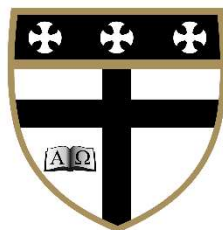


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## A HISTORY OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

“Historical Origins of the *Logos* of God in the Gospel of John”<sup>1</sup>

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by

Roderick O. Ford, Litt.D., LL.D.

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<sup>1</sup> Roderick O. Ford, *The Apostolate Papers* (unpublished research papers, 2015 to 2022). [www.roderickford.org](http://www.roderickford.org).

## “Historical Origins of the *Logos* of God in the Gospel of John”



### Introduction<sup>2</sup>

Ancient Egypt’s *The Book of the Dead*, which dates to circa 2400 BC,<sup>3</sup> reads: “I am *the Eternal*, I am that which created *the Word*, I am *the Word*,” and again, “I am the Eternal... I am that which created *the Word*...I am *the Word*....”<sup>4</sup> These words, which depict the *Logos*, were penned more than a thousand years before the birth of Moses.

And in the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses himself is described as having said: “But *the word* is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”<sup>5</sup> Here, the *Logos* is mentioned more than 1000 years before the birth of Christ and the writing of the Gospel of John.

And, finally, we find the *Logos*, who is referenced in Deuteronomy, being associated with the person of Christ, in the Epistle to the Romans,<sup>6</sup>

<sup>2</sup> This paper is dedicated to the **Rev. John Wesley (1703 – 1791)**, Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford and principal founder of the Methodist Movement and the Methodist Church, and who once proclaimed: “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion, but social; no holiness but social holiness.”

<sup>3</sup> Roderick Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL. : Xlibris Pub., 2015), p. 423. See, also, “Egyptian Book of the Dead,” [https://www.worldhistory.org/Egyptian\\_Book\\_of\\_the\\_Dead/](https://www.worldhistory.org/Egyptian_Book_of_the_Dead/), stating:

The Book of the Dead originated from concepts depicted in tomb paintings and inscriptions from as early as the Third Dynasty of Egypt (c. 2670 - 2613 BCE). By the 12th Dynasty (1991 - 1802 BCE) these spells, with accompanying illustrations, were written on papyrus and placed in tombs and graves with the dead.

<sup>4</sup> See, “Neteru—The Divine Energies,” *Egyptian Wisdom Center: Learning from Ancient Egypt*, <https://egyptianwisdomcenter.org/neteru-the-divine-energies-2/>, stating:

The earliest recovered Ancient Egyptian texts **5,000 years ago** show the belief that the Word caused the creation of the World. The Egyptian *Book of the Coming Forth by Light* (wrongly and commonly translated as the *Book of the Dead*), the oldest written text in the world, states:

**“I am the Eternal ... I am that which created the Word ... I am the Word ...”**

<sup>5</sup> Deuteronomy 30:14.

<sup>6</sup> Romans 10: 5-9.

which was written 30 or 40 years before the Gospel of John.

Hence, in this paper we turn to a deeper exploration of the sources and origins of the theological and philosophical idea of the *Logos* of God-- both non-Christian and Christian sources of this concept.

We began this series with a discussion of Christ as the manifestation of the *Logos* of God<sup>7</sup> -- as the very essence of truth itself.<sup>8</sup> We analyzed the essence of Christ's law of love, which is *agape*.<sup>9</sup>

This paper looks closer at the deeper implications of *Logos* of God as a universal, multi-religious, interdenominational, secular, legal, and philosophical concept.

In the Christian world, the Gospel of John is often cited as the source of *Logos* in the New Testament and Christian theology. The popular thesis on this topic holds that the Apostle John, who was influenced by Greek culture, and who may have been engaged in a theological dispute about the true identity of Christ, sought to clarify Christ as "the Word" and *Logos* of God.

However, this paper challenges this theory, and cites the Book of Deuteronomy and the Apostle Paul's Epistle to the Romans as the original sources for the *Logos* in the Sacred Scriptures.

Since my days as an undergraduate student during the late 1980s, I have long confronted the Egyptian and archaeological origins of the Abrahamic faith traditions. This interest is a scholarly approach to the Christian faith forced me to confront the Scriptural assertion that "Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds."<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Augustine of Hippo has said that Plato himself

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<sup>7</sup> See, e.g., Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2007), p. 309 ("For Christians, the Messiah was the historical Jesus, who was also identified with the *Logos* of Greek philosophy...."); and p. 289 ("It was this intellectual element in Plato's religion that led Christians—notably the author of Saint John's Gospel—to identify Christ with the *Logos*. *Logos* should be translated 'reason' in this connection.").

<sup>8</sup> See, also, John 17:17 ("Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth.") See, also, 'St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 645 ("For by consulting the Gospel we learn that Christ is Truth."); Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), p. 48 ("Your law is the truth and you are truth.")

<sup>9</sup> The fundamental "Law of Christ," to wit, is to "love ye one another" (John 15:12); to do justice and judgment (Genesis 18:18-19; Proverbs 21: 1-3); to judge not according to appearance but to judge righteous judgments (John 7:24); to do justice, judgment, and equity (Proverbs 1:2-3); and "whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them" (Matthew 7:12). See, also, Robert F. Cochran and Zachary R. Calo, *Agape, Justice and Law: How might Christian Love Shape Law?* (Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press, 2017).

<sup>10</sup> Acts 7:21-22.

“learned from the Egyptians whatever they held and taught as important...”<sup>11</sup>

The first major archaeological fact of Western civilization is that the pantheon of Egyptian gods were copied by the Greeks, and the pantheon of Greek gods were copied by the Romans.

Although an in-depth analysis of this proposition is beyond the scope of this paper, the relevant component is that the Egyptian goddess “Ma at,” from which the 42 Principles of Ma at were derived, and which stood for balance, order, and justice, was copied by the Greeks and renamed “Aequitas,” or Equity. Both the goddesses “Ma at” and “Aequitas” represented the same principles of law, order, balance, and justice. These principles became juridical and the foundation of jurisprudence.

In ancient Greco-Roman jurisprudence, the *Logos* became indistinguishable from Greco-Roman equity. That is to say, Greco-Roman equity, which was based upon “natural law” or “the law of reason” (i.e., logos or the *Logos* of God). From this perspective, Egyptian “Ma at” may be described as a theological or philosophical concept that closely resembles the *Logos* of Greco-Roman philosophy.

But this is one final piece to the puzzle that tips the scales in favor of an Egyptian origin of the concept of the *Logos*, and that is the ancient Egyptian Book of the Dead, which is perhaps created around 2,400 years BC. This ancient funerary text contains explicit reverences to “the Word” (i.e., *Logos*) as the Creator of the world.

These Egyptian sources of “Ma at” and “Logos” place the origin of the Mosaic law outside of the ancient Hebrew religion. But this is not surprising, because the Book of Genesis (nor the entire Old Testament) never suggests that God only formed covenants and special relationships with the Hebrews. And nowhere in the writings of the Prophets is there any suggestion that non-Hebrews had not relationship with God. Though there were many false gods in ancient Egypt, there was also true religion and philosophy and law. And it is clear that, without Christ (i.e., the *Logos* of God), the whole world slumbered in a sort of slumbering toward the light, with no clear pathway toward the truth. Therefore, Egyptians (and all the Gentiles) were no different than the ancient Hebrews, prior to the coming of Christ.

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<sup>11</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 247.

If Augustine of Hippo's *The City of God* is to be taken as an authoritative source of Reformed Theology-- and this undersigned author believes that it is, then this theory of the *Logos* having been accessible even to the ancient Gentiles is within the realm of Christian orthodoxy. In Book VIII of *The City of God*, Augustine writes:

Whatever philosophers, therefore, thought concerning the supreme God, that He is both the maker of all created things, the light by which things are known, and the good in reference to which things are to be done; that we have in Him the first principle of nature, the truth of doctrine, and the happiness of life.... [A]nd, lastly, whether also we include all who have been held wise men and philosophers among all nations who are discovered to have seen and taught this, be they Atlantics, Libyans, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, Spaniards, or of other nations....<sup>12</sup>

There are many scholarly texts on topics such as the "Egyptian origins of Christianity" or the "Egyptian origins of Western Civilization," but I have refrained from citing these types of secondary, non-Christian sources, because, in keeping with the Reformed Theological tradition, I chose to focus on the texts of the Old and New Testaments (i. e., Deuteronomy, Romans, and John), together with the primary Egyptian source, *The Book of the Dead*, because these texts sufficiently establish the *Logos* of God within the Sacred Scriptures and also among the Gentiles who were without the Mosaic law.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 253-254.

<sup>13</sup> Romans 2:11-16.

# **“Historical Origins of the *Logos* of God in the Gospel of John”**

## **TABLE OF CONTENTS**

Introduction .....	2
Chapter 1. The Gospel of John and the <i>Logos</i> , or the Word of God .....	6
Chapter 2. Moses and the <i>Logos</i> , or the Word of God .....	9
Chapter 3. Ancient Egypt and the <i>Logos</i> , or the Word of God .....	13
Conclusion .....	18

## Chapter One: The Gospel of John and the *Logos*, or the Word of God

The Gospel of John is renowned as the Gospel that is distinguished from the other three Gospels, in that the Gospel of John was written decades after the first three and emphasized the divinity of Christ.

“The Gospel of John is significantly different from the synoptic gospels in the selection of its material, its theological emphasis, its chronology, and literary style, with some of its discrepancies amounting to contradictions.”<sup>14</sup>

One element that is unique to the Gospel of John is its description of Christ as the “Logos” of God, stating:

In the beginning was *the Word*, and *the Word* was with God,  
and *the Word* was God.

The same was in the beginning with God.

All things were made by him; and without him was not any  
thing made that was made.

In him was life; and the life was the light of men.

And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness  
comprehended it not....

He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the  
world knew him not.

He came unto his own, and his own received him not.

But as many as received him, to them gave he power to  
become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his  
name: which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the  
flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.

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<sup>14</sup> “Gospel of John,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)

*And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.*<sup>15</sup>

This passage in the Gospel of John has been described as a reference to the *Logos* of God, a concept popularized in Greek philosophy.

For instance, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, has written that “[f]or Christians, the Messiah was the historical Jesus, who was also identified with the *Logos* of Greek philosophy....”<sup>16</sup>

Furthermore, Dr. Russell wrote that “[i]t was this intellectual element in Plato’s religion that led Christians—notably the author of Saint John’s Gospel—to identify Christ with the Logos. Logos should be translated ‘reason’ in this connection.”<sup>17</sup>

The Gospel of John was “written in good Greek and displays sophisticated theology.”<sup>18</sup> Its Greek influence is reinforced by the fact that the Apostle John, who was its author, lived in a Greek culture and addressed the concerns of a Gentile-Greek community.

As such, it has been said that the Apostle John intentionally described God as the Logos in response to an on-going theological dispute with Grecian philosopher.

According to Irenaeus of Lyon (c 130–202), a student of John's disciple Polycarp (c pre-69-156), John the Apostle wrote these words specifically to refute the teachings of Cerinthus, who both resided and taught at Ephesus, the city John settled in following his return from exile on Patmos. While Cerinthus claimed that the world was made by "a certain Power far separated from" "Almighty God," John, according to Irenaeus, by means of John 1:1-5, presented Almighty God as the Creator — "by His Word." And while Cerinthus

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<sup>15</sup> John 1: 1-14.

<sup>16</sup> Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2007), p. 309.

<sup>17</sup> Id. At 289.

<sup>18</sup> “Gospel of John,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)



made a distinction between the man Jesus and “the Christ from above,” who descended on the man Jesus at his baptism, John, according to Irenaeus, presented the pre-existent "Word" and Jesus Christ as one and the same.<sup>19</sup>

But, as we shall see below, the concept of *Logos* was not a Greek origination, for in ancient Egypt it was readily manifest in the Book of Dead, which existed several centuries before noted Greek theologians. Additionally, the Gospel of John is not the first biblical reference to the *Logos*. For, as we shall also see below, the concept of *Logos* was already found in the writings of the Law of Moses and St. Paul, even prior to the writing of the Gospel of John.

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<sup>19</sup> “Logos (Christianity),” Wikipedia (online): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos\\_\(Christianity\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logos_(Christianity))

## Chapter Two: Moses and the *Logos*, or the Word of God

Now Moses “was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”<sup>20</sup>

And the idea of the *Logos* is found in the Mosaic Pentateuch.<sup>21</sup> In the Book of Deuteronomy, Moses explicitly states that “the word,” or *logos*, was readily apparent and, indeed, already accessible to the Israelites.<sup>22</sup>

And many centuries later, the Apostle Paul referred to that same Mosaic text in the Book of Deuteronomy, which he, too, utilized in The Epistle to the Romans in order to identify Christ as being the “the word” (i.e., *Logos* of God) referenced by Moses.<sup>23</sup>

Now Paul’s The Epistle to the Romans predated The Gospel of John by, perhaps, at least three or four decades, to wit:

The majority of scholars writing on Romans propose the letter was written in late 55/early 56 or late 56/early 57. Early 55 and early 58 both have some support, while German New Testament scholar Gerd Lüdemann argues for a date as early as 51/52 (or 54/55), following on from Knox, who proposed 53/54. Lüdemann is the only serious challenge to the consensus of mid to late 50s....<sup>24</sup>

Most scholars estimate the final form of [The Gospel of John] to be around AD 90–110....<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>20</sup> Acts 7:21-22.

<sup>21</sup> See, e.g., **Deuteronomy 30:14**, describing the *Logos* of God, stating, “But the **word** is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”). In his Epistle to the Romans, for instance, the Apostle Paul interpreted “the word” in Deuteronomy 30:14 to mean “Christ.” **Romans 10: 4-10**.

<sup>22</sup> **Deuteronomy 30:14**, describing the *Logos* of God, stating, “But the **word** is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”)

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> “Epistle to Romans,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle\\_to\\_the\\_Romans](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Epistle_to_the_Romans)

<sup>25</sup> “Gospel of John,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)

Therefore, the ancient Jewish theologian Philo's (20 BC – 50 AD) and the 5th-century Christian theologian Augustine of Hippo's (354 – 430 AD) claim that Moses, or Mosaic theology, had already conceptualize most, if not all, of the Greek philosophical foundations of Platonism or neo-Platonism is quite credible.

In Book VIII of *The City of God*, Augustine of Hippo painstakingly and thoroughly addressed the question of whether Greek philosophy and the Christian religion were compatible; whether they were the fundamentally the same or similar; whether one copied from the other; and whether one pre-dated the other. Although Augustine's analysis of this subject matter is beyond the scope of this paper, it will suffice to present a listing of a few, but not all, of the "subtopics" or "chapters" of Book VIII, *The City of God*, to wit:

Section 1. "That the questions of natural theology is to be discussed with those philosophers who sought a more excellent wisdom."

Section 2. "Concerning the two schools of philosophers, that is, the Italic and Ionic, and their founders."

Section 3. "Of the Socratic Philosophy"

Section 4. "Concerning Plato, the chief among the disciples of Socrates, and his threefold division of philosophy"

Section 5. "That it is especially with the Platonists that we must carry on our disputations on matters of theology, their opinions being preferable to those of all other philosophers"

Section 6. "Concerning the meaning of the Platonists in that part of philosophy called physical"

Section 7. "That the Platonists hold the first rank in moral philosophy also"

Section 8. “Concerning that philosophy which has come nearest to the Christian faith”

Section 9. “That the excellency of the Christian religion is above all the science of philosophers”

Section 10. “How Plato has been able to approach so nearly to Christian knowledge”

Significantly, Augustine pointed out that Plato (and, for that matter, Socrates and Aristotle), lived “about a hundred years after the time in which Jeremiah prophesied...,”<sup>26</sup> and this would mean that Plato lived about 400 to 450 years after the time of Moses. Notably, Zeno of Citium, who founded the Stoic school which perhaps coined the idea of *logos*, lived during third century B.C., which was several centuries after the time of Moses. This would mean that the ancient Mosaic texts (i.e., the Pentateuch), which contained the concept of the *Logos* of God, predated Greek philosophy by several centuries.

In Section 11, Book VIII, *The City of Book*, Augustine opines that (1) Plato’s philosophy of the creation of the world (earth, fire, water, and air), Plato’s contention that a philosopher is a lover of God, and Plato’s conclusion that God is unchangeable and immutable, correlates with (2) the Book of Genesis’ description of the Creation and with the Book of Exodus’ description of God as “I am who am.”<sup>27</sup> Augustine concluded that he believed that “Plato was not ignorant of [Moses’] writings.”<sup>28</sup> In addition, Augustine of Hippo has said that Plato himself “learned from the Egyptians whatever they held and taught as important....”<sup>29</sup> Thus, Plato may have received the same “wisdom” from the Egyptians, which Moses had earlier received several centuries before. Possibly, all roads lead to Egypt!

Be that as it may, we must conclude here that the Gospel of John is not the first source of the *Logos* being mentioned in either the New Testament or the entire Holy Bible. Nor is Greek philosophy the foundational source of the *Logos*, since,

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<sup>26</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 256.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., pp. 256 – 257.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., p. 256.

<sup>29</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 247.

as Augustine of Hippo has pointed out, the books of Moses preexisted the great Greek philosophers by several centuries.

Instead, the *Logos* of God is first mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy, which the Apostle Paul later references as being Christ in his Epistle to the Romans.<sup>30</sup> The contention that the Christians borrowed the concept of the *Logos* from Platonism or from Greek philosophy is hereby sufficiently refuted.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> See, e.g., Deuteronomy 30:14, describing the Logos of God, stating, “But the word is very nigh unto thee, in thy mouth, and in thy heart, that thou mayest do it.”). In his Epistle to the Romans, for instance, the Apostle Paul interpreted “the word” in Deuteronomy 30:14 to mean “Christ.” Romans 10: 4-10. Therefore, we Reformed Christians may rightfully object to the conclusion of Bertrand Russell that the Christians borrowed the “logos” idea from the Greeks. See, e.g., Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2007), p. 309 (“For Christians, the Messiah was the historical Jesus, who was also identified with the Logos of Greek philosophy...”); and p. 289 (“It was this intellectual element in Plato’s religion that led Christians—notably the author of Saint John’s Gospel—to identify Christ with the Logos. Logos should be translated ‘reason’ in this connection.”). Indeed, the concept of Logos was already found in the writings of the Law of Moses and St. Paul, even prior to the writing of the Gospel of John.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

## Chapter Three: Ancient Egypt and the *Logos*, or the Word of God

The New Testament states that Moses “was cast out, Pharaoh’s daughter took him up, and nourished him for her own son. And Moses was *learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians*, and was mighty in words and in deeds.”<sup>32</sup>

This begs the question, is the *Logos*, which is mentioned in the Book of Deuteronomy, a theological or philosophical idea which Moses may have received from his training in ancient Egypt?

I surmise that the answer to this question depends upon whether “Ma at” and “Logos” or word were ever used inter-changeably within ancient Egypt’s philosophy and religion. Both concepts are broadly centered around “truth.”<sup>33</sup> Both concepts inevitably relate to justice, law, and jurisprudence. For this reason, “ma at” and “logos” are certainly interchangeable concepts in a very broad sense.

There is a Blog posting<sup>34</sup> which asks the following question: **“Is the Egyptian concept of Ma’at similar to the Greek concept of Logos? What was the significance of Ma’at to the human pursuit of wisdom?”** To which the following answer is given:

Indirectly. Ma’at it(her)self is more directly analogous to the Greek concept of necessity (Latin *necessitas* or, to use the Greek word, *Ananke/Anagi*)—the, so to speak, fixed and self-acting universal force or principle on which all things turn....

This being said, Greek religion generally assimilated such Egyptian concepts, ergo the rise of things like Orphism and Christianity, but here’s also where the *Logos* comes in. The *Logos* in the form you’re probably familiar with (the spiritual Sun, alias Jesus Christ) only took center stage in the sunnier, Hellenistic-Egyptian aspect of Greek civilization. This is, in

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<sup>32</sup> Acts 7:21-22.

<sup>33</sup> See, also, St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 645 (“For by consulting the Gospel we learn that Christ is Truth.”); Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), p. 48 (“Your law is the truth and you are truth.”)

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.quora.com/Is-the-Egyptian-concept-of-Ma-at-similar-to-the-Greek-concept-of-Logos-What-was-the-significance-of-Ma-at-to-the-human-pursuit-of-wisdom>

turn, a more relatable, more loveable concept than the logos as used by the Platonists and thinkers after the Ionian philosophers, for whom it was more nearly a compelling force or fateful link.

In either case, the logos might correctly be seen as an extension of necessity/Ma'at—more precisely, as the kind of mutual relationships that Ananke/Ma'at guarantees by its own existence (hence why Zeus is the guarantor of oaths, marriages, friendships, hospitality, etc—the relation of one thing with another thing). The Logos in this aspect is the derivation of rational, ethical, and natural law as lower-order derivatives of the universal law. In the Trinity, the relation between the Father and the Son—”light of light, very god of very god, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, (and) by whom all things were created.”

This formula likewise signals the ‘derivation’ of law from law is not a fallacy, but a self-consistent ‘begetting’ as the highest conceivable existent enfolds and regulates all things that depend on it for their rational-real existence (‘by which all things were created’). These things are ‘light from light,’ not a subordinate or ‘created’ kind of light, but the light itself. It was this principle which underlies the Christian promise of salvation and immortality.

-- Dimitris Almyrantis

My general sentiments and research strongly support Mr. Almyrantis’ conclusions.

For instance, in my book, *Jesus Master of Law*,<sup>35</sup> I allotted a considerable portion of this research to a comparison of the principles of “Ma at” to ancient Greco-Roman concept of “Aequitas” or the principle of Equity. In my book, I wrote:

In the Egyptian *Book of the Dead*, we find not simply the substance of ‘ma’ at’ but also of what the ancient

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<sup>35</sup> Roderick Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL. : Xlibris Pub., 2015), p. 423.

Greeks would identify as the Logos. According to several scholars, the *Book of the Dead* reads: **‘I am the Eternal, I am that which created the Word, I am the Word,’** and **‘I am the Eternal... I am that which created the Word...I am the Word....’**

In ancient (and contemporary) Jewish thought, the ‘Word’ can be designed as God’s holy law; and in ancient Christian or Catholic thought, the ‘Word’ was not simply God’s holy law but was also represented in the person of Jesus of Nazareth. Many early Christians thus identified the Logos, or the ‘Word’ to be Jesus the Christ.

Indeed, for the Apostle John had written, ‘[i]n the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God. All things were made by him and without him was not anything made that was made. And in him was life; and the life was the light of men.’

Interestingly, a Hellenized Jewish philosopher named Philo of Alexandria (20 BC to 50 AD), who was a contemporary of Jesus of Nazareth and the apostles, made a valiant effort to synthesize Greco-Roman philosophy with Judaism. For Philo, intermediary beings were necessary to bridge the enormous gap between God and the material world, and he believed that the Logos was the highest of these intermediary beings, which Philo called ‘the first-born of God.’ Philo wrote that ‘the Logos of the living God is the bond of everything, holding all things together and binding all the parts, and prevents them from being dissolved and separated.’ Philo believed that Plato’s Theory of Forms was located within the Logos, which Philo believed was called the ‘Angel of the Lord’ in the Old Testament.<sup>36</sup>

The *Book of the Dead* predates the birth of Moses by perhaps more than 1,500 years.<sup>37</sup> And since “Moses was *learned in all the wisdom of the*

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<sup>36</sup> Ibid., p. 428.



Egyptians,”<sup>38</sup> it is unlikely that he would not have known about the *Book of the Dead*.

But the clearest connection between the concept of “Ma at” and “Logos” appears to come by way of religion:

Egyptian “**Ma ‘ at**” -- A Goddess of justice, righteousness, balance, and order.

Greco-Roman “**Aequitas**” - A Goddess of justice, righteousness, balance, and order.

In my book *Jesus Master of Law*, I wrote, “the Egyptian goddess Ma’at and the Roman goddess Aequitas appear to be near carbon copies of the same goddess, as well as carbon copies of the same legal concepts.”<sup>39</sup> In fact, pictures of these two goddesses appear to be carbon copies of each other.

In ancient Roman law, “logos” and “equity” were equivalent.<sup>40</sup> In the Roman system, the “law of reason” (i.e., logos) was Roman “natural law.” And Roman “natural law” was the same as the “law of equity.”<sup>41</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> “Book of the Dead,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_the\\_Dead](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_the_Dead) (“The Book of the Dead developed from a tradition of funerary manuscripts dating back to the Egyptian Old Kingdom. The first funerary texts were the Pyramid Texts, first used in the Pyramid of King Unas of the 5th Dynasty, around 2400 BC.”)

<sup>38</sup> Acts 7:21-22.

<sup>39</sup> Roderick Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL. : Xlibris Pub., 2015), p. 424.

<sup>40</sup> George L. Clark, *Equity: An Analysis and Discussion of Modern Equity Problems* (Columbia, Missouri: E.W. Stephens Pub., 1919), § 1 Equity as a stage in our legal development. (“As men’s sense of justice developed, such an unmoral formal system became inadequate. This brought about the third stage known in our system **as equity** and in the **Roman Law system as natural law.**”)

<sup>41</sup> Ibid. See, also, “Aquinas on Law,” <https://people.wku.edu/jan.garrett/302/aquinlaw.htm> (where Saint Thomas Aquinas describes law as “a certain rule and measure of acts whereby man is induced to act or is restrained from acting.” (q90, a1) Because the rule and measure of human actions is reason, law has an essential relation to reason; in the first place to divine reason; in the second place to human reason, when it acts correctly, i.e., in accordance with the purpose or final cause implanted in it by God.”) See, also, Sir Edward Coke (1552-1634), former Chief Justice of England and Wales, held in *Dr. Bonham’s Case* (1610) that “[r]eason is the life of the law; nay, the common law itself is nothing else but reason... The law, which is perfection of reason.”

In English jurisprudence, “reason” became the life of the English Common Law, and “reason,” which was also called “natural law,” constituted the law of equity.<sup>42</sup>

And so, it is not a stretch of logic to conclude that the *Book of the Dead*, which predated Mose by more than 1,000 years, contains the idea of an Eternal creator, and the idea of the *Logos*, or the “Word”; that the ancient Egyptian legal system of “Ma’at” consisted of idea of Logos; that the ancient Greeks and Romans “copied” the Egyptian goddess and renamed her “Aequitas” (i.e., equity); and that this Greco-Roman idea of equity was called “natural law” or the “law of reason” (i.e., logos or the “Word” or the divine *Logos*).

In English jurisprudence, the religious affiliation of equity jurisprudence with Christ as the *Logos* was not lost. In juridical terms, this means that Christ (i.e., Logos or “reason”) is the manifestation of general equity, and vice versa. See, e.g., Goldwin Smith, *A Constitutional and Legal History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Dorset Press, 1990), pp. 208-209:

What is equity? In its beginnings in England it was the extraordinary justice administered by the king’s Chancellor to enlarge, supplant, or override the common law system where that system had become too narrow and rigid in its scope.... The basic idea of equity was, and remains, the application of a moral governing principle to a body of circumstances in order to reach a judgment that was in accord with Christian conscience and Roman natural law, a settlement that showed the common denominations of humanity, justice, and mercy....[As Christ had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it, so too] ‘Equity had come not to destroy the law but to fulfill it.’

Thus, the Egyptian origin of the juridical-theological concept of the *Logos*, and the nexus between ma’at and equity, are highly probable suppositions.

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<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

The *Logos* of God is light, wisdom, and truth.<sup>43</sup> The Gospel of John explicitly identifies Jesus Christ as being the *Logos* of God.<sup>44</sup>

According to modern scholarship and even Christian tradition, this *Logos* is the same *Logos* of Greek philosophy.<sup>45</sup>

However, this theory makes the Early Church (and especially the Roman Catholic Church) appear to have incorporated pagan traditions into Christian theology. But a closer look at the Sacred Scriptures reveal the elements of Greek philosophy were already contained within the Pentateuch. So strong is the analogy between the Law of Moses and Platonism that Augustine of Hippo opined in *The City of God* that Plato may have been familiar with the Hebrew Scriptures. We do not know for certain. Thus, the concept of the *Logos* is found in the Book of Deuteronomy and predates the Greek philosophers by several centuries.

Is it possible, then, that the concept of the *Logos* originated in ancient Egypt? The Sacred Scriptures inform us that Moses was learned in all of the wisdom of Egypt, and that Moses spoke about “the word” (i.e., the *Logos* of God) in the Book of Deuteronomy. And Augustine of Hippo has said that Plato himself “learned from the Egyptians whatever they held and taught as important....”<sup>46</sup>

And ancient Egyptian religion, law, and philosophy plainly demonstrate that the *Logos* and the concept Equity (i.e., “Ma at”) were present since the days of the Old Kingdom. *The Book of the Dead*, which dates to circa 2400 BC, for instance, reads: ‘I am the Eternal, I am that which created the Word, I am the Word,’ and ‘I am the Eternal... I am that which created the Word...I am the Word....’

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<sup>43</sup> See, also, ‘St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 645 (“For by consulting the Gospel we learn that Christ is Truth.”); Saint Augustine, *Confessions* (New York, N.Y.: Barnes & Nobles Classics, 2007), p. 48 (“Your law is the truth and you are truth.”)

<sup>44</sup> John 1:1 (“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.”)

<sup>45</sup> See, e.g., Bertrand Russell, *A History of Western Philosophy* (New York, NY: Touchstone, 2007), p. 309 (“For Christians, the Messiah was the historical Jesus, who was also identified with the Logos of Greek philosophy....”); and p. 289 (“It was this intellectual element in Plato’s religion that led Christians—notably the author of Saint John’s Gospel—to identify Christ with the Logos. Logos should be translated ‘reason’ in this connection.”). See, also, “Gospel of John,” Wikipedia (online encyclopedia): [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel\\_of\\_John](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gospel_of_John)

<sup>46</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), p. 247.

The Gospel of John explicitly identifies Christ as the Word of God (i.e., *Logos*), as well as the long-awaited Messiah. As such, Christ, as the *Logos*, preexisted Creation and is co-eternal with God the Father, having participated in the creation of the World. This idea of Christ describes Him as an incorporeal Being who is “reason,” “natural law” and the “physical laws of the universe.”

And if Augustine of Hippo’s *The City of God* is to be taken as an authoritative source of Reformed Theology-- and this undersigned author believes that it is-- then this theory of the *Logos* having been accessible even to the ancient Gentiles is within the realm of Christian orthodoxy. For instance, In Book VIII of *The City of God*, Augustine writes:

Whatever philosophers, therefore, thought concerning the supreme God, that He is both the maker of all created things, the light by which things are known, and the good in reference to which things are to be done; that we have in Him the first principle of nature, the truth of doctrine, and the happiness of life.... [A]nd, lastly, whether also we include all who have been held wise men and philosophers among all nations who are discovered to have seen and taught this, be they Atlantics, Libyans, Egyptians, Indians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, Spaniards, or of other nations....<sup>47</sup>

The Apostle Paul certainly implies the same theological proposition in his Epistle to the Romans, stating:

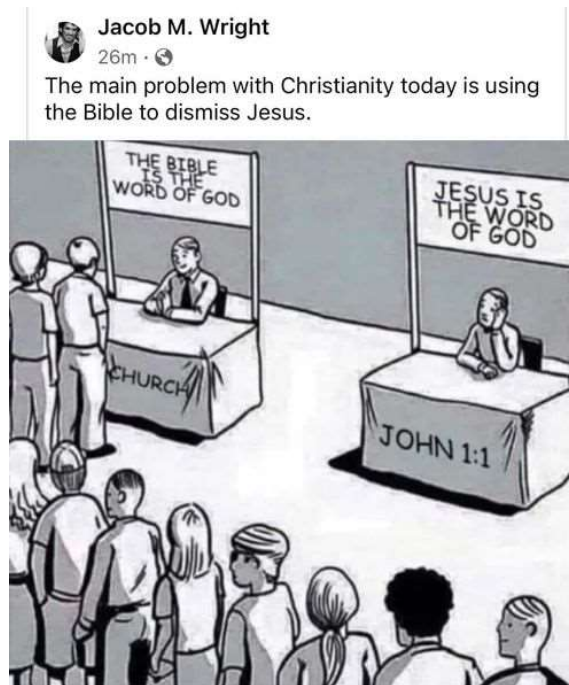
For there is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified; for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them) in the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.<sup>48</sup>

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<sup>47</sup> St. Augustine, *The City of God* (New York, N.Y.: The Modern Library, 1950), pp. 253-254.

<sup>48</sup> Romans 2: 11 – 16.

In English law, this why historically and traditionally Jesus Christ (i.e., the *Logos*) is the manifestation of equity jurisprudence.<sup>49</sup> In England, Christ is correctly understood to be the foundation of both Church and State.



But in the United States, and perhaps in very many other secular nation-states, the conventional English or Reformed or Roman Catholic conceptualization of Christ as *Logos* (i.e., “*ma’at*,” “*equity*” and the “*law of reason*”) has been diminished, if not altogether voided, in secular jurisprudence. And this unfortunate development in the secular law and jurisprudence of the United States has led to the same undue rigidity in the common law and the general administration of justice, without equity and without reason, that resulted in great anguish, exploitation, and oppression of the poor.<sup>50</sup>

-- THE END --

<sup>49</sup> Goldwin Smith, *A Constitutional and Legal History of England* (New York, N.Y.: Dorset Press, 1990), pp. 208-209.

<sup>50</sup> John Adams, *The Doctrine of Equity: A Commentary on the Law* (Philadelphia, PA: T & J W. Johnson & Co., 1881); George L. Clark, *Equity: An Analysis and Discussion of Modern Equity Problems* (Columbia, Missouri: E.W. Stephens Pub., 1919); Roderick Ford, *Jesus Master of Law: A Juridical Science of Christianity and the Law of Equity* (Tampa, FL: Xlibris Corp., 2015).

