

LOGOS (Λόγος) IN JOHN 1:1-14 AND ITS CHRISTOLOGICAL SIGNIFICANCE
FOR THE CHURCH IN NIGERIA

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BY

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ABSTRACT

This research study is an attempt to unfold the deeper truth about the person and power of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Second Person in the Godhead. It exposes the readers to the Greek philosophical understanding of Logos in the cultural and historical context of the time, and also provides a unique ground for contemporary Christians and the churches to appreciate the concept of Logos better as presented in the prologue of the fourth Gospel. It also affirmed the unity of the early church fathers on the personhood of Christ. It has a great relevance for the day-to-day reality as the study shows the existence of Jesus before the creation of the world, which substantiates the claims of Jesus about Himself. The historical background, the Greek text, the translation, the textual variance, the interpretation and explanation of the text coupled with the theology and application of the text under consideration gives deeper meaning to the truth that Jesus Christ is the Word being expressed by the author. Therefore, the term *Logos* has a great importance to the personality of Jesus as a Divine Being, as well as a great relevance to the contemporary Christians and the church to serve as apologetic tool against the heretical teachings and false teachers of the contemporary world. The Christological significance of the Logos is summarized thus: first, only someone who is infinite God could bear the full penalty for all those who could believe Him; Salvation is from the Lord and the whole message of scripture is designed to show that no human being, no creature, could ever save man only God Himself saves. Second, only someone (The Word) who was truly and fully God could be the one mediator between God and man (1Tim. 2:5), both to restore man to God and also to reveal God most fully to humanity (John 14:9). Finally, the effective, productive, fruitful Church and abiding Christian life should be centered on the sound teaching of the word of God to get rid of the wolves that sneak into the church, hence wipe away their false doctrines and heretical teachings in Nigeria and beyond.

5.2. CONCLUSION

The development of the Prologue's main contours can be viewed from two angles. In one sense, John is concerned to juxtapose the eternal, supra-temporal realm of God with the historical realm that encompasses the everyday affairs of human beings, mere creatures of flesh and blood. In so doing, the Prologue lays the foundation for the development of the "realized eschatology" of the Fourth Gospel. When, for example, John will later speak of life in the sense of "*eternal*" life, the Prologue has already established that in Jesus, the eternal God and source of life from the beginning is present is among men and women for that very purpose. The

testimony of the writer is that in Jesus, God enters into all of the ambiguities, difficulties, and trials of the human condition: He comes to live among his people as one of them, revealing God first hand, and offering new life as the source of life from the beginning (O'Day 525).

In another sense, there is also development in this description of the Logos as coming into steadily closer proximity to His people. Beginning in the realm of cosmology and ontology, the writer relates the Logos in turn to God (1:1, 2); creation (1:3-5); the world and its response (1:6-9); his own people (10, 11); his children (12-13); a specific circle of disciples and witnesses (1:14); and a particular historical person, Jesus Christ. Moreover, the intimacy of the relationship of the Logos to the Father is re-emphasized in language similar to that used in John 13:23-25 to describe the intimacy between "the beloved disciple" and Jesus himself (Beasley-Murray 237-238).

In addition, the prologue of the fourth Gospel reveals the truth about God and His plan for all mankind and, at the same time refutes heretical teachings of the time. Bruce F. F. in his writings says "it is not by accident that the prologue begins with the same phrase of Genesis 1:1, while the Genesis begins with '*In (the) beginning*' to introduce the story of the old creation, John 1:1 begins with the story of the new creation"(28-29). In both works of creation, the agent in action is emphasized- the Word of God, so the Greek word *λόγος* refers to Jesus Christ, the Son of God and this is the core message about the doctrine of Christology that John preached or expatiated on , in the fourth Gospel.

Finally, the prologue provides a profound and highly developed theological summary that has a structural integrity of its own. A careful study of the prologue serves as green light to the historical and contextual meaning of the term *Logos* to

present Jesus to the recipient of the Gospel. Also, the understanding of the exegetical analysis of the pericope, literature reviews and other arguments of the scholars' vis-à-vis biblical truth on the prologue formed a foundation that Church in Nigeria should build on, in their preaching and teaching enterprise to avoid heretical and erroneous teachings of this contemporary time like Jehovah Witness, Grail Message and so on.

5.3. RECOMMENDATIONS

Looking at the outcome of the exegetical study of Logos in John 1:1-14 and its Christological significance for the Christians and the Church in Nigeria, the researcher found it very important to give some recommendations in the light of the study. It is essentially required at this juncture to sound some warnings and recommendations concerning the doctrine of Logos – The Word (Jesus Christ):

The Ministers of Gospel and teachers of the word of God should be very careful in the contextualization of the doctrine of Logos to avoid syncretism. The study and teaching of this concept should as well be taken seriously in the Christian community for there are so many false teachings, false doctrines, misconceptions and heretical teachings outside the church that are vehemently opposed the divinity of Christ. Some of these are the teachings of the Jehovah Witness, the Mormon, Christian Science, African Traditional Religion, Grail Message, Islam to mention but a few. As a result of these erroneous teachings about the person of Jesus Christ, the church should focus on the sound teaching of the Biblical truth to firmly establish the young Christians on the concept of Logos and the understanding of Christ's divinity.

This doctrine of the personhood of Christ should be inculcated into Christian children at their early age. It could be done through songs and rhyme composed in a Christological manner and such will make a lifetime impact on the children

throughout their lifetime. Likewise, it will prevent them from heretical teachings that fly all around in our contemporary world. However, it is very pertinent for those who have a little knowledge of Biblical languages like Hebrew and Greek to study more in Christian Theological Seminaries to be well trained and equipped and be able to guide against misinterpretation of the manuscripts of the Bible when teaching the Bible doctrines like that of Logos, as well making their teachings to silence the false teachers and their teachings in the Nigerian societies.

Moreover, the church should take caution and be on her guard against “the wolves who are sneaking into the sheepfold.” The church in Nigeria should be awakening, be at alert and get rid of these wolves that sneak into the church and kill the faith of the Christians through their false doctrines (John 10:10; Jude 1). In addition, the Christian scholars and ministers should continue to publish polemic writings, preach apologetic sermons as defense of the doctrine of Christ against the heretical teachings and false doctrines around. This will aid the intensity of Christian conviction and help to explain faithfully to those outside, the authenticity of the personhood of Christ – the Christology, the Logos, and the incarnation.

Lastly, the effective, productive, fruitful, and abiding Christian life should be centered on the sound teaching of the Word of God and on the kingdom enterprise as it is given in Matthew 28:19-20 thus:

“Go ye therefore, and **teach** all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: **Teaching** them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, *even* unto the end of the world. Amen.” (KJV)

The churches in Nigeria through their denominational leaders should dwell more on doctrinal teachings and lay emphasis on the redemptive power of Jesus Christ.