

LESSON 1: HIS IDENTITY IN SCRIPTURE

Biblical Passage: John 1:1–5, 1:14, 5:31–47

LOGOS

THE GREEKS

Read the following information from the Holman Bible Dictionary about the term “logos” and answer the question below.

“Among the Greek philosophers, especially the Stoics, logos came to mean the **rational principle that gave order to the cosmos**. It could therefore be equated with God. Human reason, in turn, derived from this universal *logos*. Philo of Alexandria used this concept in his efforts to interpret Jewish religion for those versed in Greek philosophy. In Philo’s writings, *logos* was the **mediating agency by which God created** the world and **by which revelation comes to God’s people**. The *logos* became a distinct entity, specifically the “word of God” active in creation and revelation” (Butler, Holman Bible Dictionary, Nashville: Holman, 1991, p. 888).

What did Greek readers of John 1:1 understand about Jesus Christ as “the Word”?

THE JEWS

Read the following information from the Holman Bible Dictionary about the term “logos” and answer the question below.

“In the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament, logos translates the word *dabar*, which could mean, “word,” “thing,” or “event.” In Hebrew thought, the *dabar* was **dynamic and filled with a power** that was transmitted to those who received it. The term was often used to designate **God’s communication to His people**, as at the beginning of many of the writings of the prophets: “The word of the Lord came.” The whole of the Law, or all of Scripture, could then be referred to as God’s Word.

“Toward the end of the Old Testament period Wisdom was increasingly personified as the Word of God that **mediated between God and the world** (see Prov. 8:22–31) . . . Wisdom (*sophia*) was preexistent, God’s first creation, His **instrument and agent in all the rest of creation**. God became increasingly aloof in Jewish theology and dealt with His creation only through this subordinate being and through His angels” (Butler, p. 888).

What did Jewish readers of John 1:1 understand about Jesus Christ as “the Word”?