

The **WT** claims it didn't know Johannes Greber (photo) was a "spiritist" until the 1980



edition of his *New Testament* was published.<sup>7</sup> They said that when they discovered this heinous fact, they immediately ceased citing Greber. But that's not true. The **WT** knew as far back as 1956 that Greber was a spiritist.<sup>8</sup> The February 15, 1956 issue of *The Watchtower* contains nearly a full page on Greber and his spiritism.<sup>9</sup> Yet, in spite of this, they continued to cite him as "an authority" to support their translation of John 1:1 (see the 1961 edition of the **NWT**).

**[2] Misquoting Philip B. Harner**—This scholar was misquoted by the **WT**. Not only does Harner's article in the *Journal of Biblical Literature* not support the **WT's** view, he emphatically argues against it!<sup>10</sup> Harner states that had the Greek sentence of John 1:1 been constructed in a particular way (*ho logos en theos*), then it *could be* translated as "the Word was a god." But John *didn't use* that construction. Rather, he wrote the sentence in such a way (*theos en ho logos*) that it can *only* mean that the Word is as fully God as the other person called "God" (the Father) with whom he existed "in the beginning"—"the Word was with God, and the Word was God."<sup>11</sup>

**[3] Misquoting Julius R. Mantey**—Did this biblical scholar, author of *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*, really support the **NWT** of John 1:1? On the contrary, he utterly repudiated it! Dr. Mantey was personally interviewed by Dr. Walter R. Martin of the *Christian Research Institute*, where he was asked about the **WT's** translation—"the Word was a god." Dr. Mantey responded,

The Jehovah's Witnesses have forgotten entirely what the order of the sentence indicates—that the "Logos" [Word] has the same substance, nature, or essence as the Father. To indicate that Jesus was just "a god," a completely different construction in the Greek would have to be used.<sup>12</sup>

Dr. Martin then responded, "You once wrote the **WT** a letter about this." Dr. Mantey said,

I was disturbed because they had misquoted me in support of their translation. I called their attention to the fact that the whole body of the New Testament [NT] was against their view. Throughout the [NT], Jesus is glorified and magnified, yet here they were denigrating him and making him into a little god of a pagan concept.

Noting that the **JWs** are notorious for quoting biblical scholars in support of their theology,

Dr. Martin asked, "Do they quote these people in context?" Dr. Mantey said,

No. They use this device to fool people into thinking that scholars agree with them. Out of all the Greek professors, grammarians, and commentators they quoted, only one (a Unitarian) agreed that "the word was a god."

Dr. Mantey then spoke about the deceptive nature of the *New World Translation*:

I believe it's a terrible thing for a person to be deceived and go into eternity lost, forever lost, because somebody deliberately misled him by distorting the Scripture! ...Ninety-nine percent of the scholars of the world who know Greek and who have helped translate the Bible are in disagreement with the **JWs**. People who are looking for the truth ought to know what the majority of the scholars really believe. They should not allow themselves to be misled by the **JWs** and end up in hell.

**Only One True God**—John 17:3 reads in the **NWT**: "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ." A good exercise with **JWs** is to ask them how many "true Gods" there are, and based on this verse they will say that Jehovah (the Father) is the "one true God." Then point out that their Bible says that Jesus is "a god" in John 1:1. Ask them if they agree. Of course, they do. Then ask whether Jesus is a true God or a false god. They'll find themselves now caught in a dilemma; for if they say that Jesus is a false god, they're going against the **NWT** that says he is "a god." And if they say Jesus is a true God, they're now going against their own understanding of John 17:3 that says there is "only one true God"—Jehovah.

Believing in an almighty God (*Jehovah*) and a lesser mighty god (*Jesus*), the **JWs** believe in *polytheism* (belief in more than one God)—a doctrine that goes against the whole Bible. God's Word is clear on this—there's only **one true God**: "See now that I, even I, am he, and there is no god with me" (Deut 32:39). "Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me." "Is there a God beside me? yea, there is no God; I know not any." "I am the Lord, and there is none else, there is no God beside me" (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8; 45:5).

**Empty Arguments on John 1:1**—The **JWs** note that in the Greek text there is a definite article "the" (Greek: *ho*) before the first occurrence of "God" (*ho theos*—literally "the God"), and that there is no definite article ("the") before the second occurrence of "God" (it just reads: *theos*—literally "God").<sup>13</sup> Their whole

argument for their translation is: **[1]** Because the first *theos* has a definite article ("the") before it, it should be translated "God"; and **[2]** because the second *theos* has no definite article before it, it must refer to a lesser deity who simply *has godlike qualities*, and should be translated "a god."<sup>14</sup> This is **WT** reasoning at its best designed for the simple-minded!

**[1]** The Watchtower claims that *ho theos* ("the God") is *never* used of "Jesus" in the Bible.<sup>15</sup> Anyone can see this is false. When Thomas exclaimed of Christ, "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28), it literally reads, "The Lord of me and **THE GOD** [*ho theos*] of me." Other examples of *ho theos* used of Christ include Matthew 1:23 and Hebrews 1:8. Clearly, the same words used to set forth the Father as "God," are used to set forth the Son as "God."

**[2]** If they claim that the Greek word for God *theos*, when it appears *without* the definite article ("the"), must be translated "a god," then why do they render *theos* in John 1:6,12,13 & 18 as "God" (not "a god") when the Greek word likewise appears *without* the definite article? In all, over 280 instances can be cited in the **NT** where *theos* appears without the definite article. The **NWT** has "God" in the vast majority of them. If their rule by which they translate "a god" in John 1:1 is followed, some verses would be very strange indeed. The following have no definite article before *theos*. This is how they would read: "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of *agod*" (Matt 5:9). "There was a man sent from a *god*, whose name was John" (John 1:6). "No man hath seen a *god* at any time" (John 1:18). Sound ridiculous? The **JW's** rule rendering "a god" in John 1:1 makes no sense at all.

### JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT "I AM"

"Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I am" John 8:58

The **NWT** corrupts this verse by having Jesus say, "Before Abraham came into existence, I have been." The **JWs** will allow Jesus to be *preexistent* ("I have been"), but they absolutely refuse to allow him to be *eternally preexistent* ("I AM"). "I AM" is God's Name. "God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM...Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you" (Exod 3:14). This name conveys the idea of God as eternally self-existent. He never came into being at a specific point in time. He's beyond the realm of time. To know him is to know The Eternal One. And Jesus makes this remarkable connection—"Before Abraham was, I AM." He is declaring himself to be the great "I AM" of Exodus 3:14.

But the average **JW** would never make this connection. Why? because the **NW** translators have not only mistranslated this passage in John with "I have been," but they've also mistranslated God's Name ("I AM") in Exodus 3:14 with "I SHALL PROVE TO BE." They have completely cloaked the connection between these two verses—on both ends! The obvious goal of the **WT** is to keep Jesus from being identified as The Eternal God. No one reading the **NWT** would see the relationship between Exodus 3:14 and John 8:58. Is "I AM" the correct translation in these passages? All reputable Greek scholars agree that it is, and all reliable Bible translations have it so.

The key issue is the proper translation of the Greek words **ego eimi**—"I AM." It should be noted that the Septuagint—the Greek translation of the Hebrew **OT** that dates prior to the birth of Christ—renders the Hebrew phrase for "I AM" in Exodus 3:14 as *ego eimi*. Scholars agree that the **WT** has no justification for translating *ego eimi* in John 8:58 as "I have been." These Greek words, *ego eimi*, appear often in John's Gospel, and they're *always* translated as "I am"—even in the **NWT**! In John 4:26; 6:35,48,51; 8:12,24,28; 10:7,11,14; 11:25; 14:6; 15:1,5 & 18:5,6,8—the **WT** correctly translates *ego eimi* as "I am." But when it comes to 8:58 where Jesus plainly identifies himself as The Eternal God, the Great "I AM," the **WT** changes "I am" to "I have been." One speaks of Jesus as eternal and self-existent, while the other merely states that he existed before Abraham. Christ's use of these words *ego eimi* constituted his claim to be eternal, to exist without a beginning, in contrast to Abraham, who had a beginning. Abraham was created and finite; Christ was uncreated and infinite. This is deliberate deception by the **WT**.

Then, too, it is highly revealing that the **WT** attempted to classify the Greek word *eimi* as a *perfect indefinite* tense rather than a *present* tense (NWT 1950 ed. footnote). Such a tense would allow for the translation "I have been." However, this claim proved to be very embarrassing when Greek scholars pointed out to the **JWs** that there is *no such thing* as a *perfect indefinite* tense in Greek grammar!<sup>16</sup> The **WT** had made up this phony tense to cover up their translation. Following their public embarrassment, they knew they had to make a change. But instead of changing their improper translation from "I have been" to "I am," they changed the identity of the verb. They now said, *eimi* is "properly rendered in the *perfect tense indicative*" (NWT 1971 ed. footnote). They wanted it to appear to be an honest mistake. But in

reality, they were still lying in order to justify their translation. While there is a perfect tense in Greek, there is *no* perfect tense form of *eimi* in the entire **NT**! *Eimi* is clearly a *present active indicative form*—as any beginner's Greek grammar shows. It's a simple present tense of the verb **"to be."** Jesus was clearly saying **"I AM."** Because of the **WT's** theological bias, they refuse to correctly translate it in the *present* tense. They've gone to great lengths over the years to deny the Deity of Christ. Serious Bible students should take heed—"Every word of God is pure...Add thou not to his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar" (Prov 30:5,6).

The **JWs** try to argue that Jesus in answering the Jews here was referring to his *age* and not to his *identity*.<sup>17</sup> But the context reveals otherwise. The key issue throughout this entire 8th chapter is **WHO JESUS WAS**—his identity! Read verses 12,19,24,25,28,53 & 58 and this becomes all too obvious. In fact, the Jews plainly asked him, **"Who art Thou?"** (v25). This question was in response to what Jesus had just declared, "If ye believe not that I am [*ego eimi*] *he*, ye shall die in your sins" (v24). The KJV has "*he*" in italics to let us know that it is not in the Greek text and was inserted by the translators. Christ literally said, "If ye believe not that **I AM**, ye shall die in your sins." The same is true of verse 28, the "*he*" again is inserted and in italics. Christ literally said, "When ye have lifted up the Son of man, then shall ye know that **I AM** [*ego eimi*]."

Remember when they came to take him in the garden?—"Jesus said, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am [*ego eimi*] *he*. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I am [*ego eimi*] *he*, they went backward, and fell to the ground" (John 18:4-6). The same is true here in both cases, the "*he*" is inserted and not in the original. Christ literally answered them with this awesome title of Deity—"I AM"—and all of his enemies fell backward on the ground, powerless to lift a finger against him, had he not willingly given himself into their hands! (John 10:17,18) Jesus purposely used this phrase "*ego eimi*" as a means of identifying himself as "*God manifest in the flesh*" (1 Tim 3:16).

Also notice in John 8:58 that Christ began his "I AM" declaration with the words, "Verily, verily" (KJV), or "I tell you the truth" (NIV). These words represent the strongest possible oath and claim. We might paraphrase it, "I assure you, most solemnly I tell you." Jesus didn't want anyone to be confused about the

fact that he was claiming to be The Eternal God. And, of course, when Jesus made this claim, the Jews immediately picked up stones to kill him (v59). There was no question in their mind; they clearly recognized that he was identifying himself as God—"I AM THAT I AM" of Exodus 3:14. They were acting on the prescribed penalty for blasphemy under **OT** law: death by stoning (Lev 24:16).

The very same thing happened in John 5:18, "Therefore the Jews sought the more to kill him, because he not only had broken the sabbath, but said also that God was his Father, making himself *equal with God*." And again in John 10:30-33, "I and my Father are one. Then the Jews took up stones again to stone him. Jesus answered them, Many good works have I shewed you from my Father; for which of those works do ye stone me? The Jews answered him, saying, For a good work we stone thee not; but for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, *makest thyself God*." All three of these clashes of chapters 5, 8 & 10 have to do with **WHO JESUS WAS**. It's ridiculous for the **JWs** to try to hide from the truth by saying that Jesus was referring to his *age* and not to his *identity* in John 8:58!

But what is it that provokes the Jews to pick up stones? These three incidents tell us plainly with these words—"equal with God," "makest thyself God" and "**I AM**." Without question, on all three of these occasions, Jesus was identifying himself as **God**. The Jews knew exactly what he was saying. To reject this truth about the Lord Jesus Christ is to be lost forever! Make no mistake about it! Solemnly, from his own lips, his word of warning is—"If ye believe not that **I AM**, ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24). □

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**Who is God?**—Jehovah (Deut 6:4).

*all in the  
NWT!*

**No other "gods"**—(Isaiah 44:6-8; 45:5,22; 46:8-11; Deut 32:39). Yet the **JW** Jesus is "a god" (John 1:1).

**Bow before another god?**—No (Ex 34:14).

Knees bend to the Father (Eph 3:14).

Knees bend to Jesus (Phil 2:9-11).

**Who is the Lord?**—God (Acts 4:24; 17:24).

Jehovah (Deut 10:17). Jesus (Rom 10:9; 1 Cor 8:6; Phil 2:11).

**How many Lords?**—One Lord (1 Cor 8:6; Eph 4:5).

**Who is Savior?**—God (Luke 1:47; 1 Tim 1:1; Jude 25).

Jehovah alone (Isa 43:11; 45:21; 49:26; 60:16; Hosea 13:4).

Jesus (John 4:42; Acts 5:31; Phil 3:20; 2 Tim 1:10; 2 Peter 1:1,11).

**Who forgives sins?**—God (Mark 2:7; Luke 5:21).

Jesus (Mark 2:5-7,10; Luke 5:20-24; 7:48).

**Who is the Shepherd?**—Jehovah (Psalm 23:1;

Isaiah 40:10-11). Jesus (John 10:11,14; Heb 13:20; 1 Peter 2:25).

**Who is the Mighty God?**—

Jehovah (Isaiah 10:20-21; Jer 32:18). Jesus (Isaiah 9:6).

**Who has witnesses?**—Jehovah (Isaiah 43:10; 44:8). Jesus (Acts 1:8; 10:36-43; 13:31; 22:15).

**Who is the First and the Last?**—Jehovah (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12). Jesus (Rev 1:17,18; 2:8; 22:12,13,16,20).

**Who is Alpha and Omega?**—

Jehovah (Rev 1:8). Jesus (Rev 22:12,13,16,20).

**Who is the Stumbling Stone?**—

Jehovah (Isaiah 8:13-15). Jesus (Matt 11:4-6; Acts 4:10-11; Rom 9:32-33; 1 Cor 1:23; 1 Peter 2:4-8).

**For whom did John prepare a way?**—

Jehovah (Isaiah 40:3; Luke 1:76; John 1:23).

Jesus (Matt 3:3,11-17; Mark 1:1-3; John 1:23-36).

**Who created all things?**—God (Gen 1:1; Eph 3:9).

Jehovah alone (Isaiah 44:24; 48:13). Jesus (John 1:1-3).

If Jesus is a *created* being, then he is a "*thing*" that "came into existence," but John 1:3 says, "*all things* came into existence through him." Yet in Colossians 1:16-17, the **NWT** says, "By him all *other* things were created." The word "*other*" is inserted *four times* here, but *it's not* in the Greek! By deceptively inserting *other*, the **JWs** want you to believe that Jesus *himself* was *created*, then he created all "*other*" things. Also, Psalm 102:25-27 clearly refers to Jehovah (v22), and the **NT** directly quotes this passage and applies it to the Son of God (Heb 1:10-12). The same is also said of "Jehovah" in Isaiah 44:24.

**Who did Isaiah see?**—Jehovah (Isaiah 6:1-5).

Jesus (John 12:37-42). John applies Isaiah's

vision of Jehovah's glory to *Jesus Christ*!

The **NWT** marginal reference points from this passage (v41) back to Jehovah's glory of Isaiah 6. The "him" to "put faith in" and "confess" (v42) is none other than the glorious "him" that Isaiah saw and spake of! □

## Jehovah's Witnesses & John's Gospel

**I**n John's Gospel, Jesus claims to be God (John 8:58), is recognized by others as being God (20:28), and is portrayed as being preexistent and eternal (1:5,30; 3:31), self-existent (1:4; 5:26), omnipresent (1:47-49), omniscient (2:25; 16:30; 21:17), omnipotent (1:3; 2:19; 11:43-44), sovereign (5:21-22, 27-29; 10:18), and the Creator of all things (1:3). Because Jehovah's Witnesses (**JWs**) deny all of this about Jesus, the Watchtower (**WT**) has conveniently *mistranslated* key verses in John's Gospel in their *New World Translation (NWT)*. Let's briefly consider two of these verses.

### JESUS CHRIST IS THE GREAT "GOD"

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" John 1:1

The **NWT** corrupts this verse by saying, "the Word was *a god*." Notice the two references to "God" in this verse. The Greek word for God in both cases is *theos*. The **WT** teaches that there is justification for translating the first occurrence of *theos* as "God," but the last occurrence as "a god." This is opposed to all standard Bible translations—King James, New King James, American Standard, Revised Standard, English Standard, New International, Amplified, New English Translation, Young's Literal Translation, Today's English Version, etc. These all translate both occurrences of *theos* as "God."

The **WT** cites several biblical authorities to support its translation—"the Word was *a god*." (1) Johannes Greber's *New Testament* (1937) was cited for many years as supporting it.<sup>1</sup> (2) Dr. Philip B. Harner's scholarly article entitled *Qualitative Anarthrous Predicate Nouns in the Journal of Biblical Literature*.<sup>2</sup> (3) Dr. Julius R. Mantey, a Greek scholar and co-author of the authoritative text *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament*.<sup>3</sup> Now, let's examine this scholarly support the **WT** so proudly boast of.

(1) **Citing Johannes Greber as an authority**—Yes, Johannes Greber translated John 1:1 as "the Word was *a god*."<sup>4</sup> But, is Greber really a biblical scholar? Not at all. In fact, he was an **occultic spiritist** who authored the book, *Communication with the Spirit World of God*. In this book, he claims that spirits helped him to translate the *New Testament*.<sup>5</sup> He said he saw the translation come in "large illuminated letters and words passing before his eyes."<sup>6</sup>