

## The Torah 'dressed itself' in Flesh:

Here is a thought provoking question:

Given the emphasis placed by many within mainstream Christianity on Yochanan (John 1:1), what if all our Bibles translated it like this?

*"In the beginning was the Torah, and Torah was for the sake of G-d, And godly was Torah."*

One of the first academics (around 1990) to very powerfully and coherently put this translation forward was Jacobus Schoneveld in his article 'Torah in the Flesh'<sup>1</sup>. This article is well worth a careful read.

This is also how Uriel ben Mordechai has translated it, based on a re-examination of the earliest Greek manuscripts, along with a great understanding of the Hebrew mindset of Yochanan and the Hebrew Scriptures (the Tanakh/OT) that he quotes.

Uriel points out that we can get closer to the source of Yochanan's thinking and writing by going back to the original Hebrew of Mishlei (Proverbs) 8:

*"The L-RD purchased me at the very beginning of His way before any of his activities at that point. From before time began, I was poured out, even before there was "earth" ... And I was BESIDE (or WITH) Him, a master artisan, And I was full of delights, daily playing before Him at every moment" - Proverbs 8:22-23, 30 as translated by Uriel ben Mordechai © <http://chut-hamshulash.org>*

This 'wisdom' is TORAH. Torah means teaching and in this context 'divine teaching or instructions or knowledge'.

The Torah existed before the foundation of the universe. The Jews of Yeshua and Yochanan's day believed that the Torah was with G-d before Creation.

*"In rabbinic literature, it was taught that the Torah was one of the six or seven things created prior to the creation of the world. ... Akiva called the Torah "the precious instrument by which the world was created". Rav said that God created the world by looking in to the Torah as an architect builds a palace by looking into blueprints...*

*Judah Halevi (wrote) ... God created the world for the purpose of revealing the Torah; therefore, since, as the philosopher say, "the first of thought is the end of the work," the Torah is said to have existed before the world."<sup>2</sup>*

When you consider that Yochanan (John) was not writing in a vacuum, but also most likely quoting what other Jewish writers had written before him (and in Hebrew), we can be fairly sure of his intent, even if we only have questionable Greek translations.

For example, in Yochanan (John) 1:3 we read *"through 'it' everything came to be: no single thing was created without 'it' "*. If we consider 'it' to be referring to the Torah from verse 1, then this was very much a Jewish 'commonplace', that is, it was already part of Jewish writings prior to Yochanan.

For example in the Book of Jubilees we read that G-d *"has created everything by His word/Torah"* (12:4), as well as in the Wisdom of Solomon 9:1.

Even more similar to Yochanan (and prior to him) is the wording of two sentences in the Dead Sea Scrolls:

*"By His (God's) knowledge everything came to be, and everything which is happening — He establishes it by his design and without Him [nothing] is done" (1QS XI: 11).*

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<sup>1</sup> 'Torah in the Flesh', by Jacobus Schoneveld (1990) -[http://www.etrifi.info/immanuel/24/Immanuel\\_24\\_077.pdf](http://www.etrifi.info/immanuel/24/Immanuel_24_077.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> from [http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/The\\_Written\\_Law.html](http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/The_Written_Law.html)

As well as: "By the wisdom of Thy knowledge Thou didst establish their destiny ere they came into being, and according [Thy will] everything came to be, and without Thee [nothing] is done" (1QH 1:19-20).

**Thus, the idea that G-d created the world through his 'Torah/wisdom/word' is very much a Jewish concept.**

In fact, the Tanakh informs us that Almighty created the entire universe through 'fiats'; through His spoken word, from His Torah<sup>3</sup>.

So, when we consider the context and historical background and influences that existed in Yochanan's worldview, we should see that the understanding of Yochanan 1:1 which fits best really is, as Uriel shows:

**"In the beginning was the Torah, and (the) Torah was for the sake of (the) G-d, And godly was (the) Torah."**

What difference would this have made over the centuries if this was how Yochanan 1:1 had been handed down to us through the Christian translators<sup>4</sup>!?

Consider Ps 33:6

*"By the word of YHVH were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth."*

While דְבַר (davar) does mean 'speech' or 'word' or, in this context, the 'fiats' of God, ask any orthodox Rabbi from Akiva's day (1<sup>st</sup> century CE) through to today, what דְבַר (translated as 'logos' in the LXX) refers to and they will say the Torah, which existed with HaShem before the Creation.

Consider also D'varim (Deut) 32:46-47 in the LXX, which reads:

"46 και ειπε προς αυτους: προσεχετε τη καρδια επι παντας τους λογους τουτους, ους εγω διαμαρτυρομαι υμιν σημερον, α εντελεισθε τοις υιοις υμων φυλασσειν και ποιειν παντας τους λογους του νομου τουτου·  
47 οτι ουχι λογος κενος ουτος υμιν, οτι αυτη η ζωη υμων, και ενεκεν του λογου τουτου μακροημερευσετε επι της γης, εις ην υμεις διαβαινετε τον Ιορδανην εκει κληρονομησαι αυτην."

And here's one translation of it:

*"46 And he said to them, Take heed with your heart to all these **words**, which I testify to you this day, which ye shall command your sons, to observe and do all the **words** of this Torah.*

*47 For this is no vain **word** to you; for it is your life, and because of this **word** ye shall live long upon the land, into which ye go over Jordan to inherit it. "*

'Logos' and its derivatives are used in both these verses. Again, just like the verses in Yochanan I referred to, logos is referring to the teaching/instruction contained in the Torah of Moses.

In a different way, we see the use of Hebrew parallelism in Isaiah 2:3, where the LXX has 'nomos' in the first phrase, and 'logos' in the second phrase, which is really just a repeat of the same thought as in the first, given for added emphasis:

*"And many peoples shall go and say: 'Come ye, and let us go up to the mountain of YHVH, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways, and we will walk in His paths.' For out of Zion shall go forth*

- *the Torah (nomos), and*
- *the Word (logos)*

*of YHVH from Jerusalem."* – Isaiah 2:3

While the use of the Greek word 'nomos' to refer to Torah was common, like a number of these Greek words, 'logos' and 'nomos' have several meanings. Nomos can mean for example anything established, anything received by usage, a custom, a law.

It is the translators understanding of the context, and the authors' intent that is used for their conversion of

<sup>3</sup> See <http://globaltruthinternational.com/2012/10/11/the-hebraic-mindset-and-the-fiats-of-god/>

<sup>4</sup> For more get Uriel's book from <http://above-and-beyond-ltd.com/store/books/if.html>

Even better, consider joining his weekly class – register for a free trial at <http://chut-hamshulash.org/register.html>

these words into another language. There are definitely places where in the Apostle Paul's epistles where 'nomos' does not refer to Torah.

Also consider, for example Yochanan 6:60 and 7:36:

Yochanan (Jn) 6:60:

*"On hearing it, many of his talmidim said, "This is a hard word (logos) — who can bear to listen to it?" (CJB)*

Consider the context – this is talking about Yeshua's teaching (that is his 'torah').

Or Jn 7:36

*"what is this word (logos) that he said, you will seek me, and you shall not find? and, where I am, you are not able to come?"*

Again, in this context the Greek 'logos' is used here to refer to teaching, to 'torah'.

So it should be clear Yochanan does use 'logos' (or at least the Greek versions of this Gospel) to mean 'teaching', and so when the 'teaching' is YHVH's, then this word is clearly referring to the Almighty's Torah.

So to repeat, it truly was the Torah that was in/at the beginning with the Almighty. And then when we read on further into Yochanan (John) 1 we get to verse 14 where we read:

***'and the Torah became/'put on' or 'dressed itself' in flesh ...'***

The grace and truth of YHVH's instructions/teaching are no better displayed than in the living example of Yeshua, a man who obeyed the Torah of Moses perfectly.

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