

Which Logos Do We Believe In?



Theological
Conference

A Gathering of Truth Seekers

May 2021

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❖ Logos in Philosophy

- Heraclitus
- Plato
- Zeno
- Philo
- Plotinus
- Church writers Justin & Origen

❖ Logos in Scripture

- Old Testament
- New Testament
- Apocrypha

❖ Conclusion

MAIN POINTS

„What indeed has Athens to do with Jerusalem? What concord is there between the Academy and the Church? what between heretics and Christians? Our instruction comes from "the porch of Solomon," who had himself taught that "the Lord should be sought in simplicity of heart." Away with all attempts to produce a mottled Christianity of Stoic, Platonic, and dialectic composition! We want no curious disputation after possessing Christ Jesus, no inquisition after enjoying the gospel! With our faith, **we desire no further belief.** For this is our palmary faith, that there is **nothing** which we ought to believe **besides.**“

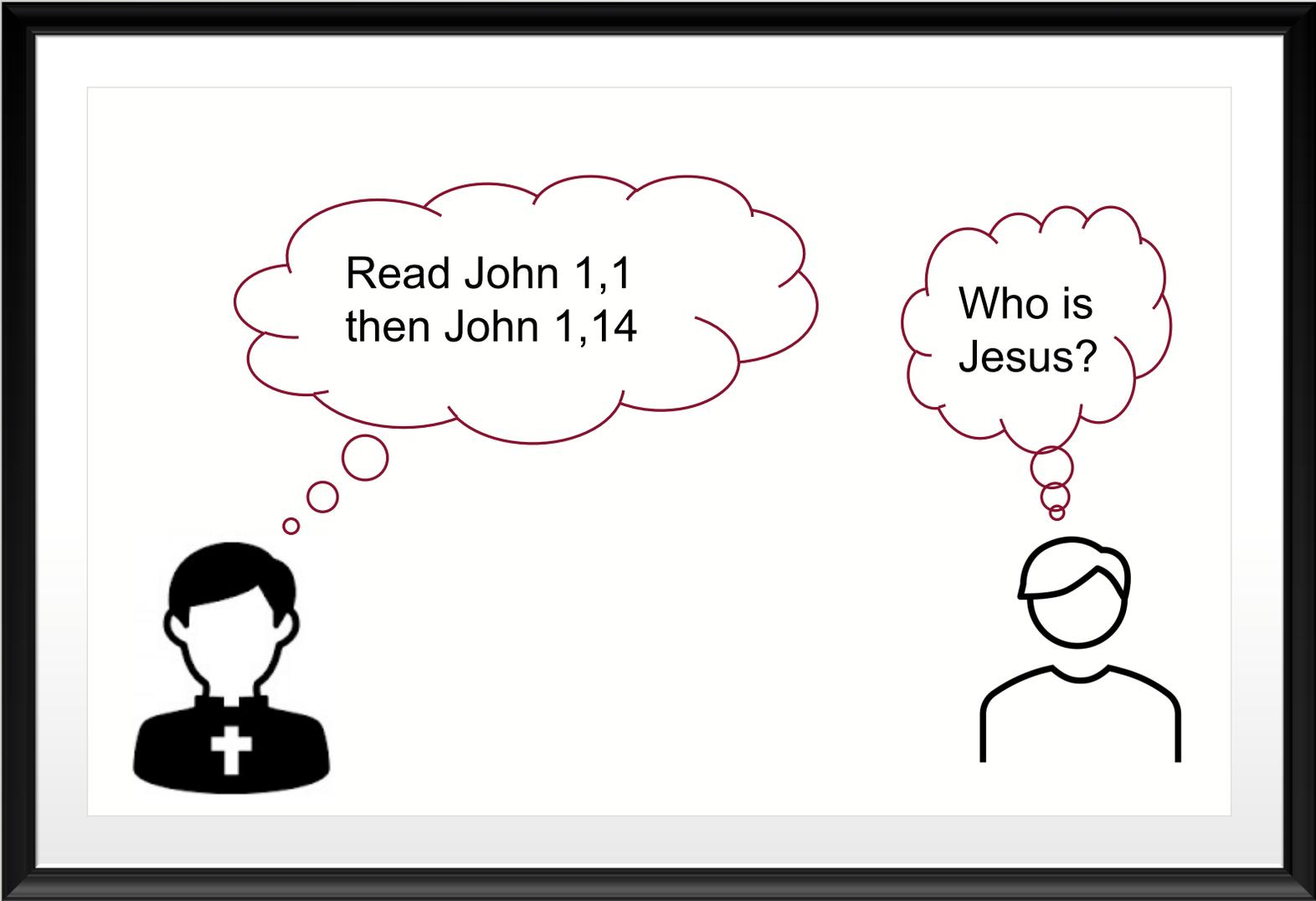
INTRODUCTION

TERTULIAN:
AGAINST THE
HERETICS, CHAPTER 7

„For it is written: I will **destroy the wisdom of the wise**,
And the understanding of those who have understanding,
I will confound. Where is the wise person? Where is the
scribe? Where is the debater of this age? **Has God not
made foolish the wisdom of the world?** For since in
the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not
come to know God, God [w]was pleased through the
foolishness of the message preached to save those who
believe. For indeed Jews ask for signs and **Greeks
search for wisdom;**“

INTRODUCTION

PAUL IN
1. CORINTHIANS 1,19-22



INTRODUCTION

If **A = B** & **B = C** then **C = A**

Now insert the prologue of John
into the equation:

A (God) = B (Logos) and
B (Logos) = C (Flesh / Jesus) then
C (Flesh / Jesus) = A (God).

INTRODUCTION

TRINITARIAN
MATH FORMULA

The traditional understanding of the text:

„In the beginning was the Son and the Son was with
God and the Son was God. And the Son became flesh.“
(John 1,1 + 14)

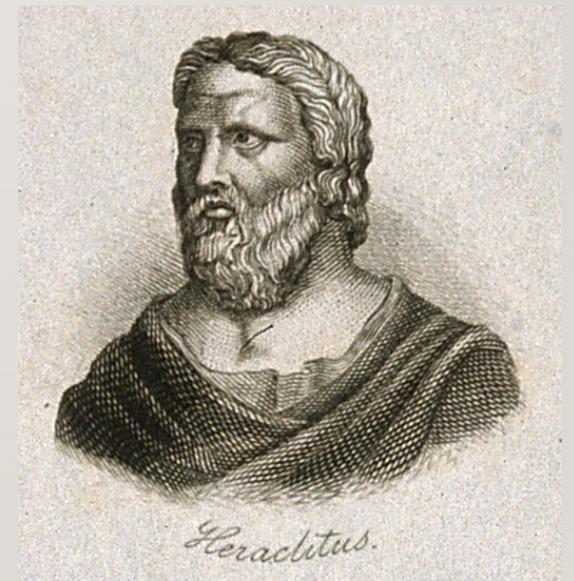
INTRODUCTION

JESUS = LOGOS = GOD ?

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

HERACLITUS

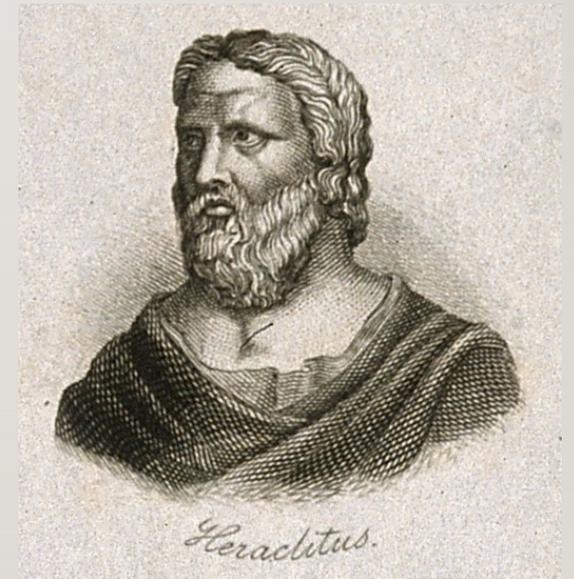
- Heraclitus of Ephesus (535 - 475 BC) was an pre-Socratic philosopher and a native of the city of Ephesus, which was then part of the Persian Empire.
- The great temple of Artemis is one of the largest temples of the 6th century BC and one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World.
- The Temple of Artemis was the focus of Eastern mystery cults and is today the huge ruin of the Greco-Roman theater (cf. Acts 19,29).



- The Lydian king Croesos (born 547 BC) had richly endowed the temple. Croesos was defeated by the Persian king Cyrus the great who 8 years later took Babylon without a fight, released the Jews from their Babylonian captivity and agreed to their return to Jerusalem.
- The Persians allowed the construction of the Temple of Artemis to be continued (completion around 540 BC)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

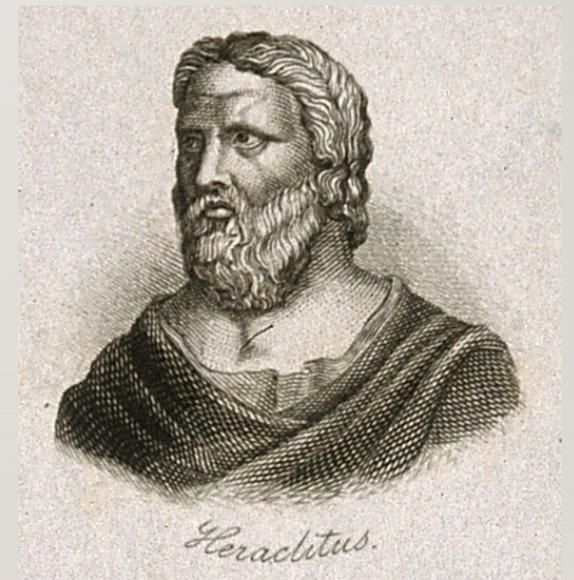
HERACLITUS



LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

HERACLITUS

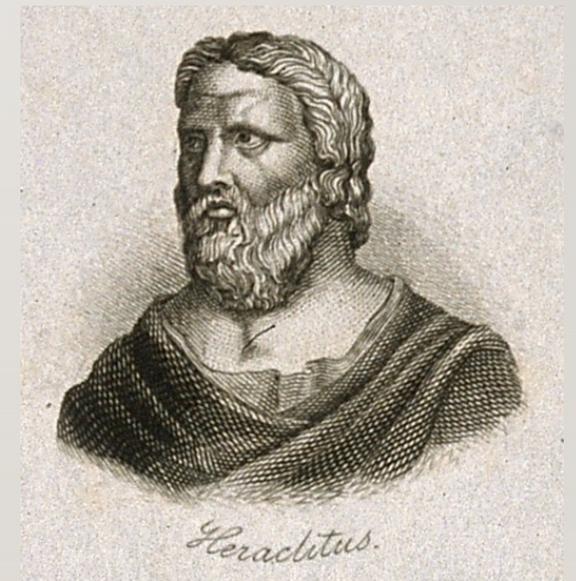
- By a resolution of the Roman Senate, Ephesus was allowed to bear the surname *temple keeper* or *guardian of the temple*“ (cf. Acts 19,35).
- After the arson of 356 BC. The building erected in the 2nd century BC was larger than the temple of YHWH in Jerusalem and the largest temple in the Greek cultural area.
- In 268 AD, the temple was destroyed in a raid by the Goths, an East Germanic tribe.



- What is the world like, and how can we understand it? He thinks that the answer to both questions is found in the logos. Presumably describes some kind of rational structure or cosmic principle that can be recognized by wise people.
- In the temple district of Ephesus Heraclitus created his doctrine of the Logos, which he laid down in the temple of Artemis and consecrated to her (cf. the Torah scroll in the YHWH temple) so that only those who had access to the sanctuary come to this knowledge.

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

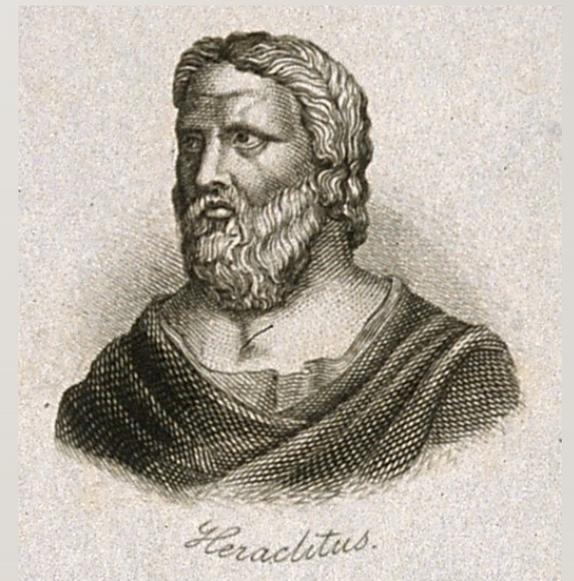
HERACLITUS



- Should this “logos” be thought of as God? Heraclitus says that the logos “is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of **Zeus.**” (Fragment 32)
- “It is wise to hearken, not to me, but to my Word [logos], and to confess that **all things are one.**” (Fragment 50)
- „Though this Word is true evermore, yet **men are as unable to understand** it when they hear it for the first time as before they have heard it at all.“ (Fragment 1)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

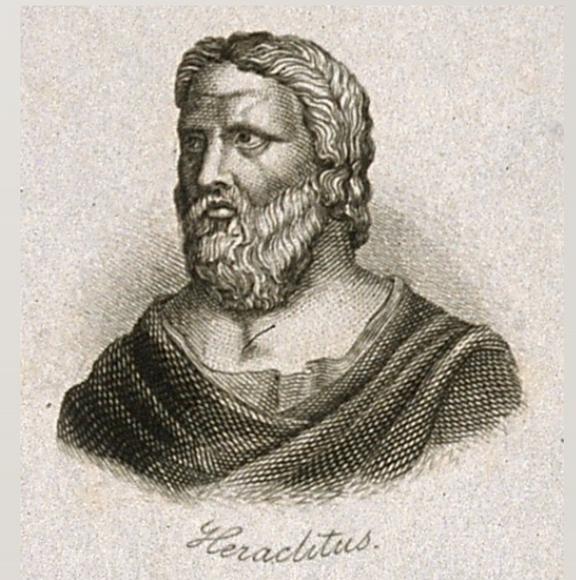
HERACLITUS



- Heraclitus claimed that the Logos spoke through him. Heraclitus work was under the protection of the Logos goddess, whose sanctuary was also called „the House of Logos“. The book lay at the feet of the idol of Artemis.
- When Diogenes from Cilicia wrote the first Greek history of philosophy around 240 AD., the Logos book existed (XI, 16). But in the second half of the 3rd century the very widespread book, often mentioned by many philosophers, disappeared in the original and in the many summaries. Only about 130 fragments have survived.

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

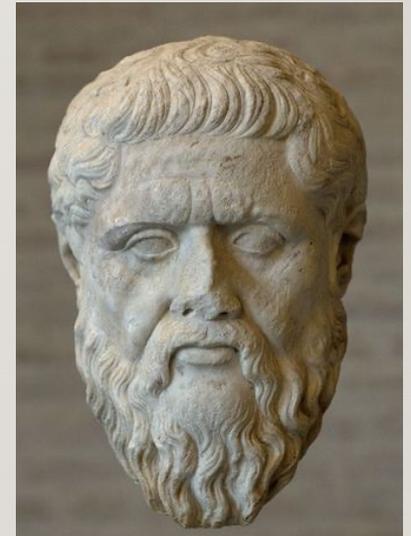
HERACLITUS



LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PLATON

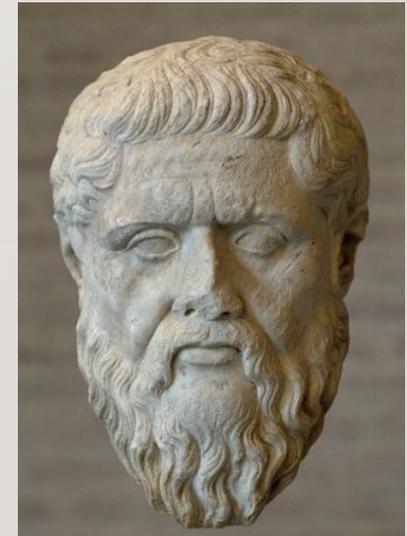
- Plato (428-348 BC) was an ancient Greek philosopher and student of Socrates. He founded the Platonic Academy, the oldest institutional school of philosophy in Greece, from which Platonism spread throughout the ancient world.
- In his work „Timaeus“ (360 b.C.), the demiurge (creator, master craftsman) designed the material world.



LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PLATON

- The Demiurge is the creator god, maker and father (Timaeus 28C, 29A).
- A divine Craftsman who, imitating an unchanging and eternal model, imposes mathematical order on a preexistent chaos to generate the ordered universe (kosmos). <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/plato-timaeus/>

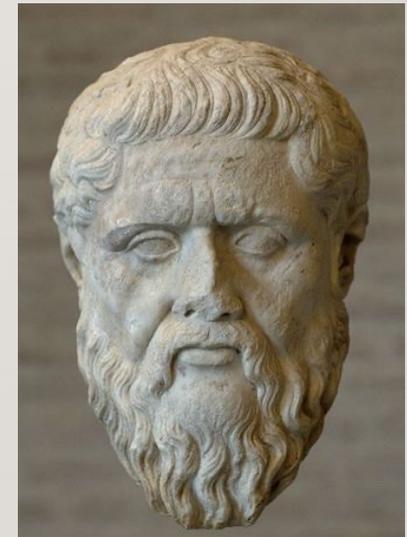


→ Lastly, **plato** himself ... In the first place declared, with truth, **a god exalted above every essence**, but **to him he added also a second**, distinguishing them numerically as two, though both possessing one perfection, and the being of the **second Deity** proceeding from the first.

(Emperor Constantine; addressing the nicean concile 325 AD.) Hemphill: Glory to God in the Highest, p. 314

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

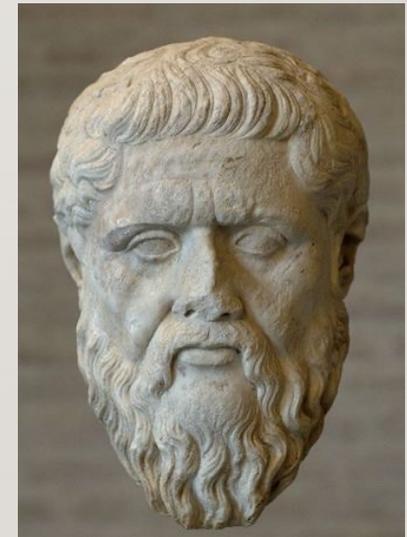
PLATON



- John 1,18
NIV: „Only Son“
KJ21: „only begotten Son“
NASB 1995: „only begotten God“
- Is Jesus a „genetic“ son of YHWH? No!
Sonship is a status (cf. Job 38,7).
- Stong's Concordance:
only, only-begotten; **unique**.
- „Unique“ in birth, salvation, kingship ...

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

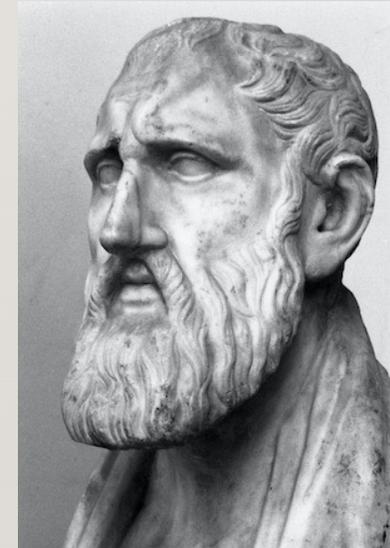
PLATON



- Zeno of Citium was the founder of the Stoic school of philosophy, which he taught in Athens from about 300 BC.
- The Stoics, philosophers who followed the teachings of the thinker Zeno, defined the logos as an active rational and spiritual principle that permeated all reality. They called the logos providence, nature, god, and the soul of the universe, which is composed of many seminal logoi that are contained in the universal logos. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/logos>

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

ZENO



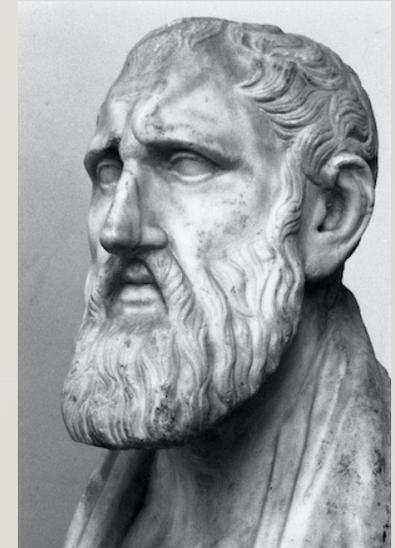
LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

ZENO

→ The stoic view of the world at the time of the apologists of the second century comes to life through a sentence of the last of the great Stoics, that of the Roman emperor Marc Aurel:

„Everything is done according to the Logos and is done by him.“

(Meditationes VI, 1)

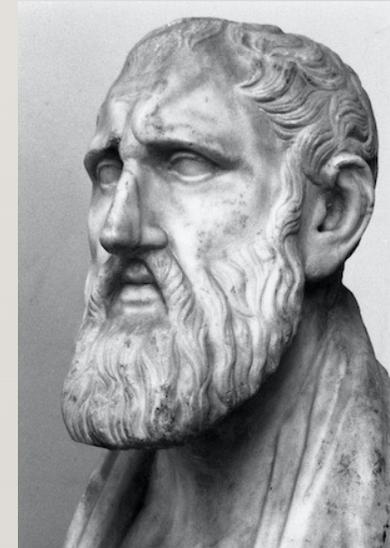


Paul at Athens

Now while Paul was waiting for them at Athens, **his spirit was being provoked** within him as he was observing the city **full of idols**. So he was reasoning in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Gentiles, and in the market place every day with those who happened to be present. And also some of the Epicurean and **Stoic philosophers** were conversing with him. Some were saying, "What would this idle babbler wish to say?" Others, "He seems to be a proclaimer of strange deities," - because he was preaching Jesus and the resurrection. And they took him and brought him to the Areopagus, saying, "May we know what this new teaching is which you are proclaiming? For you are **bringing some strange things to our ears**; so we **want to know** what these things mean." (Acts 17,16-20 NASB 1995)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

ZENO



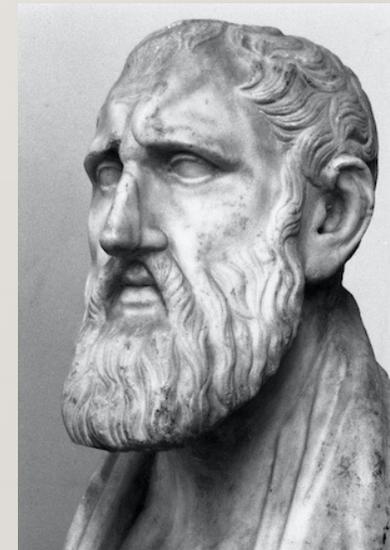
The Stoic concept of the Logos:

1. Logos is the power or principle that shapes and creates all things from itself ...
2. According to Stoic metaphysics, to exist something must have a body ...
3. Logos, the power or principle that unifies and gives coherence to the world ...
4. It is the Soul of the world, Mind of Nature, Nature, God ...

Marian Hillar: From Logos to Trinity, p. 34-35

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

ZENO



- Philo of Alexandria (20 BCE – 50 CE), was a Hellenistic Jewish philosopher who lived in Alexandria, in the Roman province of Egypt.
- Although Philo was a Jewish philosopher and primarily achieved a reconciliation between Judaism and Hellenism through his allegorical interpretation of the Old Testament.
- His doctrine of Logos and his dealings with the apostles had a major influence on early Christian development.

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILO



- From the middle of the first century BC, allegory was widely recognized and taught among Alexandrian Jews. But there were also those who oppose this interpretation. Philo writes contemptuously about them.
- „For we are about **to teach** those initiated persons who are worthy of the knowledge of the most **sacred mysteries**, the whole nature of such divine and secret ordinances. And those who are thus worthy are they who, with all modesty, practise genuine piety, of that sort which scorns to disguise itself under any false colours. But we will **not** act the part of hierophant or expounder of sacred mysteries **to those who are afflicted with the incurable disease of pride of language** and quibbling expressions, and juggling tricks of manners, and who measure sanctity and holiness by no other standard.“
(On the Cherubim, 42)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILO



- In applying the allegorical explanation to Scripture, the educated Hellenistic Jews were unaware that they had developed entirely strange ideas.
- They failed to realize that they were deviating from the faith of their fathers. The doctrines of the various philosophical systems are not applicable with the belief in revelation, such as the doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, the doctrine of ideas or the doctrine of the wickedness of substance.
- Through this method, namely exegesis based on philosophical tenets, they transferred them to the Holy Scriptures.

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILO



→ The logos mediates between God and the world, that is, the divine power of reason that lives eternally with God, the „first son“ of God (prôtogonos), the „second god“ (deuteros theos), the „shadow“ of God (skia theou), the Paraclete, the mediator between God and man.

→ Harper Collins Bible Dictionary about Philo:
„Philo’s writings are remarkably free of rabbinic concerns and betray no awareness of any christian person or event. Philo combinet a fierce loyalty to judaism with a profound love of greek philosophy.“

Hemphil: Glory to god in the highest, P. 337

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PHILO

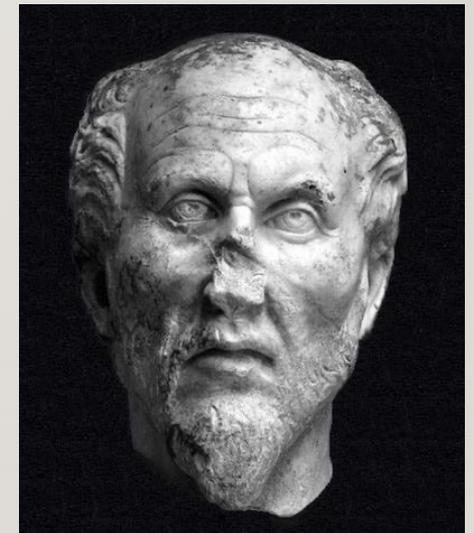


LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

PLOTINUS

- Plotinus (205 – 270 AD) was a Hellenistic philosopher who lived in Roman Egypt. In his philosophy there are three principles: the One, the Intellect, and the Soul. The term Neoplatonism applied to Plotinus and his philosophy.
- The British philosopher and Nobel Prize winner Bertrand Russell writes about the Trinity of Plotinus:
„The metaphysics of Plotinus begins with a Holy Trinity: The One, Spirit and Soul. These three are not equal. The One is supreme, Spirit comes next, and Soul last.“

Bertrand Russell, History of Western Philosophy (1946) p. 326.



LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

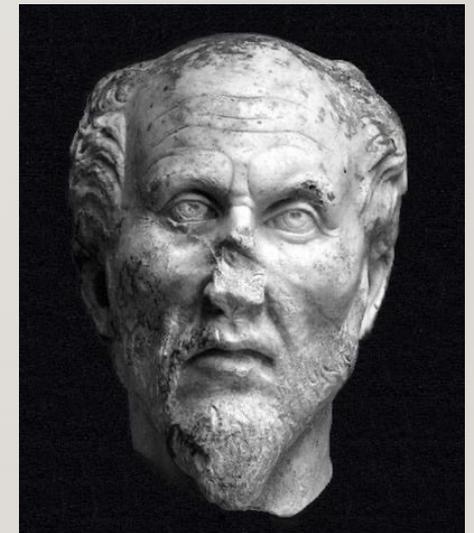
PLOTINUS

- This is the explanation of **Plato's Triplicity**, in the passage where he names as the **Primals** the Beings gathered about the King of All, and establishes a **Secondary** containing the Secondaries, and a **Third** containing the Tertiaries.

Plotinus: The Fifth Ennead, First Tractate: The Three Initial Hypostates

- The intellect (nous) from Plotinus is the generator of the universe, like the demiurge in Plato's *Timaeus*.

Anthony Kenny: *An Illustrated Brief History of Western Philosophy*. German edition, p. 325



- Justin Martyr (100 – 165 A.D.) was an early Christian apologist and philosopher.
- For Justin the teachings of Socrates, Plato or the Stoic are forerunners of Christ (First Apology 46; Second Apology 13).
- According to Stoic doctrine, all people have a share in world reason, the Logos. He finds seeds of truth everywhere, but the full knowledge rests with Christ (Second Apology 13). The logos is divine (First Apology 10)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

CHURCH WRITER JUSTIN



- Thus truth can be grasped with reason and Justin follows Plato (Dial 3,7). For Justin there is no contradiction between philosophy and God (Dial 2,1).
- Justin the Martyr indirectly points out that the Christian concept of Logos has pagan predecessors, and mentions Socrates, Heraclitus, Mercurius and Plato's world soul, among others.
- The „word“ ist the first-born of god (First Apology 21). „Jesus Christ is the only proper Son who has been begotten by God, being His Word and first-begotten, and power; and, becoming man“ (Frist Apology 23).

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

CHURCH WRITER JUSTIN



- Justin believes in subordination because God is unbegotten ... the Son has the “second place” and the spirit “in the third place” (First Apology 13 & 60).
- „We have been taught that **Christ is the first-born of God**, and we have declared above that He is **the Word** of whom every race of men were partakers; and those who lived reasonably are Christians, even though they have been thought atheists; as, among the Greeks, Socrates and Heraclitus, and men like them;“ (First Apology 66)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

CHURCH WRITER
JUSTIN



- Origen of Alexandria (184 – 253 AD.), was an early Christian scholar.
- He believed in the pre-existence of souls. (cf. Plato's theory of ideas)
- He distinguishes between Logos and Christ. „The soul of Jesus“ (he counted it among the human souls), the only one who had always given himself to the Logos in its preexistence, was the descended Messiah and not a superhuman being (Contra Celsus IV, 18; De princ. II, 6.3 + 5).

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

CHURCH WRITER ORIGEN



- „Wherefore we have always held that God is the Father of His **only-begotten Son**, who was born indeed of Him, and derives from Him what He is, **but without any beginning.**“ (De Principiis, Book 1, Chapter 2)
- „It is now time, after this cursory notice of these points, to resume our investigation of the **incarnation of our Lord** and Saviour, viz., how or why **He became man ...** (De Principiis, Book 2, Chapter 6,1)
- **The Only-begotten of God ... the God-man is born**“ (De Principiis, Book 2, Chapter 6,3)

LOGOS IN PHILOSOPHY

CHURCH WRITER
ORIGEN



→ **Strong's Dictionary**

Hebrew 1697

1441 Occurrences

Definition: speech, word

→ **Brown-Driver-Briggs**

Definition: singular speech, discourse, saying, word, as the sum of that which is spoken: of man, word of command, tidings ...

LOGOS IN THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT

„By the **word** (bīd-ḅar - Strong's H1697) of the Lord the heavens were made, And by the breath of His mouth all their host.“

(Psalm 33,6 NASB)

„So will My **word** (dā-ḅā-rōw - Strong's H1697) be which goes out of My mouth; It will not return to Me empty.“

(Isaiah 55,11 NASB)

LOGOS IN THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT

„Wisdom hath been created before all things, and the understanding of prudence from everlasting. **The word of God** on high is the fountain of wisdom, and her ways are everlasting commandments. To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed, and who hath known her wise counsels?“

(Jesus Sirach 1,4-6)

„God of my fathers, and Lord of mercy, who hast made all things **with thy word**, And by thy wisdom hast appointed man, that he should have dominion over the creature that was made by thee.“

(The Book of Wisdom 9,1-2)

APOCRYPHA

THE CREATIVE
WISDOM OF GOD

→ **Strong's Dictionary**

greek 1697

331 Occurrences

Definition: a word, speech, divine utterance, analogy.

→ **Thayer's Greek Lexicon**

Definition: a word which uttered by the living voice, what someone has said, sayings of God ...

LOGOS IN THE BIBLE

NEW TESTAMENT

Examples

„ ... resulting in the obedience of the Gentiles by **word** (logō) and deed“ (Romans 15,18)

„ ... This **statement** (logos) is very unpleasant; who can listen to it?“ (John 6,60)

„ ... So I ask, for what **reason** (logo) did you send for me?“ (Acts 10,29)

LOGOS IN THE BIBLE

NEW TESTAMENT

„The identification of the Logos with Christ became the crucial point for the merging of Greek philosophy with the apostolic legacy and led the thinking Greeks to it.“

Von Harnack: *on the Essence of Christianity*,
P. 118, German Edition

CONCLUSION

VON HARNACK

„The true background to John’s thought and language is found not in Greek Philosophy but in Hebrew Revelation. The ‘Word of God’ in the Old Testament denotes God in action, especially in creation and deliverance.“

F.F. Bruce: The Gospel of John, p. 29
British biblical scholar

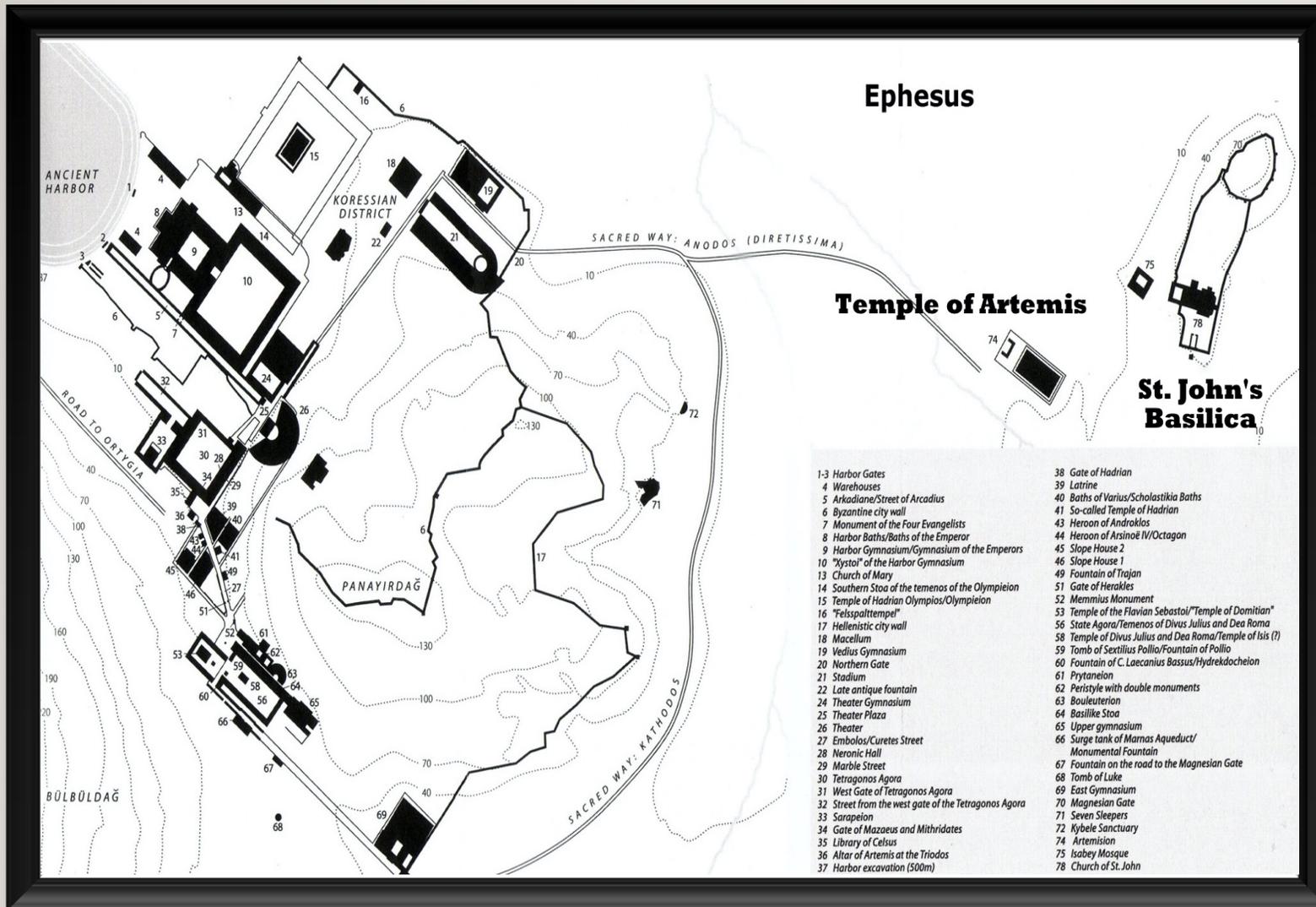
CONCLUSION

F.F. BRUCE

„See to it that there is no one who takes **you captive through philosophy** and empty deception in accordance with human tradition, in accordance with the elementary principles of the world, rather than in accordance with Christ.“

Paul in Colossians 2,8

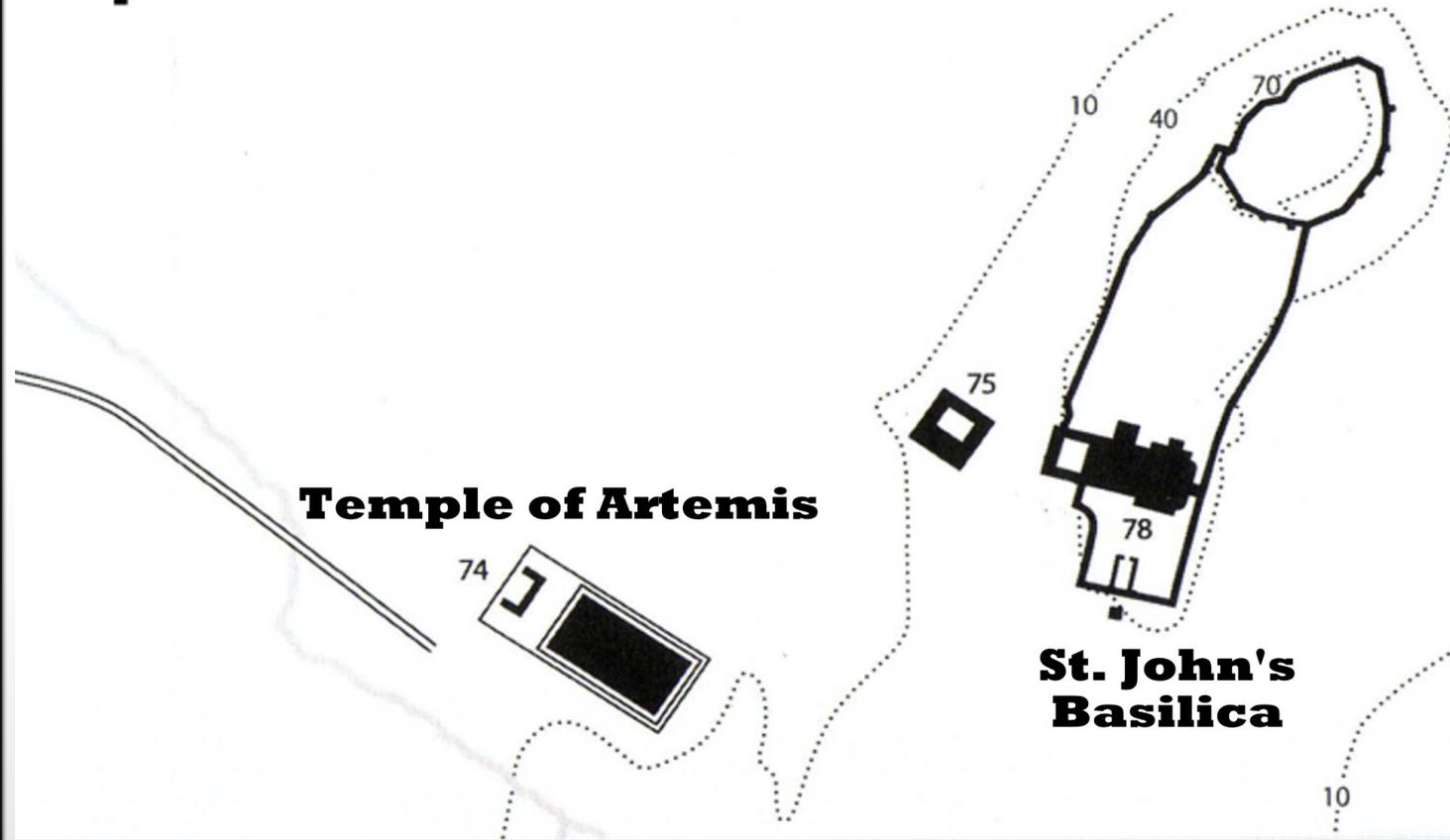
CONCLUSION



CONCLUSION

ST. JOHN'S BASILICA & TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS

Ephesus



CONCLUSION

ST. JOHN'S BASILICA &
TEMPLE OF ARTEMIS