

29 Sept 13 "In the beginning was the Word"

From time to time as I live my life and work out how I live before God, I think, "How can I know Him better? How can I be closer to Him? I really need His peace inside me. I've heard say, "If you want to know more about a person, look at where they come from." So, we go back to John's Gospel Chapter One to see what God showed him how Jesus of Nazareth is Man, God, and Word, the Word of God, we read daily to know God better and bring us peace.

John 1:1-2 reads, "*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God.*" Now, *the Word*...here, 'o logos is the written word. If you were to ask a Greek philosopher, he might tell you, *the logos* was *reason and speech or thinking and speaking*; or he might even say, *to be persuaded by good reason*. So, is John saying then that Jesus is *the Reason and Speech of God the Father*? Here's the problem with that: John wasn't a greek philosopher. He was a Galilean fisherman. And when he like everyone else went to synagogue every Sabbath, when they heard about the Word of God or the Word of LORD from the Holy Writings, they heard the term, *memra*, coined for *the Word*.

It's Aramaic for *Word* and embodies how the *Word* is used in the Tanach or O.T., like in Psa. 147:15, *He sends out his commandment upon earth; His word runs very swiftly*. Here, you see *His Word* running very swiftly. Isa. 40.8 says, *the grass withers, the flower fades; but the Word of our God shall stand forever*—here the *Word of our God* is standing. Isa. 45.23 says, *By myself have I sworn, the Word is gone forth from My mouth in righteousness*. Isa.55.11 says, *so shall My Word be that goes forth out of my mouth: it shall not return to Me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please*. Here, as in the others, *the Word* takes on a life and will of its own, *going forth and accomplishing that which pleases God*. This in its character, came to be known as *the Memra*.

The *Memra* is the personifying of *Word* in the Tanach, and so when John needed the right word for *memra*, God led him to choose logos for the person of our Lord Jesus. He is the *Memra* of the Tanach, and John gives several points of which we will take one each for the next few weeks.

- The first: The *Memra* was sometimes distinct from God and sometimes the same as God. It was seen as distinct from God in Isa. 9.8: *The LORD sent a word into Jacob, and it has lighted upon Israel*; it is something sent by the LORD. Yet, it sometimes was the same as God. 1Sam. 3:21 says, *And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the LORD*. Notice: *He revealed Himself by the Word*. Here, the *Memra* is the same as God. In the synagogue, there was no explaining away the obvious paradox by the ancient rabbis. How was it possible the *Memra* was distinct from God, and yet the same as God all at

once. Both points were true, and they left it at that. John 1 says, *In a beginning, was the Word, and the Word was with God.* John makes 'o logos, the *Word*, distinct from God when he writes, *it was with God.* Then, he turns right around and says, *the Word was God* giving the *Word* the same characteristics as God Himself. John is saying in his word order that God is more than the *Word*, but the *Word* is Deity. He is saying that the *Word* is in some way a part of God. But in the same way John heard it on the Sabbath, he does not try to explain away the paradox here. He simply says they are both true and leaves them be for now. Later, John does go on to to explain this seeming contradiction in the Trinity. 'o logos, *the Word of God*, is distinct from God as in It is not the Father and not the Holy Spirit. It is the Second Person of the Godhead; but yet, this *Word* is the same as God in all His fullness. He is the Son of God, Christ Jesus. Only in terms of the TriUne God can this paradox be explained. Jesus is the only way the Word of God is both distinct from God and the same as God.

To God Be the Glory, Amen

Many thanks to Ariel Ministries www.ariel.org for the messianic source to this article

5 Oct. 13 "All Things Came to be Through Him"

Last week we began articles about who Jesus is; that is, He is the Living Word which we read daily to give us peace and draw us closer to God. We found that the Gospel writer, John, used the word, *logos*, for Jesus because it was the closest word John could find for a rabbinic term, *memra*, he had grown up hearing. *Memra* was used to describe Jesus as something different from God, the Word, and at the same time something the same as God, in fact, the second person of God, Himself.

To continue: John 1:3 says, "*All things came to be through It; and without It not one thing came to be which has come to be.*" Here, the *memra* is used to describe Jesus as the means of creation. Both the *memra* and Jesus are masculine nouns so it can read, "*Him*" or "*It*." Psa.33.6 confirms this saying, "By the word of the LORD were the heavens made, And by the breath of his mouth, all the host of them. Here, the Word of the LORD creates the heavens and the stars. Whenever God created anything, He did so by means of His *memra*—by means of His Word.

Seen in Genesis 1:3, God spoke these words in the English, "*let there be*," but only a single word according to the sacred text: vahiy. And when He said, "Vahiy," then instantly there was light, that is, instantly at a word. This light of the Day One to Three of this creation came forth in a single-instantaneous Word from God, vahiy, and is totally distinct from the light after Day Four when God

gave the rule over this light to the sun, moon, and stars. So, by means of the *memra*—by means of His Word, all these things were created.

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13 Oct. '13 *"To Them Gave He the Right to Become Children of God"*

John1 reads beginning in verse 4, *"In him was life; and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness; and the darkness apprehended it not. There came a man, sent from God, whose name was John. The same came for witness, that he might bear witness of the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came that he might bear witness of the light. There was the true light, even the light which lights every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world knew him not. He came to his own, and they that were his own received him not. But as many as received Him, to them gave he the right to become children of God, even to them who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God, that believe on his name.*

Throughout the whole history of the O.T., whenever God saved, He did so by means of His Word. It might be a physical salvation, such as the exodus out of Egypt, or it might be a spiritual salvation. But whether or not, He did so by means of His *memra*, by means of His Word. Psa. 119.41 confirms it saying, *Let Your lovingkindnesses also come unto me, O Jehovah, Even Your salvation, according to Your Word.*

Specifically, verse 12 of John 1 says, *"But as many as received Him, to them gave He the right to become children of God, even to them that believe on His name.* It says that this *Word, the memra*, is the agent of salvation. The ones that received *this memra* received salvation. To them, *this memra* was the means of salvation. Also James1:18 says, *"Of his own will he brought us forth by the word of truth."* "Each of us, yours and my eternal birth, came from God's own desire, and it was by means of the word of truth, by means of *this memra*. So, Jesus, the Word of God is the means of all Salvation.

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20 OCT 2013 *"And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us"*

Jesus is the Living Word, and that's why we read the Scriptures daily for inner peace and to draw us closer to God. The *Word* or the *memra* as the Apostle John heard it in synagogue growing up was said to be somehow different than God and yet God himself. It is the Agent of creation, and the Agent of salvation. Only Jesus fits all the criteria of this *Word*, this *memra*. Now then, the next increment of how the living *Word* is Jesus begins in John 1:14. This is the favorite of mine on this subject. It reads, "*And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us (and we beheld His Glory, Glory as of the only begotten from the Father), full of grace and truth. John bears witness of Him, and cries out saying, 'This was He of Whom I said, 'He that comes after me is come before me: for He was before me.'*"

This is my favorite. The *memra* is the means by which God became visible. Exo. 19:18 says, "*And Mt. Sinai, the whole of it, smoked, because the LORD descended upon it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace, and the whole mount quaked greatly.*" Sometimes in Israel's history, the Old Testament records God took on some kind of a visible form. When He did so, it was by means of His *memra*—by means of His *Word*. We call these appearances, theophanies. So, by theophany, it is meant the physical appearance of God's presence.

The Old Testament has a different term to describe these appearances of God's presence. Exodus 40:35 reads, "*And Moses was not able to enter into the tent of meeting, because the cloud did abide thereon, and the Glory of the LORD filled the tabernacle.*" The term, *Shakinah*, is derived from the word, *abide*, in the text, and see how *Shakinah* is tied so closely to *Glory* in this verse. The *Shakinah* is often seen with the *Glory*, and were coined as the *Shakinah Glory*. Whenever the invisible God became visible or whenever the Omnipresence of God was somehow localized, this visible, localized, presence was the *Shakinah Glory*. Now, through most of the history of the Old Testament, the *Shakinah Glory* came either as a light, or a fire, or cloud, or combination of the three. These were not the only ways it appeared, but these were the three main ones. Whenever it did appear, it was by means of the *memra*, by means of the *Word*. John 1:14 reads, "*And the Word became flesh.*" The logos that back in verse 1 was: *In the beginning with God, and was God* which at that point was invisible God, now at a certain point in human history took on visible form. This time, however, what became visible was not this light, fire, or cloud. This time, it became flesh and bone. It became human. It became man. As John says, "*And dwelt among us.*"

This is not just "*dwelt*" or the regular word for living. John writes the word, "*tabernacle.*" So, some readings say, "*And the Word became flesh, and tabernacled among us.*" The Greeks hellenized this word, *tabernacled*, from the Hebrews. Going back Alexander the Great conquered the known

world, and when he did, he brought the Jews into this Greek world. The Greeks came across this term, *Shakinah*. They liked, and needed what the word conveyed. In their mythology, the gods of Mt. Olympus might come down in some visible form intermingling with mere humans. The Greeks took this Hebrew word, and instead of the "sh" sound of *shakinah*, they say "ss" because they had no letter, "shin" like the Jews. And, when John was thinking of his word, *Shakinah*, for tabernacle, he instead substitutes "*skene*." *Skene* and *Shakinah* are one and the same for "*tabernacle*." Indeed, when the *Shakinah Glory* came to tabernacle in the Holy of Holies, they called that place, the *Mishkan*, or the *Place of the Tabernacling*.

In the days of Moses, *The Shakinah Glory* takes up residency in the *Mishkan*. For the next several centuries, It tabernacled with the People of Israel until the days of Ezekiel when it departed from Israel. Eze. 8:2-4, 9:3-4, and 10:18-23 reads, "*Then I beheld, and, lo, a likeness as the appearance of fire at the door of the gate of the inner court that looks toward the north. Behold, the Glory of the God of Israel was there. It was gone up from the cherub, whereupon it was, to the threshold of the House. Then, the Glory of the LORD mounted up from the cherub, and stood over the threshold of the House. The House was filled with the cloud, and the court was full of the brightness of the LORD's Glory. It went forth from over the threshold of the House, and stood over the cherubim. The cherubim stood at the door of the east gate of the LORD's House, and the Glory of the God of Israel was over them above. Then, It went up from the midst of the city, and stood upon the mountain which is on the east side of the city.*" These steps show its labored departure from tabernacling with its People, Israel, for eight centuries. After six hundred more years, though, the *Shekinah Glory* now returns, but not as a light, fire, or cloud. It returns in the flesh, and once again tabernacles with God's people. John writes, "*It tabernacled among us.*" Paul later confirms in Phil. 2:7-8, "*Christ Jesus: taking the form of a servant being made in the likeness of men and being found in fashion as a man.*" John connects the physical form of *Jesus of Nazareth* with *the Glory of the LORD* as he wrote, "*We beheld the Glory of Him, Glory as of the One and Only from the Father, full of grace and truth.*" The *Shakinah Glory* usually had a brightness of fire. It usually exuded light, but the physical body of Jesus, that is, His flesh, was a veil over the light of His *Glory*. Jesus looked no different than any other Jewish male to the people who looked upon Him. Isaiah confirms this in Isa. 53:2 as He prophesies the future confession of the whole Jewish Nation: "*There was no form to Him nor majesty that we should have watched Him, nor appearance that we should have desired Him.*"

One day, John comes face to face with Jesus of Nazareth, and he realizes that standing right in front of him is the *Word*. Then, on the Mt. of Transfiguration, Jesus allowed the *Shekinah Glory* to

shine through the veil of his flesh, and *"His face did shine as the sun, and His garments became white as the light"* as confirmed by Matthew 17.2. There, John, James, and Peter saw the brightness of the *Shakinah Glory*, and John writes as an eyewitness, *"we beheld His Glory."* God took on visible form in the *Shakinah Glory* by means of the *memra*, by means of the *Word*. Jesus is the fulfillment of all the *Word* was meant to be for us who read it. Jesus is the *Word become Flesh*, the physical appearance of God's Own presence.

To God Be the Glory, Amen

Many thanks to Ariel Ministries www.ariel.org for the messianic source to this article

28 Oct. 2013 *"He Who Has Seen Me Has Seen The Father"*

John1:16-18 says, *"For of His fulness we all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him.* John is saying, "The *Word*, the *memra* was the agent of revelation. This is confirmed by 1Sam.3.21: *"And the LORD appeared again in Shiloh; for the LORD revealed Himself to Samuel in Shiloh by the Word of the LORD.* This passage personifies the *Word* as a revealer. God revealed Himself to Samuel by means of His *memra*, by means of His *Word*.

Whenever we do see God reveal Himself, He does so by means of His *Word*. Whatever we know for sure about God, we only know because His *Word* reveals it. The O.T. Scriptures say the *Word of the LORD* came to this prophet, then it says that *the Word of the LORD* came to that prophet. Jere.1.4 says, *"Now the word of the LORD came to me."* Isa. 38.4 says, *"Then came the word of LORD to Isaiah. Gen 15:1 says, "The word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am your shield, and your exceeding great reward."* Here is the first time the *memra* is recorded to have revealed Himself to man, revealing Himself to Abraham. It's not the first time the LORD revealed Himself to Abraham, though. Stephen witnessing to the Jewish leadership in Acts 7:2 said, *"Brethren and fathers, hearken: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran."* This is the *Shakinah* appearing to Abraham in a visible form.

Therefore, the *memra* is the means by which God reveals Himself—it is the agent of Revelation. So, Verse 18 of John says, *"No man has seen God at any time; the only begotten Son, Who being in the bosom of the Father, he has revealed him in detail [once and for all].* One of the subthemes in John's Gospel is that Yeshua of Nazareth came to reveal the Father to men. John

spends more time than any other Gospel with the teachings of Jesus as He reveals the nature of the Father to men. John, alone, records the scolding of Philip by the LORD in Jn 14:8-9, "*Lord, show us the Father, and it suffices us. Jesus says to him, Have I been so long time with you, and you don't know Me, Philip? He that has seen me has seen the Father. How do you say, 'Show us the Father?'*" Everything true about the divine nature of the Father is true about the divine nature of the Son; and to know the Son is to know the Father. Therefore, God is revealed by means of His *memra*, by means of His *Word*.

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11/4/13 "*Grace and Truth Came Through Yeshua Messiah*"

We have been discussing how Jesus is all things giving us *peace not as the world gives it*. He is the Living Word, somehow different than God and yet God himself. He is the Agent of creation, the Agent of salvation, the Agent by which God became visible and revealed Himself, and now, finally, the *Word* or *memra* as John heard of Him is the means by which God signed and sealed His covenants. The Old Testament defines eight covenants God has given men: three with the world in general, and five just with the Jewish people; but all signed and sealed by means of His *memra*, by means of His *Word*. Verse 17 says, "*The law was given through Moses; grace and truth came through Jesus Christ*. The Dispensation of the Law is laid upon the Mosaic Covenant, and was signed and sealed by the Shekinah Glory through the blood of a substitutionary sacrifice. Ex.24.8-10 say, "*And Moses took the blood, and sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'Behold the blood of the covenant, which the LORD has made with you concerning all these words. Then Moses, and Aaron, Nadab, and Abihu, and seventy of the elders of Israel went up. And they saw the God of Israel and under His feet there appeared to be a pavement of sapphire as clear as the sky itself.'*"

As for our own Dispensation of Grace, it is based on the New Covenant signed and again sealed by the same Shekinah Glory. But this time not by the blood of animal sacrifice. This time, it is signed and sealed by Jesus' own blood—in our place hanged upon a tree. Among His many accomplishments on the Cross was this one, the signing and sealing of the New Covenant. This was done by means of His *memra*, by means of His *Word*, the *Word* of the Father. And now we know It to be His One and Only Son, Christ Jesus. This is confirmed by Heb 1:1-3: "*God, having of old time spoken to the fathers in the prophets by diverse portions and in diverse manners, has at the end of these days spoken to us by his Son, Whom He appointed heir of all things, through Whom also He*



made the worlds; Who being the effulgence of His Shekinah Glory, and the very image of His substance, and upholding all things by the word of His power, when He had made purification of sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high.

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