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(Cont. from pg. 3) – inscription: **TO THE UNKNOWN GOD. Therefore, the One whom you worship without knowing, Him I proclaim to you**” (Acts 17:23). Paul was not sanctioning all that they taught or practiced in their worship of the “UNKNOWN GOD,” instead he was teaching them the truth, using their own misconception as a starting point.

The apostle John does the same thing in His reference to Jesus as the *Logos* of God. Unlike the Greek notion of the *Logos* as an impersonal ordering force, John declares that the Word

became flesh and dwelt among us (John 1:14). Throughout his gospel he goes on to explain that this One who is the *Logos* of God was a personal entity who lived and taught among His creation. While the Jews

perhaps were closer in their concepts of the *Logos*, John also clarifies their misconceptions. The Word of God was not simply a personified manifestation of God, John tells us that the *Logos* was the creative force of God, which was with God but was God Himself (John 1:1). Most often in Scripture, the phrase “word of God” refers simply to what God declares, John uses *Logos* at the beginnings of the gospel and his first epistle in a special way to teach both Jews and Greeks the truth about who Jesus is.



**The Lenexa EDIFIER**

...Let us pursue the things *which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another.*  
 – Romans 14:19

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## “Jesus Christ has Come in the Flesh”

by Kyle Pope

It is generally believed that the first epistle of John focused to some degree on the early stages of Gnostic belief. Gnosticism, in the first few centuries after Christ spread throughout the ancient world and challenged many early Christians. In their view Jesus could not have really come in the flesh because they felt that material things were inherently corrupt. In order to justify their own immoral behavior they rationalized the idea that just as (in their view) Jesus spiritually came to earth without really having contact with the material, they could do what they wanted with their bodies and inwardly, through attaining a secret knowledge (*gnosis* in Greek) they could still be pure. In refutation of this type of thinking John, through the Holy Spirit, declares that Jesus was One whom - “...we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled...” (I John 1:1, NKJV). Further, “every spirit that does not confess that Jesus Christ has come in the flesh is not of God. And this is the spirit of

the Antichrist, which you have heard was coming, and is now already in the world.” (I John 4:3).

While our modern world may no longer have proponents of Gnosticism as it existed in the ancient world, there are still many who have their own reasons for choosing to deny that “Jesus Christ has come in the flesh.”

### *If Jesus has come in the flesh...*

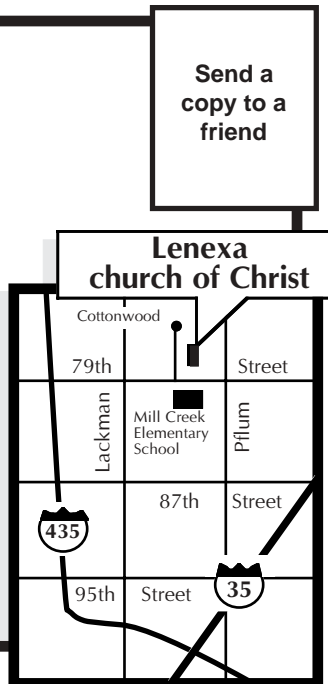
- 1. He is the way to eternal life.** Jesus offers mankind the way of salvation but He declares that it is a “narrow” and “difficult” way (Matthew 7:14). Not all roads lead to heaven. Not everything done in the name of religion is profitable to us. While we might hope and strive and try to attain a relationship with God through some other religion, our imagination or our conscience, Jesus declares boldly - “I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.” (John 14:6).
- 2. His word must be followed.** In offering man the way to salvation, Jesus (Cont. on pg. 2)

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**MEETING TIMES**  
 Sunday – Bible Classes 9:30 AM  
 Worship Services 10:20 AM & 6:00  
 Wednesday – Bible Classes 7:00 PM



**“Jesus Christ has Come in the Flesh”** (Cont. from pg. 1).— sets down a very exclusive standard of faith and behavior. We will not be judged according to some human philosophy or theory, but by Jesus’ words. Jesus taught - **“He who rejects Me, and does not receive My words, has that which judges him—the word that I have spoken will judge him in the last day”** (John 12:48). Since Jesus came in the flesh the standard of truth is clearly set forth in His word.

**3. We can’t follow our own way.** Jesus taught - **“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.”** (Matthew 16:24). Jeremiah taught the same principle centuries before this - **“O LORD, I know the way of man is not in himself; It is not in man who walks to direct his own steps”** (Jeremiah 10:23). Since Jesus came in the flesh and offered mankind the way which we must follow, in matters of personal lifestyle or in questions of religious practice the question is not what we want but what God (in Jesus) wants for us.

**4. Sin can be avoided.** Just as the Gnostics rationalized away the sinfulness of immorality, many today try to suggest that it is impossible for people to resist temptation and avoid sin. They do so either from some theological doctrine which claims that we inherit a sinful nature or from a humanistic determinism which treats behavior as the result of genetics, instinct or chemistry. The Bible makes it clear that Jesus possessed the same human nature that we do. The Hebrew writer tells us that Jesus was made like us **“in all things”** and that He has partaken of our **“flesh and blood”** which is the very

reason that He is **“a merciful and faithful High Priest in things pertaining to God”** (2:14-17). Yet Jesus as well, was **“in all points tempted as we are yet without sin”** (Hebrews 4:15). While it is obvious that the flesh is often weak (see Matthew 26:41), to suggest that the flesh cannot avoid sin we must reject Jesus’ own coming in the flesh.

**5. Many of our friends are lost.** The fact that Jesus came and offered to mankind a new way of salvation sets before us an offer we can either accept or reject. To reject Jesus is to forfeit the only hope that any of us have of salvation. Those who make such a choice will one day hear the sad words - **“I never knew you, depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness”** (Matthew 7:23). The fact that Jesus really did come in the flesh means that many in the world (including some of our own family and friends) will hear these sad words from the Lord.

**6. We must face Him in judgment.** While on the earth Jesus declared that when the day of judgment comes He will sit as judge of the world. In his gospel John relates Jesus’ declaration - **“For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son”** (John 5:22). In teaching His disciples about final judgment Jesus tells them at the end of things He will sit **“on the throne of His glory”** and all the nations will be gathered before Him so that he might separate them **“as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats”** (Matthew 25:31,32). If Jesus never came we have no accountability to Him. His coming in the flesh means that we can not escape our responsibility to Him and our appointment to stand before in judgment.



## “In the Beginning was the Word”

### A Study of the *Logos* Doctrine

By Kyle Pope

The gospel of John begins with a series of declarations about Jesus’ deity and eternal nature. The apostle, through the direction of the Holy Spirit, expresses this making use of an expression that was well known in the ancient world but unknown in Scripture (in exactly the same way) prior to this. John speaks of Jesus as **“the Word,”** who was **“with God”** and **“was God”** (1:1). John then tells us: 1. **“all things were made through Him”** (1:3a); 2. **“without Him nothing was made that was made”** (1:3b); 3. **“in Him was life”** (1:4). This **“Word,”** John continues: **“became flesh and dwelt among us”** (1:14); **“He came to His own”** (1:11a) yet, **“His own did not receive Him”** (1:11b). Sometime later, to refute false teaching which denied that Jesus came in the flesh, in his first epistle, John begins by referring to Jesus simply as **“the Word of life”** (I John 1:1).

The Greek word which is translated **“Word”** in this text is the word *logos* (λόγος). Five hundred years before Christ came into the world, the Greek philosopher Heraclitus used the word to describe what he envisioned as a universal force of reason which governed the universe. He felt that **“all things happen according to this Logos”** (Fr. 50, from Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, IX, 9, 1). Later, the philosophical school known as the Stoics expanded and popularized this idea in the ancient world.

Among Greek-speaking Jews the *Logos* came to be viewed as a force sent from God. In the Apocryphal book called the *Wisdom of Solomon*,

the Hellenistic Jewish writer describes the death of the firstborn in Egypt saying - **“thine Almighty word (*logos*) leaped down from heaven out of thy royal throne, as a fierce man of war into the midst of a land of destruction”** (18:15, KJV). The first century A.D. Alexandrian Jew Philo blended Greek and Jewish ideas together. In writing about the creation of the universe, Philo compared God’s creation to the building of a great city. The orderly arrangement of this great city, Philo attributed to **“the Logos of God”** (*On the Creation*, 24).

As early as the first century A.D. interpretations (or paraphrases) of religious passages known as *Targums*, began to be written down in Aramaic for Jews who no longer spoke Hebrew. In the *Targums* the Jews used the Aramaic word *memra* (מִמְרָא) meaning **“word”** as a personal manifestation of the presence of God. When Exodus 19:17 tells us that - **“Moses brought the people out of the camp to meet with God”** the *Targums* interpret this to mean that he brought them - **“to meet the Word (*memra*) of the Lord.”** When Psalm 2:4 declares - **“He who sits in the heavens shall laugh”** the *Targums* interpret it to mean - **“And the Word (*memra*) of the Lord shall laugh them to scorn.”**

What the apostle John appears to do in the use of this common term is much the same thing that Paul did in speaking to the Greeks in Athens. As he speaks to the wise men of the Areopagus he declares - **“... I was passing through and considering the objects of your worship, I even found an altar with this –** (Cont. on pg. 4)