

Get Your Free 150 MB Website Now!



Misleading Revisions in the New World Translation

by Andy Bjorklund

<http://caic.org.au/jws/theology/misleadi.htm>

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS) has inserted numerous changes into a proper translation of the Bible in an effort to validate the non-Christian doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs). Consequently, they claim that their New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (NWT) is superior to all others.

In the examples below, the New International Version of the Holy Bible (New York International Bible Society, c. 1978) has been used to depict a correct translation in the first quotation. (The translators' choice of words is further verified by highly similar renditions in the King James Version, Revised Standard Version and New American Standard Bible.)

The second quotation in each example is derived from a post-1989 edition of the NWT (WTBTS of Pennsylvania and International Bible Students Association, c. 1984). References to actual Hebrew and Greek words are derived from Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible (Thomas Nelson, c. 1990), the Greek-English New Testament (Christianity Today, c. 1975) and Vine's Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words (McDonald, unabridged ed., n.d.)

Genesis 1:2

"Spirit of God" changed to "God's active force."

The revision modifies the original noun with a more impersonal form as the JWs reject the orthodox Christian belief in the personality of the Holy Spirit.

Exodus 3:14

"I am" changed to "I shall prove to be."

The revision clouds the connection between God's self proclaimed title and Jesus' proclamation of being the same in John 8:58, as the JW rejects the deity of Jesus.

Numbers 1:52

"Under his own standard" changed to "by his [three-tribe] division."

The Hebrew word *degal* translated as "standard" literally means flag or banner. Since the JW's regard saluting a flag as an act of idolatry, the text has been altered according to their doctrinal bias. (Same revision found in Num. 2:2, 3, 10, 18, 25; 10: 14, 18, 22, 25.)

Isaiah 43:10

"Nor will there be one after me" changed to "after me there continued to be none."

The original future tense of the verb indicates that there will never be another being sharing in God's divinity. The altered tense suggests credibility to the JW doctrine of Jesus' becoming a "mighty god" while still being less than Jehovah in nature. (See the John 1: I discussion below for another expression of this JW distortion.)

Ecclesiastes 12:7

"The spirit returns" changed to "the spirit itself returns."

The passage indicates the return of a human spirit to God after death. Since the JW's believe in an unconscious state after death, "itself" has been inserted to suggest a more impersonal reference to spirit.

Matthew 2:11

"Bowed down and worshipped him" changed to "did obeisance to it"

The JW's evade recognizing Jesus as worthy of worship as a divine being by altering the form of honor that he receives from men and angels. The Greek word *proskuneo* literally means "worship." The use of "obeisance" is a NWT adaptation. (Same revision found in Matt. 8:2; 9:18, 14:33; 15:25; 28:9, 17; Mark 5:6; 15:19; Luke 24:52; John 9:38; Heb. 1:6.)

Matthew 5:19

"Least in the kingdom of heaven" changed to "least in relation to the kingdom of the heaven."

The passage indicates that a disobedient believer who sins can still find forgiveness and eternal life. The JW's believe heaven is reserved for only 144,000 specially designated servants of God. The revision suggests more separation between these groups through a status hierarchy.

Matthew 25:46

"Eternal punishment" changed to "everlasting cutting-off."

The Greek word kolasis translated "punishment" indicates continuous torment, but the NWT revision suggests "termination," as the JWs promote the doctrine of annihilationism regarding condemned souls.

Mark 1:4

"Baptism of repentance" changed to "baptism [in symbol] of repentance. "

Nothing in the original Greek text justifies the insertion of "in symbol." The revision undermines the significance of John the Baptist's ministry, the Jewish meaning of baptism and the Christian sacrament of baptism in contrast to the more regimented JW baptism requirements.

Luke 12:8

"Acknowledges me" changed to "confesses union with me."

The addition of "union" suggest something more than what the original Greek actually states and adds further credibility to the NWT distortion presented in John 6:56 below.

Luke 23:43

"Today you will be with me" changed to "I tell you today, You will be with me."

Jesus assured the thief on the cross that their spirits would soon enter the spiritual/heavenly realm together. As the JWs reject the belief in the conscious survival of the human spirit after death, their revision suggests that "today" deals with the time of the statement rather than the relocation of their spirits.

John 1:1

"Word was God" changed to "Word was a god."

The JWs reject the orthodox Christian belief in the deity of Jesus. The revision asserts that Jesus was someone other than God Himself.

John 1:12

"Believe" changed to "exercise faith."

The orthodox Christian doctrine of spiritual justification and rebirth before God by belief in Jesus is in conflict with the JW doctrine of salvation by works (i.e., obedience to their organization). The revision attempts to describe salvation as a continuous process rather than a radical encounter and transition (Same revision found in John 3:16, 18; 6:29; Rom. 4:3, 10:4, 9, 10.)

John 6:56

"Remains in me" changed to "remains in union with me."

The mystical union between the individual human spirit and the Spirit of Jesus is obscured by restructuring "in" with a compound form. The substitution implies more separation between a Christian and Jesus. (Same revision found in John 14:20; Rom. 8:1, 2, 10; 12:5; 2 Cor. 5:17; Gal. 3:28; Eph. 1:13*; 2:10, 13, 15, 21, 22; 3:6; Col. 1:14*, 16*, 27; 2:6, 10*, 11, 12*; 3:3; 1 Thes. 4:16; 5:18; 1 John 3:24; 4:4; 5:20. Verses with an asterisk (*) indicate where the revision uses "by means of" or "in relationship to" rather than "in union with.")

John 8:58

"I am" changed to "I have been."

Same intent as described in Exodus 3:14 above.

John 14:17

"Beholds him or knows him" changed to "beholds it or knows it."

The revision ignores the context of the pronoun with the Comforter role in the preceding verse to deny the personality of the Holy Spirit.

John 17:5

"Glorify me in your presence with the glory I had with you" changed to "glorify me alongside yourself with the glory that I had alongside you."

The original text reflects the shared deity of God the Father and Jesus before the creation of the world, but the revision suggests different natures as implied by different states of glory.

John 17:21

"Are in me" changed to "are in union with me."

The original statement by Jesus indicates his shared deity with the Father. The revision undermines this by suggesting a greater separation between them.

Acts 2:17

"Pour out my Spirit" changed to "pour out some of my spirit."

The revision evades recognition of the Holy Spirit and His activity at Pentecost by suggesting an impersonal force activated to a more limited degree by God.

Acts 2:42

"Breaking of bread" changed to "taking of meals."

The passage demonstrates the frequency of the communion sacrament among the earliest Christians. The revision is an attempt to disguise this practice as the JW's teach that communion is reserved for only the 144,000 special saints. (Same revision found in Acts 20:7.)

Acts 4:12

"Be saved" changed to "get saved." The revision avoids recognizing that an individual commitment to Jesus provides immediate and complete salvation, as the JW's believe in an alternative salvation as prescribed by their organization. (Same revision found in Acts 16:30-31.)

Acts 10:36

"Lord of all" changed to "Lord of all [others]."

The revision suggests that even though Jesus is highly honored, he is still one among many of God's created beings. (Similar revisions found in Rom. 8:32; Phil. 2:9; Col. 1: 16-17.)

Romans 2:29

"By the Spirit" changed to "by spirit."

Although the definite article 'the' does not literally appear in the Greek, it is implied by the form that (pneuma) appears in. The revision, however, translates pneuma in a more abstract form to evade the reality of the Holy Spirit. (Same revision found in Rom. 15:19; Eph. 2:22; 3:5; Titus 3:5; James 2:26; 2 Peter 1:21.)

Romans 8:23a

"Have the firstfruits of the Spirit" changed to "have the firstfruits, namely the spirit."

This represents another form of disguising the separate personality of the Holy Spirit as in Rom. 2:29 above. The original text refers to the derivatives of the Spirit, but the revision identifies the spirit as a derivative.

Romans 8:23b

"The redemption of our bodies" changed to "the release from our bodies by ransom."

This revision avoids the suggestion that there is continuity of either body or soul after death. Their teaching that the soul ceases to exist at the death of the body precludes the ownership of, or relationship to, a body that must be redeemed.

Romans 8:28

"All things" changed to "all his works." The revision undermines the sovereignty of God by suggesting that He controls only the things He is directly involved in doing.

Romans 8:29

"Those God foreknew" changed to "those whom he gave his first recognition."

The revision obscures the nature of God's knowledge and power as a first recognition may or may not be foreknowledge.

Romans 9:5

"Christ, who is God over all, forever praised!" changed to "Christ, [sprang] according to the flesh: God who is over all, [be] blessed forever."

The direction proclamation that Christ is God is obscured by the altered text.

Romans 10:13

"Lord" changed to "Jehovah."

This revision obscures the fact that the Lord referred to in verse 13 is the same Lord called Jesus in verse 9. Since the JWs reject the deity of Jesus, the revision is made accordingly.

The Greek word, kurios, translated "Lord" has been revised to "Jehovah" over 200 times in the NWT. The JWs insist that this is the only valid title for God, even though Greek-speaking Jews used "Lord" and "God" in place of "Yahweh" (the source of "Jehovah") throughout their Septuagint translation of the Old Testament. Furthermore, the Bible contains dozens of names for God other than Lord, Yahweh, or Jehovah.

Romans 13:1

"Authorities that exist have been established by God" changed to "authorities stand placed in their relative positions by God."

Since the JW regard saluting a flag, military service and similar forms of submission to government as idolatry, they have added words to the text to weaken the proclaimed authority of government.

1 Corinthians 6:19

"Your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit" changed to "the body of YOU people is [the] temple of the holy spirit."

To avoid recognition of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in the individual believer, the revision modifies "body" to a more collective form in harmony with the opposing JW doctrine.

1 Corinthians 10:4

"The Rock was Christ" changed to "that rock-mass meant the Christ."

The passage depicts the preincarnate Jesus exhibiting his divine nature by being present many centuries earlier. This revision tries to conceal his eternal nature with a more figurative interpretation of "the Rock."

1 Corinthians 12:11

"As he determines" changed to "as it wills."

The NWT finds many ways to disguise the personality of the Holy Spirit. In this case the third person pronoun exercising individual conscience and will is replaced with an impersonal pronoun.

1 Corinthians 14:14-16

"Spirit" changed to "[gift of the] spirit."

Like several other Biblical passages, this one indicates the distinctive presence of the human spirit as distinguished from the mind and body. The JW's evade these distinctions and try to disguise them with related revisions.

1 Corinthians 15:2

"By this gospel you are saved" changed to "through which YOU are also being saved."

Similar to the Acts 16:30 revision above, this one again obscures the completeness of salvation by grace. The JW's salvation exists as an extended process ("being saved") with the outcome being uncertain until final judgment before Jehovah.

Galatians 6:18

"Your spirit" changed to "the spirit YOU [show]."

Similar to the I Cor. 14 revision above, this one attempts to obscure the reality of the individual human spirit by presenting it more as an attitude of action than an entity.

Philippians 1:23

"To depart and be with Christ" changed to "the releasing and the being with Christ."

Paul's eagerness indicates that the believer's spirit goes immediately into Christ's presence at death. The revision suggests that death and being with Christ are two separate steps in an extended process, as the JW's believe in soul sleep (i.e., the unconscious state of the human spirit awaiting the resurrection).

Colossians 1:19

"His fullness" changed to "fullness."

The definite Greek article (to), translated "his," indicates that Jesus shares the Father's divine nature as also shown in Col. 2:9. The revisions evade the truth by concealing the similarity of the two passages.

Colossians 2:9

"The fullness of deity" changed to "the fullness of the divine quality."

The Greek theotes, translated "deity," literally means divine essence or divinity. As the JW's reject the divine nature of Jesus, a revision is inserted to suggest that Jesus is limited to only divine-like characteristics.

I Timothy 4:1

"The Spirit" changed to "the inspired utterance."

This revision attempts to obscure the reality and activity of the Holy Spirit by representing it as a message instead of an entity. (Similar revisions found in 1 John 4:1, 3, 6 with "expression" being utilized in place of "utterance.")

Titus 2:13

"Our great God and Savior Jesus Christ" changed to "the great God and of [the] Savior of us, Christ Jesus."

Similar to the Rom. 9:5 revision shown above, a distinct proclamation of Jesus as God is obscured by the altered text. (Similar rewording also found in 2 Peter 1:1.)

Hebrews 1:8

"Your throne, O God" changed to "God is your throne."

The revision avoids addressing the Son, Jesus, as God to validate the JW's rejection of his divine nature.

Hebrews 9:14

"The eternal Spirit" changed to "an everlasting spirit."

Similar to the Rom. 2:29 revision above, the switching of the article before the adjective represents the work of the Holy Spirit in a more indirect/ impersonal manner.

Hebrews 12:9

"Father of our spirits" changed to "Father of our spiritual life."

Similar to the I Cor. 14 revision shown above, this one tries to obscure the distinctive reality of human spirits by replacing them with a more abstract noun.

Hebrews 12:23

"The spirits of righteous men" changed to "the spiritual lives of righteous ones."

This revision represents the same noun-switching as described in Heb. 12:9 above.

Hebrews 12:28

"We are receiving a kingdom" changed to "we are to receive a kingdom."

An orthodox Christian understanding of the Kingdom recognizes it as primarily established through Jesus' victorious death, then further through post-resurrection displays of his power, and perpetually through the addition of new believers into God's family. The JWs teach that Jesus' Kingdom did not begin until his invisible return in 1914. The form of the Greek word for "receiving" (paralambano) implies a current condition, but the revision suggests a future event according to the JW doctrine.

1 Peter 1:11

"Spirit of Christ in them was pointing" changed to "the spirit in them was indicating concerning Christ."

Another example of the supernatural presence of Jesus in the life of a Christian is obscured again by this revision as the JW doctrinal view presents him as more limited.

I Peter 3:18-19

"By the Spirit, through whom" changed to "in the spirit. In this [state]."

Similar to several examples presented above, in this passage the presence and personality of the Holy Spirit is obscured with a more abstract representation of the Holy Spirit to accommodate the JW doctrine.

Jude 19

"Have the Spirit" changed to "having spirituality."

Similar to Gal. 6:18 above, this revision attempts to obscure the separate presence of the Holy Spirit.

Revelation 3:14

"Ruler of God's creation" changed to "beginning of the creation by God."

The altered prepositions distract from the sovereignty of Jesus indicated in the passage and suggests that the real power of creation was accomplished through the Father, as the JW's believe that Jesus is a created being.

Author's Note

Approximately one-fourth of the verse citations above were derived from The New World Translation on Trial by Robert Bowman in the Christian Research Journal, 11: 3 (Winter/Spring, 1989), p.20. The rest of this inventory was compiled from the author's own comparisons of doctrinally critical verses with the references cited in the introduction. There are many more examples of Biblical distortions by the JW's than those presented here. This assortment is limited to the more detectable and doctrinally significant examples.

[Home](#)