REFERENCES IN SCRIPTURE TO THE TRINITY

Paul Hahn, Theology Department

University of St Thomas, Houston 77006

© 2023

Scripture quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version updated edition.

Jesus is God’s Word.

Gen 1:3, “God said, “Let there be light”; and there was light.” (In Gen 1, God says “Let X” 8 times. Creation is by his *word*.)

Wis 9:1-2, “O God . . ., [you] have made all things by your word, 2 and by your wisdom have formed humankind . . .”

John 1:1-2, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was in the beginning with God.”

John 1:14ab, “And the Word became flesh and lived among us, and we have seen his glory . . .”

1 John 1:1-2, “We declare to you what was from the beginning, what we have heard, what we have seen with our eyes, what we have looked at and touched with our hands, concerning the *word* of life—2 this life was revealed, and we have seen it and testify to it, and declare to you the eternal life that was with the Father and was revealed to us . . .”

Jesus is God’s Wisdom.

1 Cor 1:24b, “Christ [is] the power of God and the wisdom of God.”

1 Cor 1:30, “Christ . . . became for us wisdom from God . . .”

Jesus is God’s Son.

Matt 3:17 (//Luke 3:22), (Jesus’ baptism) “And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.””

Luke 1:35, “The angel said to her [Mary], “. . . the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.””

Luke 9:35, (transfiguration) “Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!””

Heb 1:2-5, God “has spoken to us by a Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, through whom he also created the worlds. 3 . . . and he sustains all things by his powerful word. When he had made purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty on high, 4 having become as much superior to angels as the name he has inherited is more excellent than theirs. 5 For to which of the angels did God ever say, “You are my Son; today I have begotten you”? Or again, “I will be his Father, and he will be my Son”?”

other statements that Jesus is God

Rom 9:5, “to them [the Jews] belong the patriarchs, and from them, according to the flesh, comes the Christ, who is over all, God blessed forever. Amen.” (Other translations punctuate differently. E.g., the Revised Standard Version: “to them belong the patriarchs, and of their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ. God who is over all be blessed for ever. Amen.”)

Col 1:15-20, “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; 16 for in him all things in heaven and on earth were created . . . all things have been created through him and for him. 17 He himself is before all things, and in him all things hold together. . . . 18 He is . . . the firstborn from the dead . . . 19 For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell . . .”

Phil 2:6-9, “though he was in the form of God, [Jesus] did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited . . .”

Heb 1:3, “He is the reflection of God’s glory and the exact imprint of God’s very being . . .”

🙞

The Spirit is God.

Matt 3:16‑17 (//Luke 3:21‑22), “And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alight­ing on him. 17 And a voice from heaven said, “This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased.””

Luke 1:35, “The angel said to her, “The Holy Spirit will come upon you, and the power of the Most High will overshadow you; therefore the child to be born will be holy; he will be called Son of God.””

Luke 9:34-35, “a cloud came and overshadowed them . . . 35 Then from the cloud came a voice that said, “This is my Son, my Chosen; listen to him!””

John 14:16-17, “And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Advocate, to be with you forever. 17 This is the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, because he abides with you, and he will be in you.”

🙞

references to all three Persons

Matt 28:19, “Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit . . .”

Luke 10:21-22, “At that same hour Jesus rejoiced in the Holy Spirit and said, “I thank you, Father, Lord of heaven and earth . . .”

Acts 2:33, “Being therefore exalted at the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, he [Jesus] has poured out this that you both see and hear.”

Rom 1:3-4, God has now revealed “the gospel concerning his Son, who was des­cended from David according to the flesh 4and was declared to be Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by resurrection from the dead . . .”

Rom 8:9bc, “you are in the Spirit, since the Spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the Spirit of Christ does not belong to him.”

1 Cor 12:4-6, “Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; 5 and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; 6 and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.”

2 Cor 13:13 (benediction concluding the letter), “The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”

Eph 4:4-6, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to the one hope of your calling, 5 one Lord, one faith, one baptism, 6 one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”

Titus 3:6, “his Spirit he [God] poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ . . .”

Philem 3, “grace and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.” (Other salutations by Paul are similar.)

1 Pet 1:2, you “have been chosen and destined by God the Father and sanctified by the Spirit to be obedient to Jesus Christ . . .”

Jude 1:20b‑21, “pray in the Holy Spirit; 21keep yourselves in the love of God; look forward to the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ . . .”

🙞

The Apostles’ Creed (a Roman baptismal creed, c. ad 200) and the Nicene Creed (ad 325) have a Trinitarian structure: “I believe in God . . . I believe in Jesus Christ . . . I believe in the Holy Spirit . . .”

The term “Trinity” is not in the New Testament and was first used by Tertullian (*De pudicitia* 21) c. ad 210-20.

Appendix on John 1:1bc

text of John 1:1

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”

John 1:1 Greek, “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος.”

(Nestle, Eberhard, Erwin Nestle, Kurt Aland, and Barbara Aland, eds. *Novum Testamentum Graece*. [Aka Nestle-Aland.] 27th ed. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1993.)

John 1:1a, “In the beginning was the Word” “Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος”

John 1:1b, “and the Word was with God” “καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν”

John 1:1c, “and the Word was God” “καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος”

notes on John 1:1bc

John 1:1b, “the Word was with God”

“πρός w. acc. in HGk. = παρά w. dat. beside, with a pers. but in Jn apparently connoting towards (a pers.).” (From: Zerwick, Max, SJ, and Mary Grosvenor. *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*. 5th unabridged rev. ed. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974.)

Hahn paraphrase: the preposition πρός with a noun in the accusative is, in Hellenistic Greek, equivalent to παρά with a noun in the dative; it means beside; or, with a person, with. But in John πρός apparently connotes towards (a person).

“. . . the Greek preposition here [πρός] connotes communication with another.” (*New American Bible*. Rev. ed. Washington DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 2010.)

“A distinction in godhead is asserted: The Word existed along with God (determined with the article, as in 2 Cor 13:13 = the Father).” (Vawter, Bruce, CM. “The Gospel According to John.” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, SS, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, SJ, and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 2.414-66.)

2 Cor 13:13, The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God [the God, τοῦ θεοῦ], and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you.”

John 1:1c, “the Word was God”

“θεός, “the Word was divine”, pred. wt art., insisting on the nature of the Word.” (From: Zerwick, Max, SJ, and Mary Grosvenor. *A Grammatical Analysis of the Greek New Testament*. 5th unabridged rev. ed. Rome: Biblical Institute, 1974.)

Hahn paraphrase: In John 1:1c (καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος), θεός (God) without the article is predicative, so the clause means “the Word was divine”; it is insisting on the divine nature of the Word.

The “lack of a definite article with “God” in Greek signifies predication rather than identification.” (*New American Bible*. Rev. ed. Washington DC: Confraternity of Christian Doctrine, 2010.)

“Here “God” without the article is predicative: The Word is divine, but he is not all of divinity, for he has already been distinguished from another divine Person (cf. 7:28f.; 8:42; 16:28).” (Vawter, Bruce, CM. “The Gospel According to John.” *Jerome Biblical Commentary*. Ed. Raymond E. Brown, Joseph A. Fitzmyer, and Roland E. Murphy. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968. 2.414-66.)

John 7:28b-29, “I have not come on my own. But the one who sent me is true, and you do not know him. 29 I know him because I am from him, and he sent me.”

John 8:42b, “I came from God, and now I am here. I did not come on my own, but he sent me.”

John 16:28, “I came from the Father and have come into the world; again, I am leaving the world and am going to the Father.”

“With these words, John affirms that the Word is fully God, just as Paul affirms in Phil 2:6 that Jesus “was in the form of God” and was equal to God. Through this phrase, John states that the Word is what God is and the Word does what God does. The Word thus “represents the self-expression of God,” anticipating one of the central emphases of the Fourth Gospel. When he says “the Word was God,” John affirms the oneness of the Word and God (cf. John 10:30), not that the Word is a second God.” (O’Day, Gail R. “The Gospel of John: Introduction, Commentary, and Reflections.” In Keck, Leander E., gen. ed. *The New Interpreter*’*s Bible*. Nashville: Abingdon, 1994-2004. 13 vols. 9.493-865. 9.520.)

John 10:30, “The Father and I are one.”