Chapter 3

The Dabar of YHVH or the Logos of the gods?

Definition of "Tanakh" - **Tanakh** (tuh-NAHKH)

> *Acronym of Torah (Law), Nevi'im (Prophets) and Ketuvim (Writings). Written Torah, the three sections of the Jewish Bible, what gentiles call the Old Testament.*

One of the most fundamental essentials in understanding words is to know a little history behind those who use them. It is generally agreed by all that the language of the Tanakh is Hebrew. It is also generally agreed that the Tanakh is very Jewish, and full of concepts, idioms, and phrases that are viewed as Hebraic. Scriptural writers of the Tanakh spoke, taught, and thought from this perspective. Until the time of the New Testament, the Word of YHVH was everything that He had **spoken**. All scriptural thought was seen through the Hebrew language. But several hundred years before YHVH would take on flesh, the world was already experiencing some dramatic changes in language and culture. *Behind the scenes, **the Greek view** of the world and all that is in it, was brewing.*

In my book <u>Let This Mind Be in You</u>, I discuss the ***dramatic differences between Greek thought and Hebrew thought*** in much more detail. But, suffice it to say, these two world views are in most ways antithetical to each other. This can be seen in no better way than the defining of words. Earlier, we defined the word ***"word"*** from the Tanakh*.* We will now see how this word changed in time, from the thoughts and commandments of YHWH to the Greek word *Logos*. But first I would like to quote from some earlier works concerning this gradual evolution of scriptural words.

Edwin Hatch is eminently known for dozens of Greek works in the 19th century. Perhaps his greatest work is the Concordance to the Septuagint [LXX]. The following are several excerpts from his book, entitled <u>The Influence Of Greek Ideas and Usages Upon the Christian Church</u> (1895, Williams and Norgate).

"In a similar way we shall find that the Greek Christianity of the fourth century was rooted in Hellenism. The Greek minds which had been ripening for Christianity had absorbed new ideas and new motives;" "We have ample evidence in regard to the state of Greek thought during the ante-Nicene period. The writers shine with a dim and pallid light when put side by side with the master-spirits of the Attic age;" "We have ample evidence also as to the state of Christian thought in the post-Nicene period. The fathers Athanasius, Basil,

Gregory of Nazianzus, Gregory of Nyssa, and Cyril of Jerusalem, the decrees of general and local Councils, the apocryphal and pseudonymous literature, enable us to form a clear conception of the change which Greek influences had wrought.

"Education was no longer in the hands of 'private tutors' in the houses of the great families. It entered public life, and in doing so left a record behind it.

"But when the product of one generation spreads its branches far and wide into the generations that succeed, its roots must be deep and firm in the generation from which it springs. No lasting element of civilization grows upon the surface. Greek education has been almost as permanent as Christianity itself, and for similar reasons. It passed from Greece into Africa and the West. It had an especial hold first on the Roman and then UOfl the Celtic and Teutonic populations of Gaul; and from the Gallacian schools it has come,probably by direct descent, to our own country and our own time."

This process took several centuries to saturate the known world, but it indeed took root and has never let u. So let's trace one simple word for now.

The English word **word**, which we read in our New Testament, is translated in most occurrences from the Greek word 'logos'. The o is pronounced as the o in 'log', not as in 'low'. Its fundamental meaning is much the same as that of dabar. It means a thought, thing, something said, or utterance. This is the dictionary definition. However, its colloquial meaning in the centuries before and after Yeshua's time was quite different. Among the pagan religious Greeks of that time, the logos was the god of gods, the divine mind of the gods. He or it was the supreme knowledge, also known as gnosis. He/it was right thought, right mind, right purpose, and right creed. In other words the logos was right belief. Knowledge was salvation: saying the right things and believing the right things. And so we have the very subtle shift **from Yeshua' being the "instructions of God become flesh"** *to* the divine *"knowledge of the god of gods."* **Salvation** became an *intellectual pursuit, with structured creeds as its evidence*. Edwin Hatch said it better, again, when he said, "...The word '*faith*' came to be transferred from simple trust in Yahuah to mean the acceptance of a series of propositions, and these propositions, propositions in the abstract metaphysics.... The proposition followed: *Belief* in God came to mean the assent to certain propositions *about* God.

Theophilus also stated that the logos had two aspects - thought and speech. So the teachings of YHWH in the Tanakh concerning marriage, government, children, relationships, disease, food, unclean

things,criminals, waste management, health, money and love evolved into a creedal system. The words of YHVH soon became an abstract, undefined concept that could be **obtained by saying the right things**, **without the necessity of doing the right things.** The Jews of the so-called "Dark Ages" knew this concept very well. When confronted with the Crusaders, they simply stated that they believed that "Jesus was the Savior," and were promptly released. Most confessing Jews of that time secretly returned to their underground synagogues, knowing that the evidence of a Christian was a good confession.

This would not be all that critical if the actual words of YHVH were impotent and ineffectual. In Yeshayahu, in referring to haSatan, it says,

> Ysha'yahu 14:17
> "Who made the world like a wilderness, and destroyed its cities, who opened not the house of his prisoners?"

Is it any wonder how easy that would be for him if Yah's Word, designed to produce a land of milk and honey, to prosper our cities, and to set the captives free, was rendered irrelevant by a Torah-less (lawless) religious culture? Is it a coincidence that the devil (in 2 Thessalonians 2:8) is called the lawless one? When you redefine Yah's words, you redefine life and all that it means.