Jehovah’s Witnesses

JESUS IS JEHOVAH (Hebrew YHWH, Greek Theos)

Zech. 12:8-10*, John 19:34, Rev. 1:7
*Jehovah is the one who was pierced. The NWT is in error: They will look on ME, not HIM. According to the Masoretic text (considered THE authoritative Hebrew text by most scholars), the word used here is the compound "Ahl’lee", meaning "ON ME" or "UPON ME".

| Isaiah 9:6 | How can the Son be “the mighty God, the everlasting Father”? |
| Isaiah 44:24 and Col. 1:16 | Jehovah and Jesus are the Creator. |
| Isaiah 43:11, Luke 2:11, Acts 4:10-12 | Jehovah and Jesus are the Savior. |
| Ex. 34:14, Daniel 7:14 | Jehovah and Jesus are worshiped as God. |
| John 1:1-3, 14, 8:58-59, 10:30-33, Romans 9:5, Heb. 1:8 | Jesus is God (“I AM”, I and Father are one) |
| Phil. 2:5-11, Col. 1:15, 1 Tim. 3:16, 1 John 4:2 | Jesus is God in the flesh |
| Psalm 110:1, Rev. 22:16 | Jesus the Lord is both the Root and Offspring of David. |
| Col. 1:14-20 | “Firstborn of all creation” doesn’t mean “first created thing” but “one with authority ruling over all creation” (see Ex 4:22, Job 18:13, Ps 89:27, Jer. 31:9; Jesus is also called “the firstborn from the dead” in Re 1:5). Also supported by v. 16 which shows that Jesus created EVERYTHING that was created (which, of course, doesn’t include God, who is eternal). |

JEHOVAH IS A TRINITY

Gen. 1:26, Ex. 3:14, Psalm 45:6-7 | Elohiym is a plural noun but is used with a singular verb. |
| Matthew 28:19 | …in the NAME (not names) of the Father…Son…Spirit |
| Isaiah 46:9, 48:12-16, John, Acts 2:33, 19:2, Romans 8:11, 27, 15:16, 1 Cor. 12:4-6, 2 Cor. 3:17-18, 5:5, 13:14, Gal. 4:6, Eph 1:13-14, Heb. 9:14, 1 Peter 1:2, 3:18, Rev. 22:13, 16 |

NO ONE IS GOOD ENOUGH TO GET TO HEAVEN

Isaiah 64:6 All our “goodness” is like filthy rags |
Php. 3:9 Saved by Jesus’ righteousness, not ours |
Eph 2:8-9 By grace you are saved |
Gal 2:20-3:5 Receive Spirit by believing |
Rom 3 All have sinned (why only God can pay for our sins) |
Rom 6:23 Gift of God is eternal life |
Rom 10:9 Believe and confess |
Rom 4:5 Salvation without works |
Heb 12:2 Jesus author of our faith |
John 14:6 Jesus only way to Father |

The Bible says you can KNOW you’ll get to Heaven!

John 3:16,36 Believers HAVE eternal life |
Eph. 4:30 Believers are SEALED |
2 Cor. 1:22 Believers’ salvation is GUARANTEED (also Eph. 1:14) |
1 John 5:13 Believers KNOW they are saved
Commentary

Jehovah's Witnesses, like most cults, believe that their version of the Bible is the only correct one, and that mainstream Christians bash them for no reason. Of course they are guilty of bashing as well, and the general arguments they present against our Bible (bias, tampering, etc.) apply only to theirs.

One good strategy to use with JWs is to get them to define how they determine truth or authority. No matter what their standard is, we can use that to show the deficiencies in their belief system and the strengths in ours. Beware of accepting quotes from the NWT; always check them against your own version.

Another strategy is to ask them what their religion offers them. Do they have assurance that they'll ever get to Heaven? How good is good enough? Can they lose their place in Heaven? Does their church kick them when they're down? There is plenty of evidence that it does. Then, of course, tell them what the Bible says about these things.

* NWT = New World Translation, whose “translators” and credentials are unknown! What do they have to hide?

The New World Translation (NWT)

The Current Teaching Of The Watchtower Society:

The Jehovah's Witness Bible is known as the New World Translation. The Society believes that this version is a most accurate translation of the Bible and is the one they use in their teaching and Bible reading, and they consistently quote it in their literature. Many scholars refer to the New World Translation as a commentary on the Bible instead of a translation in light of the way the text has been altered to fit the various Society doctrines. These changes are particularly evident when the subjects of hell, the Trinity, or the immortality of the soul are discussed. The following is a representative list of passages altered in the Society's Bible:

| Hbr 1:8 | Luk 23:43 | 1Jo 5:20 |
| 1Cr 11:30 | Phil 2:5 | 1Cr 14:14 |
| Jhn 1:1 | 2Cr 5:1 | Col 1:15-18 |
| Gal 5:15 | Tts 2:13 | Gal 6:18 |
| Act 2:17 | Hbr 10:39 | 1Pe 3:18, 19 |
| Hbr 12:9 | Jude 1:19 | Hbr 12:28 |
| 1Jo 4:1-6 | Rev 5:10 | Rev 8:9 |
| Act 20:7 | Mar 1:4 | Col 2:12 |

Observations, Evaluations, And Criticisms of the NEW WORLD TRANSLATION By Noted Greek And New Testament Scholars:

[NOTE: These comments are particularly directed toward the NWT translation of John 1:1, but are indicative of the tone of their observations about the NWT translation in general.]

DR. J.R. MANTEY (who is quoted on pages 1158-1159, of the Society's Kingdom Interlinear Translation): "A shocking mistranslation", "Obsolete and incorrect". "It is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 "The Word was a god."

DR. BRUCE M. METZGER of Princeton University (Professor New Testament Language and Literature): "A frightful mistranslation...", "erroneous...", "pernicious..." "reprehensible...". "If the Jehovah's Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists."

DR. SAMUEL J. MIKOLASKI of Zurich, Switzerland: "This anarthrous (used without the article) construction does not mean what the indefinite article 'a' means in English. It is monstrous to translate the phrase 'the Word was a god.'"

DR. PAUL L. KAUFFMAN of Portland, Oregon: "The Jehovah's Witnesses [translators] evidence an abysmal ignorance of the basic tenets of Greek grammar in their mistranslation of John 1:1."

DR. CHARLES L. FEINBERG of La Mirada, California: "I can assure you that the rendering which the Jehovah's Witnesses give John 1:1 is not held by any reputable Greek scholar."
DR. JAMES L. BOYER of Winona Lake, Indiana: "I have never heard of, or read of any Greek scholar who would agree to the interpretation of this [John 1:1] verse insisted upon by the Jehovah's Witnesses... I have never encountered one of them [Society member] who had any knowledge of the Greek language."

DR. WALTER MARTIN (who does not teach Greek but has studied the language): "The translation 'a god' instead of 'God' is erroneous and unsupported by any good Greek scholarship, ancient or contemporary, and is a translation rejected by all recognized scholars of the Greek language, many of whom are not even Christians, and cannot fairly be said to be biased in favor of the orthodox contention."

DR. WILLIAN BARCLAY of the University of Glasgow, Scotland: "The deliberate distortion of truth by this sect is seen in their New Testament translations. John 1:1 is translated: 'the Word was a god.' a translation which is grammatically impossible. It is abundantly clear that a sect which can translate the New Testament like that is intellectually dishonest."

DR. F.F. BRUCE of the University of Manchester, England: "Much is made by Arian amateur grammarians of the omission of the definite article with 'God' in the phrase 'and the Word was God.' Such an omission is common with nouns in a predicative construction... 'a god' would be totally indefensible."

(The late Dr. Barclay and Dr. Bruce are generally regarded as Great Britain's leading Greek scholars. Each have New Testament translations in print.)

DR. ERNEST C. COLWELL of the University of Chicago: "A definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb; it does not have the article when it precedes the verb... this statement cannot be regarded as strange in the prologue of the gospel which reaches its climax in the confession of Thomas: 'My Lord and my God.'--John 20:28."

DR. PHILIP B. HARNER of Heidelberg College: "The verb preceding an anarthrous predicate, would probably mean that the LOGOS was 'a god' or a divine being of some kind, belonging to the general category of THEOS but a distinct being from HO THEOS. In the form the John actually uses, the word THEOS is placed at the beginning for emphasis [thus ruling out the 'a god' translation]."

DR. J. JOHNSON of California State University, Long Beach: "No justification whatsoever for translating THEOS EN HO LOGOS as 'the Word was a god.' There is no syntactical parallel to Acts 23:6 where there is a statement in indirect discourse; John 1:1 is direct... I am neither a Christian nor a Trinitarian."

DR. EUGENE A. NIDA, head of Translation Department, American Bible Society: "With regard to John 1:1, there is of course a complication simply because the New World Translation was apparently done by persons who did not take seriously the syntax of the Greek." (Responsible for the Good News Bible -- the committee worked under him.)

DR. B.F. WESTCOTT (whose Greek New Testament text -- not the English part -- is used in the Kingdom Interlinear Translation): "The predicate (God) stands emphatically first, as in John 4:24. It is necessarily without the article... No idea of inferiority of nature is suggested by [this] form of expression, which simply affirms the true deity of the Word... in the third clause 'the Word' is declared to be 'God', and so included in the unity of the Godhead."

DR. J.J. GRIESEBACH (whose Greek New Testament text -- not the English part -- is used in the Society's publication The Emphatic Diaglott): "So numerous and clear are the arguments and testimonies of Scriptures in favor of the true Deity of Christ, that I can hardly imagine how, upon the admission of the Divine authority of Scripture, and with regard to fair rules of interpretation, this doctrine can by any man be called in doubt. Especially the passage, John 1:1-3, is so clear and so superior to all exception, that by no daring efforts of either commentators or critics can it be snatched out of the hands of the defenders of the truth."

Cite This Page:


**The New World Translation**

**New Testament, 1950.** Frederick W. Franz, ed., New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures Rendered from the Original Language by the


The publisher of this version has never made public the names of the translators. But former members of the Governing Body of the Jehovah's Witnesses organization have identified the members of the committee as Nathan H. Knorr (President of the organization), Frederick W. Franz (Vice-President), George D. Cangas, and Albert D. Schroeder. According to Raymond V. Franz, the "principal translator of the Society's New World Translation" was Frederick W. Franz. (1) According to M. James Penton, "to all intents and purposes the New World Translation is the work of one man, Frederick Franz." (2) Franz afterwards became the President of the organization, from 1977 to 1992, and was responsible for the revisions.

The Forward to the first edition of the New Testament (1950) explained the need for the version, and also indicated the reason for its name: "It befits the significant time of transition from the old world to the righteous new world that translations of the Scriptures today should as far as possible eliminate the misleading influence of religious traditions which have their roots in paganism." (p.7, emphasis added.)

The New Testament adheres to the text of Westcott & Hort. It is a fairly literal translation, for the most part, but it does have some peculiar non-literal renderings. These are the result of the committee's efforts to conform the version to the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses. "Jehovah" is given as a translation for kurios (Lord) in the New Testament whenever the Father is meant, but not when it refers to Christ, the Son. "Torture stake" is put instead of "cross" because the Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the cross is an idolatrous symbol introduced by the Roman Catholic Church. And because this sect teaches that Jesus Christ was merely an angel, the version reflects a Unitarian bias in several places.

Examples of Unitarian bias:

- Gen. 1:1-2. "In [the] beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth proved to be formless and waste and there was darkness upon the surface of [the] watery deep; and God's active force was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters." The ruach elohim ("Spirit of God") of the Hebrew is interpreted "God's active force" in order to avoid the Trinitarian understanding of the "Spirit."
Zech. 12:10. "...they will look upon the one whom they have pierced..." Here the Hebrew "look upon me whom they have pierced," in which God is the speaker, has been altered in order to avoid the implication that the one who is to be pierced (on the cross) is God.

John 1:1. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god." Instead of the literal "the Word was God," we have "a god," which the sect interprets as "an angelic being."

Col. 1:15-17. "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist." Because the sect teaches that Christ was a created being rather than eternal God, the word "other" is inserted several times. The first edition of the translation did this without brackets.

Heb. 1:8. "God is your throne forever" (a nonsensical statement) is put instead of "your throne, O God, is forever," because this statement refers to Christ.

Because the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that men exercise "free will" in accepting or rejecting Christ, the version also has such forced interpretations as:

Acts 13:48. "When those of the nations heard this, they began to rejoice and to glorify the word of Jehovah, and all those who were rightly disposed for everlasting life became believers." Here "rightly disposed" (a human inclination) replaces "ordained" (a divine appointment).

The New World Translation is widely seen as an example of sectarian bias in Bible translation.

Bibliography
