

# Logos, Light & Lamb

Brad Jersak

## THE LOGOS (WORD) OF GOD

**I**n the beginning was the Word [Logos]. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. The Word was with God in the beginning. All things came into existence through him; not one thing that exists came into existence without him (John 1:1-3, NTE).

John the Beloved opens his beautiful Gospel with an echo of the Jewish creation story: “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” (Genesis 1:1). It’s important to note that “beginning” here means far more than “first” or “at the start.” This *beginning* is like laying a foundation on which everything is built and remains, or like an overture that recurs through an entire musical score.

Early Christian teachers would proclaim that this beginning, this foundation, this overture is (not just was) the very Word of God (Jesus Christ) by whom God spoke and speaks all things into being. Origen, for example, paraphrased the first verse of Genesis,

*...the one true Creator God speaks all that is into being, by his Word (Logos), and that Word is none other than Jesus Christ.*

“In Christ, God created the invisible and visible universe.” He had learned this from the prologue of John’s Gospel—the *Logos* (the divine Word), the Son of God, Jesus Christ founded and fashions all of existence. Everything that exists—including you and me—lives and exists *in Christ*. To call Jesus “the Word of God” is to say (a) Jesus is what God has to say about himself, and (b) this same Christ is the Word who said in Genesis 1 (and says today), “Let there be Light...”

The key point here is that the one true Creator God speaks all that is into being by his Word (*Logos*), and that Word is none other than our Lord Jesus

Christ. Of course, the apostle Paul concurs:

*The Son is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For in him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things have been created through him and for him. He is before all things, and in him all things hold together* (Colossians 1:15-17, NIV).

## THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD

*Life was in him, and this life was the Light of the human race. The Light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.*

*There was a man called John, who was sent from God. He came as evidence, to be a witness for the Light, so that everyone might believe through him.*

*He was not himself the Light, but he came to give evidence about the Light.*

*The true Light, which gives light to every human being, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, and the world did not know him* (John 1:4-10, NTE).

Many religions conceive of the Creator as transcendent, outside of creation, beyond time and space—and this is true. Later in John 1, we read that

“no one has seen God at any time” (verse 18). So too, Paul writes that God “lives in unapproachable light, whom no man has ever seen or can see” (1 Timothy 6:16, NIV).

But these truths are *not* true by themselves, for “the one and only Son, who is himself God and is in closest relationship with (lit., in the bosom of) the Father, has made him known” (John 1:18). In Christ, God the Word “pitched his tent” with us and we beheld his glory (John 1:14, see 1 John 1:1-4).

Yes, God is *transcendent*, but in Christ, he is also *immanent*. God’s *immanence* means that he is not far and, in fact, he’s even *much more than near!*



God is *everywhere present and fills all things*. God-in-Christ-by-the-Spirit (the Holy Trinity) is both *beyond* creation and *united* to it, and actually *permeates* it with his infinite loving presence.

To impress this upon the reader, John describes Jesus Christ as *LIGHT*. Let's imagine it this way: the Sun is 96 million miles away from the earth (incredibly far) but at the speed of light, it's just over eight minutes away (surprisingly close). Despite its vast distance, we can experience the light and heat of the sun directly, even burning our skin, blinding our eyes, or charging the cells of our body.

How much more has God (the unapproachable Light) *entered* our world (John 1:9), *overcome* the darkness (vs. 5), and *shone* his Love on every last one of us (vs. 9). His *"life was the Light of the human race"* (vs. 4), including those not ready to receive him (vs. 10). Jesus Christ truly is *"the Light of the world,"* and not just a human subset of well-behaved Christians.

Just as Jesus the *Logos* (Word) shows us God the Creator, so Jesus the visible Light shows us God the invisible Light, revealing that God the Father is not at all distant. We might use the James Webb telescope by way of limited analogy. The Webb telescope has been generating beautiful images of galaxies and nebulae, transposing frequencies of invisible light into photographs—it is making visible what is truly there, but beyond the spectrum of human vision. If the limited vision of our eyes can't see it, is the image still "real"? Absolutely.

How much more is Christ the true *"image of the invisible God,"* unveiling God before the eyes of those who could never otherwise see who God is or what God is like!

## THE LAMB OF GOD

When Christ tore back the veil to reveal God's true nature, we saw a new kind of glory that not one person ever expected (despite the prophetic hints). Here was God—not the roaring lion or soaring eagle or charging stallion, but a Lamb. A slain Lamb! The baby sheep, killed and eaten at Passover.

Ah, but what a Lamb! The Lamb of Exodus whose blood was more powerful than death, whose presence meant deliverance from slavery—*"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"* (John 1:29, 36). *This same Logos and Light is also the Lamb.*

- This Lamb has appeared in space-time history.
- This Lamb designates the Word enfleshed in a real human body.
- This Lamb was crucified under Pontius Pilate, buried and resurrected.
- This Lamb takes away the sin of the world.

Note that the Lamb does not merely *offer* to take away the sin of the world. The Lamb does not merely take away the sin of the church or the elect or the righteous. Nor does this Lamb merely take away sins (plural)—but rather, the "sin" (singular) of the world. The disease of alienation itself is healed

*Continued on page 8*



### COVER PHOTO: PHANTOM GALAXY

M74 shines its brightest in this combined optical/infrared image, featuring data from both the Hubble and James Webb space telescopes, capturing a range of wavelengths and galactic features. Red and yellow colors show dust threaded through the arms of the galaxy. Young stars are highlight in blue. Older stars toward the galaxy's center are shown in cyan and green, projecting a glow from the core of the Phantom Galaxy. Bubbles of star formation are visible in pink across the arms.

Credit: ESA/Webb, NASA & CSA, J. Lee and the PHANGS-JWST Team; ESA/Hubble & NASA, R. Chandar Acknowledgement: J. Schmidt

## Logos, Light & Lamb by Brad Jersak (Continued from page 3)

in the Lamb's union with humanity, *all humanity*.

Further, this same Lamb who died on a cross outside of Jerusalem in the first century was also "slain from the foundation [lit. the throwing down] of the world" (Revelation 13:8). That is, the "Lamb nature" of self-giving, sacrificial love IS the very nature of the eternal God. The Lamb of God reveals God as Lamb forever—the Servant-King, crowned by thorns and enthroned on a cross, forever reigns by love, mercy and peace.

*Thus, the "Lamb-ness" of God is not a brief episode in the life of God. This love is God's*

*essential and eternal nature.*

In closing, let's hear these themes John's overture gathered together: this Word (*Logos*) who was from the beginning, by whom all things were made, this same cosmic *Light* who said, "Let there be light" and shines his light on all, God's only begotten Son who unveils God as our loving Father—this same One is the *Lamb*, crucified and risen, who takes away the sin of the world. This cruciform *Lamb* is the Image of God's self-giving nature and unfailing love. □

*Brad Jersak gratefully writes and edits for CWR magazine.*

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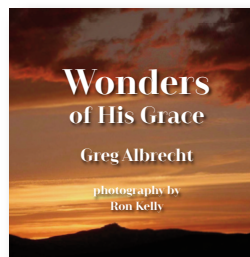
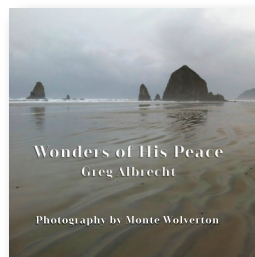
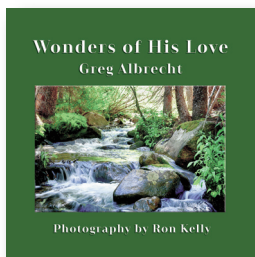
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