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Two Ways Jehovah's Witnesses Changed the Bible - Part 2
Lord or Jehovah?

By Tal Davis

In the first of this two part series, we discussed how the Jehovah's Witnesses go to all lengths to obscure from their membership the biblical facts about the full deity of Jesus Christ and the doctrine of the Holy Trinity. Their corporate organization, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS), publishes numerous books, pamphlets, and magazines for Jehovah's Witnesses to read and study. In fact, members are allowed only to read Bible study literature published by that organization and its affiliates. That way only its official interpretations are absorbed by its people. All other publications are regarded as apostate and false teachings that can lead a person astray. Any Jehovah's Witness caught consulting non-WBTS reading material or videos may be subject to discipline or expulsion. This is a perfect example of a cultic or totalitarian mind control technique. It is exactly the way the regimes in North Korea and China maintain control over their people.

As we indicated in part one, clearly, the most overt way the WBTS controls how its membership acquires biblical knowledge is that it publishes its own official Bible version called the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (NWT). That version is almost universally regarded by Hebrew and Greek scholars as the most distorted translation ever produced in the English language. In the last installment, we showed one blatant example of where the NWT translators added a word in their English version that does not appear in any Greek text. That addition, found five times in Colossians 1:15-20, completely changes the meaning of what is an important passage regard-

ing the preexistent eternal deity of Jesus Christ. (To read part one click here:

<http://www.marketfaith.org/2023/10/two-ways-jehovahs-witnesses-changed-the-bible-part-1-tal-davis/>)

Now we turn to what may be an even more serious and unmitigated distortion of the New Testament text by the translators of the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*. So what then is that blatant misrepresentation?

First let's review a little Old Testament history.

In Exodus 3, Moses, while he was in exile after killing an Egyptian, watched Jethro's sheep in Horeb, the "Mountain of God." Suddenly, Moses saw the "angel of the LORD" (actually God Himself) in a burning bush. The Lord told Moses to remove his sandals because he was on sacred ground. God then identified Himself saying, "*I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.*" He informed Moses that He had seen the misery of His people in their bondage, had heard the cries, and knew of their suffering. He also informed Moses that He was going to lead them "*to a good and spacious land, a land flowing with milk and honey.*" He then ordered Moses to personally go talk to Pharaoh and to lead the Israelites out of Egypt.

We might expect that when God called Moses he would have responded unquestionably. But that was not what happened. Moses asked, "*Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh and that I should bring the Israelites out of Egypt?*" (vs. 3:11)

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God gave Moses a two-fold answer to his objection (vs. 12). One, He would personally accompany Moses to face Pharaoh. And second, he would give him a sign.

After God gave Moses these assurances, Moses posed a rather audacious question (Exodus 3: 13f). He wanted to know how he was supposed to identify to the Israelites which God had sent him to be their deliverer. God's reply is especially significant, "*I AM WHO I AM*" (or "*I AM BECAUSE I AM*," or "*I WILL BE WHO I WILL BE*"). He said to tell them, "*I AM has sent me to you.*" God revealed His sacred name to Moses which came to be written as YHWH. It appears more than 6,000 times in the Old Testament. YHWH is a Hebrew form of "I AM," which is how Jesus often referred to Himself. Actually, the exact pronunciation of the name is not known (ancient Hebrew had no vowels). Most linguistic scholars believe it is best transliterated as Yahweh.

Ancient Jewish people, when reading the Scriptures, would never say that name because they did not want to mispronounce it. Instead they substituted the Hebrew word for Lord (*Adonai*) anywhere it appeared. Consequently, in the 3rd century B.C., the Old Testament was translated into Greek by seventy Jewish scholars (the famous Septuagint, meaning "70"). Whenever the name of God appeared, the translators used the Greek word for Lord (*Kyrios*) instead of the Hebrew YHWH. By New Testament times (the 1st century A.D.) the Septuagint was the commonly used Greek version throughout the Mediterranean world, even in Palestine.

That's why when the Greek New Testament writers (Matthew, Mark, Luke, John, Paul, etc.) quoted from Old Testament passages, they used the word Lord (Greek: *Kyrios*)

where in the Hebrew original it was Yahweh. They were using the Greek Septuagint. And, incidentally, that's why, even now, most English Old Testament versions do not transliterate YHWH as Yahweh but rather substitute it with LORD (all capital letters). An example is Deuteronomy 6:4-5 in the New American Standard Bible: "Hear, Israel! The LORD (YHWH) is our God, the LORD (YHWH) is one! And you shall love the LORD (YHWH) your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength."

Now we come to the NWT. Pay close attention to this statement: 237 times in the NWT "Christian Greek Scriptures" New Testament, the common Greek words for Lord (*kyrios*) and God (*Theos*) are, incredibly, translated as "Jehovah." This is a totally illegitimate and unwarranted use of the Old Testament name of God (YHWH - badly transliterated by the WBTS as "Jehovah"). This illicit substitution is made, however, only when *kyrios* is used in the context of a reference to God in a generic sense, or when used in a passage that quotes from the Old Testament.

That being said, however, never in the NWT New Testament is *kyrios* translated as "Jehovah" in the nearly 400 other times when it is applied as a title to Jesus Christ. In those cases it is always rendered correctly as "Lord" or "Master."

This is troublesome for several reasons. To start with, there is simply no justifiable textual or linguistic basis for ever rendering *kyrios* as "Jehovah." The Greek word *kyrios* should always be accurately translated, according to context, as either "Lord" or "Master." The Greek word *Theos* is always translated as "God." Neither Greek word should be, or can ever be, translated legitimately as "Jehovah." That word never appears in any Greek New Testament text.

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That's why it is important to comprehend that the New Testament writers, following Jewish tradition and the 3rd Century B.C. Greek Septuagint's translation of the Old Testament, understood the term *kurios* (Lord), in most cases, to be a reference to God (Yahweh) in the fullest sense. Thus, when New Testament writers called Jesus *kurios* (Lord or Master), they were directly identifying Him with the God of the Old Testament (Yahweh).

Note: The Hebrew divine name should accurately be transliterated as Yahweh, not "Jehovah." The word Jehovah is derived from placing vowels from the Latin transliteration of Hebrew *adonai* into the Latin transliteration of YHWH (JHVH). It first appeared in 1530. "Jehovah" was used four times in the KJV, but the NKJV (New King James Version) removed it. The last English translation to use it was the American Standard Version (ASV) of 1901. All revisions of that ASV, and nearly all other Bible versions in the 20th century, dropped it in favor of the more traditional LORD. This is another fact the WBTS has obscured from its membership for decades.

The conclusion is this, it is obvious that the WBTS' illegitimate use of "Jehovah" in the NWT to translate *kurios* (Lord) or *Theos* (God) 237 times in generic reference to God, but never as a title of Jesus, is intentional. It is intended to fortify its dogmatic doctrinal distinction between God and Je-

sus in the minds of its members. By not allowing its people the freedom to do biblical textual research on their own, the WTBS has kept the truth of this deceitful corruption of the Scriptures from its trusting members. One has to wonder, how many Jehovah's Witnesses, after doing some online study have noticed this problem in the NWT?

The Jehovah's Witnesses say they are a Christian movement. But for over a hundred and fifty years they have denied the most fundamental doctrine of the Christian faith: the full Deity of the Lord Jesus Christ. In this two part series we have examined just two primary examples of how the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (the leadership organization of the Jehovah's Witnesses) has distorted its translation of the Bible in order to obscure that essential truth from its

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own followers. We could cite many others. In future articles we will examine more of them. God will hold the translators and the leaders of the WBTS organization responsible for their deceitfulness in leading people far astray from His Son Jesus and the salvation only faith in Him provides.

But false prophets also appeared among the people, just as there will also be false teachers among you, who will secretly introduce destructive heresies, even denying the Master who bought them, bringing swift destruction upon themselves. (2 Peter 2:1 NASB)