

Logos and Rhema: An Exaltation of Logos

by Karl Kemp; April, 2012

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All quotations from the Bible were taken from the *New American Standard Bible*, 1995 edition, unless otherwise noted.

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Introduction. I wrote a three and one-half page handwritten (before I began to type) article dealing with this topic in September, 1995, but I'll go into a lot more detail in this paper. The problems associated with widespread misunderstandings regarding the meaning of the Greek words *logos* and *rhema*, which are most often translated *word(s)* in the New Testament, are worse now than they were in 1995. This isn't the most serious error we need to deal with in the Body of Christ in our day, but it needs to be addressed. Some have addressed the problem already. I noticed that there are quite a few articles (most of the articles are brief) dealing with the meaning of these words on the internet, many are perpetuating the errors and a few are written to refute the errors.

I'll briefly define the problem (there are several varieties of viewpoints that misunderstand the meaning of logos and rhema): You often hear (or read) that logos is the written word and rhema is the spoken word. That's bad for a start, because logos is only used for the written word in about seven percent of its uses in the New Testament, and rhema is also used for the written word in the New Testament, though less often than logos. Some don't make the mistake of saying that logos is used (or always used) for the written word and rhema for the spoken word, but we hear this a lot. And, significantly, we often hear that the rhema word is alive, powerful, effective, revealed and understood, personal, etc. in contrast with the logos word, which needs to be awakened and changed to a rhema word to meet many of our needs. I should mention up front that it is very important for us to know that God's written word is alive, powerful, effective, personal, etc. When there is a problem, it typically comes from the condition of the hearts of those who come in contact with God's Word (see the Parable of the Sower, for example; we will discuss that parable in this paper); God's written Word is alive, powerful, effective, personal, etc. for those who come to it with open, repentant, humble, believing hearts.

The words "**for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life**" of 1 Cor. 3:6 are often seriously wrongly used to illustrate the supposedly dead written *logos* word of God before the Spirit of God makes it a *rhema* word. However, what the apostle Paul was saying in context (in 2 Corinthians chapter 3) was that we desperately need new-covenant salvation, which brings us the outpoured and indwelling Holy Spirit of God. We are born again by the outpoured Spirit, and we are required (and privileged) to walk by the Spirit of God on a continuous basis. And He enables us to walk in the righteousness and holiness of God, keeping the moral requirements of God's Law in our daily lives. The indwelling Spirit of God is here to help us in every area of our lives, including the gifts of the Spirit.

The apostle Paul frequently makes the point (like he does in 2 Corinthians chapter 3) that (the letter of) God's Law kills (brings death), in that the Law intensifies the sin problem, rather than solves the sin problem for man in the flesh, for man not having the new-covenant enablement of the Holy Spirit. (See Rom. 4:15, 5:13, 21; 7:5-13; Gal. 3:10-14; and 1 Cor. 15:56.) The new-covenant work of the Holy Spirit makes all the difference. (See Rom. 8:1-17, Gal. 5:16-25; and 6:8, for example.) For one thing, as verses like Ezek. 36:27 ("**I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will be careful to observe My ordinances.**") and Rom. 8:4 ("**so that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.**") demonstrate (also see Jer. 31:31-34; Rom. 2:25-29), the Holy Spirit enables us to keep God's moral Law in our daily lives, which is a way of saying that He enables us to walk in the imparted righteousness and holiness of God. These super-important things are discussed in detail in my book, *Holiness and Victory Over Sin: Full Salvation Through the Atoning Death of the Lord Jesus Christ*, and in many of my articles and papers.

Many Christians in our day define a "rhema word" as a word that God drops into our heart (by revelation), or where He turns a spotlight on a passage of the Bible so that it becomes alive and personal to us—it becomes a rhema word to us, they say. I agree that God can give personal words of revelation to direct us, correct us, and help us in various ways, etc. He is our Father, and we are His born-again children. He loves us, and we are totally dependent on Him. The Bible doesn't answer every question. It doesn't tell us, for example, who God calls into the ministry, or what ministry, or give us specific direction in every situation.

1 Corinthians 12:8 is probably the best example of God's giving us words of revelation in the New Testament, "For to one is given the **WORD** of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the **WORD** of knowledge according to the same Spirit." God can guide us by His Spirit with a "word of knowledge" or "word of wisdom," for example, but this has nothing to do with a supposed difference in meaning between the Greek words *logos* and *rhema*. According to many in our day, such a revelation would be called a rhema word, which is alive, understood, relevant, etc. for the one(s) who receive the revelation. Many readers will undoubtedly be surprised to learn that the Greek word translated "word" in "word

of knowledge" and "word of wisdom" is logos. Sometimes the facts get in the way of our ideas, assumptions, theories. Thank God for the truth! Thank God for the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches!

It's also true that God can turn a spotlight on a particular passage of the Bible (showing us the meaning of that passage, etc.), but it doesn't square with the meaning of the Greek words logos and rhema to say, as it is often said in our day, that that passage of the Bible has now become a rhema word for us. There is nothing about the word rhema that makes it more suitable than logos for God's revealing something to His children, including His turning a spotlight on a passage of the Bible, one way, or another, so that it becomes alive and personal to us in a special way. By the way, I don't see any examples in the New Testament where rhema is used where God does something special to a passage of the Bible so that it becomes a so-called rhema word for us. I don't see any support in the New Testament for the popular (but wrong) viewpoints regarding logos and rhema. These viewpoints cause considerable confusion.

As I mentioned, I agree that God does sometimes reveal things to His people (including guiding His people, especially ministers, to the correct interpretation of His Word), but we must be very careful with such revelations. Did it really come from God, or did it come from us, or from an evil being posing as an angel of light? It can obviously cause great damage if we think we, or some other Christian (especially influential ministers), have a revelation from God but we/they don't. And this happens all too often. Jesus warned us (in Matt. 7:15-23), for example, that we must check out those who call themselves prophets (and other ministers). He said to check them by their fruit, with the emphasis on how they are living (especially see verses 21, 23). Are they truly living for God in His righteousness and holiness? And we are warned in 1 John 4:1-6 that we must test every teaching (and the spirit behind that teaching) against what God has already revealed—we must put a very strong emphasis on God's written word, which we know is true. Every teaching/revelation must line up with God's written word.

It's true that rhema, when it is used of God's Word in the New Testament, is often alive, personal, revealed and understood, powerful, and effective in the hearts and lives of those who submit to God's Word in humble faith. But the same good things can be said regarding logos, and logos is used much more often that way in the New Testament than rhema. For one thing, the Greek noun logos is used five times more often than rhema is in the New Testament. (You should also be aware of the fact that sometimes Jesus' apostles, disciples, parents, etc. did not understand the rhema word He spoke to them. I'll give some examples in a section below.)

There are many verses that use rhema where rhema is used of God's Word which is alive, powerful, effective, just like with logos, but just because God's word is alive (whether logos or rhema) doesn't mean that the word will be alive in those who hear it. We are dependent on God's convicting, drawing, revealing,

enlightening, etc., but the condition of our heart, our attitudes, motives, priorities, etc. is a dominant factor determining whether we will respond (in faith) to God's Word and take it into our hearts, or not. The Bible puts a strong emphasis on the need for us to rightly listen to and respond to God and His Word. We'll discuss this later, including discussing the Parable of the Sower. We must be very careful how we listen to God's Word, for one thing.

A primary goal for this paper is to show that everything good that can be said about the use of rhema in the New Testament can also be said about logos. I don't believe that there are any verses that use rhema where logos could not be used instead, and without any discernable difference in meaning. But at least two good things can be said about logos that cannot be said about rhema. As I mentioned, logos is the favored word in the New Testament, being used five times more often than rhema. And, significantly, logos has the distinction of being used as the title for the unique Son of God, the LOGOS (see John 1:1, 14; 1 John 1:1; and Rev. 19:13), who was with God the Father in the beginning, who was sent to the earth to become the God-man through the virgin birth to become the Lamb of God and our Savior and Lord. God the Father created every being and thing that has ever been created through His Son (John 1:1-3, 10, 1 Cor. 8:6 (NIV); Heb. 1:3); and the Son was the perfect One to reveal the Father to us (cf. John 1:18).

Logos is a very special word used in the New Testament. Very often, as this paper shows, it is used in exalted ways. Back in the 70s, when I had to pick a name for my ministry to register in the state of Missouri, I picked the name "LOGOS Teaching Ministries."

It is somewhat surprising to me that these erroneous viewpoints regarding logos and rhema got started in the first place and that they have spread so rapidly in some circles. As I will demonstrate in this paper, there is essentially nothing in the Bible that backs up these viewpoints. Some of these viewpoints are further from the truth than others. One thing that we have to be very careful about is the error of thinking that God's written Word isn't alive. It is alive for those who take it for what it is—God's word to man! We'll speak more about these things as we continue.

There are quite a few scholarly resources that are quite helpful on the meaning of the words used in the New Testament, including the words logos and rhema. I'll mention the ones I looked at later in this paper. Reading through what they said on the meaning of logos and rhema in the New Testament, I didn't find any support for the erroneous viewpoints that we are considering in this paper. There is one rather minor exception. I probably wouldn't have looked at W. E. Vine's *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words with the Precise Meanings for English Readers* if it were not for the fact that I noticed that many of the articles written about the supposed significant differences between logos and rhema refer to a paragraph in that book, in the article under "word," where he discusses

logos and rhema. They are reading a lot more into that paragraph than what Vine said, and what he says in the rest of the article, by itself, confirms that the erroneous viewpoints we are considering in this paper are wrong. I'll quote that paragraph below and discuss what Vine said in that article.

I learned a long time ago that the most important tool for determining the meaning of words used in the Bible is to look up all of the uses of that word in the Bible and determine what the words mean in their biblical contexts. (That's more difficult when a word is used more than 300 times, like the word logos.) That's the primary tool we will be using in this paper, but we won't discuss all of the verses. I have been greatly rewarded for doing such word studies for some words of key importance that are controversial, like the words righteousness (with the companion words including righteous, justify, justification, etc.) and holiness (with the companion words holy, saint, sanctification, etc.). I have spent more than 100 hours on both of those words, and it was well worth the time. We cannot rightly understand sentences in the Bible if we don't know the meaning of the words in the sentences, especially the meaning of key words like those I mentioned. It would be worth spending a thousand hours to understand the meaning of such words, or many more than a thousand hours if necessary. As I mentioned, we will never understand the Bible if we don't understand the meaning of the words.

Once wrong (or inadequate) definitions or interpretations are accepted, it is very difficult to get rid of them. Each group tends to demand loyalty to their accepted definitions and interpretations. If you (especially ministers) suggest your group is in error, you probably won't be part of that group much longer. For one thing, pride can play a key role here; and nobody likes to admit they (and their group) have been wrong, but it is totally necessary for every one of us to make God and His truth and righteousness top priority. WE ARE ALL GOING TO HAVE TO ANSWER TO HIM! Wrong definitions and interpretations do great damage to the Body of Christ! Another big part of the problem is that Satan and his hosts make it a priority to lead Christians to wrong interpretations of the Bible, and all too often Christians have been quick to follow their lead. For one thing, it seems that many Christians like new interpretations. How desperately we need to make it a top priority to always seek to learn and to hold the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches on every topic, especially the more important topics. Rightly dividing God's Word and then living it must be a top priority for every Christian!

The different ways logos and rhema are translated by the *New American Standard Bible* and some examples of verses where logos and rhema are used in contexts that have nothing to do with the Word of God:

I'm going to quote what the "Greek Dictionary" in the back of the *Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, 1995 edition, for the *New American Standard Bible*, has for logos and rhema. (It was published by the Lockman Foundation in 1998.)

An exhaustive concordance like this is one of the most helpful Bible study tools available to Christians.

Under Logos: "...a word (as embodying an idea), a statement, a speech:—account(7), accounts*(1), accounting(2), accounts(2), answer(1), appearance(1), complaint(1), exhortation*(1), how to do(1), instruction(1), length*(1), matter(4), matters(1), message(10), news(3), preaching(1), question(2), reason(2), reasonable(1), remark(1), report(1), said(1), say(1), sayings(4), saying(1), speaker(1), speech(10), statement(18), story(1), talk(1), teaching(2), thing(2), things(1), utterance(2), what he says(1), what*(1), WORD(179), WORDS(61)" (my underlining and capitalization). The total number is 332, according to these numbers.

An asterisk (*) means that the key word represents two or more Greek words.

Under Rhema: "...a word, by implication, a matter:—charge(1), discourse(1), fact(2), matters(1), message(2), nothing*(1), remark(1), say(1), say say(1) [apparently this Greek Dictionary has a typographical error here], saying(1), sayings(3), statement(6), thing(2), things(4), WORD(18), WORDS(22)" (my underlining and capitalization). The total number is 67.

You will notice that the words logos and rhema are both translated other ways too, like "matter(s)" or "thing(s)." I won't comment on those other translations in this paper. I should point out that logos and rhema are both used several places where the words are the words of men that don't have anything to do with the Word of God. I'll give two examples for both words. For rhema, **Matt. 12:36, "But I tell you that every careless word [rhema] that people speak, they will give an accounting for it in the day of judgment."** And **Acts 6:11, "Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him [Stephen] speak blasphemous words [plural of rhema] against Moses and against God.'** For logos, **2 Pet. 2:3, "and in their greed they will exploit you with false words [plural of logos]; their judgment from long ago is not idle, and their destruction is not asleep."** And **1 John 3:10, "...unjustly accusing us with wicked words [plural of logos]...."**

Logos, rhema, and the written Word of God. Like I mentioned, there are some variations in the erroneous viewpoints regarding the meaning of logos and rhema, but one of the biggest errors that you often hear is that logos is always used of the written word, whereas rhema is always used of the spoken word. A quick glance at the ways logos is translated suffices to show that logos isn't always used of the written word, but when you get into the details it becomes a lot more obvious. As I will demonstrate, when logos is translated "word(s)" it refers to a spoken word most of the time. Some 7 percent of the total uses of logos in the New Testament refer to the written word.

I'll give a few examples where logos is used of God's written word: **1 Cor. 15:54, "But when this perishable will have put on the imperishable, and this mortal will have put on immortality, then will come about the saying [logos; or we could translate "the word"] that is written, 'death is swallowed up in victory [quoting from Isa. 25:8].'** " The apostle Paul went on to quote from Hos. 13:14. It is important to understand that God's written word is alive too. It is alive for those who appreciate the fact that it is God's word speaking to us. I'll also quote part of **Acts 15:15, "With this the words [plural of logos] of the Prophets agree,"** then James goes on to quote Amos 9:11, 12. And I'll quote **Rev. 1:3, "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words [plural of logos] of the prophecy [referring to the super-important book of Revelation], and heed [or, keep] the things which are written in it."** (Also see Rev. 22:7, 9, 10, 18, 19, which also refer to the words [plural of logos] of the prophecy of the book of Revelation.) The words of this prophecy are alive (along with all of God's written Word), and we are required to make it a top priority to understand them and live in line with them by the grace of God in Christ through faith.

It is significant to this study to learn that rhema is also used of God's written Word in the New Testament. I'll quote **Matt. 4:4, "But He answered [Jesus answered the devil] and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word [rhema] that proceeds out of the mouth of God."'** " In that context it would be understood by the Lord Jesus, by the devil, and by those reading the Gospel of Matthew that "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God" refers (at least for the most part) to the word of God written in the Old Testament. Jesus quoted from the Old Testament three times in Matt. 4:1-11 and the devil quoted from it once. **2 Pet. 3:2, "that you should remember the words [plural of rhema] spoken beforehand by the holy prophets [referring (at least for the most part) to their words written in the Old Testament] and the commandments of the Lord and Savior spoken by your apostles."** I'll also quote **Eph. 6:17, "And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [rhema] of God."** The Spirit of God, who dwells in us as born-again Christians, enables us to effectively use the word of God as the need arises in our warfare against sin and Satan and his hosts. (Jesus used the word of God against Satan in Matt. 4:1-11.) The "word of God" for the apostle Paul's first readers very much included the Old Testament along with the gospel they had learned from the apostle Paul and others. In our day the word of God that we use in our daily lives, including in our warfare against the evil one and his hosts, refers to God's written Word, the Bible. We'll discuss Eph. 6:17 later in this paper.

Many key passages that use logos where rhema would be expected, based on the popular, but wrong, views regarding logos and rhema:

Matthew 8:8. "But the centurion said, 'Lord, I am not worthy for You to come under my roof, but just say the word [logos], and my servant will be

healed.' " That word was alive, powerful, effective, etc. So too for the verses that follow.

Matthew 8:16. "When evening came, they brought to Him many who were demon-possessed; and He cast out the spirits with a word [logos], and healed all who were ill."

Luke 4:32, 36. "and they were amazed at His teaching, for His message [logos], was with authority. (36) And amazement came upon them all, and they *began* talking with one another saying, 'What is this message [logos]? For with authority and power He commands the unclean spirits and they come out.' "

John 15:3. "You are already clean because of the word [logos] which I have spoken to you."

Acts 15:7. "After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, 'Brethren, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, that by my mouth the Gentiles would hear the word [logos] of the gospel and believe.' " The word of the gospel is alive, powerful, and effective to save all who submit to God and His word in faith.

Acts 15:32. "Judas and Silas, also being prophets themselves, encouraged and strengthened the brethren with a lengthy message [logos]." Their word was filled with truth and alive and effective to encourage and strengthen the brethren.

Acts 19:20. "So the word [logos] of the Lord was growing mightily and prevailing."

Acts 20:32. "And now I commend you to God and to the word [logos] of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give *you* the inheritance among all those who are sanctified."

Romans 15:18. "For I will not presume to speak of anything except what Christ has accomplished through me, resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by word [logos] and deed."

1 Corinthians 1:18. "For the word [logos] of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

1 Corinthians 2:4, 5. "and my message [logos] and my preaching were not in persuasive words [plural of logos] of wisdom [Paul is speaking of worldly wisdom, of which the Greeks (including the Corinthians) were proud. See verse 5.], but in demonstration of the Spirit and power, (5) so that your faith

would not rest on the wisdom of men, but on the power [Greek *dunamis*] of God."

1 Corinthians 12:8. "For to one is given the word [logos] of wisdom through the Spirit, and to another the word [logos] of knowledge according to the same Spirit." These words from God were revealed, alive, and effective. In 1 Cor. 14:19 the apostle Paul speaks of "**words** [plural of logos; words that come from the Holy Spirit] **in a tongue** [speaking in tongues, as in 1 Cor. 14:2, 4, etc]."

1 Corinthians 15:1, 2. "Now I make known to you, brethren, the gospel which I preached to you, which also you received, in which also you stand, **(2) by which also you are saved, if you hold fast the word [logos] which I preached to you, unless you believed in vain.**" The word [logos] of the gospel that the apostle Paul preached to them was alive, powerful, and effective to save all who would repent and humble their hearts before God to receive it. To receive the gospel includes submitting yourself to God, His Son, and His gospel in faith, and (as Paul says here) we must continue to hold fast the gospel (by the sufficient saving grace of God in Christ).

When the apostle said "unless you believed in vain" in 1 Cor. 15:2, he meant unless the gospel he had preached to them wasn't true. He knew it was true, of course. He spoke these words ("unless you believed in vain") in a context (which he goes on to discuss as he continues) of knowing that some of the "Christians" at Corinth were denying the future resurrection of the physical body. He wanted to make it very clear that we don't have the option to change the gospel that he had received by revelation from the Lord Jesus Christ (see Gal. 1:6-9, 11, 12).

Ephesians 1:13. "In Him [in Christ], you also, after listening to the message [logos] of truth, the gospel of your salvation—having also believed [Having heard the word (logos) of the gospel, which is alive, powerful, effective, personal, etc., we still must submit to the gospel in faith, appropriating God's saving grace, and we must press on in faith (by God's grace) until the end.], **you were sealed in Him with the Holy Spirit of promise.**" Having believed—having submitted to the gospel in faith—we receive the Holy Spirit, who was promised in the Old Testament (cf., e.g., Ezek. 36:27; Joel 2:28, 29) and promised by the Lord Jesus (cf., e.g., John 7:37, 39; Acts 2:4, 5). To be sealed by God as His own (what a privilege!) includes being born again by the Holy Spirit. The new birth was not available until Jesus had conquered sin and spiritual death through His atoning death and been resurrected. Then He still had to return to the Father and receive "from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit" which He then poured out, starting on the day of Pentecost (see Acts 2:33).

Philippians 2:14-16. "Do all things without grumbling or disputing, **(15) so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation,**

among whom you shine as lights in the world, (16) holding fast the word [logos] of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain." We must submit to, and hold fast, the word (logos) of life, which is alive, powerful, and effective and enables us to "be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom [we] shine as lights in the world." The Spirit of God enables us to walk in line with the word of the gospel (whether using the Greek words logos or rhema). The apostle Paul would have run/toiled in vain at Philippi if all the believers there would have turned their backs on Christ and would not be ready to stand before God "in the day of Christ," which wasn't about to happen.

Colossians 3:16. "Let the word [logos] of Christ richly dwell in you, with all wisdom teaching and admonishing one another with psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with thankfulness in your hearts to God."

1 Thessalonians 2:13. "For this reason we also constantly thank God that when you received [in faith] the word [logos] of God which you heard from us, you accepted *it* not as the word [logos] of men, but *for* what it really is, the word [logos] of God, which also performs its work in you who believe." Here again we see that the logos of God is alive, powerful, and effective: IT PERFORMS ITS WORK IN [THOSE] WHO BELIEVE (to those who submit to the word of God in faith and continue to walk in faith by God's sufficient grace).

1 Timothy 4:6. "In pointing out these things to the brethren, you will be a good servant of Jesus Christ, *constantly* nourished on the words [plural of logos] of the faith and of sound doctrine which you have been following." We are constantly nourished on the Word of God, which is alive, powerful, effective, etc.

2 Timothy 2:8, 9. "Remember Christ Jesus, risen from the dead, descendant of David, according to my gospel, (9) for which I suffer hardship even to imprisonment as a criminal, but the word [logos] of God is not imprisoned."

Hebrews 4:12. "For the word [logos] of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged sword, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of the heart." Hebrews 4:12 is discussed in my paper on the meaning of the words spirit and soul.

James 1:18. "In the exercise of His [God's] will He brought us forth by the word [logos] of truth, so that we would be a kind of first fruits among His creatures." "He chose to give us birth through the word [logos] of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created" (NIV). The word that makes us alive, etc. is alive, powerful, effective, personal, etc.

1 Peter 1:22, 23. "Since you have in obedience to the truth [Obedience to the truth of the word of the gospel is included in what it means to have faith in the gospel (see, for example, John 3:36; Rom. 2:8; 2 Thess. 1:8; and 1 Pet. 4:17).] purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart [Having been born of the Spirit, Christians are enabled and required to love one another with a supernatural love (cf., e.g., Gal. 5:22; 1 Pet. 4:8; 1 John 4:7, 8, 11, 12, 16-21).], **(23) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, that is, through the living and enduring word [logos] of God.**" God's logos is "living and enduring," powerful, effective, etc. For one thing, we are born again through that logos word. And with the new birth comes the enablement to walk in love (and all the fruit of the Holy Spirit of Gal. 5:22, 23) and manifest the righteousness and holiness of God.

1 John 1:10. "If we say that we have not sinned [like the Gnostic heretics that the apostle John was refuting throughout this epistle, who denied the reality of the all-important sacrificial death of the Lamb of God and their need for His atoning blood, were saying], **we make Him a liar and His word [logos] is not in us.**" God's word was not in them because they did not receive it into their hearts.

1 John 2:14b. "I have written to you young men, because you are strong, and the word [logos] of God abides in you."

Some examples where people hear a word (rhema), but the word is not received, or in some cases is not understood, by those who hear it. There is nothing about the meaning of the word rhema (as it is used in the New Testament) that ensures that it will be alive, understood, effective, etc. in those who hear it, even in the case of believers. (Ten uses of the total number of the 67 uses of rhema in the New Testament are included with these examples.):

Mark 9:32. "But they [Jesus' disciples] did not understand *this* statement [rhema], and they were afraid to ask Him."

Luke 2:50. "But they [Jesus' parents] did not understand the statement [rhema] which He had made to them."

Luke 9:45. "But they [His disciples] did not understand this statement [rhema], and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement [rhema]."

Luke 18:34. "And the disciples understood none of these things, and *the meaning of this statement* [rhema] was hidden from them, and they did not comprehend the things that were said."

Luke 24:11. "But these words [plural of rhema] appeared to them [to the apostles] as nonsense, and they would not believe them."

John 5:47. (Jesus spoke these words to some of the Jews who were rejecting and not believing in Him.) "**But if you do not believe his writings** [the writings of Moses; in verse 46 Jesus had just mentioned that Moses wrote about Him], **how will you believe My words** [plural of rhema]."

John 8:47b. "He who is of God hears the words [plural of rhema] of God; for this reason you do not hear *them*, because you are not of God."

John 12:47, 48. "If anyone hears My sayings [plural of rhema] and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. (48) He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings [plural of rhema], has one who judges him; the word [logos] I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." God's logos, which is alive, and powerful, and effective will judge those who reject God's words [plural of rhema; logos could be used here too] at the last day.

Quite a few examples where rhema is used of God's Word in an exalted sense, where it is alive, powerful, effective, etc. However, as I mentioned, I don't believe that the meaning of any of these verses would change in any meaningful way if the word logos was used instead of rhema.

Matthew 4:4. "But He [Jesus] answered and said, 'It is written, "Man shall not live on bread alone, but on every word [rhema] that proceeds out of the mouth of God." ' " Jesus was quoting from Deut. 8:3. It is clear that God's written word is included in, and is a big part of what is meant by, "every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God." God's word is alive, powerful, and effective, and we are totally dependent on His word to live in right relationship with Him, even as our physical bodies are dependent on bread (food) to sustain physical life. Although God's Word is alive, powerful, and effective, we must make it a top priority to understand His Word and to take it into our hearts and live in it, by grace through faith, or it won't be alive, powerful, or effective in/for us. (God's words dealing with the judgment of those who continue to rebel against Him will, of course, be alive, powerful, and effective against those who don't submit to Him or His words.) Many examples included in this article show that logos would fit perfectly here.

Luke 1:38. "And Mary said, 'Behold, the bondservant of the Lord; may it be done to me according to your word [rhema].' And the angel departed from her." The word that Mary received was the Word of God spoken by Gabriel. The word was alive in Mary and understood in large part because of the condition of her heart. I'm not minimizing our dependence on God's working with His Word, revealing it, etc., and He must receive all the glory, but as I demonstrate in this paper, the Bible puts a strong emphasis on the condition of our hearts and our need to take God's Word into our hearts for the precious thing that it is, the very

Word of God. If we don't love God and His Word, it won't be alive, powerful, or effective in/for us. Verses like the following, which use logos, demonstrate that logos would fit perfectly here: Matt. 13:23; Mark 4:20; Luke 10:39; 11:28; John 4:50; 5:24; and Acts 2:41.

Luke 3:2. "in the high priesthood of Annas and Caiphas, the word [rhema] of God came to John [John the Baptist], the son of Zacharias, in the wilderness." The word of God came to John the Baptist, and the word was alive, powerful, and effective in John and his ministry, but this had nothing to do with the fact that rhema was used here instead of logos. Many examples in this article demonstrate that logos could have been used here without changing the meaning of this verse.

John 6:63, 68. "It is the Spirit who gives life [referring here to spiritual/eternal life]; the flesh profits nothing; the words [plural of rhema] I have spoken to you are spirit [or, "Spirit" with the margin of the NIV] and are life. ... Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord to whom shall we go? You have the words [plural of rhema] of eternal life.' " Rhema is used in an exalted sense here, but it would not change the meaning of these verses to substitute logos for rhema (cf., e.g., John 5:24; 8:31, 51; 1 Thess. 2:13; Heb. 4:12; and 1 Pet. 1:23). And even though Jesus' words were very much alive and brought life to those who received them, they were not alive for those who did not submit to the Lord Jesus and His Word in faith. The majority rejected Him and His words. In this context many of His disciples stopped following Him.

John 8:47a. "He who is of God hears the words [plural of rhema] of God." Logos would fit perfectly here too (see under John 17:8 below).

John 15:7. "If you abide in Me, and My words [plural of rhema] abide in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be done for you." It is clear that most people have rejected Jesus; they did not abide in Him, and His words did not abide in them. Whether logos or rhema is used, we must submit to His words with repentance and humble faith. See 1 John 2:14, for example, which speaks of God's logos abiding in believers.

John 17:8. (Jesus is praying to God the Father here,) **"for the words [plural of rhema] which You gave Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that You sent Me."** I'll quote John 17:2, 6, 14: **"even as you have given Him [Christ Jesus] authority over all flesh, that to all whom You have given Him, He may give eternal life. ... (6) I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word [logos]. ... (14) I have given them Your word [logos]; and the world has hated them, because they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world."** We must RECEIVE GOD'S WORD AND KEEP

HIS WORD, whether logos or rhema is used, and whether it is God's written word, His Word spoken through Jesus, an apostle, etc.

Acts 2:14. "But Peter, taking his stand with the eleven [on the Day of Pentecost], raised his voice and declared to them, 'Men of Judea and all you who live in Jerusalem, let this be known to you and give heed to my words [plural of rhema]." The listeners still needed to respond to Peter's words. Some did, and some didn't. Verses like Acts 2:22, 40, 41 demonstrate that logos could have been used in Acts 2:14 instead of rhema.

Acts 5:19, 20. "But during the night an angel of the Lord opened the gates of the prison, and taking them [the apostles] out he said, (20) 'Go, stand and speak to the people in the temple the whole message [plural of rhema] of this Life.' " Logos is used repeatedly throughout the book of Acts and other places in the New Testament for the words of the gospel message.

Acts 10:22, 44; 11:1. "They said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was *divinely* directed by a holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house and hear a message [plural of rhema] from you.' " (44) "While Peter was still speaking these words [plural of rhema], the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message [logos]." (11:1) "Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word [logos] of God." (Acts 11:14 also uses the plural of rhema, referring to the same event, "and he will speak words [plural or rhema] to you by which you will be saved and all your household.") The use of *logos* in Acts 10:44 and 11:1 (and in many similar verses) confirms that there is no substantial difference between the meaning of the words rhema and logos in these verses.

All the people gathered by Cornelius responded in faith to (they received) the gospel message that Peter preached. (God knew their hearts before He sent Peter to them [cf. Acts 10:2, 4, 31, 34, 35].) Believing in the Lord Jesus Christ (see Acts 11:17) is something they did. Although God convicts, draws, reveals, etc., He does not just give people saving faith or make believers continue in faith (see my papers titled "A Paper on Faith" and "Once Saved, Always Saved?") We desperately need the balanced truth of what God's Word teaches on these super-important topics.

We certainly couldn't submit to the gospel if God didn't send the gospel to us, one way, or another. (And before that, He had to send His Son to die for us and all that was involved in His all-important ministry, and He had to keep the devil from destroying us.) God told Cornelius to send for the apostle Peter, who would tell him words [plural of rhema] by which he and all his household would be saved (Acts 11:14); He convinced Peter that he should go (Acts 10:9-20, 28, 29, 34, 35; 11:2-12); and Acts 11:18 speaks of God's granting the Gentiles also the repentance *that leads to life*. Our salvation is totally dependent on God; we are

saved 100 percent by the saving grace in Christ, and God must receive all the glory; but we (as free moral agents; we still have some freedom after the fall) must submit to the gospel in faith and press on to the end of the race by grace through faith. God, who is sovereign, is the one who set things up this way.

Romans 10:8. (Romans chapters 9-11 are discussed verse-by-verse in a paper on my internet site.) **"But what does it say? 'The word [rhema] is near you, in your mouth and in your heart'—that is, the word [rhema] of faith [or, "of the faith"; the definite article is included in the Greek] which we are preaching."** The apostle Paul is speaking with respect to those who submit to the gospel in faith. Verses like the following show that the apostle Paul could just as well have used the word logos here: 1 John 2:14, which speaks of the word [logos] of God abiding in hearts; Phil. 2:16, which speaks of the need for Christians to hold fast the word [logos] in their hearts; and 1 Thess. 2:13, which speaks of the word (logos) of God performing its work in those who receive the word for what it really is, the word (logos) of God.

Romans 10:16-18. **"However [even though God sent His Son to save them (and us) and sent the gospel of new-covenant salvation to them (and us)], they did not all heed [obey] the good news [In other words, they did not submit to the word (rhema) of the gospel with repentance and faith; many did, but many didn't.]; for Isaiah says, 'Lord, who has believed our report?' [Isa. 53:1] (17) So faith comes from hearing [It's important to see that the apostle didn't say here that if you hear the gospel you will believe it. (But we must, of course, hear the gospel before we can submit to it in faith.) He has already mentioned that many did not submit to the gospel—they did not obey it—and he goes on in verse 18 to point out that the problem wasn't that they hadn't heard the gospel. Many heard it but rejected it.], and hearing by the word [rhema] of Christ [or, probably better, "by the word concerning Christ," the gospel]. (18) But I say, surely they have never heard have they? Indeed they have; 'their voice has gone out into all the earth, and their words [plural of rhema] to the ends of the world [quoting from Psalm 19:4].'"**

2 Corinthians 12:3, 4. **"And I know how such a man [The apostle Paul was speaking of himself here]—whether in the body or apart from the body I do not know, God knows—(4) was caught up into Paradise and heard inexpressible words [plural of rhema], which a man is not permitted to speak."** Rhema is used in an exalted sense here, but logos could have been used too with no difference in meaning.

Ephesians 6:17. **"And take up the helmet of salvation, and the SWORD of the Spirit, which is the word [rhema] of God."** I'll quote Heb. 4:12, which uses logos, **"For the word [logos] of God is living and active and sharper than any two-edged SWORD, and piercing as far as the division of soul and spirit, of both joints and marrow, and able to judge the thoughts and intentions of**

the heart." (Hebrews 4:12 is discussed in my article dealing with the meaning of spirit and soul in the New Testament.)

In Eph. 6:10-20 the apostle Paul speaks of the armor Christians must wear and of the sword we must use to be victorious in our warfare against Satan and his hosts (built on the pattern of the armor worn and a weapon used by many Roman soldiers). The indwelling Spirit of God enables us to effectively use the word of God (the sword of the Spirit) in our spiritual warfare. We will further discuss Eph. 6:17b later in this paper.

1 Peter 1:22-25. "Since you have in obedience to the truth purified your souls for a sincere love of the brethren, fervently love one another from the heart, (23) for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word [logos] of God. (24) For, 'all flesh is like grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, (25) but the word [rhema] of the Lord endures forever' [quoting Isa. 40:6b-8 (Septuagint version)]. And this is the word [rhema] which was preached to you."

Many uses of logos in the New Testament demonstrate that logos could have been used instead of the two uses of rhema in 1 Pet. 1:25, including the use of logos in 1 Pet. 1:23, where logos is used of "the living and enduring word of God," through which we are born again.

Several examples where logos and rhema are used together in the same setting with the same meaning.

Luke 9:44, 45. " 'Let these words [plural of logos] sink into your ears; for the Son of Man is going to be delivered into the hands of men.' (45) But they did not understand this statement [rhema], and it was concealed from them so that they would not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this statement [rhema]." "This statement" (rhema), which is used twice in verse 45, is the equivalent of "these words" (plural of logos) in verse 44.

John 12:47, 48. "If anyone hears My sayings [plural of rhema] and does not keep them, I do not judge him; for I did not come to judge the world, but to save the world. (48) He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings [plural of rhema], has one who judges him; the word [logos] I spoke is what will judge him at the last day." God's logos, which is alive, and powerful, and effective will judge those who reject God's words/sayings [plural of rhema; logos could be used here too].

John 17:6-8, 14a. "I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word [logos]. ... (8) For the words [plural of rhema] which you

have given to Me I have given to them; and they received *them* and truly understood that I came forth from You, and they believed that you sent Me. ... (14) I have given them your word [logos]...." (Also note the use of logos in 17:17.) The context shows that the "words" (plural of rhema) of 17:8 are the equivalent of God's "word" (logos) of 17:6 and 14.

Acts 10:22, 44; 11:1. "They said, 'Cornelius, a centurion, a righteous and God-fearing man well spoken of by the entire nation of the Jews, was *divinely* directed by a holy angel to send for you *to come* to his house and hear a message [plural of rhema] from you.' " (44) "While Peter was still speaking these words [plural of rhema], the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who were listening to the message [logos]." (11:1) "Now the apostles and the brethren who were throughout Judea heard that the Gentiles also had received the word [logos] of God." (Acts 11:14 also uses the plural of rhema, referring to the same event, "and he will speak words [plural or rhema] to you by which you will be saved and all your household.") The uses of logos and rhema in these verses (and in many similar verses) confirms that there is no substantial difference between the meaning of these words in these verses.

Hebrews 12:19. (These things took place at Mt. Sinai.) "**and to the blast of a trumpet and the sound of words** [plural of rhema; God audibly spoke the ten commandments to the people of Israel (see Ex. 20:1, 19, 22), for one thing] **which sound was such that those who heard begged that no further word** [logos] **be spoken to them.**" Logos and rhema are used with the same meaning in this verse.

1 Peter 1:23-25. "for you have been born again not of seed which is perishable but imperishable, *that is*, through the living and enduring word [logos] of God. [This logos of God is certainly living, effective, etc.] (24) For, 'All flesh is as grass, and all its glory like the flower of grass. The grass withers, and the flower falls off, (25) But the word [rhema] of the Lord endures forever [taken from Isa. 40:6-8].' **And this is the word [rhema] which was preached to you.**"

With the words of **1 Pet. 1:25a**, "but the word [rhema] endures forever," compare the words of Jesus in **Matt. 24:35** (Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33), "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words [plural of logos] will not pass away."

I believe I could find quite a few other passages to list here too.

What do the scholarly works that deal with the meaning of New Testament words have to say on this topic? I looked at the relevant articles in the BAGD *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* in 3 volumes (edited by Colin Brown); the *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* in 10 volumes (edited by G. Kittel; I didn't thoroughly study

the lengthy article of some 65 pages, which is in Vol. 4); *A Theological Word Book of the Bible* (by Alan Richardson); the *Exegetical Dictionary of the New Testament* in 3 volumes (edited by H. Balz and G. Schneider); *A Manual Greek Lexicon of the New Testament* by George Abbott-Smith; and the *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament* in 2 volumes (by J. P. Louw and E. A. Nida).

I didn't notice anything in any of these articles that would support the popular (but wrong) views regarding the meaning of *logos* and *rhema* that we are discussing in this paper. I'll quote a one sentence paragraph from Vol. 1 of the last reference cited (on page 400) in a brief discussion (33.98) for *logos* and *rhema*: "Any difference of meaning between *logos* and *rhema* would be only a matter of stylistic usage."

I noticed that many (or most) articles on the internet that teach popular (but wrong) views regarding *logos* and *rhema* appeal to the one and one-half page article under "word" that deals with the meaning of *logos* and *rhema* in *An Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine (first published in 1940). As I mentioned, I probably wouldn't have looked at this reference if many articles on the internet were not using it as the (or, a) primary support for the popular (but wrong) views regarding *logos* and *rhema*. I have had this book for more than forty years, but I haven't used it much. For one thing, the BAGD Greek Lexicon is much more highly rated by Bible commentators, etc.

It is very significant for the purposes of this paper that this article by W. E. Vine makes it clear that it is wrong to say that *logos* is used for the written word and *rhema* for the spoken word. For one thing, he makes the statement that *rhema* "denotes that which is spoken, what is uttered in speech OR WRITING [my emphasis]...." And it is very significant that Vine's article refutes the idea that the *rhema* word is alive, powerful, and effective, etc. but the *logos* word isn't. I'll quote part of what Vine says under *logos*: "...the phrase 'the word of the Lord,' i.e., the revealed will of God (very frequent in the O.T.), IS USED OF A DIRECT REVELATION OF CHRIST, 1 Thess. 4:15; [and it is used] of the gospel, Acts 8:25; 13:49; 15:35, 36; 16:32; 19:10; 1 Thess. 1:8; 2 Thess. 3:1 [and many more verses could be listed here]; in this respect IT IS THE MESSAGE FROM THE LORD, DELIVERED WITH HIS AUTHORITY AND MADE EFFECTIVE BY HIS POWER [my emphasis] (compare Acts 10:36)...." Under his very brief (two paragraph) discussion of *rhema*, Vine points out, for one thing, that *rhema* "is used of the gospel in Rom. 10:8 (twice); 10:17...'the word of Christ', (i.e., the word which preaches Christ); Rom. 10:18 [plural] ; 1 Peter 1:25 (twice)...."

It is one of Vine's two paragraphs that deal with *rhema* that has caused the damage, based on what I have read. I'll quote the paragraph: "The significance of *rhema* (as distinct from *logos*) is exemplified in the injunction to take 'the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God,' Eph. 6:17; here the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our

remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture."

It is unfortunate that this short paragraph has been so influential. Anyway, many are reading a whole lot more into this paragraph than what Vine intended, and (apparently) they aren't reading the rest of the article.

In what way is rhema "distinct from logos" according to Vine in this paragraph? First, I want to repeat the very significant point that his article (including this paragraph) does not support any of the errors that I am dealing with in this paper: He does not say that logos is used for the written word and rhema for the spoken word, and he does not say that the rhema word is alive, powerful, effective, personal, etc., but that the logos word isn't. The only thing he says here about a distinction between rhema and logos is that "the reference is not to the whole Bible as such, but to the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need."

If we only had this one paragraph, we might think Vine was saying that logos always refers "to the whole Bible," but rhema is used for "individual scripture" (like a verse or a passage of several verses). But his article makes it is clear that he is not saying that, and a study of the use of the words in the New Testament will quickly confirm that that statement would be false, and it would be especially false to say that logos always (or, most of the time) refers "to the whole Bible." For one thing, Vine points out in his article the obvious fact that logos is sometimes used in the New Testament for "a saying or statement, (1) by God, e.g., John 15:25; Rom. 9:9, 28...; Gal. 5:14; Heb. 4:12; (2) by Christ, e.g., Matt. 24:35 (plural); John 2:22; 4:41; 14:23 (plural); 15:20." In John 15:25, for example, the first verse Vine cited here, logos refers to part of a verse from the Old Testament, "But they have done this to fulfill the word [logos] that is written in their Law, 'They hated me without a cause' " [see Psalm 35:19; 69:4]. So too for the next verse he listed, Rom. 9:9, "For this is the word [logos] of promise: 'At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son' " (see Gen. 18:10). I'll also quote John 2:22, which Vine cited here, "So when He was raised from the dead, His disciples remembered that He said this; and they believed the Scripture and the word [logos] which Jesus had spoken." These verses (along with a large number of other verses) demonstrate that logos is often used of individual scriptures or statements/sayings/words. I'll list some more examples: Matt. 5:37; 8:8; 12:32; 15:12; 19:11, 22; 28:15; Mark 5:36; 7:29; 10:22 (plural); 12:13; Luke 1:29; 7:7, 17; 12:10; 20:20; John 4:37, 39, 50; 6:60; 7:36, 40 (plural); 10:19 (plural); 12:38; 15:20, 25; 18: 9, 32; 19:8, 13 (plural); 21:23; Acts 2:40 (plural); Acts 5:5 (plural), 5:24 (plural); 6:5; 7:29; 11:22; 13:15; 15:27, 32 (plural); 16:36 (plural); 20:38; 22:22; Rom. 9:9; 13:9; 1 Cor. 12:8; 14:9, 19; 15:54; Gal. 5:14; Eph. 4:29; Col. 4:6; 1 Thess. 4:15; 2 Thess. 2:2; 3:14; 1 Tim. 1:15; 3:1; 4:9; 2 Tim. 2:11; Titus 3:8; Heb. 7:28 (with 7:21); and 2 Pet. 2:3 (plural).

Apparently all that Vine intended to say about a distinction between logos and rhema (a distinction that he doesn't comment on anywhere else in his article) was that his interpretation of Eph. 6:17 (which isn't widely held; we'll discuss the interpretation of this verse as we continue), where he assumes (wrongly I believe) that the fact that the apostle Paul used rhema (and not logos) allows him to assume that Paul was referring to "the individual scripture which the Spirit brings to our remembrance for use in time of need, a prerequisite being the regular storing of the mind with Scripture." Vine is assuming too much. For one thing, even though rhema could be used that way, I didn't find one verse in the New Testament where rhema is used of an "individual scripture." Significantly, however, logos is used quite a few times in the New Testament of individual verses of the Bible (see John 4:37; 12:38; 15:25; Rom. 9:9; 13:9; 1 Cor. 15:54; Gal. 5:14; and Heb. 7:29 with 7:21).

I haven't hardly considered the question whether rhema might be used much more often than logos for individual statements, etc. because it isn't relevant to this paper. I assume that there is a tendency in that direction, but there are so many exceptions to that tendency that it doesn't affect the interpretation of Eph. 6:17. I'll quote a sentence from the article under "word" dealing with the use of rhema in the New Testament from *The New International Dictionary of New Testament Theology*, Vol. 3, edited by Colin Brown, page 1121: "Whereas *logos* can often designate the Christian proclamation as a whole in the NT, *rhema* usually relates to individual words and utterances: man has to render account or every unjust word [Matt. 12:36]; Jesus answered Pilate without a single word [Matt. 27:14]...." Apparently Vine is building heavily on the tendency mentioned in this quotation.

How about the commentators on Eph. 6:17. I looked at thirty-five commentaries on the book of Ephesians. Thirty-two of the commentators disagreed with Vine's assumption: Twenty-three said that rhema here refers to the Bible, and nine said that it refers to the gospel. The other three commentators said things similar to what Vine said here. Lastly, I'll mention that the well-respected BAGD Greek Lexicon said rhema refers to the gospel in Eph. 6:17.

I'll quote the relevant part of Eph. 6:17, "**And take...and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word [rhema] of God.**"

In agreement with the BAGD Greek Lexicon and a great majority of commentators on the book of Ephesians, I don't agree with Vine that rhema is used of "the individual scripture" in Eph. 6:17. As I mentioned, BAGD and quite a few commentators say rhema refers to the gospel here, and, as I showed above, Vine's article demonstrates that rhema is sometimes used for the gospel. I agree with the commentators who say rhema is used in Eph. 6:17 for the entire Word of God. Why limit the Word that the Spirit enables us to use in our daily lives, which includes spiritual warfare, to the gospel? Many verses in the Old Testament are very important to our daily lives, including our warfare against Satan and his

hosts. The temptation of Jesus, for example, involved verses from the Old Testament.

I'll quote what the BAGD Greek Lexicon, third edition (which is very well respected, but not infallible), says (under *rhema*) regarding the use of *rhema* in Eph. 6:17. The heading under 1 is "that which is said, *word, saying, expression, or statement of any kind.*" Toward the end of what BAGD says under 1, it has these words, words that are quite relevant to this study, under which Eph. 6:17 is listed (along with several other verses): "Generally the singular [The singular of *rhema* is used in Eph. 6:17] brings together all the divine teachings as a unified whole, with some such meaning as *gospel, or confession.*" So BAGD doesn't agree that *rhema* should be understood of "the individual scripture." I'll list the other verses that BAGD included with Eph. 6:17 here: Rom. 10:8 (twice); Eph. 5:26; Heb. 6:5; and 1 Pet. 1:25 (twice).

I don't have any problem with including Vine's idea that the Holy Spirit can bring passages of scripture that we have memorized to our remembrance on occasion (whether *logos* or *rhema* is used), but I don't believe that is the primary idea here. If the apostle Paul had wanted to make the point that the Spirit of God brings to our remembrance individual verses of the Bible that we have memorized, he would undoubtedly have stated that clearly. His use of *rhema* surely doesn't suffice to make that point. The apostle was saying a lot more than that here in Eph. 6:17. The Spirit of God enables us to rightly and effectively use all the Word of God (whether *logos* or *rhema*) with authority and power in our daily lives, very much including when we are involved in spiritual warfare against the forces of evil. He can even enable us to use verses we haven't memorized.

This is a very important part of what the Spirit does for us as we walk in faith (a faith that is based on God and His Word) and by the Holy Spirit on a continuous basis (see Rom. 8:1-14; Gal. 5:16, for example). For one thing, the Spirit enables us to think right, which includes thinking in line with God's Word (Rom. 8:5-9; 12:1, 2; and Eph. 4:23 with the translation, "and be renewed by the Spirit in your mind/thinking.") These verses are discussed in my book *Holiness and Victory Over Sin*. Romans 12:1-8, which is a very important passage, is discussed in the Appendix of my "A Paper on Faith," which is available on my internet site; Google to Karl Kemp Teaching.

Even though I (with a great majority of others) don't agree with Vine's interpretation of Eph. 6:17, I don't believe that he intended to communicate the idea that the *rhema* word is alive, powerful, effective, revealed, etc., but that the *logos* word isn't. The things Vine said in this article about *logos* (that I quoted) demonstrate that he wasn't making that point, which would be an erroneous point. And I assume he wouldn't say that *logos* could not be used for an individual scripture that the Spirit of God brings to our remembrance. I have demonstrated that *logos* is used of individual scriptures quite a few times in the New Testament, and remember, for example, that a revealed word of knowledge and word of

wisdom from the Spirit of God (1 Cor. 12:8) is a logos word. (Vine listed 1 Cor. 12:8 under the sub-heading "discourse, speech, of instruction etc.," but he didn't comment on the meaning of the verse.)

In summation, I don't agree with much that Vine said in his paragraph on rhema that we have been discussing. But I'm thankful that I can say that those who read his entire article will be kept from the errors dealing with logos and rhema that are circulating in parts of the Body of Christ in our day.

A discussion on the Parable of the Sower and some other verses that show some of the reasons why people do not bring forth good fruit when they are confronted with God's Word, even though it is alive, powerful, effective, etc.

There are a large number of verses where logos and rhema are used of God's Word, which is alive, powerful, effective, personal for us, etc., but just because God's word is alive, etc. doesn't mean that the word will be understood and received by those who hear it, that they will press on in the word and bring forth a harvest of righteous and good fruit at the end. Whether with logos or rhema, everything depends on the condition of our heart (according to this parable), which includes our attitudes, motives, priorities, etc. We are dependent on God's calling, convicting, drawing, revealing, enlightening, etc., but the Bible puts a strong emphasis on the need for us to rightly respond to God and His Word, from our hearts, by His grace, with repentance and faith. If we aren't interested, or at least don't become interested, in repenting, being forgiven, and coming into divine order in God's righteousness and holiness, through submitting to God and His salvation plan, the gospel won't be important to us, and it won't be alive, powerful, or effective to save us.

Matthew 13:1-24 (Mark 4:1-25; Luke 8:4-15 [Luke 8:4-18 are discussed in my "A Paper on Faith"]) **and the Parable of the Sower.** This parable shows, for one super-important thing, that although the seed is good, it will not produce any lasting good fruit if the soil is not good. (There is no problem with the Word of God, whether using logos or rhema; logos is used here in verses 19, 20, 21, 22 [twice], and 23; it is alive, powerful, effective, and personal for those who will rightly receive it.) Although Jesus doesn't clearly make this point in this parable, the New Testament makes it abundantly clear that God can turn bad soil into good soil for those who begin to respond to the gospel of new covenant salvation with repentance and faith. We must make it a top priority to understand God's Word, to take it into our hearts, and to live by it, by grace through faith. (What we were doing with God's Word yesterday, and the day before, etc. will determine how well we will understand it today.) Mark 4:20, speaking of those who represent the good soil says, "they hear the word [logos] AND ACCEPT IT (they accept it for what it is) and bear fruit, thirty, sixty, and a hundredfold." We must be very careful HOW WE LISTEN TO GOD'S WORD (see Luke 8:18, "So take care how you listen...."). The New Testament frequently speaks of those who don't

listen to God's Word. **"That day Jesus went out of the house and was sitting by the sea. (2) And large crowds gathered to Him, so He got into a boat and sat down, and the whole crowd was standing on the beach.** [Many of the people in such crowds were not there for the right reasons.] **(3) And He spoke many things to them in parables, saying, 'Behold the sower went out to sow** [It is clear (at least it is clear when we have Jesus' explanation of the parable in verses 18-23) that the sower is sowing the Word of God, "the word [logos] of the kingdom" (Matt. 13:19), the gospel; the ultimate Sower was the Lord Jesus.]; **(4) and as he sowed, some seeds fell beside the road, and the birds came and ate them up.** [Jesus explained these words in verse 19: "When anyone hears the word [logos] of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil *one* comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road." We must make it a top priority to do everything we must do to be able to understand God's Word. For one thing, we will never understand God's Word until we are willing to do His will. (I'll quote what Jesus said in John 7:17, for example, "If anyone is willing to do His [God's will], he will know of the teaching, whether it is of God or *whether* I speak from Myself.") If we draw near to God and begin to walk by His Spirit, the devil will not be able to steal God's Word (or His righteousness, or His salvation) from us.] **(5) Others fell on the rocky places, where they did not have much soil; and immediately they sprang up, because they had no depth of earth. (6) But when the sun had risen, they were scorched; and because they had no root they withered away.** [I'll read what Jesus said about these people in verses 20, 21: "The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word [logos] and immediately receives it with joy; (23) yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word [logos], immediately he falls away." We must make it a top priority to appropriate the fullness of the saving grace of God in Christ, which we learn about through God's Word, so this won't happen to us.] **(7) Others fell among the thorns, and the thorns came up and choked them out.** [I'll quote what Jesus said in verse 22, "And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word [logos], and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word, and it becomes unfruitful." Again, we must appropriate the fullness of the saving grace of God in Christ that we learn about from His Word [logos], so this won't happen to us.] **(8) And others fell on the good soil and yielded a crop, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.** [I'll quote what Jesus said in verse 23, "And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word [logos] and understands it; who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty." Any people who truly humble themselves before God and make it a top priority to understand His Word (by His grace) and persist on that path (by His grace) will be able to understand God's Word and to live in line with His Word and bring forth much good fruit by His grace and for His glory.

I'll quote a paragraph from what R. C. H. Lenski says under Luke 8:15 (*The Interpretation of St. Luke's Gospel*, [Wartburg Press, 1946] page 453.), "What the parable and its exposition describe is *the final fate* of the Word in the hearts of men. When life is done, some show a harvest; all the rest show no harvest. ... This final fate of the Word is shown us *now* so that we may examine ourselves as to how we are treating the Word *now*, before life is done. And this is done because, though no man can change himself, God has means to change us all, trodden path, rocky places, briar patches into good soil for his Word. This means of God is the Word itself as it is exhibited in this parable [the Word (logos) which is alive, powerful, effective, personal for us, etc.]. Like all the Scripture revelations of man's sinful states, this one, too, aims at the conscience and at repentance which thus opens the soul for the gospel. The more it is opened, the more fruit will there be in the end." **(9) He who has ears, let him hear.** [Mark 4:3 begins this parable with the words, "Listen *to this!*" These words here in verse 9 indicate the supreme importance of really hearing God's Word (especially His Word dealing with new-covenant salvation), not just hearing the words of this parable. This parable was designed, for one thing, to warn the multitudes who came to Jesus with the need to really hear what He was saying. They desperately needed to hear His primary message, which centered in the need to repent and submit to Him and the One who sent Him and to His new-covenant salvation, which was God's complete and only answer to the sin, spiritual death, Satan problem, in the light of the fact that the day of judgment is coming.

These verses show that the sin problem runs very deep in the hearts of people, even in the hearts of the people of Israel, which makes it all the more mandatory that we learn of our need for salvation, what God has provided for us in Christ, and what He requires of us. The world, the flesh (the old man who still wants to live in the born-again Christian), and the devil and his hosts are against us. This parable, and many other things Jesus said, make it clear that He knew that many never would repent and submit in faith to God, His Son, and His logos (cf., e.g., John 3:19-21; 8:37-59; 10:1-18).] **(10) And the disciples came and said to Him, 'Why do You speak to them in parables?'** **(11) Jesus answered them, 'To you it has been granted to know the mysteries** [The word "mysteries" is used here, as it often is in the New Testament, of the glory of God's new covenant plans that were not revealed in the days of the Old Testament but were now being revealed through the Lord Jesus, and before long would be revealed through His apostles (cf., e.g., Rom. 16:25; 1 Cor. 15:51; and Eph. 3:9). I should mention that God has revealed a lot more to us than He revealed to those who heard Jesus when He ministered on the earth, including the revelation given through the apostles, very much including the all-important book of Revelation.] **of the kingdom of heaven** [Mark 4:11 and Luke 8:10 have the "kingdom of God" instead of the "kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of heaven/God is here now in its preliminary form.], **but to them it has not been granted.** [We must be totally thankful for the salvation that God has prepared for us at a very high (infinite) cost to Himself and His Son, and for His revealing these things to us (to all who have ears to hear). He has truly given us the pearl of great price (Matt. 13:45, 46).

We must appreciate it for what it is and make these things the top priority of our hearts and lives. God, who knows the hearts of all people, doesn't reveal these things or give these things to those who won't appreciate them and use them, committing themselves to live for God in His imparted righteousness and holiness by His saving grace in Christ. See verse 12. The Bible shows that God can save people who are in great bondage to sin IF they will humble their hearts and begin to cooperate with His grace and persevere in His grace.] **(12) For whoever has, to him *more* shall be given, and he will have an abundance** [See under verse 11. I'll quote Luke 8:18, "So take care how you listen; for whoever has, to him *more* shall be given; and whoever does not have, even what he thinks he has (or, "seems to have," margin of the NASB) shall be taken away from him."]; **but whoever does not have, even what he has shall be taken away from him.** [If we do not love God and the things He has given us, and use them, we will eventually lose anything we do have from Him.] **(13) Therefore I speak to them in parables; because while seeing they do not see, and while hearing they do not hear, nor do they understand.** [More can be said (for one thing, Jesus understood that some of the people in the multitudes He spoke to would become true disciples), but the point Jesus made here is that He spoke to those who were not His disciples in parables, because He didn't want them to understand what He was saying. God, who knows the hearts of all people, doesn't want all people to understand the gospel. For one thing, for many that knowledge would hurt them in that their ultimate rejection of God and His salvation would increase their guilt before God. Any "repentance" and "faith" would be shallow and temporary and do more harm than good. And it is very important to see that the more such people are part of the church and influence the church, the more damage they do to the church. Jesus frequently said things, and God frequently does things, designed to keep many people from becoming "Christians" or to separate such temporary non-committed "believers" from the church. Jesus consistently insisted that those who follow Him do so with total commitment (cf., e.g. Matt. 16:24-27; Luke 6:46-49; 9:62; and 14:25-33). We certainly confuse the issue and give prospective converts a faulty "gospel" if we don't inform them what God requires of Christians along with what He provides for them. We cannot change the gospel. God backs up and honors His Word; He doesn't back up or honor a gospel we have invented/modified.

God certainly doesn't want to lose any people who can be brought to true repentance and faith by His marvelous grace (cf. 1 Tim. 2:4-6). But the sin problem runs very deep, including in the heart of man. Who would have believed that Satan would rebel and a third of the angels would follow him. And who would have anticipated that mankind would be so prone to follow the devil in his rebellion against God, so much so that Jesus would have to tell some of the people of Israel of that generation that they were children of the devil in John 8:31-59. It's no wonder that for such people, Jesus' word (logos) found no place in them. As this paper shows, the results would have been exactly the same if the word *rhema* had been used.

We desperately need the balanced truth regarding what the Bible teaches about God's role and man's role in our salvation. We must understand that our salvation comes 100 percent by the saving grace of God in Christ (we did not, and could not, earn it), and God must receive 100 percent of the glory for our salvation. But it is also true that God's salvation plans include a very definite role for man. Even though we are totally dependent on God's grace to save us, which includes the incarnation and Sacrifice of His Son; His calling, drawing, convicting, enlightening, strengthening, enabling work, which includes His sending the gospel to us as individuals, and the fact that He didn't let the evil one consume us, and the fact that He calls us to repent and submit to the gospel in faith and to continue in faith until the end, HE DOESN'T JUST GIVE US SAVING FAITH, and (although He gives us the enabling grace to continue in faith to the end, which includes all the work of the Holy Spirit who dwells in us) HE DOESN'T MAKE US CONTINUE IN FAITH TO THE END. He calls us to always walk by the Holy Spirit, not the flesh (old man), for example (Gal. 5:16), but that doesn't mean that all Christians will do what He calls us to do, enables us to do, and wills us to do.

I believe the New Testament is quite clear on these super-important points if we take the balanced truth of all that it says on these things and don't limit ourselves to the favorite proof texts that many Christians use. (See my "A Paper on Faith" and "Once Saved, Always Saved?") However, the fact that we are required to submit to God, His Son, and His gospel in faith and to continue to walk in faith and by the Holy Spirit has nothing to do with our earning or deserving salvation in any way. Rather, we were all spiritually dead sinners in desperate need of salvation. The most true Christians can say for themselves is that they eventually submitted to God's love and grace, and that God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit must receive all the glory forever. However, we will be *glorified* and reign with God the Father and His Son forever.

The fact that we must submit to God's saving grace in Christ, rather than continue in spiritual death, being out of the divine order we were created for, does not in any way detract from the fact that we are saved 100 percent by the saving grace of God in Christ. We are saved by grace through faith, and from the time we are born again all the good that we do is a work of God wrought by His grace (see Eph. 2:10, for example), especially through the work of the indwelling Spirit of God, who enables us to live in the righteousness and holiness of God, with the victory over sin and Satan and his hosts.

We need to be very careful about passing judgments—we are not the Judge. We don't know the hearts of people like God does; we don't know all the facts, and we don't know what will happen to them in the future. Many of us would have been sure that Saul, who became the apostle Paul, would not turn out to be a totally committed Christian. No matter how great the sin, God can totally save those who will truly repent and submit to His saving grace in Christ.] **(14) In their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says "You will keep on hearing, but will not understand; you will keep on seeing, but will not**

perceive; (15) for the heart of this people has become dull, with their ears they scarcely hear, and they have closed their eyes, otherwise they would see with their eyes, hear with their ears, and understand with their heart and return, and I would heal them." [As Isaiah chapter 6, from which these verses were quoted, shows, God was going to send very intense judgment against the people of Israel (especially referring to the attacks and exiles by the Babylonians, who destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple in 587/586BC) through which He would save a repentant remnant.] (16) **But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.** [See verse 11.] (17) **For truly I say to you that many prophets and righteous men desired to see what you see, and did not see *it*, and to hear what you hear, and did not hear *it*** [cf. 1 Peter 1:10-12.] (18) **Hear then the parable of the sower. (19) When anyone hears the word [logos] of the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what has been sown in his heart. This is the one on whom seed was sown beside the road. (20) The one on whom seed was sown on the rocky places, this is the man who hears the word [logos] and immediately receives it with joy; (21) yet he has no *firm* root in himself, but is *only* temporary, and when affliction or persecution arises because of the word [logos], immediately he falls sway. (22) And the one on whom seed was sown among the thorns, this is the man who hears the word [logos], and the worry of the world and the deceitfulness of wealth choke the word [logos], and it becomes unfruitful. (23) And the one on whom seed was sown on the good soil, this is the man who hears the word [logos] and understands it** [Mark 4:20 has, "hear the word [logos] and accept it." We must put a very high priority on the word [logos] of the kingdom (and all of God's Word); we must understand it; we must accept it into our hearts; and we must (we have the privilege) to live it (by grace through faith). Mark 4:24 goes on to warn us to "take care what you listen to." We must listen to the truth of God's Word. Bad seed (which includes bad doctrine) produces bad fruit in hearts and lives. The words of Luke 8:15 emphasize the need for perseverance/steadfastness, "But the *seed* in the good soil, these are the ones who have heard the word [logos] in an honest and good heart, and hold it fast, and bear fruit with perseverance [or, steadfastness]."]; **who indeed bears fruit and brings forth, some a hundredfold, some sixty, and some thirty.**" Whatever the good fruit, it comes 100 percent by God's saving grace in Christ Jesus through faith, and God must receive all the glory. It is His salvation plan; His Son became a man (the God-man), lived a sinless life, and died for us bearing all our sins with the guilt and the penalties, including the major penalties of spiritual death and bondage to sin, so we could be born again and walk with the victory over sin in the righteousness and holiness of God.

In Jesus' day, many of the people who would be part of the good soil would be those who had been appropriating the grace of God that was available to believers under the old covenant. And God's grace that flowed through the ministry of John the Baptist was significant. For such people, the good news of salvation from spiritual death and sin was exactly what they wanted. Then too, no

matter how sinful the lives of the people were (or are), if their hearts were receptive to God's call to repent and make Him and His Word and righteousness top priority by His grace, they could become good soil very quickly. God can change hearts and lives, and that is a big part of what new-covenant salvation is all about. It works for Gentiles too, for all who humble themselves before God and submit to, and persevere in, His sufficient saving grace in Christ.

Some more verses that show that we must receive God's living, powerful, effective, personal Word into our hearts, understand it, hold it fast, obey it, etc.

Matthew 7:24 (also see Matt. 7:25-29; Luke 6:47 with 6:46-49). **"Therefore everyone who hears these words [plural of logos] of Mine and acts on them, may be compared to a wise man who built his house on the rock."**

Luke 8:21. **"But He [Jesus] answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word [logos] of God and do it.'"**

Luke 11:28. **"But He [Jesus] said, 'On the contrary, blessed are those who hear the word [logos] of God and observe [or, keep, obey] it.' "**

John 8:31, 32. **"So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word [logos], *then* you are truly disciples of Mine (32) and you will know the truth, and the truth will make you free.' "** Verses 34-36 show that this includes being set free from being a slave of sin.

John 8:51. **"Truly, truly, I say to you, if anyone keeps My word [logos] he will never see death."**

John 12:48. **"He who rejects Me and does not receive My sayings [plural of rhema], has one who judges him; the word [logos] I spoke is what will judge him at the last day."**

John 17:6. **"I have manifested Your name to the men whom You gave Me out of the world; they were Yours and You gave them to Me, and they have kept Your word [logos]."** Logos is also used in 17:14, 17, and 20. The plural of rhema is used in 17:8, with no substantial difference in meaning.

Acts 2:40, 41. **"And with many other words [plural of logos] he [Peter] solemnly testified and kept on exhorting them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation!' (41) So then, those who had received his word [logos] were baptized; and that day there were added about three thousand souls."**

Acts 4:4. **"But many of those who had heard the message [logos] believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand."**

Acts 8:14. "Now when the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word [logos] of God, they sent them Peter and John." Also see Acts 11:1.

Acts 17:11, 12. "Now these [the Jews at Berea] were more noble minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word [logos] with eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. (12) Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men."

1 Corinthians 15:2. "by which you are saved, if you hold fast the word [logos] which I preached to you...."

Philippians 2:15, 16. "so that you will prove yourselves to be blameless and innocent, children of God above reproach in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation, among whom you appear as lights in the world, (16) holding fast the word [logos] of life, so that in the day of Christ I will have reason to glory because I did not run in vain nor toil in vain."

1 Thessalonians 1:6. "You also became imitators of us and of the Lord, having received the word [logos; the word of the gospel] in much tribulation with the joy of the Holy Spirit."

Titus 1:9. "holding fast the faithful word [logos] which is in accordance with the teaching, so that he will be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict."

Hebrews 4:2. "For indeed we have had good news preached to us, just as they did also; but the word [logos] they heard did not profit them, because it was not united by faith in those who heard."

James 1:21-22. "Therefore, putting aside all filthiness and *all* that remains of wickedness, in humility receive the word [logos] implanted, which is able to save your souls. (22) But [And] prove yourselves doers of the word [logos] and not merely hearers who delude themselves." James 1:21 is discussed in my article dealing with the meaning of the words spirit and soul.

1 John 2:5. "but whoever keeps His word [logos], in him the love of God has been perfected [cf. 1 John 4:12]. By this we know that we are in Him."

1 John 2:14b. "I have written to you young men, because you are strong, and the word [logos] of God abides in you [The word abides in them because they have received it and make it a top priority to walk in accordance with the word, by grace through faith.], and you have overcome the evil one."

Revelation 1:3. "Blessed is he who reads and those who hear the words [plural of logos] of the prophecy [the book of Revelation], and heed [keep] the things which are written in it for the time is near." There is no time left to live in sin.

Revelation 3:8, 10. "I know your deeds [works]. Behold I set before you an open door which no one can shut, because you have a little power, and you have kept My word [logos], and have not denied My name. ... (10) Because you have kept the word [logos] of My perseverance [They had kept His Word (by His grace), which required perseverance.], I also will keep you from [out of] the hour of testing, that *hour* which is about to come upon the whole world, to test those who dwell on the earth."

Revelation 22:7. "And behold, I am coming quickly. Blessed are those who heed [or, keep] the words [plural of logos] of the prophecy of this book [the book of Revelation]." Revelation 22:9 speaks of "those who heed [or, keep] the words [plural of logos] of the prophecy of this book." We are required to heed/keep all the written word of God, which includes having correct doctrine and righteous and holy living (by grace through faith) in agreement with God's word.

Some more passages that will help us understand why so many people don't submit to, love, or persevere in God's Word, even though it is alive, powerful, effective, etc.

John 3:19-21. "This is the judgment [condemnation], that the Light has come into the world [referring to the incarnation (see John 1:4-10, for example)], and men [but not all men] loved the darkness rather than the Light [God's light includes His truth, righteousness and holiness], for their deeds [works] were evil [and they did not want to repent]. (21) For everyone who does evil hates the Light, and does not come to the Light for fear that his deeds [works] will be exposed. [If their hearts were open to God, they could receive forgiveness for their sins and be set free from bondage to sin.] (22) But he who practices the truth comes to the Light, so that his deeds [works] may be manifested as having been wrought in God." Some of the Jews under the old covenant lived relatively righteous lives by the grace of God available under the old covenant (especially consider those who submitted to the ministry of John the Baptist), but all of them will be quick to confess that they needed to be saved through the far greater grace available under the new covenant established on the atoning death of the Lamb of God and by the outpoured Spirit that was promised in the Old Testament.

John chapters 1-20 are discussed verse-by-verse in much more detail than I have here, in papers on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching).

John 5:37-47. "And the Father who sent Me, He has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time nor seen His form. (38) You do not have His [God the Father's] word [logos] abiding in you, for you do not believe Him whom He sent [the Son of God]. [Jesus was speaking here to Jews who were rejecting Him and His words. The Father's word that Jesus was referring to here was His word in the Old Testament (see verses 45-47). Jesus was saying that the fact that they were rejecting Him proved that they didn't really have God's word in their hearts, even though they put a high priority on searching the Scriptures (see the next verse).] (39) You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; it is these that testify of Me [see verses 45-47]; (40) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life. (41) I do not receive glory from men; (42) but I know you, that you do not have the love of God in yourselves. [The context helps show, and most commentators agree, that Jesus was speaking of their not loving God, in spite of their claims to the contrary.] (43) I have come in my Father's name [having been sent into the world by Him], and you do not receive Me [or His Word]; if another comes in his own name, you will receive him [ultimately including Antichrist (cf. Dan. 9:27)]. (44) How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the *one and only God* [referring to God the Father]? (45) Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; the one who accuses you is Moses, in whom you have set your hope. (46) For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me, for he wrote about Me. (47) But if you do not believe his writings how will you believe My words [plural of rhema]?"

It isn't surprising that those who do not really love God the Father (verse 42), who do not have His word abiding in them (verse 38), and who receive glory from one another and do not seek the glory of God the Father (verse 44), all without any openness to repent, don't have room in their hearts for the Lord Jesus or the gospel. Faith includes an attitude of the heart where we make God and His Word top priority.

John 7:17. "If anyone is willing to do His will [God the Father's will], he will know of the teaching [of Jesus' teaching], whether it is of God or *whether I speak from Myself*." Sin is mankind's one basic problem, with the root sins of pride and unbelief. The primary purpose of the gospel of new-covenant salvation for this present age is to bring all who will repent and submit (in faith) to God's new covenant salvation, with its strong emphasis on the impartation of His righteousness and holiness, not to minimize forgiveness. God hates sin! The gospel is good news indeed for all who seek first God's kingdom and His righteousness (cf. Matt. 6:33). It's bad news for those who want to continue in sin.

The problem was that large numbers of the people of Israel in Jesus' day did not want to do the Father's will (and they were not about to repent), according to Jesus. (That problem was not limited to that generation, and it certainly isn't limited to the people of Israel.) That attitude of the heart kept them from receiving

God's word in their hearts. They were not open to be drawn, enlightened, etc. by God, and God (who knows the hearts of all people) doesn't draw to His Son those who are sold out to sin and the evil one (cf. John 6:44). See on John 6:35-65 in my "A Verse-by-Verse Study of John Chapters 5-8" on my internet site (Google to Karl Kemp Teaching). Any repentance or faith on the part of such people would be quite unsatisfactory and quite temporary and would not yield true salvation or glorify God.

John 8:37-47. (These verses are discussed in more detail in my "A Verse-by-Verse Study of John Chapters 5-8" that is on my internet site (karlkempteachingministries.com.) " **'I know that you are Abraham's descendants; yet you seek to kill Me** [cf. John 5:18; 7:1, 19, 25; 8:40, 44, 59], **because My word [logos] has no place in you. (38) I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.'** [Jesus goes on to tell His opponents that their father is the devil (verses 40-44). They were children of the devil doing the works of the devil (cf. 1 John 3:8-12; we'll briefly discuss these verses as we continue).] **(39) They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.'** **Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children, do the deeds [works] of Abraham. (40) But as it is, you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth, which I heard from God; this Abraham did not do. (41) You are doing the deeds [works] of your father.'** [I'll quote 1 John 3:12a, "not as Cain, who was of the evil one and slew his brother." For one thing, as Jesus goes on to say in John 8:44, their father, the devil, "was a murderer from the beginning." They were the devil's children in a spiritual (actually unspiritual), moral (actually immoral), family sense; they had the same desires he had (John 8:44), and they acted like him. He was the spirit working in them (Eph. 2:2) and through them. They were doing his works as they yielded to him. This means a lot more than the devil's children imitate him. The devil is anxious to help people sin, including believers, if we will let him.] **They said to Him, 'We were not born of fornication; we have one Father: God.'** **(42) Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father, you would love Me** [As it was, they hated Him, like their father, the devil, hated Him.], **for I proceeded forth and have come from God, for I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me.** [And Jesus was totally like the Father, and He spoke the words the Father wanted Him to speak and did the works the Father wanted Him to do. You can't really love the Father and reject His unique Son.] **(43) Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My word [logos]. (44) You are of your father the devil** ["not as Cain, *who* was of the evil one and slew his brother" (1 John 3:12)], **and you want to do the desires of your father.** [They have the same murderous (and other sinful) desires that their father, the devil, has.] **He was a murderer** [The Greek noun used here is *anthropoktonos*. I'll quote part of what A. T. Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* says here: "Old and rare word...from *anthropos*, man, and *kteino*, to kill. In N.T. [used] only here and 1 John 3:15."] **from the beginning**

[[Jesus did not mean, of course, that the devil was a murderer from the time of his creation. He was created good. He was a murderer at least from the time that mankind joined him in his rebellion against God (in the fall) and then Cain killed Abel (Gen. 4:8). Cain was motivated by the devil and was yielding to the devil (so was Judas when he made his major contribution to the murder of Jesus [John 13:2, 27]), and in one very real sense the sin of Cain, and the sins of man in general (especially the sins of the people who align themselves with the devil like Cain and those who opposed Jesus like in John 8:37-47), can be considered the works of the devil. In John 8:41 Jesus said that his opponents were doing the works of their father, the devil (also see John 8:38, 44). (This does not mean that people are not responsible for their sins.) Compare, for example, Eph. 2:1-3 [Ephesians 2:2 speaks of the devil "working in the sons of disobedience"]; 1 John 3:4-15

[I'll quote 1 John 3:5a, "You know that He (Jesus) appeared to take away sins...." In the verses that precede and follow 1 John 3:5, the apostle John speaks of Christians doing righteousness and not sinning. (See 1 John 2:29; 3:3, 4, 6-15.) Jesus took away their sins! In the ideal case, they would never sin again (see 1 John 2:3-6; 2:29; 3:3, 6-9, for example). I'll quote 1 John 3:8, "the one who practices sin [or, the one who is doing sin] is of the devil; for the devil has sinned from the beginning. The Son of God appeared for this purpose, to destroy the works of the devil." I believe the primary "works of the devil" that Jesus came to destroy are sins. But it would probably be better to translate the last words of 3:8, "to do away with the works of the devil," or the equivalent. (The BAGD Greek Lexicon translates "destroys the works of the devil" in 1 John 3:8, but it lists this verse under the heading, "to do away with, *destroy, bring to an end, abolish.*" The devil has been sinning since the time of his rebellion against God, but the idea here seems to be his sinful works that have been manifested in all those who have yielded to him and sinned since the time of the fall of man. Christians certainly don't want to do any works of the devil.

"But the Son of God appeared for this purpose, to do away with the works of the devil" (1 John 3:8). Throughout this epistle the apostle John emphasizes the glorious truth that born-again Christians are called and enabled to walk with the victory over all sin (by grace through faith). In other words, He takes away their sins in the glorious sense that they aren't sinning anymore. That's the ideal presented in the new covenant.

I'll quote a few sentences from what Donald Burdick says under 1 John 3:8 [*The Letters of John the Apostle* (Moody Press, 1985), page 243]: "The devil's works are all the sinful attitudes and activities of which he is the source, whether directly or indirectly.in this context destroying the works of the devil is parallel to taking away sins (see on 1 John 3:5). That is to say that Christ is here and now destroying or removing sins. He came to give believers victory over sin, and thus to destroy the sins that otherwise would fill people's lives." And I'll quote part of what F. F. Bruce says here [*The Epistles of John* (Eerdmans, 1983 reprint), page

91]: "Chief of the devil's works is sin, which the Son of God came to take away (cf. verse 5). How can one in whose life sin has manifestly not been destroyed or taken away claim to dwell in Christ? Is it not rather self-evident that he belongs to the family which is characterized by rebellion against God, and whose head is the arch-rebel?"

As I mentioned, in the ideal case Christians won't be sinning at all, and they certainly won't be sinning after they are glorified through new-covenant salvation at the end of this age. Also, by the time of the great-white-throne judgment at the end of the millennial kingdom, God will have removed all the works of the devil forever from God's kingdom through removing the devil and all who continue to follow him in sin (without repentance). The Lord Jesus will remove them from God's kingdom and cast them in the eternal lake of fire (see Matt. 25:41, 46; Rev. 19:20; 20:10, 14, 15). There won't be any more sinning (or the ugly results that come with sinning) in God's kingdom after that.] Now back to John 8:44:]] **and does not stand in the truth because there is no truth in him [in the devil]. Whenever he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own nature, for he is a liar and the father of lies. (45) But because I speak the truth, you do not believe Me. (46) Which one of you convicts Me of sin? [They accuse Him of sin, but they could never prove that He sinned, because He didn't.] If I speak truth, why do you not believe Me? (47) He who is of God hears the words [plural of rhema] of God; for this reason you do not hear them, because you are not of God.' "**

It is no surprise that for the people described in these verses that Jesus' word [logos] "has no place in [them]" (verse 37). They not only reject Him and His word, but they seek to kill Him too, which they eventually accomplish because His atoning death is the center of God's plan of salvation. He says that they are not children of God (verses 42, 47), but that they qualify to be called children of the devil (verse 38, 41, 44), who do the works of the devil (verses 38, 41, 44). Compare 1 John 3:10-12. Children of the devil (who is a rebel, a murderer, and the father of lies, and liars) will not be open to repent and love the truth, which includes God's righteousness and holiness [cf. Eph. 4:24].

John 14:23, 24. "Jesus answered and said to him, 'If anyone loves Me, He will keep My word [logos]; and My Father will love him, and We will come and make Our abode with him. (24) He who does not love Me does not keep My words [plural of logos]; and the word [logos] which you hear is not Mine, but the Father's who sent Me." These words are aimed at disciples, exhorting them with the need to love Christ Jesus and keep His Word, which includes continuing in His Word to the end of the race. He says here that if we love Him we will make it a top priority [to understand His Word and] to be doers of His Word. (A very large number of verses throughout the New Testament show that we must continue to be doers of the God's Word until the end. This is required of all Christians. He also says that if we don't love Him, we won't keep His words, which are words He received from God the Father. Whether we love the Lord

Jesus and the One who sent Him in our hearts is the issue. Even though God's Word is alive, etc., it won't produce lasting fruit in the hearts and lives of those who don't love God, His Son, and His Word. Also see John 14:15. The only way we can love God and His Son, as we must, is by appropriating the grace of God that we learn about through His Word, which includes all the work of the indwelling Holy Spirit.

Acts 17:11, 12. "Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word [logos] with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so. (12) Therefore many of them believed, along with a number of prominent Greek women and men." We must humble ourselves before God and His Word and sincerely seek Him for the truth, the balanced truth of what the Bible teaches. God can enlighten those who approach Him and His Word with a desire to know the truth and to be doers of the truth (by grace through faith).

2 Thessalonians 2:9-12. "that is, the one whose coming is in accord with the activity of Satan, with all power and signs and false wonders [referring to Antichrist], (10) and with all the deception of wickedness for those who perish [Wickedness can be deceptive, as with Eve in the Garden, but we have no excuse for listening to the devil, who tries to make sin look good (and righteousness look bad) through his lies.], because they did not receive the love of the truth so as to be saved. [As the apostle Paul will go on to say in verse 12, they did not believe the truth of the gospel. They did not love the truth of the gospel. The righteousness of God was not something they longed for in their hearts; rather, they "took pleasure in wickedness" and were not about to repent.] (11) For this reason God will send upon them a deluding influence [referring here to the coming of Antichrist] so that they will believe what is false [As I mentioned, God doesn't want to draw people to His Son and the gospel who are committed to evil, without repentance. He allows false prophets, etc.], (12) in order that they all may be judged [condemned] who did not believe the truth, but took pleasure in wickedness." For those who reject God, His Son, His salvation, and His righteousness, He gives them Antichrist to believe in, who will lead them to destruction.

It is easy to see why God's Word, which is alive, powerful, and effective for those who will submit to God and His Word isn't alive, powerful, or effective in hearts that are committed to sin. The gospel isn't good news for those who have no desire for God or His righteousness, but rather "took pleasure in wickedness," and whose hearts cannot be persuaded to change (by God's grace) and become good soil.

I'll close this study by quoting several more important verses that demonstrate the exalted use of logos in the New Testament:

Matthew 24:35 (Mark 13:31; Luke 21:33). "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words [plural of logos] will not pass away."

Luke 10:38-42. "Now as they were traveling along, He entered a village and a woman named Martha welcomed Him into her home. (39) She had a sister called Mary, who was seated at the Lord's feet, listening to His word [logos]. [We must all make it a top priority to listen to God's Word, because it is *God's* Word. Essentially everything is dependent on our listening to His Word with the intention of living it by His grace through faith.] (40) But Martha was distracted with all her preparations; and she came up *to Him* and said, 'Lord, do you not care that my sister has left me to do all the serving alone? Then tell her to help me.' But the Lord answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and bothered about many things; (42) but *only* one thing is necessary, for Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken away from her.' " We are responsible to do other things too, of course, but God, His Word, and His righteousness must be top priority.

Luke 24:19. "And He [Jesus] said to them [to the two men on the road to Emmaus], 'What things?' And they said to Him, 'The things about Jesus the Nazarene, who was a prophet mighty in deed and word [logos] in the sight of God and all the people.' "

John 4:50. "Jesus said to him [to the royal official whose son was sick at Capernaum], 'Go, your son lives.' The man believed the word [logos] that Jesus spoke to him and started off." Verses 51-54 show that the son was healed, and the man "himself believed [believed the gospel] and his whole household."

Acts 14:3. "Therefore they [Paul and Barnabus] spent a long time *there* [in Iconium] speaking boldly *with reliance* upon the Lord, who was testifying to the word [logos] of His grace, granting that signs and wonders be done by their hands."

Romans 9:9. "For this is a word [logos] of promise, 'At this time I will come, and Sarah shall have a son.' "

2 Timothy 2:15. "Be diligent to present yourself approved to God as a workman who does not need to be ashamed, accurately handling the word [logos] of truth."

May God be glorified through this paper and His people be edified!

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