-9 quotes Is. 61:1-2 but substitutes “the year of Melchizedek’s favor” for “the year of YHWH’s favor” thus identifying the Melchizedek figure with YHWH in this passage. 11Q13 goes on to say:

…as it is written about him [Melchizedek] in the Songs of David,

“ELOHIM has taken his place in the council of EL;

in the midst of the ELOHIM he holds judgment”

(Ps. 82:1) Scripture also says about him [Melchizedek],

“Over it take your seat in the highest heaven;

EL will judge the peoples” (Ps. 7:7-8)

(11Q13 Col. 10-11)

The text of 11Q13 goes on to apply the passage “Your ELOHIM reigns” (Is. 52:7) to Melchizedek finally concluding:

“Your ELOHIM” (Is. 52:7) is Melchizedek, who will deliver them from the power of Belial.

(11Q13 Col. 24-25)

The Melchizadek figure of 11Q13 would free the captives (Is. 61:1-2) and through the Day of Atonement will “atone for all the Sons of Light”.

In Hebrews 4:14-7:28 Paul argues that Messiah Yeshua (The Word of Jn. 1:1-3, 14) is the true High Priest and true Melchizadek making atonement for us in the heavenly Temple by his blood.

Philo also describes the Word (Logos) not only as the “Son” of the “Father” but as a PARACLETE who is “perfect in all virtue” and procures “forgiveness of sins” as well as a “supply of unlimited blessings”:

…the twelve stones arranged on the breast in four rows of three stones each, namely the logeum, being also an emblem of that reason (Logos, Word) which holds together and regulates the universe. For it was indispensable that the man who was consecrated to the Father of the world, should have as a paraclete, his son, the being most perfect in all virtue, to procure forgiveness of sins, and a supply of unlimited blessings;

(Life of Moses II, 133-134)

This Greek word (paraclete) is also a Hebrew and Aramaic word also appears in the Mishna:

He who does even a single religious duty

gets himself a good advocate (or comforter Hebrew: paraklita)

he who does even a single transgression

gets himself a prosecutor.

(m.Avot 4:11a)

And in the Talmud it is used to refer to the sin offering::

R. Simeon said: For what purpose does a sin-offering come? —

[You ask,] ‘for what purpose does a sin-offering come?’

Surely in order to make atonement! —

Rather, [the question is:]

Why does it come before the burnt-offering?

[Because it is] like an intercessor (paraklita) who enters

[to appease the King]: When the intercessor (paraklita)

has appeased [him], the gift follows.

(b.Zev. 7b)

The Jewish Dictionary states:

…The sin offering is like the parclete (paraklita) before God,

it interceded for man and is followed by another…

a thank offering for the pardon obtained…

the two daily burnt offerings are called ‘the two parcletes’…

Jewish Dictionary pp. 514-515

Now Yochanan, who identifies the Messiah as the Word (logos) in Jn. 1:1-3, 14 and Rev. 19:13 also says of Messiah:

1 My sons, I write these [things] to you, that you do not sin: and if someone should sin, we have an advocate (paraklita) with the Father, Yeshua the Messiah, the just [One].

2 For He is the propitiation for our sins, and not on behalf of ours only, but also on behalf of [the sins of] the whole world.

(1st Yochanan (John) 2:1)

With all of this in mind, it is no surprise that the Targums tell us that the Word (Aramaic: Memra) is the source of our salvation. Jacob called upon the Word for his salvation:

Our father Jacob said: “My soul does not wait for salvation such as that wrought by Gideon, the son of Joash, for that was but temporal; neither for a salvation like that of Samson, which was only transitory; but for that salvation which You have promised to come, through Your Word unto Your people, the children of Israel; for your salvation my soul hopes.”

(Targum Jonathan Gen. 49:18)

That the Word of YHWH is the savior is expressed elsewhere in the Targums:

But Israel shall be saved by the Word of YHWH with an everlasting

salvation… By the Word of YHWH shall all the seed of Israel be justified…

(Targum Jonathan Is. 45:17, 25)

But I will have mercy upon the house of Judah, and I will save them by the Word of YHWH, their Elohim.

(Targum Jonathan Hosea 1:7)

It was, according to Targum Onkelos, this Word of YHWH that Abraham trusted in, by which he was justified:

And Abraham trusted in the Word [Memra] of YHWH, and He counted it to him for righteousness.

(Targum Onkelos Gen. 15:6)

Likewise, Paul quotes Gen. 15:6 in Romans 4:3 and Galatians 3:6 to prove his point that we are justified by faith in the Messiah.

Now here is perhaps the most amazing thing, Philo believed “Word” (Logos) and the Messiah to be one and the same:

“The head of all things is the eternal Word (Logos) of the eternal God, under which, as if it were his feet or other limbs, is placed the whole world, over which He passes and firmly stands. Now it is not because Messiah is Lord that He passes and sits over the whole world, for His seat with His Father and God but because for its perfect fullness the world is in need of the care and superintendence of the best ordered dispensation, and for its own complete piety, of the Divine Word (Logos), just as living creatures (need) a head, without which it is impossible to live.”

(Q&A on Exodus, II, 117)

And with all of this in mind, we should not be surprised to read in the Zohar concerning Messiah:

“In the Garden of Eden there is a hall that is called the “hall of the afflicted.” Now it is into this hall that the Messiah goes and summons all the afflictions and pains and sufferings of Israel to come upon him. And so they all come upon him. And had he not eased the children of Israel of their sorrows, and taken their burden upon himself, there would be none who could endure the suffering of Israel in the penalty of neglecting the Torah. Thus it is written: “Surely our diseases he did bear and our pains he carried.” (Is. 53:5) As long as the children of Israel dwelt in the Holy Land, they averted all afflictions and sufferings from the world by the service of the sanctuary and by sacrifice. But now it is the Messiah who is averting them from the habitants of the world,”

(Zohar 2:212a)

So, there you have it. I have a few times failed to resist the temptation to crack open the “New Testament” simply for the purpose of showing a clear parallel, but using the works of Philo, the Dead Sea Scrolls and Rabbinic literature I have laid out the concept of the Word as I believe it existed in the first century.

The Word is:

\* The Image of Elohim from which we were created

\* The Middle Pillar of the Three Pillars of the Godhead, reconciling to opposing “powers” or “pillars” and thus encompassing all three.

\* The Firstborn Son of Yah

\* The true High Priest, Melchizadek, redeeming us through his death.

\* The Paraklete procuring forgiveness for our sins.

\* Our Savior

\* The Messiah

Regarding the concept of the Memra (“***Word***”) as understood in Rabbinic Judaism Gershom Scholem writes:

...the memra-- the paraphrase used in the Targumim,

the Aramaic Bible translations, to refer to God's word.

The memra is not merely a linguistic device for overcoming

the problem of biblical anthropomorphisms; it has theological

significance in its own right. The memra....is...."a world-permeating force, a reality in the world of matter or mind, the emmanent aspect of God, holding all things under its omnipresent sway."

(***On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead:***

***Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah,***

by Gershom Scholem pg 181-182)

The concept of the “***Word***” also appears in the Book of Enoch (see notes to Jude 1:14-15):

…and YHWH called me with His own mouth,

and said to me: “Come here, Enoch, and hear My ***Word***.

(1Enoch 14:24)

And when he shall lift up his countenance   
To judge their secret ways according to

the ***Word*** of the name of YHWH of Spirits…

(1Enoch 61:9)

And in those days the ***Word*** of Eloah came unto me,

and He said unto me: ' Noah, your lot has come up before Me,…

(1Enoch 67:1)

And now, my son Methuselah, call to me all your brothers   
And gather together to me all the sons of thy mother;   
For the ***Word*** calls me,   
And the Spirit is poured out upon me,…

(1Enoch 91:1)

In those days when He hath brought a grievous fire upon you,   
Whither will ye flee, and where will ye find deliverance ?   
And when He launches forth His ***Word*** against you

will you not be affrighted and fear?

(1Enoch 102:1)

Thus, when Yochanan refers to the “***Word***” he refers to this concept of the Living Torah incarnate, the Middle Pillar of the Godhead, the Son of Yah, the Lesser YHWH.

**In the beginning was the Word** What word is that? The word  “bereshit” .

 (in the beginning) was the word. Messiah is also described in Rev. 3:14 as "...the beginning of the creation of Elohim..." Messiah is the BERESHIT  of the creation of ELOHIM.

**and the Word was with Eloah**

The word () was with ELOHIM as Gen. 1:1 begins BERESHIT BARA ELOHIM. BERESHIT () is with ELOHIM in Genesis 1:1. Yochanan (John) 1:1 is pointing us to the word BERESHIT () in Genesis 1:1 where the word BERESHIT is with ELOHIM.

**and Eloah was the Word**

The word BERESHIT () is ELOHIM. The key to who ELOHIM is, is hidden on a SOD level in the word BERESHIT ().

The first three letters of BERASHIT are: 

 stands for  (Son)

 stands for (Spirit)

 stands for  (Father)

These three are the three pillars of the Godhead. They ARE ELOHIM. Moreover as we discussed earlier, hidden within the word  we can find the phrase:

“The Son, the Spirit, the Father, a Trinity, a perfect Unity”



The opening portion of the Zohar tells of how each of the Hebrew letters petitions Elohim

wishing to be the first of the creation. (BEIT)is chosen to be the first letter of creation and of the Torah because BEIT is the first letter of BARUCH (bless) because it is with BEIT that Elohim is blessed. Thus according to the Zohar the BEIT (which we have identified with BEN/Son) is the beginning of all creation.

Now the letter BEIT in Paleo Hebrew the letter BEIT is a pictograph of a house (In Hebrew BEIT means “house”). The Messiah is the “house” of the Abba (Father) and the Ruach (Spirit).

Eccl. 12:1 says "Remember now your creators" ("creators" is plural in the Hebrew here)

This points us to the repetition of the letters in the next word after BERSHIT in Gen. 1:1  BARA (create/created) In the Hebrew Gen. 1:1 could be read as

 is the creator ELOHIM. Or “in the beginning  was ELOHIM.”

According to the ***Sefer Yetzirah*** (Book of Formation) :

...He created His universe with three SEFARIM (books):

with SEFER (text) with SEFAR (number)

and with SIPPUR (communication).

(***Sefer Yetzirah*** 1:1b)

According to the commentary of Rabbi HaKalir (around 6th century, some authorities place him in the second century and identify him with R. Eliezer the son of R. Shim'on bar Yochai traditional author of the

Zohar.):

When the Glory created the world, He created it through

the three Sefarim namely, through Sefer, Sefar and Sippur,

by which the three "beings" are meant; because it is written

in the history of creation, "These are the generations

of the heavens and the earth, when they created."

Our Rabbis, of blessed memory, have expounded the letter ,

in the word , thus through the letter  (an

abbreviation for HaShem, i.e. YHWH) are indicating the three

"beings" and this is the secret of the Torah, when saying,

"In the beginning Elohim created" (Gen. 1:1) etc.

and later when it is said "In the day that YHWH Elohim

made the earth and the heavens." The Psalmist (may peace be

upon him) said, "By the Word of YHWH were the heavens

made, and all the host of them by the Spirit (or breath) of his

mouth" (Ps. 33:6)...

The Rabbi, my lord teacher of blessed memory,

explained "Sefer, Safer and Sippur"

are "Yah, YHWH and Elohim", meaning to say,

that the world was created by these three names.

(***Rabbi Eliezer HaKalir On Gen***. 1:1 Mantra Edition p. 28, 29)

In his commentary to the phrase “with three books” in Sefer Yetzirah 1:1b Aryey Kaplan identifies these with the divisions of Universe, Year and Soul” which the Sefer Yetzirah calls depictions of the “three mothers” (i.e. the letters ) (Sefer Yetzirah 3:3).

The Sefer Yetzirah says:

Twenty-two Foundational Letters:

Three Mothers

Seven Doubles

and Twelve Elementals.

The Three Mothers are Alef Mem Shin,

(i.e. the letters )

Their foundation is

a pan of merit

a pan of liability

and a tongue of decree deciding between them.

Three Mothers, Alef Mem Shin

Mem hums,

Shin hisses

and Alef is the Breath of air (RUACH; Spirit) deciding

between them.]

(***Sefer Yetzirah*** 2:1)

The Sefer Yetzirah speaks of 32 "Paths of Wisdom". These are made up of the ten SEFIROT and the 22 Hebrew letters. The Sefer Yetzirah goes on to subdivide the 22 Hebrew letters into three categories: Three Mothers; Seven Doubles and twelve Elementals. One could write pages about the significance of these things, however here I simply want to address Sefer Yetzirah 2:1 which speaks about the three Mothers ALEF, MEM and SHIN (i.e. the letters ).

Here the Sefer Yetzirah compares these three "Mothers" to a balance-scale with a "pan of merit" and a "pan of liability" and "a tongue of decree deciding between them".

Sometime later the Sefer Yetzirah says:

Three Mothers, Alef Mem Shin (i.e. the letters )

in the Universe are air, water, fire.

Heaven was created from fire

Earth was created from water

and air from Breath (Ruach; Spirit) decides between them.

(***Sefer Yetzirah*** 3:4)

Thus, the analogy given is:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| *Shin * | *Alef * | *Mem * |
| Fire | Air | Water |
| Hissing | Breath of air | Humming |
| Pan of Liability | Breath of Air | Pan of Merit |

The concept here is obvious. One of balance between opposing forces. There are two forces, an aggressive expanding force, and a submissive contracting force. Then there is the reconciling of these two opposing forces in-between.

These are often characterized in Kabbalah as a masculine (aggressive) aspect of the godhead and a feminine (permissive) aspect of the godhead. According to Paul (Rom. 1) the masculine and feminine attributes of the godhead are manifest to us in ourselves and in the creation around us (see Rom. 1: ).

The masculine aspect of the Godhead is often called Father while the feminine is often called Mother or Ruach. The reconciling of these two in-between is often called "The Son of Yah".

These are known in Kabbalah as the three Tzachtzachot (supernal lights; splenders) Gershom Scholem explains these three supernal lights this way:

…above all emanated powers, there exist in

"the root of all roots" three hidden lights which

have no beginning, "for they are the name and

essence of the root of all roots... It is stressed

that these three lights constitute one essence

and one root which is "infinitely hidden" (ne'lam ad

le-ein sof) [literally: hidden until Eyn-Sof],

forming a kind of kabbalistic trinity that precedes

the emanation of the ten Sefirot.... In the terminology

of the Kabbalah these three lights are called

tzachtzachot (splendors)…Christians later found

an allusion to their own doctrine of the trinity

in this theory.

(***Kabbalah*** by Gershom Scholem p. 95)

These three Tzachtzachot are also known as "the three pillars of the Godhead".

These three pillars are known as the Pillar of Severity; the Pillar of

Mercy and the Middle Pillar of the Godhead. This Middle Pillar of the

Godhead is also known as Metatron, or "The Son of Yah." as the Zohar states:

The Middle Pillar [of the godhead] is Metatron,

Who has accomplished peace above,

According to the glorious state there.

(***Zohar***, vol. 3., p. 227, Amsterdam Edition)

Better is a neighbor that is near,

than a brother far off.

This neighbor is the Middle Pillar in the godhead,

which is the Son of Yah.

(***Zohar***, vol. ii, p. 115, Amsterdam Edition)

These three "Mothers", according to the Sefer Yetzirah, correspond

allegorically with the ancient element-concepts of Fire, Air and Water.

Fire being the masculine, Water the feminine and Air representing breath (Ruach; Spirit) which the ancients saw as containing fire (heat) and water (moisture).

This takes us to the concept of the "Word" as described by the Psalmist:

By ***the Word of YHWH***

were the heavens made,

And all the hosts of them

by ***the Spirit of His mouth***.

(Ps. 33:6)

Note that the "Spirit of his Mouth" is the same as the "Word". This also takes us to the Kabbalistic concept of the KOL. In Hebrew KOL can mean "all" or can mean "voice".

(Kabbalists recognize the "all" of 1Chron. 29:11 as corresponding to the SEFIRAH known as YESOD which is along the Middle Pillar of the Tree of Life and which is identified with the "Tzadik" which is also identified in Kabbalah with the Middle Pillar.)

All of this brings us to Deut. 6:4:

SH'MA YISRAEL YHWH ELOHEYNU YHWH ECHAD

"Hear O Israel, YHWH your Elohim, YHWH is one (or a Unity)."

The Zohar explains this passage of Torah as follows:





The [profession of] unity that every day is [a profession of]

unity is to be understood and to be perceived. We have said

in many places that this prayer is a profession of Unity that is

proclaimed:



“Hear O Yisrael, YHWH“ first, [then] “Eloheynu”

[and] “YHWH” they are all One and thus He is called “One”.







Behold, these are three names, how can they be one?

Is it because we call them one? (***literally:*** And also concerning the proclamation that we call them one?). How these are one can only through the vision of the Holy Sprit be known. And these are through the vision of the closed eye (or the hidden eye) To make known that these three are one (i.e. a Tri-Unity).





And this is the mystery of the voice that is heard. The voice is

one. And is three ***GAUNIN***: fire and air and water. And all

these are one in the mystery of the voice.









And also here “YHWH, Eloheynu, YHWH” these are One.

Three ***GAUNIN*** that are One. And this is the voice of the act

of a son of man in [proclaiming] the Unity. And to which he

sees by the Unity of the “All” from Eyn Sof (the

Infinite One) to the end of the “All”. Because of the voice in

which it is done, in these are three that are one (i.e. a Tri-

Unity).



And this is the [profession] of the daily profession of Unity

that is revealed in the mystery of the Holy Spirit.







And there are many ***GAUNIN*** that are a Unity, and all of them

are true, what the one does, that the other does, and what that

one does, the other does.

(Zohar 2:43)

Now back to our passages from the Sefer Yetzirah:

Twenty-two Foundational Letters:

Three Mothers

Seven Doubles

and Twelve Elementals.

The Three Mothers are Alef Mem Shin,

(i.e. the letters )

Their foundation is

a pan of merit

a pan of liability

and a tongue of decree deciding between them.

Three Mothers, Alef Mem Shin

Mem hums,

Shin hisses

and Alef is the Breath of air (RUACH; Spirit) deciding

between them.]

(***Sefer Yetzirah*** 2:1)

Three Mothers, Alef Mem Shin

in the Universe are air, water, fire.

Heaven was created from fire

Earth was created from water

and air from Breath (Ruach; Spirit) decides between them.

(***Sefer Yetzirah*** 3:4)

These three "Mothers" parallel the three pillars of the Godhead. The ALEF represents the Middle Pillar which balances the two opposing pillars. The tongue of decree deciding between the Pan of Liability and the Pan of Merit is the Middle Pillar, the Son of Yah. The Son of Yah is the "Breath [RUACH; Spirit] of air" which decides between fire and water, and reconciles the Pillar of Severity with the Pillar of Mercy. This "tongue of decree" is the "Breath/Spirit", the "voice" of ***the Word*** which expresses the unity of the Godhead.

Jn. 1:2 This was in the beginning with Eloah.

He (Messiah) was BERSHIT  ("in the beginning") which in Gen. 1:1 is with ELOHIM.

Jn. 1:3 Everything existed through him, and without him not even one thing existed of that which existed.

All things were made through him. Gen. 1:1 reads:

BERESHIT BARA ELOHIM

ET () HASHAMAYIM

ET () HAERETZ

ELOHIM creates the heavens and the earth through  (ALEF and TAV). Revelation refers to Messiah as the ALEF and the TAV (Rev. 1:11; 22:13)

The ALEF and the TAV is the ALL. The first and last letter of the Hebrew Alphabet.

Jn. 1:4-5 In him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light brought light into the darkness and the darkness did not over take it.

**In him was life** - The Messiah is the Torah incarnate. The Tanak tells us that the Torah is the Word (Is. 2:3), the ***Light*** (Prov. 6:23; Ps. 119:105; Is. 8:20; 51:4), the Truth (Ps. 119:142, 151) and the Way (Deut. 9:12; 11:22-28; 30:15-16) and Yochanan will tell us that the Messiah (being the Torah incarnate) is also is the Word (Jn. 1:1-3, 14-18; Rev. 19:13), the ***Light*** (Jn. 1:4-5, 9; 3:19; 8:12; 9:5; 12:35-36, 46; 14:6), the Truth (Jn. 14:6) and the Way (Jn. 14:6).the Torah brings life, because the Torah gives life (see comments to Jn. 3:17).

and the life was the light of men. And the light brought light into the darkness and the darkness did not over take it

One level of understanding is that the “Light” is Torah (See comments to Jn. 8:12). Thus, the Messiah is the Torah incarnate.

However, these words also recall the words of Genesis1:3-4a:

Then Elohim said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.

And Elohim saw that the light was good…

(Gen. 1:3-4a)

The Zohar explains this passage as follows:

Why, it may be asked, was it necessary to repeat the word

“light” in this verse? The answer is that the first “light” refers

to the primordial light which is of the Right Hand, and is

destined for the “end of days”; while the second “light” refers to the Left Hand, which issues from the Right.

The next words, “And God saw the light that it was good”

(Gen. 1:4), refer to the pillar which standing midway between them, writes both sides, and therefore when the unity of the three, right, left, and middle, was complete, “it was good”, since there could be no completion until the third had appeared to remove the strife between Right and Left, as it is written, “And God separated

between the light and between the darkness.” …

This is the Middle Pillar: Ki Tov (that it was good) threw light

above and below and on all other sides, in virtue of YHWH,

the name which embraces all sides.

(Zohar 1:16b)

The word with which Elohim created the heavens and the earth was "light" as he said "let there be light". Thus, the Word of YHWH is also the light. The "light" or "word" emanated from Eyn Sof to man. The Hebrew word OR means "light" or enlightenment". The upper three sefirot, the first emanation(s) from Eyn Sof are Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding which are enlightenment (see Col. 1:9). Moreover the Torah is “light” (Prov. 6:23; Ps. 119:105; Is. 8:20; 51:4 ) because it is enlightenment from YHWH. The Sun, moon and stars had not been created yet so this (light) was the  of men (enlightenment: Wisdom, Knowledge and Understanding). Wisdom, Understanding and Knowledge (Hebrew:  ) have a total Gematria of 620 which is the same as the Gematria for Keter “Crown” (Hebrew: ) (see James 1:2; 2Tim. 4:8; Rev. 2:10; 3:11).

The word for “light” in Hebrew is spelled which has a Gematria of 207 which is the same as ”Adon Olam; Lord of the Universe”; (Eyn Sof); (Elders (because they are enlightened)); (The crown of the Ark) and (Rabbah; Great; Great One). In Hebrew the letter often represents “and” so that we may read as “and”. The may be seen as representing ”Ruach; Spirit” while the may be seen as representing (Av or Abba; Father):

************

Thus, the Messiah as the is the perfect harmony of Abba and Ruach.

Now it has been argued that if the Messiah was the “light” that the Messiah had to have been created, since the light was created. However, this is not quite true. In Jewish understanding there were four stages to what we call “creation”. These stages are revealed in the Tanak in Is. 43:7:

All that are ***called*** by my name:

For I have ***created*** him for my glory,

I have ***formed*** him;

Yes, I have ***made*** him.

This is said to account for chronological irregularities between the “creation story” of Gen. 1 (in which plant life is created before man) and the “creation story” of Gen. 2 (in which plant life is formed after man. Gen.1 is an account of creation but Gen. 2 is an account of formation.

According to this concept the creation began with “calling” or “ordaining” also called “emanation”. The further stages of creating, forming and making (or actualizing) followed after this initial step. Certain things were never “created” but only “called” or “brought forth” because they were already eternally existent within Eyn Sof. These things only had to be emanated or “brought forth”. For example “Wisdom” always existed within Eyn Sof and only had to be “called”/”brought forth”/”emanated” from Eyn Sof into the universe. Thus Prov. 8:22-24 indicates not that wisdom was “created” (as some have tried to use the passage) but only that Wisdom was “brought forth” (see comments on 1Cor. 1:24).

In the same way the “light” of Gen. 1: was not “created”. This was not the “light” from the Sun, Moon and Stars, which had not yet been created. This was the “***light of men***” (Jn. 1: ) or “enlightenment” (i.e. “wisdom, knowledge and understanding). Thus the ***Bahir*** makes the important observation that the Torah deals differently with the bringing forth of the light in Gen. 1 and the creation of created things in Gen.1.:

Rabbi Berachiah said: What is the meaning of the verse

(Genesis 1:3), And God said, “’Let there be light,’

and there was light”? Why does the verse not say,

“And it was so”? What is this like? A king had a beautiful

object. He put it away until he had a place for it, and then

he put it there. It is therefore written, “Let there be light,

and there was light.” This indicates that it already existed.

(***Bahir***  1:25)

Thus, the ***Bahir*** makes the important observation that the Torah says “and there was light” rather than “and it was so” (as it does with all of the created things) to indicate that the light was not being created in Genesis 1:3 but that it already existed and was being brought forth, or emanated.

Jn. 1:5, 10-11 And the light brought light into the darkness and the darkness did not over take it…. He was in the world and the world was by his hand and the world did not know him. He came to his and his did not receive him.

Modern theoretical physics and Kabbalah both agree in general as to how this universe began.

Theoretical physics tells us that the universe began with a singularity, a zero dimensional point. Time and space, which are components of the universe, did not yet exist. The only thing that existed was this zero dimensional point, this singularity. No one knows where the singularity came from of what was “before” it… in fact since there was no time, there was no such thing as “before” as we know it.

The singularity became “filled” with energy. We do not know if the energy was finite or infinite, but we do know that it was of infinite density. Density is a ratio of mass to volume, and volume is a measurement of (three dimensional) space. But the singularity allowed no volume for the energy. Energy is also mass (E=mc2 or Energy = Mass times the Velocity of Light squared) and any mass with a volume of zero has an infinite density. But mass requires volume and thus the singularity was forced open and “burst out” into time, three dimensions of space, energy and matter.

Kabbalah teaches us that the universe began with the act of Tzimtzum. Tzimtzum means “contraction”. Since Elohim is infinite, he had no borders and encompassed everything that “was”. But Judaism does not hold to pantheism (the idea that since “God” has no borders, “God” must be everything and everything must be “God”).

In order to avoid a pantheistic universe and in order for there to be freewill, Elohim had to contract upon himself to create that which for the first time was not Elohim. Elohim did not actually create an empty space when contracted. Space has three dimensions and is actually part of the created universe itself.

Instead the result of this Tzimtzum (contraction) was a singularity. Elohim then emanated energy of himself into the singularity. The vessels of this universe, however, could not contain the glory of the infinite one and they shattered. This event was called the “shattering of the vessels” (Shevirat ha-Kelim).

The universe was thrown out of balance by this cosmic disruption. The universe ended up with an uneven distribution of the energy/mass of the divine spark of the energy of Elohim and as a result of this cosmic disruption the sparks of Elohim, the “truth” of this universe became coated in Keliphot (husks, shells) which conceal each element of truth in this universe with darkness, and deception. Like an M&M all we can see is the shell that encompasses the truth, until we break through these Keliphot and liberate the sparks/truth which they have hidden from us. This breaking of the Keliphot and liberating of truth is a process called Tikkun (repair).

In Kabbalah the “Keliphot” are not just “shells” or “husks” they have personality, they are identified with the shedim (demons). This is not an alternate explanation of the origin of the shedim but another way of looking at that origin. Hallel (who became HaSatan) and the shedim which followed him were unable to contain the glory of YHWH that was poured into them. As Scripture says:

You were perfect in your ways from the day that you were created, till unrighteousness was found in you.

By the multitude of your traffic they filled the midst of you with violence, and you have sinned; therefore have I cast you as profane out of the mountain of Elohim; and I have destroyed you, O covering cheruv, from the midst of the stones of fire.

Your heart was lifted up because of your beauty, you have corrupted your wisdom by reason of your brightness; I have cast you to the ground, I have laid you before kings, that they may gaze upon you.

(Ezekiel 28:15-17 HRV)

These shedim were unable to handle the glory of YHWH that was committed to them and they fell. They became deceivers. Just about everything you perceive in this universe is only the outer shell, that darkness. What you normally perceive of the universe is a lie, and the shedim want to keep you captive to that lie.

Now two major forms of Gentile Christianity arose from the apostasy from Nazarene Judaism: Orthodox Christianity and Gnostic Christianity. Only Orthodox Christianity has survived into modern times but during the first four centuries there was no way of knowing that only Orthodox Christianity would be standing at the end of the day.

While Orthodox Christians saw a (false) contrast between the “God of the Old Testament” and the “God of the New Testament”, the Gnostics went so far as to say that these were two different “Gods”.

The Gnostic Christians identified the Creator God of the Old Testament as something they called the Demiurge (craftsman). The Demiurge was (they believed) an emanation from the true God the Father of the New Testament, which had rebelled against the true God by creating a physical universe of matter. This physical universe, they believed, was evil, being the product of this lesser, evil, Old Testament god. This Demiurge, they maintained, was aided by allies known in Greek as the “Archons” (powers”). It was the job of the “Archons” to keep us deceived by this false physical universe and keep us from seeking the true spiritual universe known in Greek as the “Pleroma” (fullness).

Now Gnostics were in an extreme heresy, but the truth is often found hidden away encased in a shell of deception. In this case, elements of Kabbalah were carried forward from the Jewish Nazarenes into apostate Gentile Gnostic Christianity. If we follow the parallels we find that what the Kabbalists called “Keliphot” (shells, husks) and saw as personified by the shedim (demons), the Gnostics called “Archons” (rulers).

Now if the concept of the Gnostic “Archons” is a twisting of the Kabbalistic concept of the “Keliphot” and if the idea was borrowed from the Nazarene Jews, then we might expect the early Nazarene writers of the Ketuvim Netzarim (the so-called “New Testament”) to express that very idea in their writings. And we find exactly that in the writings of Paul where the Greek versions of his writings use the word “Archons” (and the original Aramaic has “Archos”) do describe the deceptive demonic powers which rule this world:

because your struggle is not with flesh and blood, but with principalities and with authorities and with the possessors of this dark world and with the evil spirits that are under heaven.

(Eph. 6:12 HRV)

For I am persuaded that neither death nor life nor angels nor authorities nor powers nor those [things] present nor those coming

(Rom. 8:38 HRV)

And by the putting off of his Body He exposed principalities and powers and shamed them openly in his person.

(Col. 2:15 HRV)

The concept of the Keliphot explains why Paul writes:

whose minds the god of this world has blinded, in order that they do not believe, lest the light of the good news of the glory of the Messiah, who is the likeness of Eloah, should dawn upon them.

(2Cor. 4:4 HRV)

And in Hebrews we read:

Behold faith is the principle of things hoped for and the appearance of the illuminated things that are not seen.

(Heb. 11:1 HRV)

Telling us that there is an unseen world of illumination, a world concealed by the Keliphot (shells of darkness), that can be seen through faith.

The universe as we perceive it is a world of darkness. “Rulers” in this universe work to hide the truth and keep us deceived. The particles of this universe are putting on a show for an audience, and we are their audience. Recent experimentation with subatomic particles has proven this point. The experiment in question is known as the double slit experiment.

The experiment is carried out by emitting particles (electron’s for example) from a distance, through a divider with two slits in it equally distant from the emitter. The particles pass through the slit(s) and are projected onto a screen on the other side of the divider. The experiment was originally conducted to determine whether photons and electrons were actually waves or actually particles.

But the results opened up much bigger questions about the universe. When the electrons were emitted through the divider, they created an interference pattern on the screen, as if they were waves passing through both slits at the same time, and interfering with their own wave patterns. The result was a pattern that looked like Venetian blinds. This cause researchers to take a closer look, so they added detectors at each slit to “watch” and see how many electrons were going through each slit.

When they did this, they were able to count electrons and determine that they were passing one at a time through either one slit or the other as particles (and not simultaneously through both slits as a wave).

Now that they were being watched the electrons changed their behavior, and the pattern was gone, instead only two formless blobs of light appeared on the screen. Observing the electrons totally changed their behavior. They behave as waves when they were not being observed, and as single particles when they are being observed. The particles in this universe act one way when their audience is watching, and quite another way when they are not being watched.

When Messiah came into this universe, the “rulers” of this dark world were unable to successfully hide the truth that Messiah brought into the universe.

**Jn. 1:14** **And the Word became flesh** – Regarding “**the Word**” see comments to 1:1. **became flesh** – the Word is the Torah (Is. 2:3; see comments to 1:1 for more details on this issue) and the Torah is a living being and the very expression of Elohim’s being. According to Jewish tradition the entire running text of the Torah is one of the names of Elohim and the Torah is a living being:

…the entire Torah was in fact nothing else than the

Great Name of God Himself. In it God expressed his own

being insofar as His being pertained to creation and insofar as it was able to manifest through creation. Thus the divine energy chose to articulate itself in the form of the letters of the Torah as they express themselves in God’s name. … the Torah… served as an instrument of the creation. Thus, the Torah is a structure the whole of which is built on one fundamental principle, namely, the Ineffable Name. It can be compared to the mystic body of the Godhead, and God Himself is the soulm of its letters. … The weaving of the Torah from the Ineffable Name suggests the analogy that the Torah is a living texture, a live body in the formulation of Azriel of Gerona and the Zohar. … The Torah has been passed on with the understanding that it is a living structure… The Torah is like a human body that has a head, torso, heart, mouth,

and so forth…

(***Kabbalah***; Gershom Scholem; 1978; pages 170-171)

While the Peshitta text say that **the Word became “flesh”** (), the Old Syriac states that **the Word became “a body”** ().

**grace and truth** - (see 1:17)

**Jn. 1:17 Because the Torah was given through Moshe,**

and grace and truth was through Yeshua the Messiah.

The KJV and many other English versions have “but” rather than “**and**” in this passage. In the KJV it will be noted that “but” is in italics which indicates that this word does not appear in the Greek but has been added by the translator. The use of the word “but” wrongly has this passage contrasting “**Torah**” with “**grace and truth**”. The Aramaic of this passage reads in the Old Syriac as:





In the Aramaic of the Old Syriac the “and” is clearly indicated in the text by the prefixed to the word . This verse is written in Synonymous Poetic Parallelism. The idea of this passage is that the “**grace and truth”** given through Messiah ***IS*** the “**Torah given through Moshe**”.

**Grace** - Men of the "Old Testament" times were just as under **grace** as we are today:

But Noah found ***grace*** in the eyes of YHWH.

(Gen. 6:8)

...you have also found ***grace*** in my sight....

...for you have found ***grace*** in my sight...

(Ex. 33:12, 17)

...and now I have found ***grace*** in your sight...

(Judges 6:17)

The people... found ***grace*** in the wilderness...

(Jer. 31:2)

Part of the reason that many people have come to think that there is more "**grace**" in the New Testament than in the Old Testament is a translation bias in the KJV and many other English versions.

There are two words for "**grace**" in the Hebrew Tanak. The first word is ***CHEN*** (Strong's 2580/2581) which means "**grace** or charm". The other word is ***CHESED*** (Strong's 2616/2617 ) which carries the meaning of "**grace**, mercy or undue favor."

These two words closely parallel the meanings of the two Greek words used for **grace** in the Greek Bible. These are ***CHARIS*** (Strong's 5485/5463) which means "grace or charm" and ***ELEOS*** (Strong's 1651/1653) meaning "grace, mercy or undue favor."

Obviously Hebrew ***CHEN*** = Greek ***CHARIS*** and Hebrew ***CHESED*** = Greek ***ELEOS***. But the KJV tends to translate ***CHEN/CHARIS*** as "**grace**" but tends to translate ***CHESED/ELEOS*** as "mercy". Now when we think of "**grace**" in biblical terms

we are usually thinking of the concept of ***CHESED/ELEOS*** "undue favor".

Now if we follow with the KJV translation scheme then it appears that there is much more **grace** in the New Testament than the Tanak, since ***CHEN*** only appears 70 times in the Tanak while ***CHARIS*** appears 233 times in the New Testament. But remember, the concept of "undue favor" is actually ***CHESED/ELEOS. CHESED*** appears 251 times in the Tanak, while ***ELEOS*** appears only 50 times in the New Testament. If anything, there is far more "**grace**" in the Tanak than in the New Testament.

Now let us turn to the Tanak to get a better understanding of what **grace** really is. According to the Scriptures there is a close connection between "**grace**" and the "***fear of YHWH***":

For as high as the heavens are above the earth,

so great is his ***grace*** (***CHESED***)

toward ***those who fear him.***

(Psalm 103:11)

Oh let those who fear YHWH say,

"His ***grace*** (***CHESED***) is everlasting.

(Psalm 118:4)

By ***grace (CHESED)*** and ***truth***

iniquity is atoned for,

and ***by the fear of YHWH***

one keeps away from evil.

(Proverbs 16:6)

And the fear of YHWH, according to the Tanak, includes Torah observance:

...that he may learn ***the fear of YHWH*** his God,

to ***keep all the words of this Torah***

and these statutes***, to do them***:

(Deut. 17:19)

...that they may hear, and that they may learn,

and ***fear YHWH*** your God,

and ***observe to do all the words of this Torah***.

(Deut. 31:12)

Therefore there is clearly no conflict between ***grace*** and Torah. In fact the Torah is closely connected to grace. This is clear in the Aramaic text of Romans 5:20:







But the entrance that was toward the Torah

was because that sin might have proliferated

And where sin proliferates there grace abounds.

In the Aramaic of Romans 5:20 ***Torah IS grace*** (see comments to Rom. 5:20) the Torah’s entrance ***was*** the abounding of **grace**.

**Truth** - The **Torah *IS* truth** (Ps. 119:142, 151).

**Grace and truth** cannot be contrasted with **Torah** because the **Torah** is **truth** and the entrance of the **Torah** was the abounding of **grace**.

Jn. 1:18 Man has not ever seen Eloah. The only begotten Eloah, that one who is in the bosom of his father, has declared him. -

This passage reaches at an apparent contradiction in the Tanak. On the one hand the Tanak maintains that no man can see YHWH and live:

But He [YHWH] said, “You are unable to see My face,

For no man does see Me and live.

Ex. 33:20

(see also Col. 1:15; 1Jn. 4:12 & 1Enoch 14:19-21)

Yet many Tanak passages recount cases in which a person or persons did in fact ***see*** YHWH:

And YHWH ***appeared*** to Abram…

(Gen. 12:7; see also Acts 7:2)

And YHWH ***appeared*** to him [Abraham]…

So he lifted his eyes and looked, and saw three men…

(Gen. 18:1-2)

…I have seen ***Elohim face to face***,

and my life is preserved.

(Gen. 32:30)

…El who ***appeared*** to you…

…Elohim ***appeared*** to him…

And Elohim ***appeared*** to Ya’akov…

(Gen. 35: 1, 7, 9)

…he [Moshe] was afraid to ***look*** at Elohim.

(Ex. 3:6)

…and they ***saw*** the Elohim of Yisrael,

and under His feet like a paved work of

sapphire stone… He [Elohim] did stretch

out His hand… and they ***saw*** Elohim…

(Ex. 24:9-11)

Then I shall take away My hand

and you shall ***see*** My back,

but My face shall not be ***seen***.

(Ex. 33:23)

…I [YHWH] ***appear*** in the cloud…

(Lev. 16:2)

…You, YHWH, are ***seen eye to eye***…

(Num. 14:14)

…we have ***seen*** Elohim. (Judges 13:22)

…I [Isaiah] ***saw*** YHWH sitting on a throne…

(Is. 6:1)

…on the likeness of the throne was a likeness

as the ***appearance of a man***…this was the likeness

of the appearance of the esteem of YHWH…

(Ezek. 1:26-28)

I was ***looking***… the Ancient of Days was seated.

His garment was white…

(Dan. 7:9)

It is understood in Judaism that Eyn Sof, being infinitely large, cannot be seen, but that when someone in the Tanak “saw” YHWH they were actually seeing Adam Kadmon. For example, the “appearance of a man” on the throne in Ezekiel 1:26-28 is understood to be Adam Kadmon.

According to Genesis man was created in the "image of Elohim". This "image of Elohim" was a manifestation of the Godhead which served as a model for Adam.

...the form (image) of G-d in which He created man

is actually G-d's blueprint form for man.

This "form" or "blueprint" consisted

of God's first thought in creation,

and hence the highest level of creation.

This is referred to as "Adam Kadmon" (Primeval Man).

- ***Bahir;*** Kaplan edition p. 95

"Adam Kadmon" means "before Adam" and refers to the "image of Elohim" after which we were created. Gershom Scholem writes:

In His active manifestations, the Godhead

appears as the dynamic unity of the Sefiroth,

portrayed as the "tree of the Sefiroth," or the

mystical human form ('Adam Kadmon),

who is none other than the concealed shape

of Godhead itself.

- ***On the Mystical Shape of the Godhead***;

***Basic Concepts in the Kabbalah***; p. 39

However, the Sefiroth do not appear

only in the shape of the tree. They also

appear in the form of Primal Man

('Adam Kadmon), which corresponds

to that of earthly man.

- ***ibid*** p. 43

Adam Kadmon, however, was not just the image of Elohim. He was actually Elohim himself, as Gershom Scholem writes:

...God entered into the form of

the Adam Kadmon...

- ***Kabbalah*** by Gershom Scholem p. 116

The Sefirot are laid out as Adam Kadmon with Keter as the head, Chokhmah and Binah represent the right and left lobes of the brain. Gevurah and Khesed represent the hands, Tiferet the heart. Yesod represents the reproductive organ. Hod and Netzah represent the legs and Malkut represents the feet.

The Adam Kadmon was "the likeness like the appearance of a man" which Ezekiel saw upon the throne (Ezek. 1:26) in his Merkavah vision (vision of the divine throne-chariot).

This therefore is the invisible image of YHWH which is the Messiah:

…the Messiah, who is the likeness of Elohim.

(2Cor. 4:4)

[his Son] who is the image of the invisible Elohim…

(Col. 1:15)

[the Son] who is the radiance of his glory,

and the image of his being…

(Heb. 1:3)

**The only begotten Eloah –** The Peshitta has “only begotten Eloah” while the Old Syriac has “only begotten Son”. Greek manuscripts also differ on this reading. **only begotten –** Aramaic: ***yichidaya*** – The Aramaic form of the Hebrew word which appears in Gen. 22:2 where Isaac is Avraham’s “only” son.