

# **Jehovah's Witnesses**

## **The Deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit**

By Maurice Barnett<sup>1</sup>

### **Introduction**

The position of the Jehovah's Witness's Watchtower Bible and Tract Society is as follows:

"We see God in heaven as the superior One... We see his Son on earth expressing delight to do his Father's will; clearly two separate and distinct personalities and not at all equal. Nothing here (Matthew 28:18-20) to indicate that it (the Holy Spirit) is a person, let alone that it is equal with Jehovah God. The very fact that the Son received his life from the Father proves that he could not be co-eternal with Him. (John 1:18; 6:57)...

Nor can it be argued that God was superior to Jesus only because of Jesus' then being a human, for Paul makes clear that Christ Jesus in his pre-human form was not equal with his father. Philippians 2:1-11 (NWT) he counsels Christians not to be motivated by egotism but to have lowliness of mind, even as Christ Jesus had, who, although existing in God's form before coming to earth, was not ambitious to become equal with his Father.... Jesus did not claim to be The God, but only God's Son.

That Jesus is inferior to his Father, is also apparent... The 'Holy Ghost' or Holy Spirit is God's active force.... There is no basis for concluding that the Holy Spirit is a person.... Yes, the Trinity finds its origin in the pagan concept of a multiplicity, plurality, or pantheon of Gods. The law Jehovah God gave to the Jews stated diametrically the opposite. 'Jehovah our God is one Jehovah' (Deuteronomy 6:4)." (*The Watchtower*, January 1, 1953, pp. 21-24).

This position is completely false, degrading to the Lord of Glory and the Holy Spirit. There are many passages that speak of the servitude of Jesus the Father. These we grant and accept as truth. But, this was only in respect to his role as a human servant to God accomplishing the Father's purposes. There are also many passages that speak of his true nature. These must also be kept in mind to gain a complete picture of the one we know of as Jesus. He came into the world cast in a certain role to accomplish redemption; by nature he is also God. (See Philippians 2:1-11).

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<sup>1</sup> The material presented here is an edited excerpt of Maurice Barnett's exhaustive material on Jehovah's Witnesses. For access to Barnett's work, go to the website: <http://westsidechurchofchristphoenix.com>

By reason of their position on the Godhead and the person of Christ, Jehovah's Witnesses nullify salvation for themselves. The very first thing a person must believe in order to be saved eternally is believe what the Bible truly says about the Godhead, which includes the person of Christ. John 8:24 says, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins; for except ye believe that I am (he), ye shall die in your sins." In this passage the word "*he*" ("I am he") has been added by the translators, as indicated by the italics. Actually, Jesus is claiming deity for himself. He claims to be the I AM, which corresponds to the many passages in both Old and New Testaments that speak of God as I AM. It is a term used of Jehovah. This passage demands our belief in the deity of Jesus and that such belief is necessary to our salvation. It is this precise fact, however, that is denied by the Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as some other religious groups.

### **The "Trinity"**

Jehovah's Witnesses object to the word "trinity." They say the idea is false because the word cannot be found in the Bible. We may equally say their favorite word "Theocracy" is not found there either, nor their organization, nor a lot of other words they use to describe their doctrines.

Watchtower literature spends a great amount of space poking fun at the idea of three persons in one Godhead, reducing it to a matter of mathematics, such as  $1 + 1 + 1 = 1$ . They make great sport of that addition – although it would be fair to ask Jehovah's Witnesses to answer the equation  $1 \times 1 \times 1 =$ . Of course, such non-sense is based on their ignorance, and willful perversion, of the meaning of the term God, Godhead, Deity, etc.

It must be acknowledged, however, that it is difficult for man to comprehend the substance of deity. But the same is true of many things in the spiritual realm. They are beyond our experience, and all we know is what God has told us in His word. There is enough said that we must accept the facts presented, whether we fully comprehend them or not.

### **One God**

**Deut. 6:4** – "The Lord our God is one Lord."

**Isaiah 44:6** – "I am the first, and I am the last; and besides me there is no God."

**James 2:19** – "Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well."

These passages all declare a simple fact: the unity of God. The Pentecostals have taken this to mean that there is only one person in the Godhead. The Father was also the Son, and was also the Holy Spirit, according to them. This is as equally untrue as the position of the Witnesses. The unity of God is found in the common ground and equality of the three persons.

What is said of one can be said of the others. All divine attributes throughout the Bible are equally ascribed to all three persons. They are all three worshipped. Their equality is declared over and over through-out.

In the Godhead there is pictured a subordination in mode of operation only. That is, the Father is pictured as first, the Son second, and the Spirit third. The Son is of the Father and the Spirit is of both; the Father sends the Son, and the Father and Son send the Spirit; the Father operates through the Son, and the Father and Son operate through the Spirit. However, the Scriptures maintain that the Father created the world, the Son created the world, and the Spirit created the world; the Father preserves all things; the Son upholds all things; and the Spirit is the source of life.

### Plurality In One God

Throughout the Old Testament there are instances of the word *God* being found in the *plural* in the original language. The Witnesses argue that it is the *Pluralis Majestatis*, or using the plural to denote great, lofty, and supreme majesty. Such a use may be found in some of the eastern languages, and Hebrew *may* have such a use. But, it is not true that *every* plural noun is used that way. This will be evident in the following facts about our subject.

1. **Genesis 1:1** states: "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
  - a. The word *God* in this passage is from *Elohim*, and is the plural form, while the verb *created*, from *bara*, is singular. In other words, this *plurality* joined in the *singular* creation of heaven and earth. We can take further note that other passages, as well as verse two of this chapter, show that each of the persons of Godhead had a part to play toward the common end of creation.
2. **Deuteronomy 6:4** - "The Lord our God is one Lord."
  - a. Both appearances of the term *Lord* here are from the tetragrammaton for *Jehovah*. The term *God* is from *Elohim*, the plural form as we noticed. The term *one* is from *echad*, and indicates a *united one*, not an absolute singular. There is a term for absolute one, *yachid*. (See *Gesenius*, p. 345 and such passages as Genesis 22:2-13 Jeremiah 6:26, Psalms 25:16, Zechariah 12:10, Judges 11:34. The term *only*).
  - b. *Echad* used as a *united one* is found in such passages as the following. (See *Gesenius* pages 28-29)

**Genesis 1:5** - God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. So the evening and the morning were the first day.

**Genesis 2:24** - Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

**Ezra 2:64**, (also 3:9, 6:20) – The whole assembly together was forty-two thousand three hundred and sixty...

**Ecclesiastes 11:6** – In the morning sow your seed, and in the evening do not withhold your hand; for you do not know which will prosper, either this or that, or whether both alike will be good.

**Judges 20:8** – So all the people arose as one man, saying, "None of us will go to his tent, nor will any turn back to his house. . ."

**1 Samuel 11:7** – So he took a yoke of oxen and cut them in pieces, and sent them throughout all the territory of Israel by the hands of messengers, saying, "Whoever does not go out with Saul and Samuel to battle, so it shall be done to his oxen." And the fear of the Lord fell on the people, and they came out with one consent.

**Isaiah 65:25** – "The wolf and the lamb shall feed together, the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain," says the Lord.

- c. The passage above (Deuteronomy 6:4) then reveals that "Jehovah our *Elohim* is a united Jehovah." This fits the facts about *Elohim*, and, as we shall note shortly, the term *Jehovah*.

Notice now some other passages that use the plural for *God*, connected with plural verbs, adjectives, or pronouns.

1. **Genesis 1:26** – "And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...." Note the plural pronouns.
  - a. Jehovah's Witnesses argue that He was speaking to angels. Yet, we are not made in the image of angels. Verse 27 says: "So God created man in his own image, the image of God.
2. **Genesis 3:22** – "And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us.... **Genesis 11:7**. "Go to, let us go down and there confound their language...." (note verse 6 for the plural noun).
3. Here are some other passages where the nouns, verbs, etc. are plural in the original, though they usually don't show up as such in the translation. Genesis 20:13; 31:7-53; 35:7; Deuteronomy 4:7; 5:23; Joshua 24:19; 1 Samuel 4:8; 2 Samuel 7:23; Psalms 58:12; Isaiah 6:8; Jeremiah 10:10, 23:36. There are others, but these show the point, plurality in one deity.

### More Than One Jehovah:

1. **Genesis 19:24** – "The Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimstone and fire from the Lord out of Heaven."

2. **Zechariah 2:8-9** – "For thus saith the Lord of hosts...and ye shall know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me."
3. **Zechariah 2:10-11** – "...saith the Lord... and thou shalt know that the Lord of hosts hath sent me unto thee."
4. **Zechariah 10:12** – "And I will strengthen them in the Lord, and they shall walk up and down in his name saith the Lord."

In the above passages, the term Lord is the term Jehovah in the original. Following are some passages that speak of more than one person, on the basis of equality, and at the same time, unity.

1. **Isaiah 48:16** – "...there am I, and now the Lord God, and his Spirit hath sent me."
2. **Matthew 28:19** – "baptizing them into the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."
3. **John 14:23** – "Jesus answered and said unto him, 'If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'"
4. **2 Corinthians 13:14** – "The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost be with you all."

Here now are listed a number of other passages that show plurality of persons. Some of these and others will be discussed at length later. Matthew 3:16-17; 26:39-44; Luke 23:46; John 1:1; 8:16-17; 14:16-23; 16:8; 17:8-10, 11; Romans 8:26; 2 John 9

### **Jehovah – Jesus:**

The name *Jehovah* occurs some 6,823 times in the Old Testament, and is the most precious name among the Jews for God. The term *Elohim*, which we have already noted declares God as the *Almighty*. *Jehovah* declares Him as the *Eternal God*. The two terms are used together in the scriptures in many places, as *Jehovah Elohim*, and declares indisputably that the two are the same, *Lord God*.

Indeed there are many names given to the deity throughout the Bible, one author cataloging 280 titles and symbols of Christ alone. (Please note Section 1 for a discussion of *The New World Translation* use of *Jehovah* in the New Testament. Their 1961 edition Appendix pp. 1454-1457 lists all the places in the New Testament where they claim "the name 'Jehovah' occurs in the Christian Greek Scriptures." This is completely false, since the name "Jehovah" does not occur anywhere in the Greek Scriptures. Their listing is only where they have inserted it in their translation from the Greek Scriptures, which is something else again).

The name *Jehovah* is found combined with many other words and names to give some very graphic pictures in the Old Testament.

Jehovah-Rapha – "the Lord that healeth"

Jehovah-Tsidkenu – "the Lord our righteousness"

Jehovah-Nissi – "the Lord my banner"

Jehovah-Sabaoth – "the Lord of Hosts"

Jehoshaphat – "God Judges"

Jehoram – "exaltation of God"

And, of course, the name *Jesus* is an abbreviation of *Jehoshua*, meaning "Jehovah the Savior." We shall proceed to show that since Jesus, as the *Logos*, the *Word*, was a member of the Godhead, that the term *Jehovah* applies to Him, just as He was included in the term *Elohim* in Genesis 1, and in the plurality of *Jehovahs* in other passages. The same term applies to more than one person. We can demonstrate this by taking the Old Testament passages that refer to Jehovah, and find fulfillment as prophecy in the New Testament in application to Jesus.

**Exodus 3:14** – And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

The term for *I AM* is *Ehyeh*, and is a present tense form of *Jah*, *Jehovah*. It is found in three places in the above passage, in Hebrew, where it is translated as *I AM*. The origin of the word is from the verb *to be*. It denotes timelessness in existence of the one who was, who is, and who is to come, the first and the last, the Alpha and Omega. Following are some points adapted from James Large, 280 Titles and Symbols of Christ, pp. 209-210:

1. He is self-existent, in that He lives by His own Power.
2. He is eternal, I AM. He lived in infinite ages before anything came into being.
3. He is unchangeable. He always will be what he always was. He does not grow wiser every year, he is complete knowledge and wisdom, as well as substance.
4. He is incomprehensible. "I AM THAT I AM," what no man, no angel, shall ever be able by searching to find out. What He is can neither be described nor imagined. Our strongest words fall infinitely short of the truth.
5. He is all-sufficient. He does not tell Moses what He is. He simply states *I AM*. God states it as if to say - I AM strength, I AM riches, I AM comfort, I AM all things, I AM power, wisdom, mercy, I AM glory, beauty, holiness. Whatever is great, good, or needful to make men happy - that I AM.

**John 8:58** (see also John 8:24-28, 13:19) – "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, before Abraham was born, I AM."

The verb, *was born* (Gr. Genesthai), is an aorist infinitive. The aorist tense denotes a specific act in past time. In contrast, the term *I AM* (Gr. ego eimi) that Jesus uses in reference to his being *I AM*, is present tense, which denotes continuous action. Note this statement from Blackwelder, *Light from the Greek New Testament*, p. 67.

"The present tense is used to express timeless being. Jesus says, 'Before Abraham came to be (genesthai, aorist infinitive, I am)' (ego eimi, present tense, and double nominative for emphasis). The aorist indicates a beginning for the existence of Abraham, but the present tense emphasizes the eternal pre-existence of Jesus."

This is the claim Jesus made: Jesus is *I AM*. This is the same claim made by Jehovah in the Old Testament as noted above. For this the Jews tried to stone Him. They well understood he was claiming deity for Himself. The attack the Jehovah's Witnesses make is as contradictory as it is unwarranted. They attack first the meaning of Exodus 3:14, then John 8:58.

**Isaiah 8:13-14** – Sanctify the Lord of Hosts himself; and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread. And he shall be for a sanctuary; but for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence to both the houses of Israel, for a gin and for a snare to the inhabitants of Jerusalem." (the term "*Lord*" here is "*Jehovah*").

**1 Peter 2:8** – "And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, even to them which stumble at the word, being disobedient: whereunto also they were appointed." (Read in context: 1 Peter 2:4-8)

1. This is evidently a reference to Isaiah 8:13-14, and finds fulfillment in Christ.
2. The Witnesses agree that 1 Peter 2:8 is a fulfillment of Isaiah 8:13-14, and they so state in *Things in Which It is Impossible for God to Lie*, pp. 246-247. This is also found in several other of their books and publications. Note however, how it identifies the Christ with Jehovah!

**Isaiah 9:6** – For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

1. This passage is an evident reference to Jesus. The next verse shows this further. "Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end, upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom, to order it, and to establish it with judgment and with justice from henceforth even forever. The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this."

2. The Witnesses accept this. Note their book *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 47.
3. The term "*The mighty God*" is from the Hebrew *El Gibboor*. In Isaiah it means *Jehovah*, except where there is reference to idols, 44:10-15, 17; 45:20; 46:6. Surely no idol is meant here however. This passage identifies Jesus as "*The mighty God*," or *Jehovah*.

### Conclusion – Jesus-Jehovah:

Rutherford taught the following in his book, *Reconciliation*:

"The great Jehovah is The God. The Son, the Logos, is A God. The name god is applied to mighty ones, even to angels and to magistrates. The name god is therefore properly applied to the Son because he is a mighty one... The names of Jehovah, Almighty God, and the Most High are never in the Scriptures applied to Jesus, the Son of God... In truth, when Jesus was on earth he was a perfect man, nothing more and nothing less.... Jesus was not God the Son." *Reconciliation*, J.F. Rutherford, 1928, pp. 106, 111, 113.

### The Deity of Christ

When a Christian says, "Jesus is God," he is not saying Jesus is the Father! Jesus is not the person of the Father, yet He is equal to the Father by nature. In other words, Jesus is God *by nature*, as are the Father and the Holy Spirit. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus is "*a god*" but not God. The instances of Jesus being subject to the Father are in keeping with the purpose of their work in the redemption of man. Jesus came in the form of a servant, Philippians 2:5ff, and followed the directions of the Father who was the director of this "universe project," Matthew 24:36, Acts 1:6-7.

#### Editors Note:

Jesus is declared as being God, and therefore equal to the Father in numerous passages:

- **John 1:1-5** – Jesus is the Word, and the Word was God.
- **John 5:18** – The Jews sought to kill Jesus for making Himself equal to God.
- **John 10:30-38** – The Jews wanted to kill Jesus for saying He and the Father are one.
- **John 20:28** – Thomas acknowledged Jesus as "My Lord, and My God!"
- **Philippians 2:6** – Although Jesus was in the form (Gr. Morphe) of God, He did not consider equality with God something He needed to hold onto, and therefore, humbled Himself by taking on the form (Gr. Morphe) of man.
- **Titus 2:13** – "our great God and Savior Jesus Christ"
- **Hebrews 1:3** – Jesus is "the brightness of His (God's) glory and the express image of His (God's) person".
- **Revelation 1:13-18** – The apostle John uses the same descriptions from the Old Testament prophets Daniel and Ezekiel to describe Jesus Christ (Dan 10:5-7; Ezek 43:2).



Jesus also accepted worship – something that must be given only to God (Matt 4:10)

- **Matthew 2:11** – the "wise men" worshipped Jesus.
- **Matthew 8:2** – A leper worshipped Him.
- **Matthew 9:18** – A ruler of the Jews worshipped Him.
- **Matthew 14:33** – The disciples in the boat worshipped Jesus.
- **Matthew 15:25** – The woman healed worshipped Him by saying, "Lord, help me."
- **Matthew 28:9** – Following His resurrection, the women took hold of his feet, and worshipped Jesus.
- **Matthew 28:17** – The eleven disciples worshipped Him when they saw Jesus had been resurrected from the dead.
- **John 9:38** – The blind man whom Jesus healed worshipped Him.
- **Hebrews 1:6** – God commanded that all the angels must worship Him. (Note: if angels are to worship Him, does that not also suggest that Jesus is as equal and worthy of worship as the Father?)

## The Deity of the Holy Spirit

The Jehovah's Witnesses' Watchtower Bible and Tract Society claims the Holy Spirit is just an impersonal "it" and has no existence except as the power of God. This is not what the Bible teaches. The Holy Spirit is a person equal with Father and Son (Matthew 28:18-20).

### The Holy Spirit has the Attributes of Personality:

1. Has Knowledge – 1 Corinthians 2:10-11 – "God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit; for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea the deep things of God. For what man knoweth the things of a man save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."
2. Searches - See above.
3. Is Sent Forth – John 15:26 – "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall bear witness of me:"
4. Moves – Genesis 1:2 – "And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters."
5. Speaks – John 16:13 – "Howbeit when he, the Spirit of truth is come, he shall guide you into all the truth; for he shall not speak from himself but whatsoever things he shall hear and he shall declare the things that are to come." (See also Acts 10:19; 11:12; 1 Timothy 4:1; Revelation 14:13).

6. Leads – Romans 8:14 – "For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God." (Also Galatians 5:18).
7. Testifies – Romans 8:16 – "The Spirit himself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are children of God..." (Also John 15:26).
8. Reveals – Ephesians 3:5 – "...as it hath now been revealed unto his holy apostles and prophets in the Spirit:"
9. Gives Gifts – 1 Corinthians 12:8-11 – "For to one is given through the Spirit the word of wisdom; and to another the word of knowledge, according to the same Spirit but all these worketh the one and the same Spirit, dividing to each one severally even as he will."
10. Works Miracles – Romans 15:19 – "...in the power of signs and wonders, in the power of the Holy Spirit..."
11. Sanctifies – 1 Corinthians 6:11 – "And such were some of you: but ye were washed, but ye were sanctified, but ye were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God."
12. Gives Life – John 6:63 – "it is the spirit that giveth life;..."
13. Sends – Acts 13:2-4 – "And as they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them...So they, being sent forth by the Holy Spirit.."
14. Teaches and Reveals Knowledge – Luke 2:26 – "And it had been revealed unto him by the Holy Spirit, that he should not see death, before he had seen the Lord's Christ." (Also John 16:13; 14:26).
15. Teachers Speak by Him – Mark 13:11 – "And when they lead you to judgment, and deliver you up, be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye; for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Spirit."
16. Convicts Others of Sin – John 16:7-8 – "Nevertheless I tell you the truth: It is expedient for you that I go away; for if I go not away the Comforter will not come unto you; but if I go, I will send him unto you. And, when he is come, will convict the world in respect of sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment..."
17. Can Be Pleased – Acts 15:28 – "For it seemed good to the Holy Spirit, and to us to lay..."
18. Can Be Grieved – Ephesians 4:30 – "And grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, in whom ye were sealed unto the day of redemption." (Also Isaiah 63:10)

19. Can Be Resisted – Acts 7:51 – "Ye stiffnecked and uncircumcised in heart and ears, ye do always resist the Holy Spirit: as your fathers did, so do ye."
20. Can Be Blasphemed – Matthew 12:31-32 – "Therefore I say unto you, Every sin and blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men; but the blasphemy against the Spirit shall not be forgiven. And whosoever shall speak a word against the Son of man, it shall be forgiven him; but whoso ever shall speak against the Holy Spirit, it shall not be for-given him, neither in this world, nor in that which is to come."
21. Loves – Romans 15:30 – "Now I beseech you, brethren, by our Lord Jesus Christ, and by the love of the Spirit, that ye strive together with me in your prayers to God for me."
22. Has a Mind – Romans 8:27 – "...and he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God."
23. Makes Intercession – Romans 8:26 – "And in like manner the Spirit also helpeth our infirmity: for we know not how to pray as we ought; but the Spirit himself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered..."
24. He is Identified as God by Comparison of Scriptures:

Isaiah 6:8-9 – "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not..."

- Compare with -

Acts 28:25 – "...Well spake the Holy Spirit through Isaiah the prophet unto your fathers, saying, Go thou unto this people, and say, by hearing ye shall hear, and shall in no wise understand; and seeing ye shall see, and shall in no wise perceive."

Jeremiah 31:33 – "But this shall be the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel; after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts..."

- Compare with -

Hebrews 10:15. "And the Holy Spirit also beareth witness to us; for after he hath said, This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord: I will put my laws on their heart..."

Acts 5:4. "While it remained, did it not remain thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thy power? How is it that thou hast conceived this thing in thy heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

- Compared with -

Acts 5:3. "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thy heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and to keep back part of the price of the Land?"

## **Over a Century of False Prophecies from Jehovah's Witnesses**

1877: "The end of this world; that is the end of the gospel and the beginning of the millennial age is nearer than most men suppose; indeed we have already entered the transition period, which is to be a time of trouble, such as never was since there was a nation, Dan. 12:3." (N.H. Barbour and Charles Taze Russell, *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of This World*, p. 17).

1879: "Christ came in the character of a Bridegroom in 1874.... at the beginning of the Gospel harvest." (*The Watchtower*, October, 1879, p. 4)

1886: "The outlook at the opening of the New Year has some very encouraging features. The outward evidences are that the marshaling of the hosts for the battle of the great day of God Almighty, is in progress while the skirmishing is commencing. ... The time is come for Messiah to take the dominion of earth and to overthrow the oppressors and corrupters of the earth, (Rev. 19:15 and 11:17-18) preparatory to the establishment of everlasting peace upon the only firm foundation of righteousness and truth." (*Zion's Watchtower*, January, 1886; *The Watchtower reprints I*, p. 817)

1888: "In this chapter we present the Bible evidence proving that the full end of the times of the Gentiles, i.e., the full end of their lease of dominion, will be reached in A.D. 1914; and that the date will be the farthest limit of the rule of imperfect men. And be it observed, that if this is shown to be a fact firmly established by the Scriptures, it will prove; Firstly, that at that date the Kingdom of God, for which our Lord taught us to pray, saying, Thy Kingdom come, will obtain full, universal control, and that it will then be set up, or firmly established, in the earth, on the ruins of present institutions." (Charles Taze Russell, *The Time Is At Hand*, 1888, p. 76-77)

1889: "Be not surprised, then, when in subsequent chapters we present proofs that the setting up of the Kingdom of God is already begun, that it is pointed out in prophecy as due to begin the exercise of power in A.D. 1878, and that the 'battle of the great day of God Almighty' (Rev. 16:14) which will end in A.D. 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's present rulership, is already commenced. The gathering of the armies is plainly visible from the standpoint of God's word." (Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 2, The Time Is At Hand*, 1889 ed., p. 101. [The 1915 Edition of this texts changed "A.D. 1914" to read 'A.D. 1915'])

1889: "In the coming 26 years, all present governments will be overthrown and dissolved." (Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 2*, 1889, p. 98-99)

1889: "Remember that the forty years Jewish Harvest ended October A.D. 69, and was followed by the complete overthrow of that nation; and that likewise the forty years of the Gospel age harvest will end October, 1914, and that likewise the overthrow of 'Christendom,' so-called, must be expected to immediately follow." (Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 2, 1889, p. 245)

1894: "A few more years will wind up the present order of things, and then the chastened world will stand face to face with the actual conditions of the established Kingdom of God. And yet the course of the Church is to be finished within the space of time that intervenes." (*The Watchtower*, 1894, p. 56)

1894: "We see no reason for changing the figures - nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but for the end of the time of trouble." (*The Watchtower*, July 15, 1894, p. 266 [Also in *The Watchtower Reprints*, p. 1677])

1897: "Complete destruction of the 'powers that be' of 'this present evil worlds' – political, financial, ecclesiastical – about the close of the 'Time of the Gentiles;' October A.D. 1914." (Charles Taze Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, IV, 1897, p. 622)

1897: "The distillery, the brewery, the saloon, the brothel, the pool-room, all time-killing and character-depraving business will be stopped; and their servants will be given something to do that will be beneficial to themselves and others... Similarly, the building of war-vessels, the manufacture of munitions of war and defense will cease, and armies will be disbanded. The new Kingdom will have no need of these, but will have abundant power to execute summary justice in the punishment of evil doers... The banking and brokerage business, and other like employment's, very useful under present conditions, will no longer have a place; for under the new conditions the human race will be required to treat each others as members of one family, and private capital and money to loan and to be needed will be things of the past. Landlords and renting agencies will find new employment also, because the new King will not recognize as valid patents and deeds now on record. ...namely, that with present conveniences, if the whole people were put to work systematically and wisely, not more than three hours labor for each individual would be necessary." (Charles Taze Russell, *Studies*, Vol. IV, 1897, pp. 633-635,)

1902: "In view of this strong Bible evidence concerning the times of the Gentiles, we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the kingdom of God, will be accomplished by the end of A.D. 1914." (*The Time Is At Hand*, 1902 edition, p. 99)

1903: "When Uranus and Jupiter meet in the humane sign of Aquarius in 1914, the long-promised era will have made a fair start in the work of setting man free to work out his own salvation, and will insure the ultimate realization of dreams and ideals of all poets and sages in history." (*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1903, p. 130-131 [Also in *The Watchtower Reprints*, p. 3184])

1904: "According to our expectations the stress of the great time of trouble will be on us soon, somewhere between 1910 and 1912, culminating with the end of the 'Times of the Gentiles,' October, 1914." (*The New Creation, Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 6*, p. 579, 1904)

1908: "True, it is expecting great things to claim, as we do, that within the coming twenty-six years all present governments will be overthrown and dissolved." (*The Time Is At Hand*; 1908 ed.; p. 99 [Compare to 1889 ed.])

1914: "There is absolutely no ground for Bible students to question that the consummation of this Gospel age is now even at the door, and that it will end as the Scriptures foretell in a great time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation. We see the participants in this great crisis banding themselves together... The great crisis, the great clash, symbolically represented as a fire, that will consume the ecclesiastical heavens and the social earth, is very near." (*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1914, [Reprints, VI, p. 5450])

1914: "While it's possible that Armageddon may begin next Spring, yet this purely speculation to attempt to say just when. We see, however, that there are parallels between the close of the Jewish age and this Gospel age. These parallels seem to point to the year just before us part particularly the early months." (*The Watchtower*, Sept 1, 1914 [Reprints, VI, p. 5527])

1914: "Studying God's Word, we have measured the 2,520 years, the seven symbolic times, from that year 606 B.C. and have found that it reached down to October, 1914, as nearly as we were able to reckon. We did not say positively that this would be the year." (*The Watchtower*, November 1, 1914, p. 325)

1914: "Even if the time of our change should not come within ten years, what more should we ask? Are we not a blessed, happy people? Is not our God faithful? If anyone knows anything better, let him take it. If any of you ever find anything better, we hope you will tell us." (*The Watchtower*, Dec 15, 1914, p. 376.)

1915: "The present great war in Europe is the beginning of the Armageddon of the Scriptures (Rev. 19:16-20). It will eventuate in the complete overthrow of all the systems of error which have so long oppressed the people of God and deluded the world. We believe the present war cannot last much longer until revolutions shall break out" (Charles Taze Russell, *Pastor Russell's Sermons*, p. 676, [Sometime during World War I])

1916: "We see no reason for doubting, therefore, that the times of the Gentiles ended in October, 1914; and that a few more years will witness their utter collapse and the full establishment of God's kingdom in the hands of Messiah." (*The Watchtower* [Reprints, VI, Sept 1, 1916, p. 5950])

1917: "No doubt Satan believed the Millennial Kingdom was due to be set-up in 1915... Be that as it may, there is evidence that the establishment of the Kingdom in Palestine will probably be in 1925, ten years later than we once calculated." (*Studies In The Scriptures, Vol. 7, The Finished Mystery*, p. 128)

1917: "Pastor Russell's mission, in large part, was to advise Christendom of its impending end, in the time of world-wide trouble. It is the Divine judgment upon the nations. ... There will be no chance of escaping from destruction, through the nations. ... The trouble is due to the dawning of the Day of Christ, the Millennium. It is the Day of Vengeance, which began in the World War of 1914 and which will break like a furious morning storm in 1918." (*The Finished Mystery*, 1917, p. 404)

1917: "Also, in the year 1918, when God destroys the churches wholesale and the church members by million, it shall be that any that escape shall come to the works of Pastor Russell to learn the meaning of the downfall of Christianity." (*The Finished Mystery*, 1917 edition, p. 485)

1918: "Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named by the Apostle in Hebrews 11, to the condition of human perfection." (*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, Rutherford, p. 89)

1920: "...we may expect 1925 to witness the return of these faithful men of Israel from the condition of death, being resurrected" (*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, Rutherford, 1920, p. 88)

1922: "The period must end in 1925. The type ending, the antitype must begin; and therefore 1925 is definitely fixed in the scriptures. Every thinking person can see that a great climax is at hand. The Scriptures clearly indicate that the climax is the fall of Satan's empire and the full establishment of the Messianic kingdom. This climax being reached by 1925, and that marking the beginning of the fulfillment of the long promised blessings of life to the people, millions now living on earth will be living then and those who obey the righteous laws of the new arrangement will live forever. Therefore it can be confidently said at this time that millions now living will never die." (*Golden Age*, Rutherford, Jan. 4, 1922, p. 217)

1922: "1914 ended the Gentile Times...The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures...by then the great crisis will be reached and probably passed." (*The Watchtower*, Sept. 1, 1922, p. 262)

1923: "Our thought is, that 1925 is definitely settled by the Scriptures. As to Noah, the Christian now has much more upon which to base his faith than Noah had upon which to base his faith in a coming deluge." (*The Watchtower*, March 1, 1923, p. 106)

1924: "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914. (*The Watchtower*, 1924, p. 211)



1924: "We cannot be blamed for presenting from the Scriptures such evidence as they afford which leads us to believe that a certain event will take place at a given time. Sometimes the Lord has let His people looking for the right thing at the wrong time, and more frequently they have looked for the wrong things at the right time. But all the enemies of the cause of present truth in the earth are fervently hoping that the Bible students will not be so successful in 1925 in looking for the right thing at the right time as they were in 1914. If they are, however, it will be the other fellow that will have to do the explaining, and not we." (*The Golden Age*, Rutherford, Feb. 13, 1924, p. 314)

1925: "The year 1925 is here. With great expectation Christians have looked forward to this year. Many have confidently expected that all members of the body of Christ will be changed to heavenly glory during this year. This may be accomplished. It may not be. In his own due time God will accomplish his purposes concerning his people. Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year." (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 1, 1925, p. 3)

1925: "It is to be expected that Satan will try to inject into the minds of the consecrated, the thought that 1925 should see an end to the work." (*The Watchtower*, Sept. 1925, p. 262)

1926: "Some anticipated that the work would end in 1925, but the Lord did not state so. The difficulty was that the friends inflated their imaginations beyond reason; and that when their imaginations burst asunder, they were inclined to throw away everything." (*The Watchtower*, 1926, p. 232.)

1930: "The Watchtower, and its companion publications of the society, for forty years emphasized that fact that 1914 would witness the establishment of God's kingdom and the complete glorification of the church. During that period of forty years God's people on earth were carrying on a witness work, which work was foreshadowed by Elijah and John the Baptist. all of the lords people looked forward to 1914 with joyful expectation. when that time came and passed there was much disappointment, chagrin and mourning, and the lords people were greatly in reproach. they were ridiculed by the clergy and their allies in particular, and pointed to with scorn, because they had said so much about 1914, and what would come to pass, and their prophecies had not been fulfilled. (*Light, Book 1*, 1930, p. 194)

1930: "The great climax is at hand. The kings of earth now set themselves against his anointed Stone." (J.F. Rutherford, *Light, II*, 1930 p. 327)

1931: "God's kingdom has begun to operate. His day of vengeance is here and Armageddon is at hand and certain to fall upon Christendom and that within an early date. God's judgment is upon Christendom and must shortly be executed." (J. F. Rutherford, *Vindication*, Vol. I, p. 147, 1931)

1938: "...mark the words of Jesus, which definitely seem to discourage the bearing of children immediately before or during Armageddon....It would therefore appear that

there is no reasonable or scriptural injunction to bring children into the world immediately before Armageddon, where we now are." (*The Watchtower*, Nov. 1, 1938, p. 324)

1938: "They had preached that in an early time God would overthrow 'Christendom.' Many had emphasized the year 1925 as the date, and then when that date did not materialize the date was moved up to 1932. Again, 1932 came and 'Christendom' was not destroyed, and now it was discovered that 'Christendom' would be spared for a while longer for the sake of the Jonadab class, and this made the proud 'elective elder' crowd very mad." (*The Watchtower*, Feb. 15, 1938, p. 54)

1939: "The abundance of Scriptural evidence, together with the physical facts that have come to pass showing the fulfillment of prophecy, conclusively proves that the time for the battle of the great day of God Almighty is very near and that in that battle all of God's enemies shall be destroyed and the earth cleared of wickedness. ... Likewise today, all the nations and peoples of earth are face to face with the greatest emergency. They are being warned as God commands, that the disaster of Armageddon is just ahead." (J. F. Rutherford, *Salvation*, 1939, p. 310, 361)

1940: "The year 1940 is certain to be the most important year yet because Armageddon is very near. It behooves all who love righteousness to put forth every effort to advertise The Theocracy while the privileges are still open." (*Informant*, April, 1940, p. 1)

1940: "The Kingdom is here, the King is enthroned. Armageddon is just ahead. The glorious reign of Christ that shall bring blessings to the world will immediately follow. Therefore the great climax has been reached. Tribulation has fallen upon those who stand by the Lord." (*The Messenger*, Sept. 1940, p. 6)

1940: "The prophecies of Almighty God, the fulfillment of which now clearly appears from the physical facts, show that the end of religion has come and with its end the complete downfall of Satan's entire organization." (*Religion*, J. F. Rutherford, p. 336, 1940)

1942: "Now, with Armageddon immediately before us, it is a matter of life or destruction. Those who would be of the Lords other sheep that shall compose the great multitude of Armageddon survivors and live joyfully on earth forever must find the answer to a very personal question, and very important." (*The Watchtower*, April 1, 1942, p. 139)

1943: "Man cannot by airplane or rockets or other means get above the air envelope which is about our earthly globe..." (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 285, 1943 edition)

1946: "the disaster of Armageddon, greater than that which befell Sodom and Gomorrah, is at the door." (*Let God Be True*, 1946, p. 194)

1953: "After almost six thousand years of human sorrow, suffering and death, at last permanent relief is near at hand and will be realized within this generation." (*New Heavens And A New Earth*, 1953, p. 7)

1955: "In the light of the fulfillment of Bible prophecy it is becoming clear that the war of Armageddon is nearing its breaking-out point." (*You May Survive Armageddon Into God's New World*, 1955, p. 331)

1963: "Of what significance is this today? It means that by the fall of 1963 mankind has dwelt upon this earth 5,988 years. Does this mean, then, that by 1963 we had progressed 5,988 years into the 'day' on which Jehovah 'has been resting from all his work'? (Gen. 2:3) No, for the creation of Adam does not correspond with the beginning of Jehovah's rest day. Following Adam's creation, and still within the sixth creative day, Jehovah appears to have been forming further animal and bird creations. Also, he had Adam name the animals, which would take some time, and he proceeded to create Eve. (Gen. 2:18-22; see also NW, 1953 Ed., footnote on Vs. 19) Whatever time elapsed between Adam's creation and the end of the 'sixth day' must be subtracted from the 5,988 years in order to give the actual length of time from the beginning of the 'seventh day' until now. It does no good to use Bible chronology for speculating on dates that are still future in the stream of time." (*All Scripture Is Inspired Of God And Beneficial*, 1963, p. 286)

1966: "According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E. Six thousand years of man's existence on earth will soon be up, yea within this generation. The reign of Christ...to run parallel with the 7th millennium ..." (*Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*, 1966, p. 29-30)

1967: "Just think, 1975 marks the end of 6,000 years of human experience....Will it be the time when God executes the wicked?....It very well could be, but we will have to wait to see." (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 5, 1967, p. 262)

1968: "Eight years from the Autumn of 1967 would bring us to the Autumn of 1975, fully 6,000 years into God's seventh day, his rest day." (*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1968 p. 271)

1969: "There is only a short time left before Jehovah will destroy this wicked system of things." (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 15, 1969)

1972: "Does this admission of making mistakes stamp them [The Watchtower] as false prophets? Not at all, for false prophets do not admit to making mistakes." (*The Watchtower*, Nov. 1, 1972, p. 644)

1974: "Yes, the end of this system is so very near! Is that not reason to increase our activity?...Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this

is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world's end."  
(*Kingdom Ministry*, May 1974, p. 3)

1976: "It may be that some who have been serving God have planned their lives according to a mistaken view of just what was to happen on a certain date or in a certain year. They may have, for this reason, put off or neglected things that they otherwise would have cared for. But they have missed the point of the Bibles warnings concerning the end of this system of things, thinking that Bible chronology reveals the specific date." (*The Watchtower*, July 15, 1976, p. 440)

1980: "With the appearance of the book *Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*, and its comments as to how appropriate it would be for the millennial reign of Christ to parallel the seventh millennium of mans existence, considerable expectation was aroused regarding the year 1975. Unfortunately, however, along with such cautionary information, there were other statements published that implied that such realization of hopes by that year was more of a probability than a mere possibility. There were statements made then, and thereafter, stressing that this was only a possibility. It is to be regretted that these latter statements apparently overshadowed the cautionary ones and contributed to a buildup of the expectation already initiated....In saying anyone, the Watchtower included all disappointed ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, hence including persons having to do with the publication of the information that contributed to the buildup of hopes centered on that date. (*The Watchtower*, Mar. 15, 1980, p. 17-18)

1980: "If the wicked system of this world survived until the turn of the century (the year 2000), which is highly improbable in view of world trends and the fulfillment of Bible prophecy, there would still be survivors of the World War I generation. However, the fact that their number is dwindling is one more indication that 'the conclusion of the system of things' is moving fast toward its end. (*The Watchtower*, Oct. 15, 1980, p. 31)

1984: "Some of that 'generation (of 1914)' could survive until the end of the century. But there are many indications that 'the end' is much closer than that!" (*The Watchtower*, Mar. 1, 1984, pp. 18-19)

1990: "Adult Christians too can be disappointed, and this has in some cases led to spiritual disaster. Some set their hope on a date when they were sure Armageddon would come. When nothing happened on that day, they felt let down." (*The Watchtower*, Apr. 15, 1990, p. 27)

2005: "Jesus indicated that a similar day [to the Flood] is coming in our time. Those heeding the knowledge associated with this event will have the prospect of not only surviving but also living forever. In addition, the dead who are in Gods memory will be raised to life with the prospect of never having to die again. ... All evidence shows that this day is very near, which means that you may never die at all." (*The Watchtower*, Apr. 15, 2005, p. 5)

2008: "As a class, these anointed ones make up the modern-day 'generation' of contemporaries that will not pass away 'until all these things occur.' This suggests that some who are Christ's anointed brothers will still be alive on earth when the foretold great tribulation begins... Can we calculate the length of 'this generation'? ...when the term 'generation' is used with reference to people living at a particular time, the exact length of that time cannot be stated except that it does have an end and would not be excessively long." (*The Watchtower*, Feb. 15, 2008, pp. 24-25)

2012: "The stage is now set for the war of Armageddon. How so? Already there exists a worldwide association of people who serve Jehovah and live by the Bible's elevated moral standards. With God's backing, millions from all nations, tribes, and tongues are gathering to together to form a harmonious, loving brotherhood. That brotherhood exists among Jehovah's Witnesses – John 13:35. Soon Satan will gather his armies and launch what will be his greatest assault on these peaceable and seemingly defenseless people (Ezekiel 38:8-12; Revelation 16:13, 14, 16) How can you be sure of that fact? The Bible describes specific events that help us to know when the battle of Armageddon will come. Many of the events it identifies are already being fulfilled." (*The Watchtower*, Feb. 1, 2012, p. 8)

2013: "However, the Bible prophets who spoke about the end were not trying to explain baffling events of their day. Instead, they were inspired by God to describe conditions that would indicate an imminent end of the world. Consider some of those prophecies and decide for yourself whether they are being fulfilled in our time. Wars, famines, earthquakes, and epidemics of deadly disease (Matthew 24:7; Luke 21:11). Significant increase in crime (Matthew 24:12). The ruining of the earth by mankind (Revelation 11:18). People who love themselves, money, and pleasures but do not love God (2 Timothy 3:2, 4). The breakdown of the family (2 Timothy 2, 3). General apathy toward evidence of the approaching end (Matthew 24:37-39). The preaching of the good news of God's kingdom worldwide (Matthew 24:14). As Jesus said, seeing "all these things" lets us know that the end of the world is near (Matthew 24:33). Jehovah's Witnesses believe the evidence is convincing, and they share their faith with others by preaching in 236 lands." (*The Watchtower*, Jan. 1, 2013, pp. 6-7)

## The New World Translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses

Excerpt from an article by Dr. John Ankerberg and Dr. John Weldon

The Jehovah's Witnesses constitute a large and aggressive sect which has opposed the doctrines of biblical Christianity from its inception. Many fine works have already detailed the history and doctrines of this group and contrasted the latter with biblical teaching.<sup>1</sup> It is our goal in this article to briefly critique the English translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (NWT).

Our purpose will be to determine the legitimacy of the Jehovah's Witnesses' claim to respect and honor the Bible as divine revelation. If the Witnesses have not translated God's revelation with care and accuracy – but instead have incorporated their own doctrinal bias in disregard of the Greek text – then it is unlikely that the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) is, as widely proclaimed, God's sole channel for communicating His will to mankind today.

Indeed, the combined weight of four indisputable facts proves the Watchtower Society has no regard at all for the Word of God. These four pillars of disproof of Watchtower claims include their (1) pervasive unbiblical theology, (2) clear bias in translation, (3) numerous false prophecies historically, and (4) changes and contradictions in their doctrine, history and important dates.<sup>2</sup>

### The Emphatic Diaglott

Before we begin our analysis of the *NWT*, we should note that for about 70 years the *NWT* was preceded in use by the *Emphatic Diaglott*, published in 1864 by Benjamin Wilson. Unfortunately, in utilizing this translation, the Witnesses never informed their members that the translation was flawed or that Wilson was a Christadelphian, who, holding similar doctrines with Jehovah's Witnesses, naturally sought a translation in harmony with Christadelphian bias.

For example, the *Diaglott* translates Matthew 25:46 "age lasting cutting-off," and John 1:1 "the Word was a god," both in harmony with Christadelphian (and Watchtower) denials of eternal punishment and Christ's deity respectively.<sup>3</sup>

Professor Edmond Gruss of the Master's College in southern California, author of a standard work on Jehovah's Witnesses, *Apostles of Denial*, and a former member of the group, observes how the *Diaglott* fits the needs of the newly formed Russellite (Jehovah's Witness) religion:

Wilson was self-educated; his work shows that he certainly was not a scholar. Neither did he have the respect of those who were scholars. Obviously, his purpose was not to translate, but to justify his theological views....

It may be concluded, then, that the *Emphatic Diaglott* was adopted because of its Christadelphian bias which agreed almost perfectly with the new Russellite group that was forming. The Russellites accepted the renderings of Wilson, for they did not have the linguistic ability either to evaluate or to determine their correctness, nor did they wish to question that which so perfectly supported their theories....<sup>4</sup>

In spite of his bias and errors in translation, Wilson had claimed "scrupulous fidelity" to the original languages:

Scrupulous fidelity has been maintained throughout this version regard whatever being paid to the prevailing doctrines or prejudices of sects, or in giving the true rendering of the original text into English; no the peculiar tenets of theologians. To the Divine authority of the original Scriptures alone has there been the most humble and unbiased submission.<sup>5</sup>

As we will see, the Jehovah's Witnesses also make similar claims to scholarly objectivity – and yet also fail to live up to them.

### **The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures**

Eventually the Watchtower Society produced its own translation, *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. The alleged manner in which this translation was produced is relevant to note.

We cite Professor Gruss who quotes from a legal case wherein testimony was being given under oath. F. W. Franz was the Society vice-president who testified before the Court of Session, Edinburgh, November 23, 1954. F. W. Franz and N. H. Knorr headed the secret committee of seven translators. The *Scottish Daily Express*, November 24, 1954, records that Franz testified that (1) he and Knorr have the final word in translation; (2) he, Franz, was head of the Society's Publicity Department, and (3) translations and interpretations come from God in such a way that they are invisibly communicated to the Publicity Department via "angels of various ranks who control witnesses."<sup>6</sup>

This is a rather startling admission, for the actual control of men by "angels" or spirits sounds more like spirit possession than divine inspiration. Given the serious errors of translation in the *NWT*, if Witnesses were actually controlled by "angels" of various ranks, these spirits would of necessity have to be immoral angels; i.e., demons. This fact would indeed explain the theological bias and anti-Christian nature of their translation.

Whether the origin of the NWT was from a supernatural source or not, the Watchtower Society clearly made similar claims to translation accuracy as that of Wilson cited previously. Of course, if Witnesses really believed the translators were possessed by "angels," it would be easy to assume the translation was divine and hence accurate even when the translators themselves did not know the original languages. Regardless, we find the WBTS claiming absolute fidelity to the Greek and Hebrew text. Their *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* declares:

Sincere searchers for eternal, life-giving truth desire an accurate understanding of the faith-inspiring Greek Scriptures, an understanding that will not be confused by sectarian, denominational religious teachings but that is fortified by the knowledge of what the original language says and means. To aid such seekers of truth and life is the purpose behind the publishing of *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. Its literal interlinear English translation is specially designed to open up to the student of the Sacred Scriptures what the original *Koine* Greek basically or literally says, without any sectarian religious coloration.<sup>7</sup>

And their *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* is even more assertive:

It is a very responsible thing to translate the Holy Scriptures from their original languages, Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek, into modern speech. Translating the Holy Scriptures means a rendering into another language the thoughts and sayings of the heavenly Author of this sacred library of sixty-six books, Jehovah God, which holy men of long ago put down in writing under inspiration for our benefit today. That is a sobering thought. The translators who have a fear and love of the divine Author of the Holy Scriptures feel especially a responsibility toward Him to transmit his thoughts and declarations as accurately as possible. They also feel a responsibility toward the searching readers of the modern translation who depend upon the inspired Word of the Most High God for their everlasting salvation. It was with such a sense of solemn responsibility that the committee of dedicated men have produced *the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, over the course of many years.<sup>8</sup>

In their text, *All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial*, the Jehovah's Witnesses make similar claims. Note their assertions to grammatical accuracy:

The *New World Translation*...conveys accurately the action or state expressed in the Hebrew and Greek verbs.... The conveying of the state of the Hebrew verb accurately into English is most important, otherwise the meaning may be distorted.... Similar care has been exercised in the translating of the Greek verbs.... The *New World Translation*...is accurate and reliable...a faithful translation of God's Word.<sup>9</sup>



The loftiness of these claims is important to document in light of the *New World Translation's* repeated failure to live up to them. As we will now document, they have little concern with what the Greek text actually says. Their only desire is to conform it to their own preconceived and unbiblical theology.

### **Scholars' Comments on the *New World Translation***

Dr. Robert Countess' published doctoral thesis, *The Jehovah's Witness New Testament: A Critical Analysis of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1982), is perhaps the most thorough and devastating critique of the NWT. His overall conclusions are that the NWT:

...has been sharply unsuccessful in keeping doctrinal considerations from influencing the actual translation... the *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* must be viewed as a radically biased piece of work. At some points it is actually dishonest. At others it is neither modern nor scholarly. And interwoven throughout its fabric is inconsistent application of its own principles enunciated in the Foreword and Appendix.<sup>10</sup>

Professor Edmond Gruss, author of a standard historical and theological work, *Apostles of Denial*, writes:

A sound interpretation of any passage requires a careful grammatical exegesis. Watchtower publications repeatedly present doctrines and interpretations of the Scriptures which completely misunderstand or ignore grammar. Before the Society entered into the field of translation, there were many verses which gave them trouble because of their direct contradiction of the Witnesses' doctrines. With the appearance of the *New World Translation* the difficult passages in many cases were weakened or eliminated by a translation that violated or ignored the rules of grammar.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. Anthony Hoekema, author of *The Four Major Cults* points out that:

... the Jehovah's Witnesses actually impose their own theological system upon Scripture and force it to comply with their beliefs. ...their *New World Translation* of the Bible is by no means an objective rendering of the sacred text into modern English, but is a biased translation in which many of their peculiar teachings of the Watchtower Society are smuggled into the text of the Bible itself.<sup>12</sup>

The late Dr. Walter Martin, author of *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, and a respected authority on cults, observes that of the anonymous *seven-member* translation committee at least *five* had no training in Greek:

These books possess a veneer of scholarship unrivaled for its daring and boldness in a field that all informed scholars know Jehovah's Witnesses are almost totally unprepared to venture into. As a matter of fact, the authors have been able to uncover partially a carefully guarded Watchtower secret: the names of five of the members of the New World Translation committee. Not one of these five people has any training in Greek...[or Hebrew].<sup>13</sup>

Dr. Bruce Metzger, professor of New Testament Language and Literature at Princeton Theological Seminary and author of *The Text of the New Testament* states: "...the Jehovah's Witnesses have incorporated in their translation of the New Testament several quite erroneous renderings of the Greek."<sup>14</sup>

Dr. Julius Mantey was one of the leading Greek scholars in the world and co-author of *The Dana-Mantey Greek Grammar* and *A Hellenistic Greek Reader*. He declares:

I have never read any New Testament so badly translated as *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*. In fact, it is not their translation at all. Rather, it is a distortion of the New Testament. The translators used what J. B. Rotherham had translated in 1893, in modern speech, and changed the readings in scores of passages to state what Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach. That is *distortion*, not translation.<sup>15</sup>

In light of the above testimony, we must conclude that the scholarly Christian community has rendered its verdict on the *NWT*: such a translation must not be trusted to accurately convey God's Word because of its unrelenting biases in translation. Nor can Jehovah's Witnesses appeal to an alleged "trinitarian bias" on the part of these scholars for the issue is not personal theology but accuracy in translation. Even non-Christian scholars of New Testament Greek would agree that the *NWT* is not an accurate one, for rules of languages, grammar, and translation are true regardless of personal theological belief.

### **Examples of Mistranslation**

The Watchtower Society tells us that "Jehovah is against such clergy prophets whom he did not send forth from his intimate group and who 'steal' words from his Bible in order to make a wrong application of them...he will rid himself of this 'burden' by abandoning Christendom to calamity.... To such self-opinionated religionists, the Jeremiah class [Jehovah's Witnesses] say: 'You have changed the words of the living God...'"<sup>16</sup> The Witnesses also declare, "God does not deal with persons who ignore his Word and go according to their own independent ideas."<sup>17</sup>

But who is it that really "steals" or "ignores" God's words in order to bolster their own independent ideas?

In the following section we have utilized the Watchtower Society's *New World Translation* and *Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (1969). It

gives the Greek text, a word for word English translation below the Greek text, and, has a column containing the *New World Translation* to the right.

In the following examples we have provided the *New World Translation* and the *New American Standard* translation so the reader may make a quick comparison prior to a brief discussion. The *NWT* mistranslation is supplied in capital letters for emphasis.

**1. Matthew 25:46** ["Punishment" is translated "cutting off" to support their theology of annihilation of the wicked (or conditional immortality).]

- "And these will depart into everlasting CUTTING-OFF but the righteous ones into everlasting life." NWT
- "And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life." NAS

The Greek *kolasin* is translated "cutting-off" in order to escape the text's teaching of eternal punishment. How do standard Greek lexicons define *kolasin*?

J. H. Moulton and G. Milligan in *The Vocabulary of the Greek New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1980, p. 352) give an illustration of the meaning of *kolasin* as "punishment and much torment."

H. K. Moulton in *The Analytical Greek Lexicon Revised* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1978, p. 235) defines it as "chastisement, punishment."

*New Thayer's Greek English Lexicon* (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1974, 1977, p. 353) defines it as "correction, punishment, penalty."

The *Arndt and Gingrich Greek-English Lexicon* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1967, p. 441) states "1. punishment... 2. of divine retribution...go away into eternal punishment, Matt. 25:45."

Gerhard Kittle (ed) in *Theological Dictionary of New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1978, Vol. 3, p. 816) defines it as "punishment."

Over hundreds of years, words may evolve in meaning, hence *kolasin* at one time could be translated "cutting-off," meaning the removal of that which is evil. It could also have the meaning of punishment for the purposes of correction.<sup>18</sup> However, that this was *not* its intended meaning in biblical times is evident from the two quotations by Greek scholars, Mantey and Trench, given below (Greek words are transliterated by this author):

In Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation and Kingdom Interlinear Translation* (Matt. 25:46), the Greek word *kolasin*, which is regularly defined as "punishment" in Greek lexicons, is translated "cutting-off," in spite of the

fact that there isn't a shred of lexical evidence anywhere for such a translation. We have found this word in first-century Greek writings in 107 different contexts and in every one of them, it has the meaning of "punishment," and never "cutting-off."<sup>19</sup>

The *kolasis aionios* of Matt. xxv.46, as it is plain, is not merely corrective, and therefore temporary, discipline;...for in proof that *kolasis* with *kolazesthai* had acquired in Hellenistic Greek this severer sense, and was used simply as "punishment" or "torment" ...<sup>20</sup>

**2. John 8:58** ["I Am" is translated as "I have been" in order to circumvent Christ's deity.]

- "Jesus said to them: "Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, I HAVE BEEN." NWT
- "Jesus said to them, 'Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was born, I Am.'" NAS

The proper translation of the Greek *ego eimi* is "I Am" not "I have been" (NWT). This is an attempt to deny Christ's statement of deity (cf. context) and to replace it with something compatible to the Witnesses' concept of Christ's limited pre-existence. Dr. Mantey states:

The translation of it as "I have been" by Jehovah's Witnesses is wrong. The footnote stating that it is in "the perfect indefinite tense" is also wrong. No Greek grammar, to my knowledge, has such a statement. In fact, there is no form *eimi* in the perfect tense in the Greek New Testament.<sup>21</sup>

In fact, one can look at their own *Kingdom Interlinear* (p. 467) and directly beneath the Greek *ego eimi* we find "I Am"; but the translation column to the right reads "I have been."

**3. Hebrews 9:27** [This verse has the insertion of "for all time" to justify their belief in conditional immortality.]

- "And as it is reserved for men to die once FOR ALL TIME, [i.e., eternally] but after this a judgment." NWT
- "And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment." NAS

Again looking at the *Kingdom Interlinear* (p. 988) we find the addition of the words "for all time" is without any justification. There is no Greek correspondence. Mantey states:

Heb. 9:27, which without any grounds for it in the Greek, is mistranslated in the J. W. Translation – "And as it is reserved for men to die *once for all time*, but after this is a judgment...." Note that the phrase "for all time" was inserted in the former versions without any basis in the original for it. No honest scholar would attempt to so pervert the Word of God!<sup>22</sup>

**4. Luke 23:43** [This verse inserts a comma after "today," to support their belief in soul sleep.]

- "And he said to him: 'Truly I tell you today, You will [i.e., later] be with me in Paradise.'" NWT
- "And he said to him, 'Truly I say to you, today you shall be with Me in Paradise.'" NAS

Their own Interlinear (p. 408) admits "in the original Greek no comma is found." The noted commentator Lenski explains why the *NWT* is incorrect here:

It would usually take three or four days until a man would die on the cross, so lingering was death by crucifixion. But Jesus assures this malefactor that his sufferings will cease "today." This is plain prophecy and at the same time blessed news to this sufferer. But Jesus says vastly more: "Today in company with me shalt thou be in Paradise!" This is an absolution. By this word Jesus acquits this criminal of sin and guilt.<sup>23</sup>

**5. Matthew 27:50/Luke 23:46** [The term "spirit" is translated as "breath" and/or "spirit" in order to support conditional immortality.]

- "Again Jesus cried out with a loud voice, and yielded up (his) BREATH." NWT
- "And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit." NAS
- "And Jesus called with a loud voice and said 'Father into your hands I entrust my spirit.' When he had said this he expired." NWT
- "And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, 'Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit.' And having said this, He breathed His last." NAS

In Matthew 27:50 *pneuma* (spirit) is translated "breath" rather than spirit, to support their belief that no immortal spirit exists to be "yielded up." Yet Luke 23:46, the parallel account of this *same* event which includes the actual cry of Jesus, shows that the translation "breath" is an impossible rendering as it would have Jesus crying out, "Father into thy hands I commit my *breath*."

The question is this – If in the New World Translation *pneuma* is translated "spirit" in Luke, why is it translated "breath" in Matthew unless it is an attempt to deny that

Jesus' spirit continued after His physical death? Clearly, the Witnesses have distorted Matthew 27:50 although nothing could really be done with the passage in Luke.27 Again, their interlinear directly beneath the Greek translates "*pneuma*" as "spirit" in both places (pp. 168, 409). Why then not in both translations?

**6. Acts 20:28** [The phrase "with his own blood" is translated as "the blood of his own (Son)," to circumvent Christ's deity.]

- "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with THE BLOOD OF HIS OWN (SON)." NWT
- "Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood." NAS

Even the *Kingdom Interlinear* appendix itself admits:

....grammatically, this passage could be translated, as in the King James Version and Douay Version, "with his own blood." In such case the verse would be saying that God purchased his congregation with his own blood. That has been a difficult thought with many... the ordinary translation would mean to say "God's blood."<sup>24</sup>

Nevertheless, the more accurate and natural translation is rejected since it *cannot* be true according to Watchtower theology, which denies the deity of Jesus Christ.

**7. Hebrews 1:8** ["Thy throne O God" is translated "God is your throne" in order to circumvent Christ's deity.]

- "But with the reference to the Son: 'GOD IS YOUR THRONE forever, and (the) scepter of your kingdom is the scepter of uprightness.'" NWT
- "But of the Son He says, 'Thy throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the righteous scepter is the scepter of His kingdom.'" NAS

Nigel Turner again comments:

Happily in Heb. 1:8 the NEB (New English Bible) no longer hesitates to accept in its text the statement that Jesus is God. "Thy throne, Oh God, is for ever and ever." It consigns to the margin the grotesque interpretation which obscures the godhead of Jesus ("God is thy throne for ever and ever").<sup>25</sup>

Thomas Hewitt states:

The AV, RV and RSV rightly support the vocative and translate "Thy throne, O God".... The Son, on the contrary, is addressed by the Father not as a messenger but as God, who occupies an eternal throne, and as Sovereign, who rules His Kingdom with righteousness.<sup>26</sup>

**8. Colossians 1:15-20** [This verse inserts the word "other" in parenthesis in order to deny the eternal existence of Christ.]

"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, and he is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that he might become the one who is first-born from the dead, that he might become the one who is first in all things; because (God) saw good for all fullness to dwell in him, and through him to reconcile again to himself all (OTHER) things by making peace through the blood (he shed) on the torture stake, no matter whether they are the things upon the earth or the things in heaven." NWT

"And He is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together. He is also head of the body, the church; and He is the beginning, the first-born from the dead; so that He Himself might come to have first place in everything. For it was the Father's good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him, and through Him to reconcile all things to Himself, having made peace through the blood of His cross; through Him, I say, whether things on earth or things in heaven." NAS

In this passage the *NWT* adds five words *not* present in the Greek text, again, in order to deny Christ's deity. In Colossians 1:16, 17, 20 the term "other" is inserted in brackets five times. This is done in order to imply the meaning of the passage is that Christ Himself is not *the* Creator. We grant that a translator may insert a word in italics or brackets if it is necessary to accurately express the thought of the original. But even a cursory reading of the context will show that Christ *is* the Creator.

Their own interlinear is again embarrassing (p. 896) for it proves the word "other" is not in the Greek. Yet this did not prevent earlier editions of the *New World Translation* from using "other" *without* brackets, implying it *was* part of the Greek (see the 1950, 1953 eds.). And even the 1965 edition of *Make Sure of All things Hold*

*Fast to What is Fine* quotes Colossians 1:15-18 as if "other" were part of the original Greek. No parenthesis brackets are present: "because by means of him all OTHER things were created.... All OTHER things have been created through him and for him."<sup>27</sup>

In addition, modern versions of the NWT insert the word "other" in Philippians 2:9, again changing the meaning (i.e., "the name above every OTHER name") and again without brackets or italics, implying it is in the original when, in fact, it is not, as their own interlinear once again demonstrates.

Jehovah's Witnesses' objectivity cannot become more questionable than through examples of this type, where one adds to the divine text what is simply not present in order to deny what is clearly taught. Nevertheless, the Witnesses have somehow overlooked John 1:3 (which the *NWT* translates correctly) and which clearly declares the doctrine of Christ's deity which they spuriously removed from Colossians: that if Christ is the Creator of *all* things, He Himself must be uncreated.

All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence. NWT

While on the subject of Christ as Creator, Jehovah's Witnesses refer to the word *prototokos* ("first-born" in Col. 1:15) as alleged evidence of Christ being "created." However, the word means priority and sovereignty over creation, as the context reveals. Metzger observes:

Here he is spoken of as "the first begotten of all creation," which is something quite different from saying that he was made or created. If Paul had wished to express the latter idea, he had available a Greek word to do so, the word *protoktistos*, meaning "first created." Actually, however, Paul uses the *prototokes*, meaning "first begotten," which signifies something quite different, as the following explanation by a modern lay theologian makes clear:

We don't use the words *begetting* or *begotten* much in modern English, but everyone still knows what they mean. To beget is to become the father of: to create is to make. And the difference is just this: When you beget, you beget something of the same kind as yourself.

What God begets is God; just as what man begets is man. What God creates is not God; just as what man makes is not man."

To return now to Col. 1:15 where Paul speaks of Christ as "the first begotten of all creation," it is important to observe that the adjective "first" refers both to rank as well as time. In other words, the Apostle alludes here not only to Christ's *priority* to all creation, but also to his *sovereignty* over all creation.<sup>28</sup>



One can also mention other Scriptures. In Psalms 89:27 "first born" clearly means preeminence. In Jeremiah 31:9 Ephraim is the "first-born" although *Manasseh* was literally born first, hence "first born" must refer to rank or preeminence.

**9. Colossians 2:9** [In this verse "deity" is translated as "divine quality" in order to circumvent Christ's deity.]

- "...because it is in him that all the fullness of the DIVINE QUALITY dwells bodily." NWT
- "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." NAS

The great grammarian, A. T. Robertson, author of *A Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, declares:

In this sentence...Paul states the heart of his message about the Person of Christ. There dwells (at home) in Christ not one or more aspects of the Godhead (the very essence of God, from *theos*, *deitas*) and not to be confused with *theiotes* in Rom. 1:20 (from *theios*, the quality of God, *divinitas*), here only in N. T. as *theiotes* only in Rom. 1:20.

Paul here asserts that "all the pleroma (fullness) of the Godhead," not just certain aspects, dwells in Christ and in bodily form... dwells now in Christ in his glorified humanity... He asserts plainly the deity and the humanity of Jesus Christ in corporeal form.<sup>29</sup>

Metzger asserts:

Nothing could be clearer or more emphatic than this declaration. It means that everything without exception which goes to make the godhead, or divine quality, dwells or resides in Jesus Christ bodily, that it is invested with a body in Jesus Christ. It is to be noticed also that Paul uses the present tense of the verb, "dwells." He does not say that the fullness of the divine quality "has dwelt" in Jesus Christ, but that it "dwells" there.<sup>30</sup>

**10. Titus 2:13, 2 Peter 1:1** [Cf., Eph. 5:5, 2 Thess. 1:12; our great God and Savior" is translated as "the great God and the Savior" in order to deny Christ's deity.]

- "...while we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God AND OF (THE) Savior of us, Christ Jesus." NWT (Titus 2:13)
- "...looking for the blessed hope and the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior, Christ Jesus." NAS (Titus 2:13)

The *New World Translation* changes the proper translation to separate Jesus Christ from the term God, thereby denying His deity. In the *NWT*, the verse is translated as

if two persons are being spoken of, God and Jesus, rather than one person only, i.e., Jesus Christ.

Dana and Mantey in *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* state: "2 Pt. 1:1...means that Jesus is our God and Savior. After the same manner Tit. 2:13...asserts that Jesus is the great God and Savior."<sup>31</sup>

#### 11. John 1:1 ["God" as "a god" in order to deny Christ's deity.]

- "In (the) beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was A god." NWT
- "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God." NAS

In essence, the Watchtower Society claims it can translate *theos* as "a god" because there is no definite article before this usage of "theos" (God) in the last clause of John 1:1.

Note that the first use of the term God ("*pros ton theon*") has the article ("*ton*," the). The second use simply states "*kai theos*" ("and God," not "and *the* God"). Because it does not say "and *the* God" Jehovah's Witnesses argue they are free to interpret this second usage of God as figuratively meaning a lesser deity, "a god"—signifying Christ's exalted status, even though he is still only a creature.

To declare that "*the* God was the word (Jesus)" would have stated that all of God, i.e., the whole trinity, was Jesus. This would have supported modalistic belief that there is only one Person in the Godhead (i.e., Jesus) and that the terms Father, Son and Spirit in Scripture only refer to modes or offices of the one God who exists as one person.

The apostle John had to make a finer distinction and, on the one hand, clearly declare that the person of Jesus was deity, but, on the other, not make it seem as if all three persons in the Godhead were to be considered the same as the person of Jesus. To make this fine distinction he had to use the exact wording he used.

We should also note that *The Kingdom Interlinear* (p. 1158-59) utilizes both Mantey and Robertson's *Grammar* in defense of their John 1:1 translation. However, Mantey observes:

Since my name is used and our *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* is quoted on page 744 to seek to justify their translation, I am making this statement...of all the scholars in the world, as far as we know none have translated this verse as Jehovah's Witnesses have done. If the Greek article occurred with both Word and God in John 1:1, the implication would be that they are one and the same person, absolutely identical. But

John affirmed that "the Word was with (the) God" (the definite article preceding each noun), and in so writing, he indicated his belief that they are distinct and separate personalities. Then John next stated that the Word was God, i.e., of the same family or essence that characterizes the Creator. Or, in other words, that both are of the same nature, and that nature is the highest in existence, namely divine.... The apostle John, in the context of the introduction to his Gospel, is pulling all the stops out of language to portray not only the deity of Christ, but also his equality with the Father. He states that the Word was in the beginning, that He was with God, that He was God and that all creation came into existence through him and that not even one thing exists that was not created by Christ. What else could be said that John did not say?<sup>32</sup>

The Watchtower Society appendix defending the "a god" rendering (*Kingdom Interlinear*, p. 1158-60) again, appears scholarly, but is not. For example, they misquote Dana and Mantey's *Grammar*. In a letter dated July 11, 1974 to the WBTS, Mantey even demanded a public apology for these *repeated* misquotings—as well as requested their discontinuance of the use of his grammar: After citing numerous examples of mistranslations, Mantey writes:

In view of the preceding facts, especially because you have been quoting me out of context, I herewith request you not to quote the *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* again, which you have been doing for 24 years. Also that you not quote it or me in any of your publications from this time on.

Also that you publicly and immediately apologize in *The Watchtower* magazine, since my words had no relevance to the absence of the article before *theos* in John 1:1.... On the page before the *Preface* in the grammar are these words: "All rights reserved—no part of this book may be reproduced in any form without permission in writing from the publisher." If you have such permission, please send me a photocopy of it. If you do not heed these requests you will suffer the consequences.

Regretfully yours,  
Julius R. Mantey<sup>33</sup>

Van Buskirk has also documented Watchtower deception in detail in his *Scholastic Dishonesty of the Watchtower* noting they also misquote A. T. Robertson's *Grammar* and other sources as well. Van Buskirk observes:

One's mind staggers at the depths to which someone will sink to prove his point. In the Watchtower's case both Colwell and Harner show that in John 1:1 "a god" is not a permissible translation. Yet without blinking an eye they will quote, out of context, the man who refutes them. Harner's article in no way concludes what the Watchtower makes it conclude in their letter.<sup>34</sup>

(As an aside, the *NWT* at John 1:23 translates the Greek *kurios* (Lord) as "Jehovah," since it is a clear reference to Jehovah God from Isaiah. Yet, according to their John 1:1 rendering, with no definite article it should be "a Jehovah." If "a god" must be different from God, "a Jehovah" must then be different from Jehovah. At this point we would have *three* Gods: "Jehovah," "a god" and "a Jehovah.")

**12. Philippians 1:23** [The word "depart" is translated as "releasing" to support a belief in soul sleep.]

- "I am under pressure from these two things; but what I do desire is the **RELEASING** and the being with Christ...." *NWT*
- "But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better." *NAS*

Walter Martin states:

The rendering, "but what I do desire is the releasing," particularly the last word, is a gross imposition upon the principles of Greek exegesis because the untutored Russellites have rendered the first aorist active infinitive of the verb *analuoo* (*analusai*) as a substantive (the releasing), which in this context is unscholarly and atrocious Greek. In order to translate it "the releasing" the form would have to be the participle construction (*analusas*).<sup>35</sup>

(Martin also shows that in 2 Timothy 4:6 the Witnesses *accept* the similar form of the same word as meaning death, but they cannot do so in Philippians 1:23 for reasons of theological bias.)

**13. Matthew 24:3** [The word "coming" as "presence" to justify the "invisible presence" of Jesus theory.]

- "...Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of your **PRESENCE** and of the conclusion of the system of these things?" *NWT*
- "...Tell us, when will these things be, and what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" *NAS*

The Greek word *parousia* according to its context should be translated *coming*. (It can be translated "presence" but context must determine which is correct.) Martin states:

Jehovah's Witnesses claim scholarship for this blanket translation of *parousia*, yet not one great scholar in the history of Greek exegesis and translation has ever held this view. Since 1871, when Pastor Russell produced this concept, upon examination, it has been denounced by every competent scholar. The reason this Russellite rendering is so dangerous is that it attempts to prove

that *parousia*, in regard to Christ's second advent, really means that His return or "presence" was to be invisible and unknown to all but "the faithful" (Russellites, of course)... To conclude that presence necessarily implies invisibility is also another flaw in the Watchtower's argument, for in numerous places where they render *parousia* "presence," the persons spoken of were hardly invisible. (See 1 Co. 16:17, 2 Co. 7:6; and 10:10.)<sup>36</sup>

Thus, in the *New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* under the word *parousia* we find these comments: "In the N.T., esp. of the advent, i.e., the future, visible, return from heaven of Jesus, the Messiah, to raise the dead, hold the last judgment, and set up formally and gloriously the kingdom of God: Mt. 24:3."<sup>37</sup>

#### **14. Jehovah** [The Translation of the YHWH as Jehovah.]

We can see biased translations in other areas as well, even in the Witnesses' own term *Jehovah* which is so important to them as allegedly signifying the "true" name of God.

The *NWT* adds Jehovah to the New Testament text over 200 times, in spite of the fact that "Jehovah" is not found anywhere in the Bible, New or Old Testament. Yet they claim the New Testament originals were "tampered with" and that the tetragrammaton (YHWH) was surreptitiously removed, substituting *kurios* (Lord) and *theos* (God). The fact is that YHWH never occurs in any New Testament Greek manuscripts and in only *one* Septuagint copy.<sup>38</sup> There is simply no evidence of tampering.<sup>39</sup>

The translation of *kurios* and *theos* as JEHOVAH in the *New World Translation* (237 times) is a completely unjustified translation. We simply do not know the "true" name of God.

Often, when the New Testament refers to Christ as "Lord," it is associating Him with Jehovah in the Old Testament. The Watchtower Society has even had to be inconsistent in its translation, translating *kurios* variously as "Jehovah" or "Lord" to suit their own theology.

For example, if we look at *The Kingdom Interlinear* (p. 723) for Romans 10:11, *kurios* is translated Lord, but in verse 13 the same word, *kurios*, (which here clearly refers to Jesus) is now translated "Jehovah" rather than "Lord" or "Jesus." In both places the term Lord refers to Jesus and connotes His deity but the *New World Translation* hides this by the translation of "Lord" in verse 11 and "Jehovah" in verse 13 implying the entire section refers to Jehovah—but not to Jesus.

Likewise, Philippians 2:10-11 clearly refers to Jesus and is based on Isaiah 45:22-25, referring to Jehovah (see Rom. 14:9-11). Yet if *kurios* were translated Jehovah in Philippians 2 it would mean Jesus is identified with Jehovah, and the Watchtower Society could not permit such a translation. Hence, *kurios* is here translated "Lord."

Thus, it is only where *kurios* can be translated Jesus and not simultaneously imply His deity, that it is so translated.

## 15. Additional Examples

In addition to the above examples, we may note that Professor Gruss observes a number of other errors in translation.<sup>40</sup> In Matthew 24:6,14; 1 Peter 4:7; 2 Corinthians 11:15; Revelation 19:20 and elsewhere words are added that are not in the Greek. And despite the claim to not engage in paraphrasing, the *New World Translation* repeatedly paraphrases when Scripture refers to believers being "in Christ." *All* believers everywhere can be in Christ only if Jesus is God. But in the NWT the term "in Christ" (Greek *en*) is often mistranslated, e.g., as "in union with" (Christ) or something similar. The Witnesses then interpret this to mean a union of purpose rather than an "organic" spiritual union.

In Philippians 3:11 the Greek *exanastasis* (resurrection) is erroneously translated "earlier resurrection." And, in John 13:18, 17:12, 19:24 and 19:36 the exact same Greek words are translated four different ways.

## What About The Old Testament?

So far we have referred to the New Testament portion of the *New World Translation*. What of the Old Testament? Although space does not permit illustrations, according to reviewers it is not much improved. In his discussion, British scholar H. H. Rowley asserts, "From beginning to end this volume is a shining example of how the Bible should not be translated...." and he calls it "an insult to the Word of God."<sup>41</sup> Gruss points out that their translation of the Old Testament has the same basic purpose as that of the New, to justify preconceived Watchtower theology.<sup>42</sup>

In conclusion, the above examples represent only a small percentage of the mistranslations and biases of the *New World Translation*. We must now ask, "Has the Watchtower Society passed or failed the test of accurately translating the Bible?" If it has failed, as it has, it cannot claim either adherence to or a respect for divine revelation. And if it has no respect for God's Word, can it possibly be the sole channel through which God has chosen to operate on earth?

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16. \_\_\_\_\_, *All Scripture is Inspired by God and Beneficial* (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1963).
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18. Wilson, Benjamin, *The Emphatic Diaglott New Testament*, Interlinear Edition (Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1942).
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## Notes:

1. Note: all Jehovah's Witness texts are published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS, 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY 11021). Standard works include Edmond Gruss, *Apostles of Denial* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 1976) (unless noted otherwise, all references to Gruss are from this text); Walter Martin, *Jehovah of the Watchtower* (Chicago, IL: Moody, 1974); Anthony Hoekema, *Jehovah's Witnesses* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1981). (Also published in *The Four Major Cults*.)
2. See our *The Facts On the Jehovah's Witnesses* (Eugene, OR: Harvest House); also Gruss, discusses each of these, cf., his *The Jehovah's Witness and Prophetic Speculation* (Nutley, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1972).
3. Benjamin Wilson, *The Emphatic Diaglott New Testament* (Interlinear Edition, Brooklyn, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1942), pp. 106, 372.
4. Gruss, pp. 194-96.
5. Wilson, p. 3 "Preface."
6. Gruss, pp. 32-33, 219. See also *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1932, p. 263; *Light*, Vol. 1, 1930, pp. 106, 120, 218; Vol. 2, 1930, pp. 12, 20; *Vindication*, Vol. 3, 1932, p. 250, *Preparation*, 1933, pp. 36, 67.
7. *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Brooklyn, NY: WBTS, 1969), p. 5.
8. *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (Brooklyn, NY: WBTS, 1961), p. 5.
9. *All Scripture is Inspired by God and Beneficial* (Brooklyn, NY: WBTS, 1963), pp. 226-30
10. Robert Countess, *The Jehovah's Witness New Testament* (Phillipsburg, NJ: Presbyterian and Reformed, 1983), pp. 91, 93.

11. Gruss, pp. 236-37.
12. Anthony Hoekema, *The Four Major Cults* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1960), pp. 238-39.
13. Martin, pp. 129, 175-78, cf., Gruss, p. 198.
14. Bruce Metzger, "The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus Christ," rpt. of April 1953, *Theology Today* (Princeton, NJ: Theological Book Agency, 1953), p. 74.
15. Julius Mantey, *Depth Exploration in the New Testament* (NY: Vantage Press, 1980), pp. 136-37.
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17. *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1972, p. 189.
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19. Mantey, *Depth Exploration*, p. 142.
20. Trench, pp. 25-26.
21. Mantey, p. 137.
22. Mantey, *Depth Exploration*, pp. 142-43.
23. R. C. H. Lenski, *The Interpretations of St. Luke's Gospel* (Minneapolis, MN: Augsburg Publishers House, 1961), pp. 1145-46.
24. *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*, p. 1160.
25. Turner, p. 15.
26. Thomas Hewitt, in the Tyndale's New Testament Commentary Series, *The Epistle to the Hebrews* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1973), pp. 56-57.
27. *Make Sure of All Things Hold Fast to That Which is Fine* (Brooklyn, NY: WBTS, 1965), p. 364.
28. Metzger, p. 77; also Kenneth Wuest, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, Vol. 2, "Hebrews" (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1971), p. 46.
29. A. T. Robertson, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Vol. 4 (Nashville, TN: Broadman, 1930), p. 491.
30. Metzger, pp. 77-78.
31. Dana and Mantey, *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* (Toronto, Canada: MacMillan, 1957), p. 147.
32. Mantey, *Depth Exploration*, pp. 138-39.
33. As quoted in our *The Facts on Jehovah's Witnesses*, p. 48.
34. Van Buskirk, p. 16.
35. Martin, p. 136.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 141.
37. J. H. Thayer, *New Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon* (Wilmington, DE: Associated Publishers and Authors, 1977), p. 490.
38. Countess, p. 23; Gruss, pp. 198-99.
39. Gruss, pp. 198-200; Martin, pp. 129-31.
40. Gruss, pp. 200-205.



41. Rowley, "How Not to Translate the Bible," *The Expository Times*, Nov. 1953, pp. 41-42, cf., Jan. 1956, p. 107; cited by Gruss, *Apostles of Denial*, pp. 212-13.

42. Gruss, p. 213.