

Chapter 2

The Word of God

*What are the different forms
of the Word of God?*

EXPLANATION AND SCRIPTURAL BASIS

What is meant by the phrase "the Word of God"? Actually, there are several different meanings taken by this phrase in the Bible. It is helpful to distinguish these different senses clearly at the beginning of this study.

A. "The Word of God" as a Person: Jesus Christ

Sometimes the Bible refers to the Son of God as "the Word of God." In Revelation 19:13, John sees the risen Lord Jesus in heaven and says, "The name by which he is called is The Word of God." Similarly, in the beginning of John's gospel we read, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1). It is clear that John is speaking of the Son of God here, because in verse 14 he says, "And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, full of grace and truth; we have beheld his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father." These verses (and perhaps 1 John 1:1) are the only instances where the Bible refers to God the Son as "the Word" or "the Word of God," so this usage is not common. But it does indicate that among the members of the Trinity it is especially God the Son who in his person as well as in his words has the role of communicating the character of God to us and of expressing the will of God for us.

Word = expression

B. "The Word of God" as Speech by God

1. **God's Decrees.** Sometimes God's words take the form of powerful decrees that cause events to happen or even cause things to come into being. "And God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Gen. 1:3). God even created the animal world by speaking his powerful word: "And God said, 'Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds.' And it was so" (Gen. 1:24). Thus, the psalmist can say, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth" (Ps. 33:6).

These powerful, creative words from God are often called God's decrees. A decree of God is a word of God that causes something to happen. These decrees of