

the practical wisdom of righteous ones, to get ready for Jehovah a prepared people."—Luke 1:17.

The message of the good news from God's Word the Bible should therefore not be underrated. These words are more powerful than any words men can devise or speak. The ancient Bereans were commended for "carefully examining the Scriptures" to see whether what an apostle taught was correct. (Acts 17:11) God's ministers, speaking God's powerful Word, are energized and backed up by "power of holy spirit."—Rom. 15:13, 19.

#### "THE WORD" AS A TITLE

In the Christian Greek Scriptures "the Word" (Gr., *ho Logos*) also appears as a title. (John 1:1, 14; Rev. 19:13) The apostle John identified the one to whom this title belongs, namely, to Jesus, he being so designated not only during his ministry on earth as a perfect man, but also during his prehuman spirit existence as well as after his exaltation to heaven.

Regarding the Son's prehuman existence, John says: "In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." (John 1:1, NW) The *Authorized Version* and the *Douay Version* read: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." This would make it appear that the Word was identical with Almighty God, while the former reading, in the *New World Translation*, indicates that the Word is not the God, Almighty God, but is a "mighty one," a god. (Even the judges of ancient Israel, who wielded great power in the nation, were called "gods." [Ps. 82:6; John 10:34, 35]) Actually, in the Greek text, the definite article *ho*, "the," appears before the first "God," but there is no article before the second.

Other modern translations aid in getting the proper view. The interlinear word-for-word reading of the Greek translation in the *Emphatic Diaglott* reads: "In a beginning was the Word, and the Word was with the God, and a god was the Word." The accompanying text of the *Diaglott* uses capital and small capital letters for the God, and initial capital and lowercase letters for the second appearance of "god" in the sentence: "In the Beginning was the Logos, and the Logos was with God, and the Logos was God."

These renderings would support the fact that Jesus, being the Son of God and the one used by God in creating all other things (Col. 1:15-20), is indeed a "god," a "mighty one," and has the quality of mightiness, but is not the Almighty God. Other translations reflect this view. *The New English Bible* (1961) says: "And what God was, the Word was." The Greek word translated "Word" is *Logos*; and so Dr. James Moffatt's *New Translation of the Bible* (1922) reads: "The Logos was divine." *The Complete Bible—An American Translation* (Smith-Goodspeed) reads: "The Word was divine." Other readings (by German translators) are: By Boehmer: "It was tightly bound up with God, yes, itself of divine being." By Stage: "The Word was itself of divine being." By Menge: "And God (= of divine being) the Word was." By Pfaffenlin: "And was of divine weightiness." And by Thimme: "And God of a sort the Word was." All these renderings highlight the quality of the Word, not his identity with his Father, the Almighty God. Being the Son of God (Jehovah), he would have the divine quality, for divine means "godlike."—Col. 2:9; compare 2 Peter 1:4, where "divine nature" is promised to Christ's joint heirs.

A translation by a former Roman Catholic priest, Johannes Greber (1937 ed.) renders the second appearance of the word "god" in the sentence as "a god." And *The Four Gospels—A New Translation*, by Professor Charles Cutler Torrey (second ed., 1947), says: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was god. When he was in the beginning with God all things were created through him; without him came no created thing into being." (John 1:1-3) Note that what the Word is said to be is spelled without a capital initial letter, namely, "god."

#### How "in the beginning with God"

This Word or *Logos* was God's only direct creation, the only-begotten son of God, and evidently the close associate of God to whom God was speaking when he said: "Let us make man in our image, according to our likeness." (Gen. 1:26) Hence John continued, saying: "This one was in the beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence."—John 1:2, 3.

Other scriptures plainly show that the Word was God's agent through whom all other things came into existence. There is "one God the Father, out of whom all things are, . . . and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are." (1 Cor. 8:6) The Word, God's Son, was "the beginning of the creation by God," otherwise described as "the first-born of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth."—Rev. 3:14; Col. 1:15, 16.

#### Earthly ministry and heavenly glorification

In due time a change came about. John explains: "So the Word became flesh and resided among us [as the Lord Jesus Christ], and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father." (John 1:14) By becoming flesh the Word became visible, hearable, feelable to eyewitnesses on earth. In this way men of flesh could have direct contact and association with "the word of life," which, John says, "was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have viewed attentively and our hands felt."—1 John 1:1-3.

The glorified Lord Jesus Christ continues to carry the title "the Word," as noted in Revelation 19:11-16. There in a vision of heaven John says he saw a white horse whose rider was called "Faithful and True." "The Word of God," and "upon his outer garment, even upon his thigh, he has a name written, King of kings and Lord of lords."

#### Why God's Son is entitled "the Word"

A title often describes the function served or the duty performed by the bearer. So it was with the title *Kal Hatze*, meaning "the voice or word of the king," that was given an Abyssinian officer. Based on his travels from 1768 to 1773, James Bruce describes the duties of the *Kal Hatze* as follows. He stood by a window covered with a curtain through which, unseen inside, the king spoke to this officer. He then conveyed the message to the persons or party concerned. Thus the *Kal Hatze* acted as the word or voice of the Abyssinian king.

Recall, too, that God made Aaron the word or "mouth" of Moses, saying: "He must speak for you to the people; and it must occur that he will serve as a mouth to you, and you will serve as God to him."—Ex. 4:16.

In a similar way God's firstborn Son doubtless served as the Mouth or Spokesman for his Father, the great King of Eternity. He was God's Word of communication for conveying information and instructions to the Creator's other spirit and human sons. Prior to Jesus' coming to earth, on many of the occasions when God communicated with humans it is reasonable to think he used the Word as his angelic mouthpiece. (Gen. 16:7-11; 22:11; 31:11; Ex. 3:2-5; Judg. 2:1-4; 6:11, 12; 13:3) Since the angel that guided the Israelites through the wilderness had Jehovah's name within him, he may have been God's Son, the Word.—Ex. 23:20-23; see JESUS CHRIST (Prehuman Existence; Why called "the Word"; Jesus' Godship).

Showing that Jesus continued to serve as his Father's Spokesman or Word during his earthly ministry, he told his listeners: "I have not spoken out of my own impulse, but the Father himself who sent me has given me a commandment as to what to tell and what to speak. . . . Therefore the things I speak, just as the