

Is Jesus the Creator God?

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Is this even an important question? Absolutely! If Jesus is not God, and therefore the Creator, then He is a created being. If Jesus is created, then how could He have been an adequate sacrifice to atone for sins committed against an infinite God? Jesus must have been God to adequately atone for our sins, which bring upon us unlimited guilt and cause us to deserve an eternal hell.

But does it really matter whether or not we believe that Jesus is God? Yes! If one places faith in a false Christ, one that is not described in Scripture, then can this false Christ save them? Truly, the identity of Christ is of utmost importance. And yet, in today's culture there are people teaching that Jesus was a created being. They are leading people astray.

What sets biblical Christianity apart from cults and other world religions? It is the person of Jesus Christ—who He is. In Islam, Jesus was a messenger of God, but not the Son of God. In many cults, the deity of Jesus Christ is negated, and in many world religions and personal views, Jesus is just another wise teacher. But the Bible says that all things were created by Him and for Him:

For by Him [Jesus] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him (Colossians 1:16).¹

Hebrews indicates that God calls Jesus, the Son, God:

But to the Son He says: “Your throne, O God, is forever and ever; A scepter of righteousness is the scepter of Your Kingdom. You have loved righteousness and hated lawlessness; Therefore God, Your God, has anointed You with the oil of gladness more than Your companions” (Hebrews 1:8–9).

We should expect Satan, the adversary of God and the father of lies, to advance many variants of the person of Jesus Christ. Satan would want all the false views to succeed in some measure to lead people away from the true Jesus.

One may recall the temptations of Jesus by Satan in the wilderness (Matthew 4:1–11). The great deceiver even attempted to use Scripture to trick Jesus into sinning (Matthew 4:6). The tactic of the serpent in the garden was to deceive the woman by distorting the plain meaning of the Word of God (Genesis 3:1–6). Satan, through the serpent, quoted the words of God and abused their meaning. We must be aware of the devil's devices (1 Corinthians 2:11).

John 1:1–3 and the Deity of Christ

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus Christ is not the Creator God but a lesser created angel (Michael²) who was termed “a god” by John in the New World Translation (the Jehovah's Witnesses translation of the Bible). The NWT says:

In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. This one was in [the] beginning with God. All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence (John 1:1–3 NWT).

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses' theology, Jesus is a being that came into existence. But even their own translation says that apart from Jesus not even one thing came into existence. So then, did Jesus create himself? Of course that is a ridiculous proposition, but you see how Watchtower theology contradicts the Bible, even their New World Translation.

Another contradiction surfaces in such a theology: Jehovah's Witnesses are firm that there is only one God.³ But they also admit that there is at least one other god, though not as powerful as Jehovah. Jehovah's Witness literature states:

Jesus is spoken of in the Scriptures as “a god,” even as “Mighty God” (John 1:1; Isaiah 9:6). But nowhere is he spoken of as being Almighty, as Jehovah is.⁴

So even though Jehovah's Witnesses say they believe in one God, they really can't be called monotheists. If

Jesus is not God himself, then there is a plurality of gods, assuming Jesus is to be considered “a god.”

Now let’s compare the New World Translation of John 1:1–3 to other translations:

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. (NKJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. (NIV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. The same was in the beginning with God. All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (KJV)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things came into being through Him, and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. (NASB)

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. (ESV)

These translations show that the Word was God, not “a god.” Why such blatantly different translations and, accordingly, different theologies? One starts with the Bible; the other starts from a false theology and takes that view to the Bible.

The original passage was written in Koine Greek. Following is the *Westcott and Hort Greek text* (1881) for John 1:1–2:

1 εν αρχη ην ο λογος και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος

2 ουτος ην εν αρχη προς τον θεον⁵

Elzevir’s Textus Receptus (1624) is identical:

1 εν αρχη ην ο λογος και ο λογος ην προς τον θεον και θεος ην ο λογος

2 ουτος ην εν αρχη προς τον θεον⁶

Even non-Greek scholars can use lexicons and other tools to show without much difficulty that an exact English translation is:

1. In beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and God was the Word

2. He was in beginning with God

The *Latin Vulgate of Jerome* in the 5th Century correctly translates John 1:1–2 into Latin:

1 *in principio erat Verbum et Verbum erat apud Deum et Deus erat Verbum*

2 *hoc erat in principio apud Deum*⁷

Word-for-word translation:

1 *in* (in) *in principio* (beginning) *erat* (was) *Verbum* (Word) *et* (And) *Verbum* (Word) *erat* (was) *apud* (with) *Deum* (God) *et* (and) *Deus* (God) *erat* (was) *Verbum* (Word)

2 *hoc* (He) *erat* (was) *in* (in) *in principio* (Beginning) *apud* (with) *Deum* (God)

If God was the Word, as John 1:1 is literally translated, then it is no problem for the Word to have created all things. As God, He created. How could the Word be with God and God be the Word at the same time? The doctrine of the Trinity (One God, three Persons) is the solution here. The Word was with God (the Father) and God (the Son) was the Word. This understanding, consistent with the rest of Scripture, eliminates any contradiction of multiple gods. There is only one God, revealed in a plurality of Persons. The Jehovah’s Witnesses do not have a solution to that alleged contradiction.

The primary reason Jehovah’s Witnesses do not want John 1:1 translated accurately is due to influences outside the Bible. As the theological descendents of their founder Charles Russell, they arrive at the Bible with the preconceived notion that Jesus the Christ is not God. Therefore, when a passage that clearly contradicts their theology comes up, there are two options: change their belief to coincide with what the Bible teaches or change God’s Word to fit with their current theology. Sadly, they have opted to exalt their theology above Jehovah’s Word. So, who is really the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ final authority? It is no longer a perfect God and His Word but fallible, sinful men and their ideas about God.

Kingdom Interlinear and John 1:1

It is very interesting to see how the Jehovah’s Witnesses Greek-English Interlinear translation compares with the NWT and with more accurate translations. One Jehovah’s Witness said that their translation comes from an interlinear translation of the Westcott and Hort text and that the NWT is a good translation of it. But let’s check into the two primary interlinear translations appealed to by Jehovah’s Witnesses: the *Kingdom Interlinear* and the *Emphatic Diaglott*.

The *Kingdom Interlinear*⁸ says:

KATA ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ
ACCORDING TO JOHN

<p>1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος. 2 Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. 3 Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ δὲ γέγονεν ἔν ζωῇ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκότητι φαίνει, καὶ ἡ</p>	<p>1 In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.* 2 This one was in the beginning with God. 3 All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence. What has come into existence 4 by means of him was life</p>
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Look carefully at John 1:1. The Interlinear doesn't translate *Theos* (θεος) as “a god,” which is an unjustifiable change in the NWT (to the right of the interlinear above). Strangely the interlinear does not capitalize God the second time it occurs, though it does the first.

One possible reason they tried distinguishing this particular word for God is due to the spellings of *Theos* (*God*) in this passage (θεον, θεος) is due to variant endings. Another variant ending is commonly θεου.

In one case, all three variants for God are in one passage and translated as God:

2 Thessalonians 2:4

who opposes and exalts himself above all that is called God (θεον) or that is worshiped, so that he sits as God (θεου) in the temple of God (θεον), showing himself that he is God (θεος).

There is really no obvious reason for the change to “a god” or a lower case “god” by the NWT or *Kingdom Interlinear*.

Emphatic Diaglott and John 1:1–3

The next interlinear to be checked was the *Diaglott*.⁹ It translates John 1:1–3 as:

*[ΕΥΑΓΓΕΛΙΟΝ] ΚΑΤΑ ΒΥ ΙΩΑΝΝΗΝ.
[GLAD TIDINGS] BY JOHN.
* ACCORDING TO JOHN.

<p>ΚΕΦ. α', 1. 1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ Λόγος, καὶ ὁ Λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν Θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ Λόγος. 2 Οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν. 3 Πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν, ὃ δὲ γέγονεν ἔν ζωῇ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων· καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκότητι φαίνει, καὶ ἡ</p>	<p>CHAPTER I. 1 In the beginning was the LOGOS, and the LOGOS was with GOD, and the LOGOS was God. 2 This was in the Beginning with God. 3 Through it every thing was done; and without it not even one thing was done, which has been done. 4 In it was Life; and the LIFE was the LIGHT of MEN. 5 And the LIGHT shone</p>
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The interlinear this time incorrectly states that *theos* is “a god”, but the side translation disagrees and says the Logos was God, instead of “a god.” So again, there are mismatches that make no sense.

The Context of the Passage

Interestingly, in defending their translation of John 1:1, Jehovah's Witnesses say:

Which translation of John 1:1, 2 agrees with the context? John 1:18 says: “No one has ever seen God.” Verse 14 clearly says that “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us...we have beheld his glory.” Also, verses 1, 2 say that in the beginning he was “with God.” Can one be with someone and at the same time be that person?²¹⁰

Trying to appeal to context, the Jehovah's Witnesses quote part of John 1:18 and John 1:14 while ignoring the teaching of verse 3 which shows Jesus made all things—no exceptions! We have already shown how Jesus can be with God and be God—it is through the concept of the Trinity.

Regardless, the context of the chapter should not be neglected. John 1:18 is referring to God the Father as the one no one has seen. Thus, in keeping with the context, we can interpret John 1:18 this way: No one has seen God the Father at any time; the only-begotten God, Jesus—He has revealed the Father. Anytime anyone has ever seen God, he has seen the Logos, the Son, since the Son is the Word—the revealer.

Expositor Dr. John Gill explains the reference to God:

That is, God the Father, whose voice was never heard, nor his shape seen by angels or men; for though Jacob, Moses, the elders of Israel, Manoah, and his wife, are said to see God, and Job expected to see him with his bodily eyes, and the saints will see him as he is, in which will lie their great happiness; yet all seems to be understood of the second person, who frequently appeared to the Old Testament saints, in an human form, and will be seen by the saints in heaven, in his real human nature; or of God in and by him: for the essence of God is invisible, and not to be seen with the eyes of the body; nor indeed with the eyes of the understanding, so as to comprehend it; nor immediately, but through, and by certain means: God is seen in the works of creation and providence, in the promises, and in his ordinances; but above all, in Christ the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person: this may chiefly intend here, man’s not knowing any thing of God in a spiritual and saving way, but in and by Christ¹¹

So we understand that Jesus reveals God and exists as God at the same time. There is not a contradiction between John 1:1 and John 1:18. In fact, they are amazingly consistent!

Islamic Appeal to the NWT

Muslims also deny the deity of Christ, so John 1:1–3 is also a problem to Islam if taken as written. Muslim apologists have appealed to the NWT in an effort to reduce the deity of Jesus Christ:

“The Word” is only described as being “ton theos” (divine/a god) and not as being “ho theos” (The Divine/The God). A more faithful and correct translation of this verse would thus read: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was divine” (If you read the New World Translation of the Bible you will find exactly this wording).¹²

Christian apologists have responded:

It should first be noted that all of known manuscripts and fragments of John’s gospel contains this passage without any variation. It should also be noted that John 1:1 was quoted on several occasions by early Christian theologians and Church Fathers.... Clearly, there is no “ton theos”, [sic] in this text as Al-Kadhi and Deedat claim. Both sentences have the phrase “ton theon”. “Ton theon” is used because it is the accusative case (the nominative case is “ho theos”=“the God”) In this [instance] we must use the accusative case, since the text uses the preposition “pros” which means “with” in this context.

Al-Kadhi and Deedat should know that the article “ho” (nominative case) and “ton” (accusative case) both translate as “the”. Incidentally, the Greek word for “divine” is “theios, theia, theion”, depending on the gender.¹³

But this lets us know how influential the Jehovah’s Witnesses and the NWT are. The NWT is being used in Islam to take people away from Jesus Christ.

Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Defense of the Word Being “a god”

Leading Jehovah’s Witness apologist Rolf Furuli writes extensively about John 1:1 and how theos should be translated in reference to the Word. He argues for the NWT’s rendering of the Word being “a god” as opposed to “God”. Several of his claims will be discussed here.

Mr. Furuli has a chart comparing the NWT with a couple of lesser known translations as well as the Greek text with his understanding of the word meanings. It is shown below¹⁴:

NWT	“In [the] beginning the Word was, the Word was with God, and the Word was god.”
NRSV	“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
Goodspeed	“In the beginning the Word existed. The Word was with God and the Word was divine.”
Greek text	<i>ēn arkhē</i> (“in the beginning”) <i>ēn</i> (“was”) <i>ho logos</i> (“the word”), <i>kai</i> (“and”) <i>ho logos</i> (“the word”) <i>ēn</i> (“was”) <i>pros</i> (“with”) <i>ton theon</i> (“the god”), <i>kai</i> (“and”), <i>theos</i> (“god” or “a god”) <i>ēn</i> (“was”) <i>ho logos</i> (“the word”)

Let’s evaluate Mr. Furuli’s comments concerning the term theos (notice above how he defines theos as meaning either “god” or “a god”). He says:

... in the Bible the word *theos* is also used for persons other than the creator, and therefore neither “creator” nor “YHWH” could be a part of its semantic meaning... The word theos is a count noun, and John uses it in one of two ways: either in a generic sense or as a “singular noun.” We might illustrate this point by use of the OT. Here we find that *elohim*, the Hebrew equivalent to *theos*, is used in the generic sense.¹⁵

Mr Furuli takes about two pages to compare *theos* to the contextual uses of the Hebrew word *elohim*. But it

would have been better to compare the uses of *theos* throughout the Greek New Testament and see how it was used in Greek context.¹⁶

Perhaps the reason such was not done is that it would destroy the point Mr. Furuli was trying to make. A search of *theos* in the New Testament shows that *theos* is overwhelmingly translated as “God” (even when not preceded by an article) unless context warrants otherwise (only about six times). The NT context for John 1:1 overwhelming supports the idea that the Word is God the Creator, as John 1:3 indicates.

Mr. Furuli goes on to say:

There are 322 examples of *theos* without the article. Because there is no inherent semantic contrast between the articular and the anarthrous *theos*, the question about the meaning of *theos* in some passages is pragmatic, and thus the context becomes essential.¹⁷

Furuli argues that John 1:1b can be translated: “And a god was the Word,” since there is no article in front of *theos*, and thus, the context must determine the meaning of *theos*. In response we can first appreciate the concession that Furuli is making: the lack of the article in front of *theos* does not mean that the word *theos* is to be translated as an adjective (divine) or with an indefinite article (a god) rather than simply “God.” (Even if it should be translated as an adjective, the verse would still teach the same thing—the Word is of the same essence as the Father.) It is obvious that there are many times that *theos* is translated as “God,” referring to Jehovah, even when not preceded by an article. Furuli evidently concedes that. So now it is a matter of context, says Furuli. We agree that context is crucial. But if context is so important, then why not look carefully at John 1:2–18? Furuli mentions only John 1:14, “with God” from John 1:2, and John 1:18. Why did he not refer to the other verses, including verse 3, which makes it clear that the Word made *all* things?

Furuli then attacked the eternality of the Word, Jesus Christ. In an attempt to downgrade that “in the beginning was the Word,” Mr. Furuli tries to show that Jesus was not eternal, thus not God.

Regarding the expression “in the beginning was the Word,” all we can say with reasonable certainty is that at the particular point in time called “the beginning” the Word existed. This is a far cry from saying “the Word is eternal”. [sic]¹⁸

But again, look at the context. If the Word made everything that was made (verse 3), then he must be eternal. If everything that was made (that is, everything that had a beginning) had its beginning through Christ, then it must be the case that the Word never had a beginning; thus, he is eternal.

Ignatius (John’s Disciple) and the Deity of Christ

Let’s go one further step in this study. John, the author of the Gospel, did not simply write the account and disappear. On the contrary, he was the only disciple of Christ to live out his life and die of old age. He, like Christ, had disciples of his own, and the two most noted were Polycarp and Ignatius. It makes sense that John would teach his disciples the truth about Jesus Christ and who He was.

Polycarp wrote very little that has survived. Ignatius had quite a bit more. In Ignatius’ letter to the Ephesians, it was clear that he viewed Jesus and the Father as the one true God. He said:

and elected through the true passion by the will of the Father, and Jesus Christ, our God¹⁹

God existing in the flesh²⁰

Our Lord and God, Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God²¹

For our God, Jesus Christ, was, according to the appointment of God²²

God Himself being manifested in human form for the renewal of eternal life.²³

God being manifested as man²⁴

We have also as a Physician the Lord our God, Jesus the Christ, the only-begotten Son and Word, before time began.²⁵

After reading the words of a disciple of John who learned extensively from John, there should be no question what John was trying to say. So, it is interesting that the founder of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Charles Taze Russell, said with regards to John 1:1 and the Word being God:

except that where the word *Theos* is used twice in the same clause the Greek *Prepositive Article* is sometimes used, so as to give the effect of *the God* in contrast with *a God*. An illustration of this is found in John 1:1—“the Word was with *the God* [*ho Theos*] and the Word was *a God* [*Theos*].” But the careful student (freed from Prejudice) will generally have no difficulty in determining the thought of the Apostle. Indeed, the language is so explicit that the wonder is that we were heedless of it so long.”²⁶

His interpretation of *Theos* as “*a god*,” he claims is so explicit that he wonders why it took so long for people to realize it. Pastor Russell wrote this in 1899 and yet John’s own disciple Ignatius allegedly missed it? This makes little sense. The reason the early Church knew John was speaking of Jesus being God is not just from the Scriptures, which confirm it, but they were taught this by John who was their pastor for many years.

So really, what Mr. Russell was saying is that John's disciples, the early church, and the church for about 1800 years were wrong and that he [Pastor Russell] was right. This should be a red flag to anyone. Adam Clarke sums up the argument regarding John 1:1 with excellent comments:

Should it be objected that Christ created *officially* or by *delegation*, I answer: This is impossible; for, as creation requires absolute and unlimited power, or omnipotence, there can be but *one* Creator; because it is impossible that there can be *two* or *more* Omnipotents, Infinites, or Eternals. It is therefore evident that creation cannot be effected *officially*, or by *delegation*, for this would imply a *Being conferring the office*, and *delegating such power*; and that the Being to whom it was delegated was a *dependent Being*; consequently not *unoriginated* and *eternal*; but this the nature of creation proves to be absurd. 1. The thing being impossible in itself, because no limited being could produce a work that necessarily requires omnipotence. 2. It is impossible, because, if omnipotence be *delegated*, he to whom it is delegated *had it not before*, and he who delegates it *ceases to have it*, and consequently *ceases to be GOD*; and the other to whom it was delegated *becomes God*, because such attributes as those with which he is supposed to be invested are *essential* to the nature of God. On this supposition *God ceases to exist*, though *infinite* and *eternal*, and another not naturally *infinite* and *eternal* becomes such; and thus an *infinite* and *eternal Being* ceases to exist, and another infinite and eternal Being is produced in *time*, and has a *beginning*, which is absurd. Therefore, as *Christ* is the *Creator*, he did not create by *delegation*, or in any *official way*.

Again, if he had created by *delegation* or *officially*, it would have been for that *Being who gave him that office*, and delegated to him the requisite power; but the text says that *all things were made BY him and FOR him*, which is a demonstration that the apostle understood Jesus Christ to be truly and essentially God.²⁷

Conclusion

The reality is that John 1:1–3 clearly reveals the deity of Jesus Christ, the Word, being the Creator God. As such it confirms many other passages in Scripture that teach that Christ is God. Early church fathers such as Ignatius, who was a disciple of John the Apostle, also recognized Jesus as God. The significance of this is a matter of salvation. Without the true Jesus, can one really be saved?

Footnotes

1. All Scripture NKJV unless otherwise noted.
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3. Anonymous, 1985. *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p. 150. Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
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5. *Westcott and Hort Greek New Testament, (1881): With morphology*. Bellingham: Logos Research Systems, 2002. John 1:1–3.
6. Robinson, M., 2002. *Elzevir Textus Receptus (1624): With morphology*. Bellingham, WA: Logos Research Systems, Inc. John 1:1–3.
7. Jerome. *Latin Vulgata*, adapted from Online Bible, 2007.
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10. *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, 1985, p. 416. Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania.
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12. Al-Kadhi. Answering christianity. Retrieved September 20, 2007, from http://www.answering-christianity.com/john1_1.htm.
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15. Furuli, Ref. 14, pp. 204–205.
16. Furuli, Ref. 14, pp. 211–213 (again equating *Theos* with *Elohim* to argue against its Greek usage).
17. Furuli, Ref. 14, p. 206.
18. Robinson, Ref. 6, p. 210.
19. Ignatius, Epistle of Ignatius to the Ephesians. In, Roberts, A. and J. Donaldson (eds.), *The writings of the fathers down to AD 325 Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 1, p. 49 (short version). Hendrickson Publishers.
20. Ignatius, Ref. 19, p. 52 (short version).
21. Ignatius, Ref. 19, p. 56 (long version).
22. Ignatius, Ref. 19, p. 57 (short version).

23. Ignatius, Ref. 19, p. 57 (short version).
24. Ignatius, Ref. 19, p. 57 (long version).
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26. Russell, C. T., 1899. *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 5, *The atonement between God and man*. Reprinted, 2000, in Bible Students Congregation of New Brunswick, p. 70. Edison, New Jersey, 2000.
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