

The Deity of Jesus Christ



By Walter Martin

Throughout the entire content of inspired Scripture the fact of Christ's identity is clearly taught. He is revealed as Jehovah God in human form (Isaiah 9:6; Micah 5:2; Isaiah 7:14; John 1:14; 8:58; 17:5 [cf. Exodus 3:14]; Hebrews 1:3; Philippians 2:11; Colossians 2:9; and Revelation 1:8, 17–18; etc.). The deity of Jesus Christ is one of the cornerstones of Christianity, and as such has been attacked more vigorously throughout the ages than any other single doctrine of the Christian faith. Adhering to the old Arian heresy of the fourth century A.D., which Athanasius the great church Father refuted in his famous essay "On the Incarnation of the Word," many individuals and all cults steadfastly deny the equality of Jesus Christ with God the Father, and, consequently, the Triune deity. Jehovah's Witnesses, as has been observed, are no exception to this infamous rule. However, the testimony of the Scriptures stands sure, and the above mentioned references alone put to silence forever this blasphemous heresy, which in the power of Satan himself deceives many with its "deceitful handling of the Word of God."

The deity of Christ, then, is a prime answer to Jehovah's Witnesses, for if the Trinity is a reality, which it is, if Jesus and Jehovah are "One" and the same, then the whole framework of the cult collapses into a heap of shattered, disconnected doctrines incapable of even a semblance of congruity. We will now consider the verses in question, and their bearing on the matter.

1.(a)Isaiah 7:14. "Therefore the Lord [Jehovah] himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel" (literally, "God" or "Jehovah with us," since Jehovah is the only God).

(b)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, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."

(c)Micah 5:2. "But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth unto me that is to be ruler in Israel; whose goings forth have been from of old, from everlasting."

Within the realm of Old Testament Scripture, Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, has revealed His plan to appear in human form and has fulfilled the several prophecies concerning this miracle in the person of Jesus Christ. Examination of the above listed texts will more than convince the unbiased student of Scripture that Jehovah has kept His promises and did become man, literally "God with us" (Matthew 1:23; Luke 1:32–33; John 1:14).

The key to Isaiah 7:14 is the divine name "Immanuel," which can only be rightly rendered "God with us"; and since there is no other God but Jehovah by His own declaration (Isaiah 43:10–11), therefore Jesus Christ and Jehovah God are of the same Substance in power and eternity, hence equal. This prophecy was fulfilled in Matthew 1:22–23; thus there can be no doubt that Jesus Christ is the son of the virgin so distinctly portrayed in Isaiah 7:14. Jehovah's Witnesses can present no argument to refute this plain declaration of Scripture, namely that Jehovah and Christ are "One" and the same, since the very term "Immanuel" ("God" or "Jehovah with us") belies any other interpretation.

Isaiah 9:6 in the Hebrew Bible is one of the most powerful verses in the Old Testament in proving the deity of Christ, for it incontestably declares that Jehovah himself planned to appear in human form. The verse clearly states that all government will rest upon the "child born" and the "son given" whose identity is revealed in the very terms used to describe His attributes. Isaiah, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, describes Christ as "Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace"—all attributes of God alone. The term "mighty God" is in itself indicative of Jehovah since not only is He the only God (Isaiah 43:10–11), but the term "mighty" is applied to Him alone in relation to His deity. Jehovah's Witnesses dodge this

verse by claiming that Christ is a mighty god, but not the Almighty God (Jehovah). This argument is ridiculous on the face of the matter. However, Jehovah's Witnesses insist that since there is no article in the Hebrew text, "mighty," therefore, does not mean Jehovah. The question arises: Are there two "mighty Gods"? This we know is absurd; yet Jehovah's Witnesses persist in the fallacy, despite Isaiah 10:21, where Isaiah (without the article) declares that "Jacob shall return" unto the "mighty God," and we know that Jehovah is by His own word to Moses "the God of Jacob" (Exodus 3:6). In Jeremiah 32:18 (with the article) the prophet declares that He (Jehovah) is "the Great, the Mighty God" (two forms of saying the same thing; cf. Isaiah 9:6; 10:21; Jeremiah 32:18). If we are to accept Jehovah's Witnesses' view, there must be two mighty Gods; and that is impossible, for there is only one true and mighty God (Isaiah 45:22).

The prophet Micah, writing in Micah 5:2, recording Jehovah's words, gives not only the birthplace of Christ (which the Jews affirmed as being the City of David, Bethlehem), but he gives a clue as to His identity—namely, God in human form. The term "goings forth" can be rendered "origin," and we know that the only one who fits this description, whose origin is "from everlasting" must be God himself, since He alone is the eternally existing one (Isaiah 44:6, 8). The overwhelming testimony of these verses alone ascertains beyond reasonable doubt the deity of the Lord Jesus Christ, who became man, identified himself with us in His incarnation, and offered himself "once for all" a ransom for many, the eternal sacrifice who is able to save to the uttermost whoever will appropriate His cleansing power.

2. John 1:1. "In the beginning [or "origin," Greek,] was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God ."

Contrary to the translations of The Emphatic Diaglott and the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, the Greek grammatical construction leaves no doubt whatsoever that this is the only possible rendering of the text. The subject of the sentence is Word, the verb was. There can be no direct object following "was" since according to grammatical usage intransitive verbs take no objects but take instead predicate nominatives, which refer back to the subject—in this case, Word. In fact, the late New Testament Greek scholar Dr. E. C. Colwell formulated a rule that clearly states that a definite predicate nominative (in this case, —God) never takes an article when it precedes the verb (was), as we find in John 1:1. It is therefore easy to see that no article is needed for (God), and to translate it "a god" is both incorrect grammar and poor Greek since is the predicate nominative of was in the third sentence-clause of the verse and must refer back to the subject, Word. Christ, if He is the Word "made flesh" (John 1:14), can be no one else except God unless the Greek text and consequently God's Word be denied.

Jehovah's Witnesses, in an appendix in their New World Translation (pp. 773–777), attempt to discredit the proper translation on this point, for they realize that if Jesus and Jehovah are "One" in nature, their theology cannot stand since they deny that unity of nature. The refutation of their arguments on this point is conclusive.

The claim is that since the definite article is used with in John 1:1b and not with in John 1:1c, therefore the omission is designed to show a difference; the alleged difference being that in the first case the one true God (Jehovah) is meant, while in the second "a god," other than and inferior to the first, is meant, this latter "god" being Jesus Christ.

On page 776 the claim is made that the rendering "a god" is correct because "all the doctrine of sacred Scriptures bears out the correctness of this rendering." This remark focuses attention on the fact that the whole problem involved goes far beyond this text. Scripture does in fact teach the full and equal deity of Christ. Why then is so much made of this one verse? It is probably because of the surprise effect derived from the show of pseudo-scholarship in the use of a familiar text. Omission of the definite article with does not mean that "a god" other than the one true God is meant. Let one examine these passages where the definite article is not used with and see if the rendering "a god" makes sense: Matthew 3:9; 6:24; Luke 1:35, 78; 2:40; John 1:6, 12–13, 18; 3:2, 21; 9:16, 33; Romans 1:7, 17–18; 1 Corinthians 1:30; 15:10; Philippians 2:11–13; Titus 1:1, and many, many more. The "a god" contention proves too weak and is inconsistent. To be consistent in this rendering of "a god," Jehovah's Witnesses would have to translate every instance where the article is absent as "a god" (nominative), "of a god" (genitive), "to" or "for a god" (dative), etc. This they do not do in Matthew 3:9; 6:24; Luke 1:35, 78; John 1:6, 12–13, 18;

Romans 1:7, 17, etc.

You cannot honestly render “a god” in John 1:1, and then render “of God” (Jehovah) in Matthew 3:9, Luke 1:35, 78; John 1:6, etc., when is the genitive case of the same noun (second declension), without an article and must be rendered (following Jehovah’s Witnesses’ argument) “of a god” not “of God” as both The Emphatic Diaglott and New World Translation put it. We could list at great length, but suggest consultation of the Greek New Testament by either D. Erwin Nestle or Westcott and Hort, in conjunction with The Elements of Greek by Francis Kingsley Ball on noun endings, etc. Then if Jehovah’s Witnesses must persist in this fallacious “a god” rendition, they can at least be consistent, which they are not, and render every instance where the article is absent in the same manner. The truth of the matter is that Jehovah’s Witnesses use and remove the articular emphasis whenever and wherever it suits their fancy, regardless of grammatical laws to the contrary. In a translation as important as God’s Word, every law must be observed. Jehovah’s Witnesses have not been consistent in their observances of those laws.

The writers of the claim have exhibited another trait common to Jehovah’s Witnesses—that of half-quoting or misquoting a recognized authority to bolster their ungrammatical renditions. On page 776 in an appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, when quoting Dr. A. T. Robertson’s words, “Among the ancient writers was used of the god of absolute religion in distinction from the mythological gods,” they fail to note that in the second sentence following, Dr. Robertson says, “In the New Testament, however, while we have (John 1:1–2) it is far more common to find simply , especially in the Epistles.”

In other words, the writers of the New Testament frequently do not use the article with , and yet the meaning is perfectly clear in the context, namely that the one true God is intended. Let one examine the following references where in successive verses (and even in the same sentence) the article is used with one occurrence of and not with another form, and it will be absolutely clear that no such drastic inferences can be drawn from John’s usage in John 1:1–2 (Matthew 4:3–4; 12:28; Luke 20:37–38; John 3:2; 13:3; Acts 5:29–30; Romans 1:7–8, 17–19; 2:16–17; 3:5; 4:2–3, etc.).

The doctrine of the article is important in Greek; it is not used indiscriminately. But we are not qualified to be sure in all cases what is intended. Dr. Robertson is careful to note that “it is only of recent years that a really scientific study of the article has been made.” The facts are not all known, and no such drastic conclusion, as the writers of the appendix note, should be dogmatically affirmed.

It is nonsense to say that a simple noun can be rendered “divine,” and yet, at the same time, that same noun without the article conveys merely the idea of quality. The authors of this note later render the same noun as “a god,” not as “a quality.” This is a self-contradiction in the context.

In conclusion, the position of the writers of this note is made clear in an appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (p. 774); according to them it is “unreasonable” that the Word (Christ) should be the God with whom He was (John 1:1). Their own manifestly erring reason is made the criterion for determining scriptural truth. One need only note the obvious misuse in their quotation from Dana and Mantey (pp. 774–775). Mantey clearly means that the “Word was deity” in accord with the overwhelming testimony of Scripture, but the writers have dragged in the interpretation “a god” to suit their own purpose, which purpose is the denial of Christ’s deity, and as a result a denial of the Word of God. The late Dr. Mantey publicly stated that he was quoted out of context, and he personally wrote the Watchtower, declaring, “There is no statement in our grammar that was ever meant to imply that ‘a god’ was a permissible translation in John 1:1” and “It is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 ‘The Word was a god.’ ”

Over the decades the Watchtower and independently minded Jehovah’s Witnesses have struggled without success to refute the above presentation regarding the Greek of John 1:1. Their convoluted argumentation is nowhere more evident than in their Should You Believe in the Trinity? booklet. Contemporary Witnesses use the contentions from this booklet to argue that John 1:1 should be translated as the New World Translation does: “The word was a god.” However, none of these polemics have any more scholarly merit than the earlier arguments we refuted.

For example, the booklet claims, “Someone who is ‘with’ another person cannot be the same as that other person” (p. 27). This is a complete misunderstanding of the doctrine of the Trinity, which is, simply stated, that within the nature of the one true God there are three eternal, distinct

persons—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When we say that Jesus is God, we do not mean that the Son is the same person as the Father. That would be in accord with another ancient church heresy known as modalism. John 1:1 commits no logical blunders when it states that the Word (the second person) is with God (the first person) and is himself God.

The sources referred to and quoted in *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* can be summarized in three categories: liberals who do not believe that the Bible is God's Word or that Jesus Christ was anything more than an inspired human; out-dated materials that fail to engage with up-to-date, comprehensive scholarship; and sources used out of context or misinterpreted. A number of valuable critiques of the Watchtower arguments concerning John 1:1 are currently in print.

3. John 8:58. "Jesus said unto them Before Abraham was [born], I am" (bracketed mine).

In comparing this with the Septuagint translations of Exodus 3:14 and Isaiah 43:10–13, we find that the translation is identical. In Exodus 3:14, Jehovah, speaking to Moses, said "I AM," which any intelligent scholar recognizes as synonymous with God. Jesus literally said to the Jews, "I AM Jehovah," and it is clear that they understood Him to mean just that, for they attempted, as the next verse reveals, to stone Him.

Hebrew law on this point states five cases in which stoning was legal—and bear in mind that the Jews were legalists. Those cases were: (1) Familiar spirits, Leviticus 20:27; (2) Cursing (blasphemy), Leviticus 24:10–23; (3) False prophets who lead to idolatry, Deuteronomy 13:5–10; (4) Stubborn and rebellious adult son, Deuteronomy 21:18–21; and (5) Adultery and rape, Deuteronomy 22:21–24 and Leviticus 20:10. Now any honest biblical student must admit that the only legal ground the Jews had for stoning Christ (actually they had none at all) was the second violation—namely, blasphemy. Many zealous Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that the Jews were going to stone Him because He called them children of the devil (John 8:44). But if this were true, why did they not try to stone Him on other occasions (Matthew 23:33, etc.) when He called them sons of vipers? The answer is very simple. They could not stone Christ on that ground because they were bound by the law, which gives only five cases, and would have condemned them on their own grounds had they used "insult" as a basis for stoning. This is not all, however, for in John 10:33, the Jews again attempted to stone Christ and accused Him of making himself God (not a god, which subject has already been treated at length). Let us be logical: If the Jews observed the laws of stoning on other occasions when they might have been insulted, why would they violate the law as they would have had to do if Jehovah's Witnesses are right about their interpretation of John 8:58? Little more need be said. The argument is ridiculous in its context; there is only one "I AM" in the Scriptures (Isaiah 44:6; 48:12; Revelation 1:8, 17–18), and Jesus laid claim to that identity for which the Jews, misinterpreting the law, set about to stone Him.

Jehovah's Witnesses declare that the Greek rendering of (I AM) in John 8:58 is "properly rendered in the 'perfect indefinite tense' ('I have been,' not 'I AM')." To unmask this bold perversion of the Greek text, we shall now examine it grammatically to see if it has any valid grounds for being so translated.

It is difficult to know what the translator means since he does not use standard grammatical terminology, nor is his argument documented from standard grammars. The aorist infinitive as such does not form a clause. It is the adverb *prin* that is significant here, so that the construction should be called a *prin* clause. The term "perfect indefinite" is not a standard grammatical term and its use here has been invented by the authors of the note, so it is impossible to know what is meant.

The real problem in the verse is the verb "I AM." Dr. Robertson, who is quoted as authoritative by the NWT translators, states (p. 880) that it is "absolute." This usage occurs four times (in John 8:24; 8:58; 13:19; 18:5). In these places the term is the same used by the Septuagint in Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 43:10; 46:4; etc., to render the Hebrew phrase "I (AM) He." The phrase occurs only where Jehovah's Lordship is reiterated. The phrase, then, is a claim to full and equal Deity. The incorrect and rude rendering of the NWT only serves to illustrate the difficulty of evading the meaning of the phrase and the context.

This meaning in the sense of full Deity is especially clear in John 13:19, where Jesus says that He has told them things before they came to pass, that when they do come to pass the disciples may believe that (I AM). Jehovah is the only One who knows the future as a present fact.

Jesus is telling them beforehand that when it does come to pass in the future, they may know that "I AM", i.e., that He is Jehovah!

In conclusion, the facts are self-evident and undeniably clear—the Greek allows no such impositions as "I have been." The Watchtower's contention on this point is that the phrase in question is a "historical present" used in reference to Abraham, hence permissible. This is a classic example of Watchtower double-talk. The passage is not a narrative, but a direct quote of Jesus' argument. Standard grammars reserve the use of "historical present" to narratives alone. The term is translated here correctly only as "I AM," and since Jehovah is the only "I AM" (Exodus 3:14; Isaiah 44:6), He and Christ are "One" in nature, truly the fullness of the Deity in the flesh.

The Septuagint translation of Exodus 3:14 from the Hebrew utilizes as the equivalent of "I AM" (Jehovah), and Jesus quoted the Septuagint to the Jews frequently, hence their known familiarity with it and their fury at His claim (John 8:59). Additional Old Testament references to Jehovah as "I AM" include Deuteronomy 32:39; Isaiah 43:10; Isaiah 48:12.

4. Hebrews 1:3. "He is the reflection of [his] glory and the exact representation of his very being, and he sustains all things by the word of his power" (NWT).

This passage of Scripture, I believe, clarifies beyond doubt the deity of Jesus Christ. It would be illogical and unreasonable to suppose that Christ, who is the image imprinted by Jehovah's substance, is not of the substance of Jehovah and hence God, or the second person of the triune Deity. No creation is ever declared to be of God's very "substance" or "essence" (Greek,); therefore, the eternal Word, who is "the fulness of the Godhead [Deity] bodily" (Colossians 2:9), cannot be a creation or a created being. The writer of the book of Hebrews clearly intended to portray Christ as Jehovah, or he never would have used such explicit language as "the image imprinted by His substance" (Greek interpretation), and as Isaiah 7:14 clearly states, the Messiah was to be Immanuel, literally "God with us." Jehovah's Witnesses attempt the articular fallacy of "a god" instead of God, in reference to Immanuel; but if there has been "before me no God formed, neither shall there be after me" (Jehovah speaking in Isaiah 43:10), then it is impossible on that ground alone, namely, God's declaration, for any other god ("a god" included) to exist. Their argument, based on a grammatical abstraction, fails to stand here, and the deity of the Lord Jesus, as always, remains unscathed.

5. Philippians 2:11. "And that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

If we compare this verse of Scripture with Colossians 2:9 and Isaiah 45:23, we cannot help but see the full deity of the Lord Jesus in its true light. Jehovah spoke in Isaiah 45:23: "I have sworn by myself, the word is gone out of my mouth in righteousness, and shall not return, that unto me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." In Colossians 2:9 the apostle Paul, writing under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, declares, "For in Him [Christ] dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily." The literal translation of the Greek word (Godhead) is Deity, so in Christ all the fullness of the Deity resides in the flesh.

In Thayer's Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament, which is referred to as being "comprehensive" by the Watchtower, a complete analysis of (Godhead, Deity) is given, especially its interpretation in the context of Colossians 2:9. Jehovah's Witnesses will do well to remember that Thayer was a Unitarian (one who denies the deity of Christ), and therefore more prone to accept their interpretations than those of evangelical Christianity. But despite his theological views, Thayer was a Greek scholar whose integrity in the presentation of honest facts, despite their disagreement with his beliefs, is the trait exemplified in all legitimate critics and honest scholars. Thayer states that [Godhead, Deity] is a form of (Deity), or in his own words: "i.e., the state of Being God, Godhead" (p. 288, 1886 ed.). In other words, Christ was the fullness of "the Deity" (Jehovah) in the flesh! The Emphatic Diaglott correctly translates "Deity"; but the NWT erroneously renders it "the divine quality," which robs Christ of His true deity. The only way to substantiate this inaccurate translation would be to substitute the word (Divinity) and thus escape the condemning evidence of "the Deity," . However, documentary evidence reveals that they cannot rightfully do this, for in Thayer's own words, " (Deity) differs from (Divinity) as essence

differs from quality or attribute.” This fact again exposes the deception employed by Jehovah’s Witnesses to lead the unwary Bible student astray into the paths of blasphemy against the Lord Jesus. It cannot be so translated, for the substitution of one word for another in translation is pure scholastic dishonesty, and Jehovah’s Witnesses can produce no authority for this bold mistranslation of the Greek text. Jesus Christ, according to the words themselves, is the same essence and substance as Jehovah, and as the essence (Deity) differs from the quality (Divinity), so He is God— (The Deity)—Jehovah manifest in the flesh.

That Jesus and Jehovah are “One” in nature dare not be questioned from these verses, which so clearly reveal the plan and purpose of God. Paul sustains this argument in his epistle to the Philippians (2:10–11) when he ascribes to the Lord Jesus the identity of Jehovah as revealed in Isaiah 45:23. Paul proclaims boldly, “That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” It is a well-known biblical fact that the highest glory one can give to God is to acknowledge and worship Him in the person of His Son, and as Jesus himself said, “No man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6) and “All men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father” (John 5:23).

It is therefore clear from the context that the wonder of the Godhead is specifically revealed in Jesus Christ to the fullest extent, and it is expedient for all men to realize the consequences to be met if any refuse the injunctions of God’s Word and openly deny the deity of His Son, who is “the true God, and eternal life” (1 John 5:20).

6. Revelation 1:8. “ ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says Jehovah God, ‘the One who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty’ ” (NWT; cf. Revelation 1:7–8, 17–18; 2:8; 22:13; Matthew 24:30; Isaiah 44:6).

In the seventh, eighth, seventeenth, and eighteenth verses of the first chapter of Revelation a unique and wonderful truth is again affirmed—namely, that Jesus Christ and Jehovah God are of the same substance, hence coequal, coexistent, and coeternal. In short, one nature (but three persons) in its fullest sense. We shall pursue that line of thought at length in substantiating this doctrine of Scripture.

Comparing Matthew 24:30 with Revelation 1:7, it is inescapably evident that Jesus Christ is the one coming with clouds in both the references mentioned.

And then shall appear the sign of the Son of man in heaven: and then shall all the tribes of the earth mourn, and they shall see the Son of man coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory (Matthew 24:30, emphasis added).

Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. Even so, Amen (Revelation 1:7, emphasis added).

Following this train of thought, we find that Jehovah declares in Isaiah 44:6 that He alone is the first and the last and the only God, which eliminates forever any confusion as to their being two “firsts and lasts.” Since Jehovah is the only God, then how can the be “a god,” a lesser god than Jehovah, as Jehovah’s Witnesses declare in John 1:1? (The Emphatic Diaglott and New World Translation). Many times Jehovah declares His existence as the “only” God and Savior (Isaiah 41:4; 43:10–13; 44:6; 45:5; 48:12; etc.). This is indeed irrefutable proof, since Christ could not be our Savior and Redeemer if He were not Jehovah, for Jehovah is the only Savior of men’s souls (Isaiah 43:11). However, despite the testimony of Scripture that “before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me” (Isaiah 43:10), the “a god” fallacy is pursued and taught by Jehovah’s Witnesses in direct contradiction to God’s Word. In 1 Corinthians 8:4–6 Paul points out that an idol or false god is nothing and, even though men may worship many things as gods, there is only one true and living God (cf. Acts 5:3–4 and John 1:1 for the other persons of the Trinity).

Revelation 1:17–18 and 2:8 add further weight to the deity of Christ, for they reveal Him as the first and the last, who became dead and lives forever. Now, since Jehovah is the only first and last (cf. Isaiah references), either He and Christ are “One,” or to claim otherwise Jehovah’s Witnesses must deny the authority of Scripture.

In order to be consistent we must answer the arguments advanced by Jehovah’s Witnesses concerning the use of “first” (Greek,) and “last” (Greek,) in Revelation 1:17 and 2:8.

By suggesting the original use and translation of (firstborn) and implying that “firstborn” necessarily means “first created,” instead of (first) in these passages (see the footnotes to the passages in the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures and The Emphatic Diaglott), Jehovah’s Witnesses attempt to rob Christ of His deity and make Him a created being with “a beginning” (Let God Be True, 107). When approached on this point they quickly refer you to Colossians 1:15 and Revelation 3:14, “proving” that the Logos had “a beginning” (see John 1:1 in both translations). To any informed Bible student, this conclusion is fallacious. A Greek Lexicon of the New Testament, translated and edited by J. H. Thayer (1886), states that the only correct rendering of is “first,” and in Thayer’s own words, “The Eternal One” [Jehovah] (Revelation 1:17). Here again the deity of Christ is vindicated.

Jesus said, “I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last” (Revelation 22:13), and not only this but it is He who is revealing the mysteries to John (Revelation 1:1 and 22:16) and declaring himself to be the “faithful witness” (Revelation 1:5) who testifies “I come quickly” (Revelation 22:20). It is evident that Jesus is the one testifying and the one coming (Revelation 1:2, 7) throughout the book of Revelation since it is by His command (Revelation 22:16) that John records everything. So in honesty we must acknowledge His sovereignty as the “first” and “last” (Isaiah 48:12, Revelation 1:17 and 22:13), the Lord of all, and the eternal Word of God incarnate (John 1:1).

Revelation 3:14 asserts that Christ is the “beginning of the creation of God,” and Colossians 1:15 states that Christ is “the firstborn of every creature.” These verses in no sense indicate that Christ was a created being. The Greek word (Revelation 3:14) can be correctly rendered “origin” and is so translated in John 1:1 of the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ own 1951 edition of the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures. Revelation 3:14 declares that Christ is the faithful and true witness, the “origin” or “source” of the creation of God. This corroborates Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:16–17 in establishing Christ as the Creator of all things and, therefore, God (Genesis 1:1).

Christ is the firstborn of all creation since He is the new Creation, conceived without sin (Luke 1:35), the second Adam (1 Corinthians 15:45 and 47), the fulfillment of the divine promise of the God-man (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6; Micah 5:2), and the Redeemer of the world (Colossians 1:14). John 3:13 states that no one has ascended into heaven but Christ who came down; Philippians 2:11 declares that He is Lord (Greek, $\kappa\alpha\tau\omicron\upsilon\tau\omicron\varsigma$), and as such is “the Lord from heaven” of 1 Corinthians 15:47—God—and not a created being or “a god.”

The word “firstborn” refers not to the first one created or born, but to the one who has the preeminence or the right to rule as an heir has the right to rule over his predecessor’s estate. The same term is used in the Greek translation of the Old Testament (LXX) in Genesis 25:33, where Esau actually sells his “right of the firstborn” to Jacob because he is hungry. It is also used in Exodus 4:22 by Jehovah regarding Israel as His “firstborn” nation, the nation that receives the blessings of His kingdom. (See also Psalm 89:27; Genesis 49:3; and Jeremiah 31:9, cf. Genesis 41:51–52.) This is the same meaning that “firstborn” carries in Colossians 1:15, 18 regarding Jesus Christ, and in Hebrews 11:17 regarding Isaac, who was Abraham’s “son of promise,” or “firstborn,” but, having been born after Ishmael, not literally his first son born.

The Lord Jesus is also the “firstborn” from the dead (Revelation 1:5)—that is, the one who conquered death by rising in a glorified body (not a spirit form—see Luke 24:39–40), which type of body Christians will someday possess as in the words of the apostle John: “It doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like [similar to] him; for we shall see him as he is” (1 John 3:2, bracketed mine). We know that these promises are sure, “for he is faithful that promised” (Hebrews 10:23), and all who deny the deity of Christ might well take cognizance of His warning and injunction when He said, For I testify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man shall add unto these things, God shall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book: And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book (Revelation 22:18–19).

7. John 17:5. "And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was" (Jesus Christ).

This passage of Scripture, in cross-reference with Isaiah 42:8 and 48:11, proves conclusively the identity of the Lord Jesus and is a fitting testimony to the deity of Christ.

In Isaiah 42:8 Jehovah himself is speaking and He emphatically declares, "I am the LORD: that is my name: and my glory will I not give to another, neither my praise to graven images." Again in Isaiah 48:11 Jehovah is speaking and He declares, "For mine own sake, even for mine own sake, will I do it: for how should my name be polluted? and I will not give my glory unto another."

It is plain to see from these references in Isaiah that Jehovah has irrevocably declared that His divinely inherent glory, which is of His own nature, cannot and will not be given to anyone other than himself. There is no argument Jehovah's Witnesses can erect to combat the truth of God as revealed in these passages of Scripture. The inherent glory of God belongs to God alone, and by His own mouth He has so ordained it to be. God, however, bestowed upon the incarnate Word a certain glory manifested in the presence of the Holy Spirit, through whose power and agency Christ worked while in the flesh, and Jesus in turn bestowed this upon his followers (John 17:22). But it was not the glory of God's nature; rather, it was (and is) the abiding presence of His Spirit. The two quite different types of glory should not be confused. Jesus prayed to receive back again the glory He had with the Father "before the world was" (John 17:5). Also, it was not the glory given to Him as the Messiah, which glory Christ promised to share with His disciples (v. 22). Nowhere in Scripture are the types of glory equated.

The Lord Jesus Christ, when He prayed in John 17:5, likewise irrevocably revealed that He would be glorified with the glory of the Father and that the glory of the Father (Jehovah) was not new to Him, since He affirmed that He possessed it with (Greek,) the Father ("the glory which I had with thee") even before the world came into existence. Jehovah's Witnesses attempt to answer this by asking that if He were God, where was His glory while He walked the earth?

In answer to this question, the Scriptures list at least four separate instances where Christ manifested His glory and revealed His power and deity. On the Mount of Transfiguration (Matthew 17:2) Christ shone with the inherent glory of God, which glory continued undiminished when in John 18:6 the Lord applied to himself the "I AM" of Jehovahistic identity that radiated glory enough to render His captors powerless at His will. The seventeenth chapter of John, the twenty-second verse, also confirms the manifestation of Jehovah's glory when Jesus, looking forward to the cross, prays for His disciples and affirms the origin of His glory as being the substance of God. The resurrection glory of Christ also serves to illustrate His deity and reveal it as of God himself.

So it is plain to see that the argument Jehovah's Witnesses advance to the effect that Christ did not manifest the glory of himself is invalid and finds no basis in the Scriptures. The truth of the whole matter is that the Lord Jesus did reveal the true glory of His nature in the very works He performed, and as John says (1:14), "And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth."

Paul, in the second chapter of Philippians, removes all doubt on this question when he writes, guided by the Holy Spirit, that Christ never ceased to be Jehovah even during His earthly incarnation. It is interesting to note that the Greek term , translated "being" in Philippians 2:6, literally means "remaining" or "not ceasing to be"; consequently, in the context Christ never ceased to be God, and "remained" in His basic substance; He was truly "God manifest in the flesh."

An average Jehovah's Witness interviewed recently, in attempting to escape the obvious declaration of Christ's deity as revealed in this text, reverted to the old Greek term-switching routine of the Society and asserted that the word "with" (Greek,) in John 17:5 really means "through," and therefore the glory that is spoken of is not proof of Christ's deity since the glory is Jehovah's and is merely shining "through" the Son; it is not His own but a manifestation of Jehovah's glory.

Once again we are confronted with the problem of illogical exegesis, the answer to which must be found in the Greek text itself. We must believe that the grammar of the Bible is inspired by God if we believe that God inspired the writers, or how else could He have conveyed His

thoughts without error? Would God commit His inspired words to the failing grammatical powers of man to record? No! He could not do this without risking corruption of His message; therefore, as the wise and prudent Lord that He is, He most certainly inspired the grammar of His servants that their words might transmit His thoughts without error, immutable and wholly dependable. With this thought in mind, let us consider the wording and construction of the verse.

The Greek word (with) is used in the dative case in John 17:5 and is not translated “through” (Greek) but is correctly rendered according to Thayer’s Lexicon as “with,” and Thayer quotes John 17:5, the very verse in question, as his example of how (with) should be translated.

Never let it be said that in this context indicates anything less than possessive equality—“the glory which I had with thee before the world was.” The Lord Jesus Christ clearly meant that He as God the Son was the possessor of divine glory along with the Father and the Holy Spirit before the world was even formed. Christ also declared that He intended to appropriate that glory in all its divine power once again, pending the resurrection of His earthly temple, which, by necessity, since it was finite, veiled as a voluntary act His eternal power and deity (Philippians 2:5–8). The glory He spoke of did not only shine through the Father; it was eternally inherent in the Son, and since John, led by the Holy Spirit, deliberately chose (literally, “with”) in preference to (through), the argument that Jehovah’s Witnesses propose cannot stand up. The Lord Jesus claimed the same glory of the Father as His own, and since Jehovah has said that He will not give His inherent glory to another (Isaiah 42:8), the unity of nature between Him and Christ is undeniable; they are one in all its wonderful and mysterious implications, which, though we cannot understand them fully, we gladly accept, and in so doing remain faithful to God’s Word.

8. John 20:28. “Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.”

No treatment of the deity of Christ would be complete without mentioning the greatest single testimony recorded in the Scriptures. John 20:28 presents that testimony.

Beginning at verse 24, the disciple Thomas is portrayed as being a resolute skeptic in that he refused to believe that Christ had risen and appeared physically in the same form that had been crucified on the cross. In verse 25 Thomas stubbornly declares that “Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails, and put my finger into the print of the nails, and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe.” Following through the sequence of events in verses 26 and 27, we learn that the Lord appeared to Thomas together with the other disciples and presented His body bearing the wounds of Calvary to Thomas for his inspection. This was no spirit or phantom, no “form” assumed for the occasion, as Jehovah’s Witnesses maintain. This was the very body of Christ that bore the horrible imprints of excruciating torture and the pangs of an ignominious death. Here displayed before the eyes of the unbelieving disciple was the evidence that compelled him by the sheer power of its existence to adore the One who manifested the essence of Deity. “Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God.” This was the only answer Thomas could honestly give; Christ had proved His identity; He was truly “the Lord God.” Let us substantiate this beyond doubt.

Jehovah’s Witnesses have vainly striven to elude this text in the Greek (The Emphatic Diaglott and the New World Translation), but they have unknowingly corroborated its authority beyond refutation, as a brief survey of their sources will reveal.

In The Emphatic Diaglott (John 20:28, p. 396) , literally “the God of me,” or “my God,” signifies Jehovahistic identity, and since it is in possession of the definite article, to use Jehovah’s Witnesses’ own argument, it must therefore mean “the only true God” (Jehovah), not “a god.” On page 776 in an appendix to the New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures, the note states, “So, too, John 1:1–2 uses to distinguish Jehovah God from the Word (Logos) as a god, the only begotten god as John 1:18 calls him.” Now let us reflect as sober individuals. If Thomas called the risen Christ Jehovah (definite article) , and Christ did not deny it but confirmed it by saying (verse 29), “Because thou hast seen me, thou hast believed: blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed,” then no juggling of the text in context can offset the basic thought—namely, that Jesus Christ is Jehovah God!

The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures carefully evades any explanation of the Greek text on the aforementioned point, but just as carefully it inserts in the margin (p. 350) six references to Christ as “a god,” which they attempt to slip by the unwary Bible

student. These references, as usual, are used abstractly, and four of them (Isaiah 9:6; John 1:1, 18; and 10:35) have been mentioned already in previous points. The question, then, is this: Is there any other god beside Jehovah which Jehovah's Witnesses affirm to be true by their reference to Christ as "a god" (John 1:1; Isaiah 9:6)? The Scriptures give but one answer: an emphatic NO! There is no god but Jehovah. (See Isaiah 37:16, 20; 44:6, 8; 45:21–23; etc.)

To be sure, there are many so-called gods in the Scriptures, but they are not gods by identity and self-existence; rather, they are gods by human acclamation and adoration. Satan also falls into this category since he is the "god of this world," who holds that position only because unregenerate and ungodly men have accorded to him service and worship belonging to God.

The apostle Paul seals this truth with his clear-cut analysis of idolatry and false gods in 1 Corinthians 8:4–6, where he declares that an idol is nothing in itself and that there is no god but Jehovah in heaven or earth, regardless of the inventions of man.

The picture is clear. Thomas adored Christ as the risen incarnation of the Deity (Jehovah); John declared that Deity was His from all eternity (John 1:1); and Christ affirmed it irrefutably: "If ye believe not that I am he [Jehovah], ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24, cf. Exodus 3:14, bracketed mine). All of the pseudo-scholastic and elusive tactics ever utilized can never change the plain declarations of God's Word. Jesus Christ is Lord of all; and like it or not, Jehovah's Witnesses will never destroy or remove that truth. Regardless of what is done to God's Word on earth, it remains eternal in the glory, as it is written, "For ever, O LORD, thy word is settled in heaven" (Psalm 119:89).

9. John 5:18. "[He] said also that God was his Father, making himself equal with God."

To conclude this vital topic, this verse is self-explanatory. The Greek term "equal" cannot be debated; nor is it contextually or grammatically allowable that John is here recording what the Jews said about Jesus, as Jehovah's Witnesses lamely argue. The sentence structure clearly shows that John said it under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not the Jews! Anyone so inclined can diagram the sentence and see this for himself. No serious scholar or commentator has ever questioned it. In the Jewish mind, for Jesus to claim to be God's Son was a claim to equality with God, a fact Jehovah's Witnesses might profitably consider!

We see, then, that our Lord was equal with God the Father and the Holy Spirit in His divine nature, though inferior (as a man), by choice, in His human nature as the last Adam (John 14:28; 1 Corinthians 15:45–47). This text alone is of enormous value and argues powerfully for our Lord's deity.