

# The Deity of Christ

The first part of this booklet is adapted from Dr. Alva McClain's notes, revised by Dr. John Whitcomb and Ivan French, and used by permission of Grace Theological Seminary, Winona Lake, Indiana.

## I. NAMES ARE APPLIED TO CHRIST WHICH CAN BE APPLIED PROPERLY ONLY TO ONE WHO IS GOD.

### A. He is called GOD.

"...and the Word was God" (John 1:1).<sup>1</sup>

"And Thomas answered and said unto Him, 'My Lord and my God'" (John 20:28).

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"Looking for that blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Savior Jesus Christ" (Titus 2:13).

"Christ...who is over all, God blessed for ever" (Romans 9:5).<sup>2</sup>

"But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever" (Hebrews 1:8).

"And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life" (1 John 5:20).

"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given...and his name shall be called...The mighty God" (Isaiah 9:6).

### B. He is called "the SON OF GOD."

Note: In the days of Christ the title "Son of God" was understood to mean "equality with God," that is, "sameness of nature." To claim to be the Son of God was a full claim to deity. The following texts make this abundantly clear: John 5:17-18; John 10:33,36; John 19:7.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>Many modern translations try to get around this clear statement by using a clever trick of re-punctuation. See our paper on *Romans 9:5 and the Deity of Christ* (20¢).

<sup>3</sup>For a complete discussion of this important point, see our book, *The Eternal Sonship of Christ* by George Zeller and Renald Showers available from us

**C. He is called “The Lord” (Greek: kurios, κυριος) .**

See Luke 2:11; John 13:13; Romans 10:9; 1 Cor. 12:3; Philippians 2:10 etc.

Note: The common version of our Lord's day was the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Old Testament) which used the Greek “kurios” to translate the sacred name “JEHOVAH” which is written as “LORD” or “GOD” in our English (KJV) Old Testament. Isaiah 45:5-6 shows that Jehovah denotes the only true Deity.

**D. He is called “the LORD OF GLORY.”**

Compare 1 Corinthians 2:8 with Psalm 24:8-10.

**E. He is called “the HOLY ONE.”**

Compare Acts 3:14 with Hosea 11:9 and Isaiah 48:17.

**F. He is called “the FIRST AND THE LAST.”**

Compare Revelation 1:17-18; 2:8 with Isaiah 44:6.

**G. He is called “the ALPHA and OMEGA.”**

Compare Revelation 22:13,16 with Revelation 1:8.

**H. He is called the Great “I AM.”**

Compare John 8:58; 18:6 with Exodus 3:14.

**CONCLUSION--THE NAMES**

1. These names were applied to Christ by men who

were Jews, who knew the Old Testament and who therefore were fully aware of the real import of such names. They fully realized what these names implied.

2. Furthermore, these Jews were *intensely monotheistic*. The central affirmation of their faith was, “Hear O Israel, The Lord thy God is ONE LORD” (Deuteronomy 6:4). They believed that there was an infinite chasm between God and man. Yet these men applied these names to Jesus Christ.
3. Still further, Christ Himself was a Jew who believed in One God, and that this One God was immeasurably above man. He knew, as no one else ever knew, the tremendous meaning of these names we have examined. Yet He not only permitted men to address Him as such without protest, but actually encouraged them and at times applied these names to Himself (John 20:28-29 and John 13:13).

**II. ATTRIBUTES ARE  
PREDICATED OF CHRIST  
THAT COULD BELONG ONLY  
TO ONE WHO IS GOD.**

Preliminary Observation: Note the tremendous claim made in John 16:15—“All things that the Father hath are mine.”

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**A. Christ has SELF-EXISTENT life.**

1. John 1:4 “In Him was life”
2. John 14:6 “I am the Life”
3. Acts 3:15 “the Prince (Author) of life”

**B. Christ is ETERNAL.**

1. Isaiah 9:6 “the everlasting Father” (or “the Father of eternity”)
2. Micah 5:2 “whose goings forth have been of old, from everlasting”
3. Compare John 8:35; John 8:58; 1 John 1:2; 1 John 5:11.

**C. Christ is UNCHANGEABLE.**

1. Hebrews 1:10-12 “but thou art the same”
2. Hebrews 13:8 “Jesus Christ, the same yesterday, and today and forever.”

**D. Christ is OMNIPRESENT.**

See Matthew 28:20.

**E. Christ is OMNISCIENT.**

See John 2:24-25 (compare Jeremiah 17:9-10);  
John 6:64; 16:30; Colossians 2:3.

Examples:

Matthew 17:24-27

Luke 5:22

John 1:48

John 4:16-19

John 21:6

**F. Christ is OMNIPOTENT.**

See John 5:19

Philippians 3:20-21

Revelation 1:8 with Revelation 22:12-13 for identification.

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Examples: Luke 4:39; Matthew 8:26-27; Mark 5:12-13; Luke 7:14-15; John 2:19-22

**G. Christ is PERFECT.**

(the term “perfect” as used in Scripture generally means “complete, nothing lacking”)

See Colossians 1:19

Colossians 2:9-10

**H. Christ is INFINITE.**

See John 10:28

Ephesians 3:8

Colossians 2:3

**I. Christ is INCOMPREHENSIBLE.**

See Matthew 11:27

Ephesians 3:8

Ephesians 3:19

**J. Christ is HOLY.**

See Luke 1:35

Acts 3:14

**K. Christ is TRUE.**

See John 14:6

Revelation 3:7

**L. Christ is LOVE.**

See John 13:1

Romans 8:35-39

Ephesians 3:19

1 John 3:16 ASV

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**M. Christ is RIGHTEOUS.**

See 2 Timothy 4:8  
1 John 2:1

**N. Christ is FAITHFUL.**

See Revelation 3:14  
Revelation 19:11

**O. Christ is MERCIFUL.**

See Jude 21  
James 5:11 with 5:8 for identification

**CONCLUSION--ATTRIBUTES**

John 16:15—"All things that the Father hath are mine" (every attribute that belongs to the Father belongs to Christ).

John 17:6—Jesus prayed, "I have manifested **Thy Name**" (The "Name" of God as used in Scripture refers to God's character, that is, all that God is. Hence Jesus is saying, "I have shown what kind of a God You are. I have put Your Character on display.")

The Bible clearly teaches that in Christ all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form (see COLOSSIANS 2:9).

**III. WORKS ARE DONE BY  
CHRIST WHICH ONLY GOD  
CAN DO.**

**A. Christ created all things.**

John 1:3  
John 1:10

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Ephesians 3:9  
Colossians 1:16  
Hebrews 1:2

**B. Christ upholds and preserves all things.**

Colossians 1:17  
Hebrews 1:3

**C. Christ guides and directs the stream of history.**

1. 1 Corinthians 10:4,9,11 The One who preserved and provided for the children of Israel was the Lord Jesus.
2. Hebrews 1:2 Through Christ the ages were made.
3. Isaiah 9:6 Christ is the everlasting Father (Father of the ages).

**D. Christ forgives the sins of man and gives eternal life.**

Mark 2:5-12 with Isaiah 43:25 (compare Psalm 51:4)  
John 10:28  
Colossians 3:13

**E. Christ builds the Church and maintains its corporate existence.**

Matthew 16:18  
Ephesians 4:7-16  
Philippians 1:2  
Philippians 4:23

**F. Christ receives and answers prayer.**

John 14:14  
Acts 7:59  
2 Corinthians 12:7-9

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**G. Christ will raise the dead in the resurrection.**

John 5:21

John 5:28-29

John 11:24-25

Compare Philippians 3:20-21

**H. Christ is the Final Judge of the world.**

Matthew 25:31-46

John 5:22

Acts 10:42

Acts 17:31

2 Corinthians 5:10

**CONCLUSION--WORKS**

1. The above “works” are not to be classed as miracles which might be done through delegated agents such as prophets and apostles.

2. Such “works” in the Old Testament were not only attributed to God, but they were **the marks of the one true God**. The New Testament writers knew this, yet they did not hesitate to attribute them to Jesus Christ.

**IV. WORSHIP IS RENDERED TO CHRIST WHICH BELONGS ONLY TO THE TRUE GOD.**

A. The Bible clearly teaches that such worship belongs to God alone, and is never to be rendered to any creature, no matter how exalted that creature may be.

1. Apostles refused worship (Acts 14:11-15).

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2. Peter refused worship (Acts 10:25-26).

3. Angels refused worship (Revelation 19:10; 22:8,9).

4. Christ commanded men to worship God alone (Matthew 4:8-10).

5. Men are punished for accepting what belongs only to God (Acts 12:21-33).

**B. Yet this same Bible teaches that Christ is to be worshiped as God.**

1. Christ **accepted** and **encouraged** such worship.

Matthew 14:31-33

Matthew 15:25-28

Matthew 28:9-10

Matthew 28:16-18

John 9:35-39

2. Christ **demanded** such worship.

John 5:23

3. **The Father commands** such worship of Christ.

Hebrews 1:6

4. Christ will actually be **worshiped by the host of heaven**. See Revelation 5:8

5. This worship of Christ will finally become universal.

Philippians 2:10-11 (All men will someday bow the knee to Christ.)

**V. CLAIMS ARE MADE BY CHRIST FOR HIMSELF WHICH COULD BE TRUE ONLY OF ONE WHO IS GOD.**

- . **Christ claimed absolute authority over the laws and institutions of God.**
  1. The law of Moses (Matthew 5:31-34; 38-39)
  2. The temple (Matthew 12:6). Remember, every Jew knew that the pattern and plan of the temple was given by Jehovah Himself.
  3. The Sabbath (Matthew 12:8--Christ is “Lord even of the Sabbath Day”). Every Jew knew that the Sabbath was instituted by God (Genesis chapter 2).
  4. The Kingdom (Matthew 16:19).
- B. He claimed to be the supreme object of saving faith equally with the Father.**

John 10:30  
John 14:1  
John 17:3  
John 21:15-22
- C. At times Christ pointed to Himself alone as the true object of men's faith and devotion, with no mention of the Father.**

Matthew 4:19  
Matthew 11:28  
John 3:36

- D. Our Lord insisted that the highest and most precious of human ties and devotion must yield to Him.**

Matthew 10:37  
Luke 14:26
- E. He claimed that in Himself all the deepest spiritual and eternal needs of humanity are completely satisfied.**
  1. The knowledge of God (Matthew 11:27).
  2. The way to God (John 14:6).
  3. The door to salvation (John 10:7-9).
  4. Light for the soul (John 8:12).
  5. The water of life (John 7:37).
  6. The bread of God (John 6:35,51).
  7. Rest for the soul (Matthew 11:28-30).
  8. Spiritual guidance (John 10:11).
  9. Security from danger (John 10:28-30).
  10. Fruitbearing energy (John 15:5).
  11. Life and Resurrection (John 11:25-26).

**CONCLUSION--CLAIMS**

The amazing thing about Christ was that **HE PREACHED HIMSELF!**

“I AM.....”  
“Come unto ME”  
“He that believeth on ME”  
etc.

## **VI. INDIRECT TESTIMONY TO THE DEITY OF CHRIST.**

There are passages of Scripture where the deity of Christ is strongly implied and assumed, yet not stated directly. The value of such indirect testimony is that it shows us that the deity of Christ is woven into the very fabric of the New Testament. The deity of Christ is assumed throughout the pages of the New Testament

These are only a few of the many examples that could be listed:

1. Luke 7:37-38, 44-48. Luke assumes our understanding that only God forgives sins. Therefore Jesus must be God!
2. John 12:37-41. The words of verse 40 were written by Isaiah just after he saw JEHOVAH (Isaiah 6:1,10). But John says Isaiah saw Christ's glory (John 12:41), because he assumes that the reader identifies the Jehovah of Isaiah 6 with Christ.
3. John 14:28—"my Father is greater than I." If Jesus were not Himself God, how could He compare Himself with the Father? It would be both blasphemous and ridiculous for a mere finite creature to go about trying to convince others that the Father was greater than he was! The Creator/creature distinction is infinite and cannot be compared at all. Jesus is speaking of functional distinctions between the Persons of the Triune Godhead (Christ voluntarily took upon Himself human form and certain limitations). This text is actually a proof text for the deity of Christ.
4. John 19:37. John's quotation is from Zechariah 12:10. But the context of that passage (see Zech. 12:1) shows that it was Jehovah

that was pierced. Thus, Christ must be God.

5. 1 Timothy 1:13—"Christ...put me into the ministry, who was before a blasphemer." Paul is certainly not saying that before his conversion he went about speaking against Jehovah! But he did speak against Jesus. Since he assumes the reader identifies Jesus with Jehovah, he also assumes that words spoken against Jesus are blasphemous.
6. Galatians 1:1—"Paul, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ." Paul contrasts Jesus Christ with mere men, which would only be valid if Christ were God.
7. Matthew 13:41; 16:27 and 24:31. These passages speak of Christ's angels. Who do angels belong to?

## **FINAL CONCLUSION**

There has never been a true and genuine Christianity from the time of the Apostles which did not hold to the deity of Christ as the major tenet. This truth is the ROCK FOUNDATION of the Christian faith (Matthew 16:15-18). Those who deny the deity of Christ have no right to call themselves Christians in the Biblical, historical sense of that term.

**[This ends Dr. Alva McClain's study]**

**MAY THE NAME “JEHOVAH” BE  
CORRECTLY APPLIED TO THE  
LORD JESUS?**

Those belonging to the cult known as “Jehovah's Witnesses” are taught that Jesus Christ is **not** God. They are taught that Jesus is a mere **creature** and that He was created by the Jehovah God. To indoctrinated Jehovah's Witnesses, the name “Jehovah” is the most sacred name of God. They would agree that this name can only be applied to the one, true God. But since they deny that Jesus is God, they strongly maintain that the divine name JEHOVAH is never used of Christ. To them it is unthinkable to refer to the Lord Jesus as JEHOVAH because they believe that this term belongs to God alone (and they do not believe that Jesus is God).

In this study we want to ask the important question, “May the name JEHOVAH be correctly applied to the Lord Jesus?” Does the Bible itself ever apply this divine name to Jesus Christ? Let us carefully go to the Scriptures and find the answer.

First, we must agree with the Jehovah's Witnesses in saying the Name JEHOVAH (written with all capital letters as “LORD” or “GOD” in the KJV Old Testament) is a name that is applicable to none but Deity. As Serle has said, “The title Jehovah is the grand, the peculiar, and incommunicable name of God. It neither is applied to any created being throughout the Scriptures, nor can be applied in reason, for it imports the necessary, independent, and external existence of the Most High.”

The LORD Himself is very jealous over this Name as seen in the

following two passages: **1) Psalm 83:18**—“That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth.” **2) Isaiah 42:8**—“I am Jehovah, that is my Name: and My glory will I not give to another.”

No greater proof of Deity could be presented concerning Christ than to show that He may rightfully be called JEHOVAH. In other words, if we can show that the Name JEHOVAH is sometimes applied to Christ then we have proved that Christ is God (because none but God can be called by God's Name!).

Consider the following:

- 1) In Zechariah 12 JEHOVAH is speaking (verses 1 and 4). In verse 10 Jehovah says, “They shall look upon ME whom they have pierced.” This can refer to no one other than Christ (compare John 19:37 and Revelation 1:7).
- 2) The Jehovah of the Old Testament declares Himself to be the First and the Last: “Thus saith Jehovah the King of Israel and his redeemer the Jehovah of hosts; I am the first and I am the last; and beside me there is no God: (Isaiah 44:6 and see Isaiah 41:4; 48:11-12). Who is declared to be “the first and the last” on the pages of the New Testament (see Revelation 1:8,11,17,18; 22:13)?
- 3) In Isaiah 6:5 the prophet said, “Mine eyes have seen the King, the LORD (Jehovah) of hosts.” Isaiah saw JEHOVAH! The Apostle John referred to this same event and made it very clear that the Person whom Isaiah saw was actually Jesus Christ: “These things said Esaias [Isaiah], when he saw His [Christ's] glory, and spake of Him (referring in the context to Christ)”--John 12:41.



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- 4) In Psalm 23:1 David declared that JEHOVAH is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep. According to the New Testament, Who is the Great Shepherd of the Sheep (John 10:11,14; Hebrews 13:20)? Also, the Old Testament repeatedly refers to Jehovah as Israel's ROCK (Deuteronomy 32:3, 4, 18; Psalm 18:2; Psalm 62:1-2; etc.). The New Testament clearly identifies this ROCK as Christ (1 Corinthians 10:4)!
- 5) In Exodus 3:14-15 we learn that JEHOVAH is the great "I AM." According to the Gospel of John, Who is the great "I AM" (see John 6:35; 8:12; 8:24; 8:58; 10:9; 10:11; 11:25; 14:6; 18:5-6)?
- 6) In Isaiah 43:10-11 and 45:21 JEHOVAH declares Himself to be the ONLY SAVIOUR. There is no other Saviour besides Him! According to the New Testament, Who is the ONLY SAVIOUR (Acts 4:10-12)?
- 7) In Isaiah 45:21-22 JEHOVAH says, "Look unto ME and be ye saved...there is none else." In John 3:14-16 we are told to look unto the crucified One to be saved!
- 8) In Isaiah 45:21-23 JEHOVAH says, "that unto Me every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear." In Philippians 2:9-11 this passage in Isaiah is applied to Christ, the One before Whom all shall someday bow!
- 9) In Isaiah 24:23 and Zephaniah 3:15-17 we learn that JEHOVAH Himself will reign in Jerusalem during the coming kingdom age and will be in the midst of His people. What does the New Testament tell us about the identity of this future, millennial King (Revelation 19:11-16; 20:4,6)?

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- 10) In Isaiah 40:3 we learn that John the Baptist was to prepare the way for the coming of Jehovah. In Mark 1:1-3 the same passage is applied to Christ (John the Baptist prepared the way for Christ).
- 11) In Isaiah 8:13-14 prophetically states that JEHOVAH will be "for a stone of stumbling and for a rock of offence." In 1 Peter 2:7-8 these verses in Isaiah are applied to Jesus Christ.
- 12) Compare Joel 2:32 with Acts 2:21,36 and Romans 10:9,13. Who is the LORD (Jehovah) upon whose Name sinners should call ?

Finally we shall quote from Dr. Lewis Sperry Chafer:

"A distinct and extensive proof that Christ is Jehovah is to be seen in the New Testament title of *Lord* which is applied to Him upwards of a thousand times. *Jehovah* is a Hebrew term which is not brought forward into the New Testament. Its equivalent is the Greek term kurios (Lord), which title is also applied to the Father and the Spirit. It is a justifiable procedure to treat the name *Jehovah* of the Old Testament as continued in its specific meaning into the New Testament by the name *Lord* (kurios). Such would be the natural meaning of many exalted declarations: 'Lord of all' (Acts 10:36), 'Lord over all' (Romans 10:12), 'Lord of glory' (1 Corinthians 2:8), and 'King of Kings, and Lord of Lords' (Revelation 17:14; 19:16)."

In light of this it may be said that someday all shall confess that Jesus is **LORD**--see Philippians 2:11. It may be rightfully said that **He is JEHOVAH JESUS!**

If Christ is really God, as the Scriptures so clearly teach, then how can we do less than believe on Him and love Him and

obey Him and serve Him and worship Him? Can you say as Thomas did (John 20:28), “My Lord and *My God*”? IS THE ONLY LIVING GOD YOUR PERSONAL GOD AND SAVIOR?

—George Zeller

**JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES VIOLATE  
THEIR OWN TRANSLATION RULE.**

The Jehovah’s Witnesses have their own translation of the Bible which is called *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. In this translation the New Testament word “Lord” (kurios) is translated “Jehovah” 237 times. One example would be Luke 2:22-24, “...they brought him up to Jerusalem to present him to **Jehovah**, just as it is written in **Jehovah’s** law, ‘Every male opening a womb must be called holy to **Jehovah**,’ and to offer sacrifice according to what is said in the law of **Jehovah**...” (*New World Translation*).

On the other hand, when the word “Lord” refers to Jesus Christ they are very careful never to translate it by the name Jehovah because they deny that Jesus is Jehovah. They deny His full deity, and they rightly understand that the name “Jehovah” can refer to none but God alone. Here are two examples where they do not translate “Lord” as “Jehovah” for reasons that are obvious: “...nobody can say: ‘Jesus is Lord!’ except by holy spirit” (*New World Translation* of 1 Cor. 12:3). “For if you publically declare...that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved” (*New World Translation* of Rom. 10:9). They refuse to acknowledge that Jesus is Jehovah! Such an admission would destroy their whole system of theology.

One of their rules of translation involves places where the New Testament quotes from the Old Testament. Here is their rule: “In places where the Christian Greek Scripture writers quote the earlier Hebrew Scriptures, the translator has the right to render the word kurios as ‘Jehovah’ wherever the divine name appeared in the Hebrew original.”<sup>4</sup> In other words, if the New Testament is quoting from the Old Testament and if the Old Testament passage used the Hebrew name “Jehovah” then the New Testament quotation should also use the name “Jehovah.” An example of this is found in Romans 10:13 which is a quotation of Joel 2:32 where the name “Jehovah” is found: “And it shall come to pass that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD (Jehovah) shall be delivered” (Joel 2:32,KJV). “And it must occur that everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will get away safe” (*New World Translation* of Joel 2:32). Since the Old Testament passage contained “Jehovah” so should the New Testament quote: “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved” (*New World Translation* of Romans 10:13). In this case they faithfully followed their own rule.

There are at least two examples where they violated their own rule. Let us now consider these:

**1) Philippians 2:10-11**

“That at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess **that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:10-11, KJV, emphasis mine)

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<sup>4</sup>This rule is found in an official Watchtower publication entitled *The Divine Name That Will Endure Forever* (1984), pages 26-27.

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These verses are based on Isaiah 45:23 even though this Old Testament passage is not quoted word for word. There is no question that Paul had this passage in mind. In Isaiah 45:23 it is JEHOVAH GOD who is speaking (see the context in verses 21-22): “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” (Isa. 45:23 KJV). This verse teaches that “UNTO ME” (unto Jehovah, the one true God) every knee shall bow, every tongue shall swear. Paul in Philippians 2:10-11 declares that it is at the name of Jesus that every knee should bow and every tongue should confess.

Isaiah said that every knee would bow to Jehovah God. Paul, referring to this same passage in Isaiah, said that every knee would bow to Jesus Christ.

Paul said in verse 11 that every tongue will someday confess that Jesus is Lord (*kurios*), that is, everyone will someday acknowledge that Jesus is Jehovah, the true and living and only God! But Jehovah’s Witnesses refuse to translate “Lord” as “Jehovah” even though it is obvious that Jehovah is the One referred to in the context of Isaiah 45:23. The *New World Translation* renders it this way: “and every tongue should openly acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father.” This Bible Translation is eager to translate “Lord” by the name “Jehovah” whenever possible (237 times in the N.T.), but in this case they cannot do it because it would force them to acknowledge that Jesus is Jehovah.

There is another place in the New Testament where Paul quotes from Isaiah 45:23. It is found in Romans 14:11, “For it is written, As I live, **saith the Lord**, every knee shall bow to me, and every tongue shall confess to God” (Rom. 14:11 KJV, emphasis mine). Notice how the Jehovah’s Witnesses translate this passage: “for it is written: ‘As I live,’ **says Jehovah**, ‘to me every knee will bend

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down, and every tongue will make open acknowledgment to God” (*New World Translation* of Rom. 14:11, emphasis mine). By using **Jehovah** in their translation of Rom. 14:11 the Jehovah’s Witnesses are acknowledging that the Isaiah 45:23 passage does indeed refer to Jehovah God. But when Paul in Philippians 2:11 refers Isaiah 45:23 to Christ, they refuse to translate “Lord” as “Jehovah.” In this case following their own rule would result in a translation that would destroy the very foundation of their cult. Their faith is based on the faulty foundation of a defective and blasphemous view of Christ, that Christ is a mere creature (an exalted angel) and not the Creator-God. They deny the eternal deity and the eternal Sonship of our Lord and Saviour. They deny that the name “Jehovah” ever applies to Him.

## 2. 1 Peter 2:3

“If so be ye have tasted that **the Lord** is gracious” (1 Peter 2:3).

Bible scholars agree that Peter was borrowing from the language of Psalm 34:8—“Oh taste and see that the LORD (Jehovah) is good” (KJV). Those familiar with Greek can compare the Septuagint translation of Psalm 34:8 with the Greek of 1 Peter 2:3 and they will find that the language used is nearly identical. For example, the word for “good” or “gracious” is the same Greek word: *χρηστός*. The Psalmist gave the invitation: “Oh taste and see that the LORD is good (gracious).” Peter’s point was this (to paraphrase him): “If you have really tasted that the Lord is good (v.3) then you will desire His Word (v.2).”

Remember the translation rule that the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim to follow: If the divine name appears in the Hebrew original (and it does appear in Psalm 34:8), then the translator has the right to render the word “*kurios*” as Jehovah. But in their translation of 1 Peter 2:3 they violate their own rule: “provided you have tasted

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that the Lord is kind” (1 Pet. 2:3 *New World Translation*). Why did they fail to translate “Lord” (*kurios*) as “Jehovah”? This is another case where they have chosen not to follow their own rule because the following verses (verses 4-6) make it clear that Peter was referring to the **Lord** Jesus Christ and the Jehovah’s Witnesses do not want anyone to think that Jesus is Jehovah. They must break their own rule or else they would be denying their own doctrine by calling Christ “Jehovah” and thus affirming His full deity.

-George Zeller

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## THE FULL DEITY OF THE ANGEL OF THE LORD

Bible-believing Christians have recognized the angel of the LORD to be none other than the pre-incarnate Christ who appeared to men at certain times during the Old Testament period. As we shall see, the Bible clearly identifies the angel of the LORD as Jehovah and as God. This poses a serious problem for Jehovah’s Witnesses and others who deny the deity of Christ and who deny the Trinity.

Jehovah’s Witnesses cannot identify the angel of the LORD as Christ because He is identified as Jehovah, and they deny that Christ is Jehovah. But if He is not Christ, then who is He? He is said to be Jehovah but He is also said to be a separate Person from Jehovah because He is said to be Jehovah’s messenger (the term “angel” means messenger). If He is Jehovah’s messenger then He must be distinct from Jehovah, and yet the Bible also identifies Him as Jehovah! This apparent dilemma is not a problem for those who understand the triune nature of God.

Analogous to this is Christ’s title as “the Word” in John 1:1-3. “The Word was with God” (John 1:1-2), thus He is distinct from God, and yet “the Word was God” (He is identified as God). As God’s Son He is distinct from God the Father. But the Bible identifies God’s Son as God (Heb. 1:8 etc.). So also Jehovah’s messenger is distinct from Jehovah and yet Jehovah’s messenger is also identified as Jehovah. This is a problem that Jehovah’s Witnesses and others that deny the Trinity cannot solve.

Let us now consider the abundant evidence which identifies the angel of the LORD as God (or as Jehovah). The reader is encouraged to read through each of these passages thoughtfully.

**1. Genesis 16:7-13**

The angel of the LORD promised to do something that only God can do (see v.10). Hagar knew that it was Jehovah who spoke to her (v.13) and she identified the angel of the LORD as God: “Thou God seest me” (v.13).

**2. Genesis 21:17-20**

The angel of the God promised to do something only God can do (see v.18). This angel is identified as God (v.19).

**3. Genesis 22:15-18**

The angel of Jehovah is speaking (verses 15-16) and yet verse 16 makes it clear that it is Jehovah who is speaking (“saith the LORD”)! In verses 17-18 the angel of Jehovah promises to do what only God can do.

**4. Genesis 31:11-13**

The angel of God (v.11) identifies Himself as God: “I am the God of Bethel” (v.13).

**5. Exodus 3:2-7**

The angel of Jehovah appeared to Moses out of the midst of a burning bush and identified Himself as God (verses 4 and 6) and as Jehovah (verses 4 and 7). See also Acts 7:30-32 where the angel of the Lord is identified as the Lord God.

**6. Exodus 14:19-21**

The angel of God does what only God can do (verses 19-20) and is identified with the glorious manifestation of God in the pillar of the cloud (verses 19-20). In verse 21 this angel is identified as “the LORD” (Jehovah).

**7. Exodus 23:20-23**

This passage makes it clear that Jehovah’s angel is much more than a mere angel; this angel is closely identified with God: Jehovah’s “name is in Him” (v.21, “name” referring to Jehovah’s nature and character) and God’s people must “obey His voice” (v.21). Indeed, He has the authority to “pardon your transgressions” or not to pardon them, and

who can forgive sins but God alone? Notice that the angel is distinct from God and sent by God. The LORD said, “Behold, I send an angel before thee.” We are reminded of New Testament parallels as the Son was distinct from the Father and sent by the Father (John 3:17; etc.) and yet equal to the Father (John 5:18; John 10:30).

**8. Judges 2:1-3**

The angel of Jehovah says things that only God could say. God is the One who brought them into the land which He swore to give unto their fathers (v.1). God is the One who promised to never break His covenant (v.1).

**9. Judges 6:11-24**

As you follow this passage, pay close attention to who is speaking to Gideon: in verse 12 the angel of Jehovah is speaking; in verse 14 Jehovah is speaking; in verse 16 Jehovah is speaking; in verse 20 the angel of God is speaking. Jehovah and the angel of Jehovah are one and the same.

**10. Judges 13:3-23**

Note especially verses 17-18. Manoah said to the angel of Jehovah, “What is Thy Name?” (v.17) and the angel of Jehovah said, “Why asketh thou thus after My Name, seeing it is secret?” The word “secret” may be translated “wonderful.” It is the same Hebrew word found in Isaiah 9:6—“His Name shall be called wonderful.” In Isaiah 9:6 the term is used as a name of Christ who is also called “the Mighty God.” The fact that Jehovah’s angel was God was certainly known by Manoah. After the angel of Jehovah appeared to him Manoah said, “We have seen God!” (v.22).<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup>There are two other passages where the angel of the LORD is obviously identified as God: **1) Psalm 34:7** (it is God who delivers His people, see Psalm 34:4,6,17,19 and it is God that we are to fear, see Psalm 34:9,11) and **2) Isaiah 63:9** (an obvious reference to God).

Another passage which could have been listed with the examples given above is 1 Chronicles 21:12-27. In this passage we learn that the angel of the LORD is a Person who is distinct from Jehovah (see verse 15 where Jehovah God sent the angel and spoke to the angel, and so also in verse 27). In verses 16-17 David sees the angel of the LORD and calls him "God."

**Conclusion:** The angel of the Jehovah is distinct from Jehovah and yet is identified as Jehovah, even as the Lord Jesus Christ is distinct from God the Father (as a distinct Person of the Trinity) and yet is identified as God.<sup>6</sup> He is both the Son of God and God the Son. To Him be glory and honor both now and forever more! —George Zeller

## A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION

Jehovah's Witnesses wrongly translate John 1:1 as follows: "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and **the Word was a god**" (*New World Translation*, 1960 edition, emphasis mine). In their Appendix they have an article explaining why they translate it this way and they quote from *A Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* by Dana and Mantey to justify their translation.

Julius Mantey, upon learning that he had been quoted, wrote a two page article showing that it is not proper to translate this verse as the Jehovah Witnesses had done. He entitled his article *A Grossly Misleading Translation*. Mantey skillfully explains the grammar of this verse and the significance of the absence of the Greek article in the last phrase of verse 1. Dr. Mantey's article is reproduced below in full:

## A GROSSLY MISLEADING TRANSLATION

John 1:1 which reads "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God," is shockingly mistranslated, "Originally the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god," in a *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, published under the auspices of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Since my name is used and our *Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament* is quoted on page 744 to seek to justify their translation, I am making this statement.

The translation suggested in our Grammar for the disputed passage is, "the Word was deity." Moffatt's rendering is "the Word was divine." Williams' translation is, "the Word was God himself." Each translation reflects the dominant idea in the Greek, For, whenever an article does not precede a noun in Greek, that noun can either be considered as emphasizing the character, nature, essence or quality of a person or thing, as **theos** (God) does in John 1:1, or it can be translated in certain

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contexts as indefinite, as they have done. But of all the scholars in the world, as far as we know, none have translated this verse as Jehovah's Witnesses have.

If the Greek article occurred with both Word and God in John 1:1 the implication would be that they are one and the same person, absolutely identical. But John affirmed that "the Word was with (the) God" (the definite article preceding each noun), and in so writing he indicated his belief that they were distinct and separate personalities. Then John next stated that the Word was God, i.e., of the same family or essence that characterizes the Creator. Or, in other words, that both are of the same nature, and that nature is the highest in existence, namely, divine.

Examples where the noun in the predicate does not have an article, as in the above verse, are: John 4:24, "God is spirit" (not a spirit; 1 John 4:16, "God is love" (not a love); and Matthew 13:39, "the reapers are angels," i.e., they are the type of beings known as angels. In each instance the noun in the predicate was used to describe some quality or characteristic of the subject, whether as to nature or type.

The apostle John in the context of the introduction to his gospel is pulling all the stops out of language to portray not only the deity of Christ but also His equality with the Father. He states that the Word was in the beginning, that He was with God, that He was God and that all creation came into existence through Him and that not even one thing exists which was not created by Christ. What else could be said that John did not say? In John 1:18 he explained that Christ has been so intimate with the Father that He was in His bosom and that He came to earth to exhibit or portray God. But if we had no other statement from John except that which is found in John 14:9, "He that has seen me has seen the Father," that would be enough to satisfy the seeking soul that Christ and God are the same in essence and that both are divine and equal in nature.

Besides, the whole tenor of New Testament revelation points in this direction. Compare Paul's declaration in Colossians 1:19 for instance: "That all the divine fullness should dwell in Him," or the statement in Hebrews 1:3, "He is the reflection of God's glory and the perfect

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representation of His being, and continues to uphold the universe by His mighty word" (Williams' translation). And note the sweeping, cosmic claim recorded in Matthew 28:19, "All authority has been given to me in heaven and on earth."

And, if we contrast with that the belittling implication that Christ was only **a god**, do we not at once detect the discord? Does not such a conception conflict with the New Testament message both in whole and in part? Why, if John, in the midst of the idolatry of his day, had made such a statement would not the first century hearers and readers have gotten a totally inadequate picture of Christ who we believe is the Creator of the universe and the only Redeemer of humanity?

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