

# Jesus: THE Logos AND THE Rhema

The writers of the New Testament used two different Greek words which were translated into the English – “word” when referring to the Word of God. They are “logos” and “rhema.”

The literal definitions of these Greek words as found in concordances are as follows:

- “logos” - a word, something uttered by a living voice that embodies and entails a specific concept or idea.
- “rhema” - it refers to that which is or has been uttered by a living voice, it is a thing spoken, a spoken word.

When we look at the definitions of these two words we see that actually they are very similar. However, there has arisen over the last 40-50 years a great debate concerning these two words and what they actually are referring to.

As we read the New Testament, the writers refer to and use the term “scriptures.” When they did this they were referring to the entirety of the Jewish written scriptures which we refer to as the Old Testament. The Jewish written scriptures are comprised of the Pentateuch, the Writings and the Prophets - Genesis to Malachi. We must also be aware of the fact that Jesus, Himself, used the term “scripture” or scriptures” many times in His teachings which means He was referring to or referencing things from the Jewish written scriptures. The Greek word for “scripture” is “*graphē*” which literally means - a writing, something written. By the way, neither Jesus nor any of the New Testament writers ever referred to the Jewish written scriptures as “old.” Hmmm...

However, the writers of the New Testament, as we mentioned, also used the words “logos” and “rhema” to refer to God’s Word. The term “logos” has now come to refer to the “written scriptures.” When we say that, it may seem as if it does not line up with its own definition which is, “a word uttered by a living voice.” On the face of it that may seem to be true. However, we must remember that the scriptures we have in written form were actually spoken and uttered by “a living voice.” That “living voice” was, is and always will be God. The written scriptures were spoken and inspired by the Living God and given to men. (2Timothy 3:16; 2Peter 1:21) Those men then wrote them as a permanent living memorial of who our God is to His people. In these written scriptures – both the New Testament and the Jewish scriptures - God pours out and reveals His heart, His wisdom and most of all His love.

This written Word was, is and always will be - alive. Therefore, we refer to it as the “living Word of God.” Tradition and men’s “new revelations and interpretations” continually try to make the “living Word of God” dead. That was what Jesus emphatically rebuked the religious leaders of doing. They were making their traditions and oral interpretations of the written scriptures greater than God’s Word. In doing so they were making their ways and interpretations greater than God and thereby, usurping God as their absolute, supreme and final authority. Jesus states this in Mark 7:6-9 (KJV) - *He answered and said unto them, Well hath Esaias prophesied of you hypocrites, **as it is written**, This people honor me with their lips, but their heart is far from me. <sup>7</sup>Howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men. <sup>8</sup>For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men, as the washing of pots and cups: and many other such like things ye do. <sup>9</sup>And he said unto them, Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition.*

We also see this idea of the written scriptures being “dead” in the secular as well as the very “Christian” world we live in today. It is just packaged differently. Some religions state in their doctrines that their church tradition and interpretation is greater than the “dead Word of God.” Another “package” that this incorrect doctrine is wrapped in is the incorrect and heretical teaching that states that everything written or spoken prior to the resurrection of Jesus is totally irrelevant and not useful to or for the believer, today.

This includes everything Jesus taught and said when He walked this earth prior to His resurrection. This concept is just another way of saying that the scriptures are “dead” and that man has now received a “higher revelation and understanding” which are now much higher than that “dead Word of God” known as the Jewish written scriptures – the “Old Testament.” They say that Jesus was “under the Old Testament” therefore, He was “limited” to those scriptures but now after His resurrection, it is a new ballgame. Let me make one thing perfectly clear in this – I do not believe Jesus was ever “limited” in any way, shape or form.

In bringing forth these ways of thinking concerning God’s Word, those that teach and preach such things, whether they realize it or not, are really saying that God is dead. If God’s Word is dead and irrelevant then God must be dead and irrelevant as well. However, Jesus tells us that the Word of God “will never pass away.” God’s Word is God. But, if the Word is now dead then it stands to reason that God can be dead as well. To that I say, “Hogwash and heresy!!!” If Jesus was walking the earth today, I believe He would be quoting Isaiah to those who teach this heretical teaching. Unfortunately, they (just as the religious leaders did back then) would be incensed with Him and would declare Him to be Beelzebub and try not just to silence Him but they would try to get rid of Him, as well.

God has revealed everything about Himself through the inspired, entirety of the written scripture – from Genesis to Revelation. It reveals, illuminates and glorifies the Father, as well as Jesus and the Holy Spirit. However, the written Word was truly given for the purpose of declaring God’s plan of redemption and salvation for sinful Man. The written Word, spoken by God to the writers of the Jewish scriptures, was given to point Man back to the Father and to bring forth the restoration of that breached relationship with the Father caused by sin. It pointed to a Savior who would come and save us from eternal separation from God. The scriptures point us to Jesus. What did Jesus do as the “Living word of God” when He was on this earth? He pointed us to the Father. How did He do that? He quoted and used the scriptures – the written Word of God. He was the role-model of every aspect of the written scriptures. What does the Holy Spirit do now? He points us to Jesus who is the Way to the Father and who points us to the Father. How does the Holy Spirit do that? He does it by bringing the written scriptures and every one of its precepts to our remembrance. (John 14:26)

The written scriptures were given by God to point and lead us back to Him. They were given for the purpose of instructing us on the lifestyle that is pleasing to Him and that He can bless. Peter puts it this way in 2Peter 1:19-21, “*We have also a **more sure word** of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day star arise in your hearts: Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. **For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.**”*

When Peter uses the term “prophecy” he is speaking about the entire written Word of God (logos), which up to that point were the Jewish scriptures, the “Old Testament.” They were “breathed into” the writers who wrote what God’s heart was crying out to His most prized creation – come back!!! This “inspiration” continued with the New Testament writers. Notice, Peter says that the written scriptures are more trustworthy than even someone saying they “heard the voice of God,” which he literally did hear when he was on the Mount Transfiguration. “The voice of God,” will ALWAYS line up with His written living Word.

John 1:1 tells us. “*In the beginning was the Word (logos), and the Word (logos) was with God, and the Word (logos) was God.*” (The words “logos” in the above scripture was added by this writer.) Jesus was the embodiment of the entirety of the written scriptures therefore - Yes, “logos” would be referring to Jesus as well. He was the living embodiment and fulfillment of every aspect of God’s Word - both as a representative for Man (concerning all the scriptures referring to man) and as the incarnate Son of God (as in concerning all the scriptures referring to God). He role-modeled what the lifestyle of a Child of God should be as portrayed within the written scriptures. He also role-modeled every aspect of God’s character

and nature – as found in the written scriptures. Therefore, as we mentioned Jesus was the living Word of God come in the flesh for us to look upon and behold so that we would know the Father through Him and know how to live the lifestyle (that He role-modeled) which would be and is pleasing to the Father.

Let's discuss the term "rhema." As mentioned previously, the word "rhema" literally means – "utterance, something uttered by a living voice, a thing spoken." In other words it is the written Word of God that is spoken and uttered. This really goes along with the Hebrew word used in the Jewish scriptures translated to our English for "word." The Hebrew is "dabar," which means "an utterance to speak, declare, converse, command, promise, warn, threaten, sing." It was used mostly in phrases such as, "*The word (dabar) of the LORD which came to...*" We see this term used in many of the prophetic books of the Jewish scriptures. It was used to represent God actually "speaking" to, with or through an individual. (i.e. the prophets)

Therefore, "rhema" has basically come to refer to the actual speaking and uttering of God's written Word – the scriptures, its precepts and principles. However, in recent times, the term "rhema" has also come to be referred to as "the revealed" Word of God. To many, they use this to mean that the written scriptures (logos) are just words written in a book that do not mean anything to an individual unless the scriptures are "revealed to them personally by God." This can lead to many problems within the Body of Christ which we have already seen many times over. We get leaders and preachers telling us that "God has opened up and revealed His true Word and meaning of that Word to them." They want to make and ultimately deceive many into thinking that they are now God's oracles of the true meaning and understanding of the Word of God because He has revealed it to them.

I am not saying that God cannot or will not work through individuals to show and teach us things. However, we always need to be careful in what we hear and in what we receive into our hearts. Remember what 2Peter 1:20 tells us, "*Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.*" It also must line up with the entirety of scripture. (Matthew 18:16) We must also be careful that we do not take any scripture out of its context in which it was written and therefore declare and utter an incorrect doctrine because of a scripture being taken out of its original context. I believe God still speaks to His people. He has not stopped speaking to us. He does this through His Spirit, that still small voice within, who speaks to our spirit. I believe there are "prophetic utterances" that God will use people to bring forth as the Spirit leads. However, I also believe that all of the above would and should always line up in some aspect with God's written Word, the scriptures. They are the "plumb line" to which everything else is measured.

We need to be careful and cautious of new doctrines and "revelations." If it doesn't line up with the written scriptures in their entirety as well as within the context of where they are in the scriptures, then we must have our spiritual antennae up. I am not talking about sound doctrine from scripture that may cause us to be uncomfortable. Sound doctrine and sound scripture teaching should and will always confront us but in a gentle and convicting way in bringing correction to us. Sound doctrine will always edify, exhort and encourage us in leading the lifestyle that Jesus role modeled – a lifestyle of moral excellence. We should always be teachable and open to what God may want to show us.

Another problem concerning the confusion with these two words started not too long ago back in the late 1950s and 60s. The "faith movement" really began to make a differential between "logos" and "rhema." People began to preach and teach about "speaking the Word and it will create what your faith wants it to create." (I'm paraphrasing a little) This was, as they taught, the "rhema" aspect of the Word of God. The "rhema" was the power of God's Word spoken and declared by the individual. I am not saying that there is anything technically wrong with this. However, I do think it became and continues to be over balanced. Ultimately, this teaching, whether we realized it or not, led to us having more faith in the words we were saying and in our "own power" of our "own tongue" than faith in the God we were supposed to be praying to or coming in the Name of. Hmmmm...

In using this concept, we become like Peter when Jesus had asked his disciples, "...who do they say that I am?" Peter answered for them and said that they believed He was the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus said that Peter and the other disciples had received this from the Father. Hey, Peter got it right. But when Jesus then continued and said that He was going to die, Peter got so "heady" that he began to rebuke Jesus. Imagine that. He started rebuking Jesus and telling Jesus that He was wrong and that his way, Peter's way, was not just the better way but it was the right way!!! Peter, now feeling pretty good about his "spirituality," thought his plan was better than God's plan!! We all know how Jesus responded to that kind of thinking. Thank God that Jesus didn't listen to Peter's plan or we all would be going straight to...., well you know. I think this is where we slowly but surely have arrived in many churches in the Body of Christ today. We speak what we want. We are told and taught to speak God's Word over what we want and it shall come to pass. That is not what "rhema" truly is, however it is what "rhema" has inordinately become.

We must constantly be reminded of what Isaiah 55:5-10 tells us. God, speaking and uttering His words to Isaiah, clearly and definitively states that **HIS** ways and **HIS** thoughts are higher than our ways and are not our thoughts. It goes on to say that **HIS** Word will accomplish what **HE** wants it to accomplish, not what we think it should or want it to accomplish. That scripture totally takes the control out of our hands and places it squarely back to the One who is the absolute, supreme and final authority. **HE** is the one who knows the end from the beginning and the beginning from the end. **HE** is the only sovereign one.

In misusing and misinterpreting the word "rhema" we have now put the "power" into our own spoken word and not God's living Word which, as His Word clearly tells us, we are to utter and declare for **HIS** purposes and for **HIS** plans. What has happened is that we have ended up becoming our own god. We end up making God into our image. In doing so it is as if we are saying that He must do whatever we want Him to do for us. After all, "God is obligated to do this" (sic). We must remember that God is not, and never will be obligated to do anything but His Word. His Word will only accomplish what **He** wants and intends **His Word** to accomplish. Our responsibility is to declare (rhema) His written Word (logos).

Please, don't misunderstand me. I believe and have total faith in God's Word. However, I have learned and seen that when we speak and utter His Word, our heart's desire should be that it accomplishes what He wants – not what we want. This has become a "tradition of man." It must be placed in the balance of the entirety scripture. As Jesus said and taught us – not my will but Thy will be done. Psalm 37:4-5 (KJV) tells us, *"Delight thyself also in the LORD; and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the LORD; trust also in him; and he shall bring it to pass."* Unfortunately, our flesh too often "inverts" the order of this passage. We tend to focus on our reward (the fulfilling of our desires) rather than the fulfilling of our responsibility which is to delight in and commit our ways to Him. It must be all about Him and not us. As David's wrote this psalm, he gives us the correct order that should be within our heart. He distinctly shows us that our responsibility unto Him comes **before** our rewards. Our commitment to and delighting the heart of our King comes **before** our desires. If we have this in the correct order than all of a sudden my desires fade away and His desires come to the forefront and become the priority in my life.

Jesus was, is and always will be the Living Word (logos) who released, declared and taught God's Word (rhema). That Word accomplished and continues to accomplish what God the Father had intended it to accomplish. It is still in motion until we are with Him forever and ever – and it will continue on even at that time because the Word of God, who is God, has no beginning and no end – He was, is and always will be. His word will never pass away. Jesus was God's truth revealed to us in human form. God's Word is truth (John 17:17). Jesus is the Living Word of God – the Word is truth – Jesus is the Word therefore He **is** truth and in Him is found **all** truth. In Jesus is revealed and expressed the fullness of the written Word of God (logos) the spoken Word of God (rhema) and the fulfillment of the all scripture (graphe.)