

PREACHING FROM THE BIBLE

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God, the God, the Godhead

GOD, THE GOD

The Bible is God's Word and is the only true and reliable source that teaches us about God. Analyzing the Bible's original usage of the word "God" can tell us a lot more about Him than the current English usages. The word "God" has a Biblical meaning: the only eternal and self-existing Being Who created and preserved all things. According to the Bible, the one God exists in three persons as the God, the Word, and the Spirit. When He interacts with human beings, He is called God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit.

Originally, the majority of the Bible was written in Hebrew (Old Testament) and Greek (New Testament), and a small portion of the Old Testament was written in Aramaic (Ezra 4:8-6:18; 7:12-26; Daniel 2:4b-7:28). In all three languages, the use of the definite article served to distinguish the many forms of God. The usage of "God" and "the God" in the Bible's original languages is very clear. However, that distinctive usage was lost when the Bible was translated into other languages, especially English.

Below is a list of the nouns for God in the Biblical languages in order of their appearance in the Bible. Each word is paired with its English translation with its corresponding Strong's numbers.

In Hebrew:

- אלהים ('elohiym) [H430](#) without definite article, (God).
- האלהים (ha 'elohiym) H430 with definite article, (the God).
- אל ('el) [H410](#) without definite article, (God).
- האל (ha 'el) H410 with definite article, (the God).
- אלה / אלהה ('elowahh) [H433](#) without definite article, (God).

In Aramaic:

- אלה ('alahh) [H426](#) without definite article, (God).
- אלהא ('alahh ah) H426 with definite article, (the God).

In Greek:

- θεός (theos) [G2316](#) without definite article, (God).
- ο θεός (ho theos) G2316 with definite article, (the God).

In the English Bible, all of these nouns were translated as "God" without the definite article even though there is a definite article in English. The reason is that the noun "god" was capitalized to function as a proper name, and proper names do not take the definite article in

English. However, there is a difference between “God” and “the God” in the Biblical languages:

- Without the definite article, all of the nouns in Biblical Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic denote any or all three of the Persons of the Godhead and should be translated into English as “God”.
- With the definite article, all nouns in Biblical Hebrew, Greek, and Aramaic denote God the Father and should be translated into English as “the God”. One exception is in Hebrew 1:8-9, where θεός, with the definite article, denotes both God the Father and God the Son. The reason for this exception is that God the Father gave God the Son His own name as mentioned in John 17:11. We use “*God” to denote “the God”.

*“But to the Son: Thy throne, {O} *God, {is} forever and ever. A sceptre of righteousness {is} the sceptre of Thy reign. Thou have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; therefore *God, Thy *God, has anointed Thee {with} the oil of gladness above Thy partners.” (Hebrew 1:8-9).*

“I am no more in the world, but these are in the world. I come to Thee. Holy Father! Keep in Thy name which Thou have given me, that they may be one as we.” (John 17:11).

The retention of the definite article with the noun “god” in translation helps us have a better understanding of the Bible. For instance, knowing the function of the definite article in Biblical Greek will help us to easily understand John 1: 1.

The functions of the definite article in Biblical Greek are defined as follows:

- To denote a proper name such as ο ιησους (ho iēsous) “Jesus”.
- To denote an abstract noun such as ἡ σοφία (hē sophiā) “wisdom”.
- To combine with possessive adjectives and demonstratives in phrases such as ἡ ἐμὴ πόλις (hē emē pólis) “my city” and αὕτη ἡ πόλις (hautē hē pólis) “this city”.
- To qualify a noun as the subject in a sentence either in the definite article’s placement before or after the verb. For instance, και θεος ην ο λογος (kai theos eimi ho logos) must be translated as “The Word was being God” not “God was being the Word”.
- To refer to a person, animal, or object that is known or was previously introduced.
- To individualize a noun; to distinguish a noun from all of the others of the same class. For instance, “the God” distinguishes God the Father from God the Word and God the Spirit.
- Etc.

Let's examine John 1:1 in Greek:

εν αρχη ην ο λογος και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος

Here is the literal translation:

εν (In) αρχη (beginning) ην (was existing) ο (the) λογος (Word) και (and) ο (the) λογος (Word) ην (was existing) προς (with) τον (the) θεον (God) και (and) θεος (God) ην (was existing) ο (the) λογος (Word)

In order to correctly translate John 1:1 from Greek into English, we also need to know the following:

- The verb *ην* serves the same purpose as the following verbs in English: be, exist, happen, and present. It appears three times in this verse in the imperfect tense, active voice, and indicative mood. The primary function of the imperfect tense is to convey the imperfective (progressive) verbal aspect in narratives with past context.
- The conjunction *και* is frequently used merely to mark the beginning of a sentence.
- The placement of the definite article *ο* before or after the verb qualifies a noun as the subject in a sentence.

The correct translation of John 1:1 is as follows:

In {the} beginning was the Word. The Word was with *God [the God]. The Word was God.

“The beginning” refers to the start of creation, not the beginning of the Word. God is self-existing. Thus, God does not have a beginning or ending. In the beginning of creation, the Word existed with *God (God the Father), and He was God.

θεος ην ο λογος can only be correctly translated as the following: “The Word was God”. Let's see the different meanings of these similar sentences:

- (1) *ο λογος ην θεος* = The Word was a god.
- (2) *ο λογος ην ο θεος* = The Word was the God.
- (3) *θεος ην ο λογος* = The Word was God.

Sentence (1) implies that the Word was one of the gods, who was created by God. This idea is one of the beliefs of the Jehovah Witness religion.

Sentence (2) implies that the Word and *God [the God] are the same Person. This idea is part of the teachings of the Oneness Pentecostal religion.

Sentence (3) is the correct translation. The Word was God while *God [the God] and the Spirit were also God.

Thus, the Word is God. The Word was not created by God/*God or born by God/*God because He is self-existing. However, the flesh and blood of the Word was born by *God in the womb of the Virgin Mary and born into the world by the Virgin Mary. If the Word was not God, salvation could not have existed for mankind. For more information about the relationship between the Word and salvation, please read “The Mystery of the Gospel” [1].

It is suggested that we use “*God” in English wherever the original languages of the Bible use the noun “God” with the definite article to indicate God the Father.

THE GODHEAD

The English noun “Godhead” was used to translate one adjective and two nouns from Biblical Greek:

- *θεϊος* (theios) [G2304](#) (Acts 17:29; II Peter 1:3-4). Belonging to the nature, power, providence, etc. of God
- *θειότης* (theiotēs) [G2305](#) (Romans 1:20). The nature, attributes, and properties of God.
- *θεότης* (theotēs) [G2320](#) (Colossians 2:9): The state of being God, having God's form and God's attributes.

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Notes

[1] <http://www.preachingfromthebible.net/the-mystery-of-the-gospel/>

– Aaron D. Rubin, “Studies in Semitic Grammaticalization” (Eisenbrauns, 2005)

– “The Greek Article and case Ending”: <http://inthesaltshaker.com/drills/article.htm>

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