

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word ...” – was *God*?  
Or was a god? ... Hmmm ...

# *Who is Jesus?*

*And what does Jesus have to do with Jehovah?*

How we answer that question has everything to do  
with our relationship to Jesus – and with how  
we answer *His* question: Who do you say that *I AM*?

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## *Who is Jehovah? Who is Jesus?*

Every so often, my doorbell rings, and I find myself entertaining unexpected guests. Well-mannered and gentle, they come to bear witness to what they believe is a crucial truth – a truth without which no man or woman shall enter God’s Kingdom.

Usually, my guests have a particular message and some literature to share with me. Often we share some time discussing Scripture.

And almost every time I speak with these folks who call themselves Jehovah’s Witnesses, the discussion comes down to two questions:

*Who is Jehovah?*

*Who is Jesus?*

There are a vast number of ways to answer these questions, and ultimately our answers flow from the final authority in which we trust. If you trust Scripture as the final authority, you will come to one answer. If you trust the writings or teachings of men or groups of men, you may come to different answers.

I believe that men are sinful. The Bible tells us that men all know God from the witness He has left of Himself in His creation, but their sinful nature leads them to deny and rebel against Him (Rom. 1:18 ff.). Because of this inherent sinfulness “are all under sin, just as it is written: ‘There is not a righteous [man], not even one’” (Rom.3:9-10).

It seems unwise, then, to rely on the opinions of men – whether teachers we personally know or the writings of men long dead – in answering such important questions. Far better that we test all things by the Bible – the Word that was “inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproof, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness” (2 Tim. 3:16).

In what follows, Rev. Phil Johnson has outlined eight reasons why Scripture requires us to confess that Jesus *is* Jehovah – a man fully human, yet at the same time a man who was and is fully God.

But don’t believe Phil.

He’s just a man, and that means he’s both sinful and prone to error. Instead, read what he has to say with a healthy measure of skepticism. And as you read, test what he says by looking up the Scripture passages for yourself, reading them in context.

If the Bible backs up what Phil says, then – and *only* then – you should (must!) believe him. But not because Phil wrote it, nor because I recommended it. No – believe it because *God* said it in the Bible.

Now, one last note before I turn it over to what Phil has to say.

The Bible came to us in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – languages which few people understand fluently today. As a rule, then, we quote English *translations* of the Bible. In respect for the consciences of those who adhere to the teachings of the Watchtower Society, I have replaced the Scripture citations in Phil’s paper with citations from the New World Translation (NWT).

On occasion, I find myself in sharp disagreement with the way the original language is translated in that version. (I do read Greek and Hebrew.) When that is the case, I will insert an explanation of why a different version provides a better translation.

Without further ado, here are eight reasons why we must believe that Jesus is Jehovah Himself.

## *The Old Testament Predicted a Divine Savior*

We need only sample a few key passages to make the point:

**Psalms 2** is a Messianic Psalm and was recognized as such by Jewish scholars centuries before Christ. In **Acts 13:33**, Paul affirms that this psalm has a Messianic meaning. The psalm closes with these verses, “Serve Jehovah with fear, And be joyful with trembling. Kiss the son, that He may not become incensed, And you may not perish [from] the way, For his anger flares up easily. Happy are all those taking refuge in Him.” (Ps. 2:11-12).

The phrases “Serve Jehovah with fear” and “Kiss the son” are parallel. And as is typical in Hebrew poetic parallelism, this means the two phrases are logical equivalents. “Serve Jehovah” means “kiss the son.” Moreover, this psalm presents the Son as Someone in whom believers can take refuge—a Savior who is God's own Son, identical in character and rank with God the Father.

**Psalm 110** is identified as a Messianic Psalm by the writer of Hebrews (**Heb. 5:6; 7:17**). Here David calls Him Lord: “The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is: ‘Sit at my right hand, Until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet’” (Ps.110:1). Jesus Himself quoted this verse in **Matt. 22:43-45** to demonstrate that He existed before David and was superior to any earthly king. The word translated “Lord” in that verse does not necessarily designate deity. It is a Hebrew word that often applies to an earthly master. So it's only a single piece in the puzzle—not particularly significant by itself, but when weighed with the rest of the evidence, its full meaning becomes clear.

Other Messianic prophecies are even more clear in ascribing deity to the Lord's Anointed One.

**Isaiah 9:6**, for example, is a clear promise of the Messiah. It gives a string of names that apply to Him: “Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.” Another prophecy by Isaiah, found in **Isaiah 7:14**, gave Him the name *Immanuel*, which literally means, “God with us.”

**Micah 5:2** prophesied that Messiah's birthplace would be Bethlehem, and it spoke of Him with these profoundly important words: “from you there will come out to me the one who is to become ruler in Israel, whose origin is from early times, from the days of time indefinite.” [“Time indefinite” is questionable. The Hebrew here literally translates “from-days-of eternity.” Elsewhere, the NWT renders a nearly identical phrase as “the days of a long time ago” (Micah 7:14) and “the days of long ago” (Mal. 3:4). Those are far more accurate.]

In **Malachi 3:1-2** we find one of the clearest, most vivid prophecies of the coming Messiah. **Mark 1:2** identifies this verse as a prophecy of Christ:

“Look! I am sending my messenger, and he must clear up a way before me. And suddenly there will come to His temple the [true] Lord, whom YOU people are seeking, and the messenger of the covenant in whom YOU are delighting. Look! He will certainly come,” Jehovah of armies has said. “ut who will be putting up with the day of his coming, and who will be the one standing when he appears? For he will be like the fire of a refiner and like the lye of laundrymen.”

Notice that this verse portrays Jesus as the Lord (the Hebrew word *Adonai*), who is coming to His temple. And He is coming to do a work of divine judgment.

### *Jesus is Called Jehovah*

At this point the teaching of the Watchtower Society would have us make a distinction between the word *Adonai*, which is translated “Lord” in most English Bibles, and the Word *Jehovah* (hwhj or *Yahweh*), which also is translated “Lord” in most English Bibles. Most translations show the difference between these words by rendering *Adonai* by “Lord” and *Jehovah* by “LORD” (notice the small caps).

Those who are well-versed in Watchtower doctrine would want to point out that in all the verses I have cited so far, the word *Adonai* has been employed, not *Jehovah*. Since the Jehovah's Witnesses believe *Jehovah* is the one true name of God, any passages that apply the term *Jehovah* to Christ should conclusively show Jesus Christ to be the one true God – contrary to the claims of the Watchtower Society's theology. Are there any such verses?

There certainly are.

**Ps. 23:1**, for example, says, “Jehovah is my shepherd.” Jesus very clearly applied this passage to Himself in **John 10:11,14** when He said, “I am the fine shepherd.” And the writer of Hebrews also applied this passage to Christ in **Heb. 13:20**, when he wrote, “Now may the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great shepherd of the sheep with the blood of an everlasting covenant, our Lord Jesus. ...” Jesus our great Shepherd. Jehovah our great Shepherd.

In **Isa. 6:5**, when Isaiah saw his vision of heaven, with the Lord high and lifted up, he said, “Woe to me! For I am as good as brought to silence, because a man unclean in lips I am, and in among a

people unclean in lips I am dwelling; for my eyes have seen the King, Jehovah of armies, himself!" Yet the apostle John, referring to this same incident, writes that Isaiah saw Christ's glory, "and he spoke about him" (**John 12:41**).

In the famous prophecy of John the Baptist found in **Isa. 40:3**, Jesus is called Jehovah: "Listen! Someone is calling out in the wilderness: 'Clear up the way of Jehovah, YOU people! Make the highway for our God through the desert plain straight'" (cf. Mark 1:2-11; John 1:19-34).

So too in **Jer. 23:5-6**, a very crucial text for the doctrine of justification by faith. This verse introduces a new name for God: *Jehovah Tsidkenu*, which means "Jehovah our righteousness." And to whom is it applied?

"'Look! There are days coming,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'and I will raise up to David a righteous sprout. And a king will certainly reign and act with discretion and execute justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel itself will reside in security. And this will be the name with which he will be called ...'"

Stop. Ask yourself a couple of questions. Who is the king who will reign, executing justice and righteousness? It is the righteous sprout of David; the verse allows us to see no other as the king. And to whom does this king refer? Clearly, it refers to Jesus. And it is *this one* – Jesus Christ – who is to be called ... *what?* The NWT says he will be called, "Jehovah Is Our Righteousness" – but that's not what the Hebrew says. Although it *could* be rendered that way, the most clear reading of the Hebrew, in context, is not as a sentence-clause demanding the verb "is," but as a name: *Jehovah Tsidkenu* – "Jehovah Our-Righteousness."

Or again, here's a very familiar passage: **Joel 2:32**. "And it must occur that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe." Both **Acts 2:21** and **Rom. 10:13** quote that passage, applying the title *Jehovah* to Christ.

Consider the first of these. In **Acts 2:21**, Peter quote Joel to all who will hear: "And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." And it is this same Peter who declares in **Acts 4** that he and John healed a man solely in the name of *Jesus Christ*, and "there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved" (**Acts 4:12**). There is salvation in the name of Jehovah – and only in the name of Jesus can a man be saved. Either Peter was speaking complete contradictions, or Jesus *is* Jehovah.

The same is seen in **Romans 10**. Paul is quite clear that one must confess and trust in Jesus Christ for righteousness and salvation (**Rom. 10:9-10**). And it is in *that* context that he quotes Joel, declaring that all who call on the name of *Jehovah* shall be saved. "However, how will they call on him in whom they have not put faith. How, in turn, will they put faith in him of whom they have not heard?" (**Rom. 10:13-14**). This one in whom we must hear and put our faith in can be no other than Jesus – and Jesus, by this passage, can be no other than Jehovah.

The simple fact is that the doctrine of the Watchtower Society does not witness to the true Jehovah of Scripture. It rejects Jehovah's own witness through His Word that Jesus Christ Himself is Jehovah, who came to earth in human flesh.

### *Titles Reserved for Jehovah are Applied to Christ*

In **Isa. 10:20**, we find God being called, "Jehovah, the Holy One of Israel." The Holy One *is* no less than *Jehovah Himself*. And in **Acts 3:13-14**, Peter tells the men of Jerusalem, "The God of Abraham and of Isaac and of Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has glorified his Servant, Jesus, whom YOU, for YOUR part, delivered up and disowned. ... Yes, YOU disowned that holy and righteous one." In these verses, Jesus is clearly called by a title reserved for Jehovah – and, in fact, He is contrasted with Barabbas, the mere *man*, whose release they sought.

Elsewhere, in **Isa. 44:6** we read, "This is what Jehovah has said, the King of Israel and the Redeemer of him, Jehovah of armies, 'I am the first and I am the last, and besides me there is no God.'" That verse in and of itself offers strong proof for the Trinity, because it differentiates between Jehovah and His Redeemer Jehovah. But it also reserves for Jehovah God this unique expression: "the first and the last." That title surfaces again in **Rev. 1:8**, where it is again applied to Jehovah: "I

am the Alpha and the Omega,' says the Jehovah God, 'the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty.'" There is no question about who owns that title. Notice, too that it is a title that can hardly be shared with any created being: *the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the One who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.*

Yet at the end of the book of Revelation we read these words again, this time spoken by Jesus Christ: "Look! I am coming quickly, and the reward I give is with me, to render to each one as his work is. *I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end*" (**Rev. 22:13**). Lest we have any doubt that this coming One is Jesus, John concludes the book a few verses later by affirming, "Amen! Come, Lord Jesus" (**Rev. 22:20**). The Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last – this is the title of Jehovah; it is the title of Jesus who has sworn to come again.

Or again, in **Isa. 43:11**, God speaks: "I – I am Jehovah, and besides me there is no savior." Did you realize the title "Savior" is reserved in Scripture for Jehovah alone? This verse says so in the plainest possible terms. "I am Jehovah; and besides me there is no savior." That is why Paul, writing to Titus, did not shrink from applying both the name *God* and the title *Savior* to Jesus Christ in **Titus 2:11-13**.

This is one place where the NWT renders the Greek text quite poorly. Here is what the Greek of **Titus 2:13** says, with an English translation of each word below it:

**pros dexomenoi thn marapian elpida kai epifaneian thj  
[we are] waiting for the blessed hope and appearance of-the  
dochj tou megalou qeou kai swthroj hwn Ihs ou Xristou  
glory of-the great God and savior of-us Jesus Christ**

Notice the latter half of this verse: the blessed hope and appearance for which we await is the glory of – whom? There is only one definite article (**tou**, which means "of the"), and it governs the whole phrase which follows. We await "the glory of the-great-God-and-Savior-of-us – Jesus Christ." God and Savior both describe the same being: Jesus Christ, who is *God*, and who is *Savior*.

According to God's revelation through Isaiah, then, Jesus Christ can be no other than Jehovah Himself, for He alone is our God (**Isa. 44:6**) and our Savior (**Isa. 43:11**).

Nor are these isolated instances of Jesus bearing names and titles belonging to Jehovah alone – but whether by poor translation or by intentional misleading, such instances can be hard to find in the New World Translation.

Consider **Zech. 12:10**, which includes a most interesting prophecy. In context, this is Jehovah speaking. **Vs. 4** tells us so. Then **vs. 10** says:

"And I will pour out upon the house of David and upon the inhabitants of Jerusalem the spirit of favor and entreaties, and they will certainly look to the One whom they pierced through, and they will certainly wail over him as in the wailing over an only [son]; and there will be a bitter lamentation over him as when there is bitter lamentation over the first-born [son]."

Who was the One who was pierced? Well, in the Hebrew, it doesn't say "One" – it says "Me"!

*Wehibiytu elay eth asher-daqaru*  
And-they-looked upon-me [dir.obj.mark] whom they-pierced

The early Greek translation of the Old Testament (the *Septuagint*) likewise says "they looked to me" (**epibleyontai proi me**).

Upon whom did they look? The One who was pierced – Jesus Christ. That this One was Jehovah could not be clearer from **Zech. 12:4-10** – and **John 19:37** specifically applies this text to Jesus Christ.

One more instance should suffice. **Deut. 10:17** says, "For Jehovah YOUR God is the God of gods and the Lord of lords, the God great, mighty and fear-inspiring, who treats none with partiality nor accepts a bribe." Yet **Rev. 17:14** applies the title "Lord of Lords" to the Lamb, who is Jesus Christ: "These will battle with the Lamb, but because He is Lord of lords and King of kings, the Lamb will conquer them. Also, those called and chosen and faithful with him [will do so]."

Jesus is the Lamb who is Lord of lords and King of kings. Jesus is the Lord of lords, who is *Jehovah*. Either this is true, or God's Word lies and cannot be trusted.

## *Jesus Possesses all the Incommunicable Attributes of God*

As those created in God's image, we do share some characteristics with God. For instance, we have some measure of *wisdom*, we are able to show various sorts of *goodness* (love, mercy, patience, etc.), we have a *will*. These all are characteristics that properly belong to Jehovah, which He has *communicated* – or given – also to us.

But other attributes belong to Jehovah alone and are *not* shared with mankind. Yet Jesus *does* possess these, according to Scripture.

For instance, Christ is **eternal** – a trait we saw reflected in **Micah 5:2**, as well as in His titles: “the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

Jesus is **omnipresent**, or present in all places. In **Matt. 18:20**, He said, “Where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst.” Likewise in **Matt. 28:20**, He promised, “And look! I am with YOU all the days, until the conclusion of the system of things.”

He is **omniscient**, knowing all things. On the night Christ was betrayed, the disciples told Him, “Now we know that you know all things and you do not need to have anyone question you. By this we believe that you came from God” (**John 16:30**). Later, Peter appealed to Jesus' omniscience in his own defense: “Peter became grieved that he said to him the third time, ‘Do you have affection for me?’ So he said to him: ‘Lord, you know all things; you are aware that I have affection for you’” (**John 21:17**). So too, in **Rev. 2:23** Christ describes Himself in these terms: “I am he who searches the inmost thoughts and hearts.”

He is **omnipotent** – able to do all things. **Php. 3:21** says He “will refashion our humiliated body to be conformed to his glorious body according to the operation of the power that he has, even to subject all things to himself.” And **Heb. 1:3** says He “sustains all things by the word of his power.”

He is **immutable** – unchanging. This attribute could never be true of any created being. Yet **Heb. 1:10-12** says, speaking of Christ:

“You at [the] beginning, O Lord, laid the foundations of the earth itself, and the heavens are [the] works of your hands. They themselves will perish, but you yourself are to remain continually; and just like an outer garment they will all grow old, and you will wrap them up just as a cloak, as an outer garment; and they will be changed, but you are the same, and your years will never run out.”

**Heb. 13:8** also is a familiar affirmation of the immutability of Christ: “*Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever.*”

In summary, Scripture says Christ embodies every attribute that is true of Jehovah, **Col. 2:9**: “because it is in him that all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily.” What is “the divine quality”? It is the **q̄ot ht oj** – the *essence* of what it is to be *God*. As **Heb. 1:3** says, Jesus Christ, as God the Son, “is the reflection of [his] glory and the exact representation of his very being.” Jesus *is* Jehovah God.

## *Jesus Does the Works of God*

Time and again in Scripture, we see that Jesus does works that God alone can do.

For example, **Christ created “all things.”** Thus, **John 1:3** says, “All things came into existence through him; and apart from him not even one thing came into existence.” *Not even one thing!* If that is true, then He himself could not be a created being.

**Col. 1:16** says the same thing in more detail, ruling out the possibility that Jesus could simply be an archangel.

(Note: the NWT sometimes inserts words in brackets – [like this] – which are not found in the Greek or Hebrew. Often this simply clarifies who is acting or the object of a statement's reference. In Col. 1:16, however, “other” is inserted to allow the assumption that Jesus is a created Being. This is an assumption that arises from outside the Bible, of which the Bible itself knows nothing. For that reason, the following quote omits it.)

In **Col.1:16**, the apostle says of Jesus: “by means of him all 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 things have been created through him and for him.” **Vs. 17** takes it a step further and pictures Jesus not only as Creator but also as *Sustainer*. Here again, however, the NWT strives to blunt the force of the original Greek text of Scripture, rendering this verse: “Also, he is before all things and by means of him all things were made to exist.” But that last verb isn’t quite right. Here’s the Greek:

**kai ta panta en aut & sunesthen**  
and all things in him they-continue (or *hold together*)

The verb doesn’t simply repeat what has already been said – that all things were created by Jesus – but instead, it adds the claim that all things rely on Jesus for *continued* preservation.

Furthermore, Jesus **oversees the operation of divine providence**. In **John 17:2**, Christ prays to the Father, “according as you have given him [the Son] authority over all flesh, that, as regards the whole [number] whom you have given him, he may give them everlasting life.” **Eph. 1:22** echoes that: “He also subjected all things under his feet, and made him head over all things to the congregation.”

With this, Jesus the Son exercises Jehovah’s work of **forgiving sin**. This was a huge controversy in Jesus’ earthly ministry. **Matt. 9:2-7** and **Mark 2:5-12** give the accounts of how the Pharisees were offended that He forgave sins. In **Mark 2:7** they ask, “Why is this man talking in this manner? He is blaspheming. Who can forgive sins except one, God?” They understood clearly the implications of His authority.

He has **power to raise the dead** and **authority to judge** in the final judgment. In **John 5:22**, Jesus said, “For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son.” That’s a very explicit claim of deity, and in **vs. 24**, Jesus even makes the basis of judgment the issue of whether someone hears His word or not. **Acts 10:42** says Christ “is the one decreed by God to be judge of the living and the dead.” We find the same thing in **Acts 17:31**. And **2 Tim. 4:1** says that Christ Jesus “is destined to judge the living and the dead.”

**It is He who will bring us into the fullness of glorification**. We read in **Php. 3:21** that Jesus “will refashion our humiliated body to be conformed to his glorious body according to the operation of the power that he has, even to subject all things to himself.” Likewise, in **Rev. 21:5** He says, “Look! I am making all things new.”

## *Jesus Receives Worship*

Who is to receive worship? The Bible gives a clear answer to that question: “Jehovah your God is a consuming fire, a God exacting *exclusive* devotion” (**Deut. 4:24**). And again, from **Exod. 34:14**: “You must not prostrate yourself to another god, because Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God.”

Who then is to receive our worship? Jehovah alone – for He alone is the true God!

So if Jesus received worship, one of three conclusions must follow: either that act of worship was a dreadful sin against Jehovah; or the Bible contradicts itself by saying that none but Jehovah may be worshipped, since Jesus also may be worshipped; or ... Jesus and Jehovah are one.

Jesus Himself acknowledged this, telling Satan (**Matt. 4:10**), “Go away, Satan! For it is written, ‘It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone that you must render sacred service.’”

If Jesus Himself were a mere creature, He would have been guilty of hypocrisy, for He *did* receive worship – and willingly. Not once did Jesus rebuke anyone for worshipping Him. In fact, He corrected those who scolded others for worshipping Him, as in **John 10**, when Martha was angry that Mary sat at His feet. And in **Matthew 26**, He rebuked the disciples for being indignant that a woman had anointed Him with expensive ointment.

Listen carefully to the verses that follow, and remember that in every case Jesus welcomed the worship that was offered to Him. (Note: “obeisance” is bowing in reverence and honor. This is worship.)

- **Matt. 14:33** → “Then those in the boat did obeisance to him, saying, ‘You are really God’s Son.’”
- **John 9:38** → “Then he said: ‘I do put faith in him, Lord,’ And he did obeisance to him.”
- **Matt. 28:9** → “And look! Jesus met them and said, ‘Good day!’ They approached him and caught him by his feet and did obeisance to him.”
- **Matt. 28:17-18** → “And when they saw him they did obeisance, but some doubted. And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: ‘All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth.’”
- **John 20:28-29** → “In answer Thomas said to him: ‘My Lord and my God!’ Jesus said to him: ‘Because you have seen me have you believed? Happy are those who do not see and yet believe.’”

Contrast Jesus' response to worship (*obeisance* in the NWT) with Peter's response when “Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet and did obeisance to him” (**Acts 10:25**). **Vs. 26** says, “But Peter lifted him up, saying, ‘Rise; I myself am also a man.’” **Acts 14:11-18** tells of a similar episode in Paul's ministry, when he and Barnabas refused the worship of an entire crowd. Then in **Rev. 19:10** and **22:8-9**, we have angels refusing worship from the Apostle John. In **Rev. 22:9** the angel says, “Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who are prophets and of those who are observing the words of this scroll. Worship God.”

Yet Scripture explicitly states that the Son is to be worshiped. **John 5:22-23** says, “For the Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son, in order that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him.” In fact, Jesus placed Himself on the highest possible level when He made Himself an object of our faith. And that's just what we see in **John 14:1**: “Do not let YOUR hearts be troubled. Exercise faith in God, exercise faith also in me.”

Do you want ultimate proof that Jesus is not merely an angel? **Heb. 1:6** says that when the Father brought the Son into the world, He said, “And let all God's angels worship Him.”

Let's move on to the two final lines of argument that prove Jesus is God. We have saved the strongest arguments for last. For if Jesus is God – Jehovah, come to earth in the flesh of a man – you would expect the Bible to say so in the strongest of terms.

And, in fact, it does.

### *The Bible Says Jesus is God*

**John 1** is a favorite text of the Watchtower Society. It needs to be – because in order for their doctrine to deny that Jesus truly is Jehovah, they need to overcome this well-known, clear statement that Jesus is truly and fully God.

Turn to that passage and let's look at the first three verses:

“In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god” (again, using the NWT translation).

This verse offers a very strong statement on the deity of Christ. Every phrase is significant. “In the beginning” harks back to Gen. 1:1 and sets the beginning of John's gospel in eternity past, before anything or anyone was created. B.B. Warfield wrote, “What is declared is that ‘in the beginning’ – not ‘from the beginning,’ but ‘in the beginning’ – when first things came to be, the Word, not came into being, so that He might be the first of those things which came into being, but already was. Absolute eternity of being is asserted for the Word in as precise and strong language as absolute eternity of being can be asserted. The Word antedates the beginning of things; He already was.”

The next phrase, ‘the Word was with God,’ only strengthens the assertion of deity in this passage. It means that from all eternity, the Word co-existed with God, alongside Him, in personal communion with Him.

This eternal relationship between God and the Word is underscored by a phrase in **John 1:18**, “the only begotten God, who is in the bosom position with the Father.” Jesus Christ was eternally in

the bosom of the Father – somehow distinct from God, yet at the same time identical to Him. By the way, the NWT translation in vs.18 is fairly accurate; in the Greek, the literal wording is, “the only-begotten God” – another straight-forward proof of Christ’s deity. The whole principle of the Trinity is wrapped up in this expression, “the Word was with God.”

But let’s return to the third phrase in **John 1:1**, for this is the part that the Watchtower Society tries to answer. The NWT renders this phrase: “The Word was a god.” However, every other English translation renders that phrase: “The Word was God.” Old and new, liberal or conservative, every other translator is unanimous in the way they translate that phrase – because that is precisely and literally what this text says in the Greek.

A well-trained representative of the Watchtower Society will attempt to convince you that this translation is faulty. In the Greek, they will tell you, the word “God” lacks any definite article – which is quite true. Therefore, they say, an *indefinite* article must be supplied: “The Word was a god.” But that is bad Greek. *Was* is what is known as a copulative verb. (You may have called it a “linking verb” in grammar school.) It simply connects the noun on one side with the noun on the other: “The Word was God.” In that sentence, “God” is a predicate nominative. It can only be translated the way you find it in most Bibles: “The Word was God.” To insert the word “a” is both bad Greek and bad grammar.

In producing its own Bible translation, the Watchtower Society has gathered a handful of Greek scholars who have tried desperately to defend their faulty translation. But what these “scholars” do not tell their own people is that there are dozens of places in their Bible where they are forced by common sense to violate the very rule they want to try to impose on John 1:1. I’ll give you some examples from this very same context. If we followed the NWT construction and added the word “a” every time the definite article is missing, here’s how a couple of other verses from John 1 would read:

- ✓ **John 1:6** → “There arose a man that was sent forth as a representative of [a] God: his name was John.”
- ✓ **John 1:12** → “However, as many as did receive him, to them he gave authority to become [a] God’s children ...”
- ✓ **John 1:13** → “and they were born, not from blood or from a fleshly will or from a man’s will, but from [a] God.”
- ✓ **John 1:18** → “No man has seen [a] God at any time ...”

(And those are examples we can find with only the smallest of effort, within half of one chapter!)

So John 1:1 is the achilles’ heel of Watchtower Society theology, and that is why every witness is taught what to say when it is brought up. But their answers are not at all satisfying to anyone who knows the smallest amount of Greek grammar, and their denial of Christ’s deity is easily debunked merely by the context of this verse. You need not be stumped by the Watchtower Society arguments on this.

Of course, there are more verses in the New Testament that explicitly call Jesus God. Remember, as we saw earlier, that when Thomas exclaimed, “My Lord and my God!” (**John 20:28**), Jesus did not rebuke him, but commended him for his faith.

**Titus 2:13** and **2 Pet. 1:1** refer to Jesus as “our God and Savior.” (Despite the NWT inserting “the” before Savior in 2 Pet. 1:1, that word doesn’t appear in the Greek.) **Rom. 9:5** says He is “God, who is over all.” **Php. 2:6** says He existed “in God’s form.” And **1 John 5:20** says: “But we know that the Son of God has come, and he has given us intellectual capacity that we may gain the knowledge of the true one. And we are in union with the true one, by means of his Son Jesus Christ.” John then says of this Son, Jesus Christ: “This is the true God and life everlasting.”

### *Jesus Himself Claims to be God*

Finally, if Jesus is God, we might expect Him to say so. Have you ever wondered why He didn’t simply state, “I am God” and put an end to any possibility of confusion?

Actually, He did. What He says in **John 8:58** was to His Jewish audience a far more explicit statement than if He had merely said, “I am God.” It is important to read this passage in its context. In

vs. 53, we see that the Pharisees were becoming uncomfortable with Jesus' claims, beginning to suspect that He was putting Himself on a level of authority to which no mere man would have any right. Read the passage.

**53** "You are not greater than our father Abraham, who died, are you? Also, the prophets died. Who do you claim to be? **54** Jesus answered: "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifies me, he who you say is your God; **55** and yet you have not known him. But I know him. And if I said I do not know him I should be like you, a liar. But I do know him and am observing his word. **56** Abraham your father rejoiced greatly in the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced." **57** Therefore the Jews said to him: "You are not yet fifty years old, and still you have seen Abraham?" **58** Jesus said to them, "Most truly I say to you, Before Abraham came into existence, I am.\*" **59** Therefore they picked up stones to hurl [them] at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple.

\*(Note that the NWT renders this last word as "have been." However the Greek verb is *eimi*, a present verb: "am.")

Notice that these men understood precisely what Jesus was saying. And because He obviously also understood what they were asking, His reply is that much more significant. He was telling them that He was God, using the name Jehovah Himself had revealed to Moses at the burning bush, "I AM." (Note that the NWT in translating that incident, Ex. 3:14, attempts to hide this name by rendering it, "I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be." But the Hebrew word there is the equivalent of our present tense verb of being: "I am.") *Jesus could have made no stronger claim of deity.* If that had not been His meaning, if He were claiming only to be the firstborn angel, He would have said, "before Abraham was born, I was."

The Gospel of John includes a whole series of statements Jesus made about Himself using this name, "I AM" – I am the way, the truth and the life (**John 14:6**); I am the good shepherd (**John 10:11,14**); I am the door (**John 10:7-9**); I am the bread of life (**John 6:48**); I am the light of the world (**John 8:12; 9:5**). Each one of these statements, studied in context, reveals that He was making claim after claim of absolute deity.

The biblical evidence for the deity of Christ is conclusive. It is overwhelming, irrefutable evidence. In fact, what we have covered here is only a representative sample. I haven't even mentioned **John 10:30**, "I and the Father are one." That, and many other similar passages, could be adduced to prove even more conclusively that, according to Scripture, **He is God.**

So much evidence cannot be swept aside or ignored. You either believe it, or you condemn yourself to an unthinkable eternity. In fact, Jesus said, "If you do not believe that I am, you will die in your sins" (**John 8:21**) The NWT inserts the word "he" after "I am." It's not there in the Greek; by all means, go ahead and look for it. Inserting that word is a lie, aimed to keep people from seeing that Jesus is holding Himself forth as Jehovah incarnate, in whom we must place our faith.

Jesus very obviously sets Himself in the place of God, and He can do that only because He *is* God. Those who know that Scripture is the Word of God can only believe, and join in the worship of Him at whose name every knee must bow!

Jesus is Jehovah – and He alone is the way, and the truth, and the life!