



Examination of the Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible Translations A Few Sample Texts and Teachings

NOTE: This Document Is A Work In Progress

Sources

While reading the following, please refer to the scanned pages of the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures¹ and The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures² as directed.

Summary of This Document

This document is not an extensive examination of these two texts by the Watchtower. Instead, it is a sampling of the inconsistencies in how words and phrases are translated in fundamental texts.

Quick Points about Greek

Why Do The Greek Words Look Different For The Same English Word?!

When examining the Greek portion of the interlinear text, you will quickly notice that the Greek words often look differently for the same English word. For example, the Greek word for God, *theos* (θεός), may also appear in Greek as θεοῦ, θεόν, or θεῶ. The ending of Greek nouns is determined by how they are used in a sentence. If the noun is the subject (θεός), the direct object (θεόν), the indirect object (θεῶ), or possessing something (θεοῦ). The only word in English that this type of change occurs is “who/whom.” When used as a subject, we say “who,” but if an indirect object, we say “whom” (to whom, from whom, by whom, of whom). It appears to be a leftover from an earlier time when English words were modified by their usage.

Finally, Greek has no indefinite article, which in English we have “a” and “an.” There is, however, a definite article equivalent to the English “the.” But, the definite article is not always directly translated into English because often, a definite article is implied by the context or name. We don't say “The dad is driving us to the game,” when there is only one dad possible in the situation. Instead, we just say, “Dad is driving us to the game.” In Greek, however, it could very well be written with the definite article in front of the noun. Since there is no indefinite article, and the definite article may or may not appear in front of a definite object, translators must determine whether or not to include “the” or not, or whether to add an “a” or “an” to the object. And, just because there may not be a definite article attached to the object, does not require that the object is indefinite. We'll see more on this in the first text to be examined.

Translation of the Greek word for “God” (*theos*)

1. John 1:1. JW's argue that because there is no definite article in front of the Greek word Theos when referring to the Word (Jesus), but there is for God (the Father/Jehovah), then it should be translated as “a god.”
 - a. First, it should be noted that JWs violate their own rule on this point repeatedly, even in this same chapter. See verses 6, 12, 13, 18, and so on.

¹ *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1961, 9181, 1984).

² *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures* (Brooklyn, N.Y.: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1985).



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2. John 1:14. JW's insert the word "an" in front of "only-begotten son," which is also incorrect because by definition, an "only-begotten" means it is one of a kind, unique. It is definite as to who is being referred to; hence, other English translations render this verse as "glory as of the only begotten of the Father." Both the Father and the Son are unique and it is inappropriate to place an indefinite article before either one.
 - a. In verse 18 we see that they add the definite article in front of "only-begotten" in the English translation where there is no definite article in Greek! This action is in direct contradiction to their rationale for why they added an "a" before "God" in verse 1.

Translation of the Greek phrase "I am" (ἐγὼ εἰμὶ, *ego eimi*)

1. Seven times in John, Jesus uses the phrase, "I am,"³ which is name of God Almighty, which He gave to Moses in Exodus 3:14. The very name Yahweh (YHWH), rendered LORD in the OT, and Lord (κύριος, *kurios*) by the LXX and the NT. In addition to those seven times, twice Jesus used the statement "I am" alone, both of which have special contexts in which it is undeniable that He was attributing the name of God, Yahweh, to Himself.
2. John 8:58. The Greek is literally, "before Abraham came into existence, I am (*ego eimi*)"
 - a. *Ego eimi* is the first person present tense indicative. The only way to translate this is with the English "I am."
 - b. By contrast, the JW's translates this verse as, "before Abraham came into existence, I have been" (first person, Perfect⁴ tense). This translation indicates that Jesus completed his coming into existence in the past as opposed to His existence then in the same state as He existed at the time speaking to the Pharisees.
 - c. The Kingdom Interlinear footnote on this verse says, "I have been (*ego eimi*). The action expressed by this verb began in the past, is still in progress, and is properly translated by the perfect indicative." However, the Greek language is perfectly capable to conjugate the Greek verb for "to be" to literally say, "I have been," but that is not what the text says. The text records Jesus using the present active indicative of "to be," which is literally, "I am."
 - d. Interestingly, JW's translates this exact phrase, same tense of the verb "to be," as "I am" in other places. For example, see the highlighted phrases in John 18:5–8.

3. John 18:5–8

³ 1) "I am the Bread of Life" (6:35); 2) "I am the Light of the World" (8:12); 3) "I am the Gate for the Sheep" (10:7); 4) "I am the Good Shepherd" (10:11); 5) "I am the Resurrection and the Life" (11:25); 6) "I am the Way the Truth and the Life (14:6); 7) I am the True Vine (15:1).

⁴ Perfect Tense is defined as "Action that has been completed in the past yet has results occurring in the present are expressed by the perfect tense."



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- a. In this text, Jesus also references the divine name in reference to Himself. English translations typically insert the word “He” just as the JW's translation does; however, to maintain transparency, other English translations italicize every word that does not appear in the original language and have been added for clarity. The New World Translation does not italicize any time, including this text, where words have been added.
- b. One wonders why the mass of soldiers sent to arrest Him fell backward to the ground when Jesus simply said, “I am.” If Jesus is not applying the divine name to Himself in His reply, then one has trouble explaining why approximately 200 soldiers all fell backwards for seemingly no reason. But, if Jesus did in fact state the divine name, and He, being God Almighty, said it, then it is perfectly reasonable that God Almighty speaking His sacred name would knock them over.

Translation of the Greek word for “Lord” (κύριος, *kurios*)

Translation of the Greek word for “Jehovah” ()

1. None. The word is a manufactured word

Translation of the Greek word for “worship/obeisance” (προσκυνέω, προσκυνητής⁵)

1. Matthew 4:9–10; Luke 24:52. The same Greek word (προσκυνέω) is used to translate “worship” to God, but “obeisance” to Jesus.
2. Translated as “worship” in Revelation 4:10; 5:14; 7:11; 9:20 (worship of demons);

⁵ Heinrich Greeven, “Προσκυνέω, Προσκυνητής,” ed. Gerhard Kittel, Geoffrey W. Bromiley, and Gerhard Friedrich, *Theological Dictionary of the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1964–), 758.