

JOHN 1:1

THOSE "a god" TRANSLATIONS

1.) New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures

A translation written by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and used to endorse their beliefs. The five men who make up the "translation committee" are self-appointed scholars lacking adequate schooling or background to function as Biblical translators. Their purpose was not to translate a modern version of the Bible, but to justify their theology.

2.) The Emphatic Diaglott

This 1864 Greek interlinear translation was produced by Benjamin Wilson. Wilson was self-educated and by no means a scholar. He was a Christadelphian (a sect which also denies basic Christian doctrine) and used this translation to justify his beliefs. In 1902, the Watchtower Society bought the plates used to print the Diaglott. The Society currently prints and sells this translation. Careful examination has revealed that the Society has tampered with the Greek text in the Diaglott.

3.) The New Testament (A New Translation based on the Oldest Manuscripts) by Johannes Greber.

This translation was published in 1937, and claims to be free of the dogmatic restrictions of any church. Greber, who was at one time a Catholic priest, says he was aided by spirits who clarified certain passages of the Bible and cleared up what he called doctrinal errors of Christianity. His wife, a spirit medium also was instrumental in making this translation. Greber published a companion text for his New Testament translation, entitled **Communication with the Spirit World of God**. This book recounts the events that led him to become interested in spiritism and outlines his doctrines on how the spirit world works and how God and spirits relate to and communicate with man.

4.) The New Testament in an Improved Version

This translation was based on Archbishop Newcome's New Translation of the New Testament. However, the edition cited by the Watchtower Society was not released until several years after Archbishop William Newcome's death in the early 19th century. The original volume text of John 1:1 did not read "a god". That verse was altered after the archbishop's death. The edition quoted by the Watchtower published by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue, by the Distribution of Books - Unitarian.

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A FAITHFUL WITNESS WILL NOT LIE;

But a False Witness Uttereth Lies

Proverbs 14:6

KAM/MKG

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has always sought the approval and support of scholars for its peculiar theology. The trouble is, the Society has faced an almost impossible task in finding such support.

At times, therefore, the Society has had to resort to devious techniques in order to appear to have the scholarly support they so greatly desire. Ellipses (...) have become a favorite among the writers of Watchtower material, enabling them to alter the meaning of a quotation so it appears to endorse their teachings.

Further dishonest techniques include misquotations, misrepresentations, the use of half-truths and mistranslations of Scripture. For example, the Society's inaccurate **New World Translation of the Holy Scripture** renders John 1:1:

"In [the] beginning, the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

Stripping Christ of His deity has been a lifelong practice of the Watchtower. Distorted translation of clear Biblical texts as well as isolated Scripture passages are used to endorse their position.

Their unsupported rendering of John 1:1 contradicts all known rules of New Testament Greek grammar, and, in order to present the appearance of scholarly backing for their translation of that verse, the Society has misquoted Dr. Julius R. Mantey and H.E. Dana's **Manual Grammar of the Greek New Testament**.

Both Dana and Mantey firmly held to the Christian belief in the Triune God as is evident throughout their **Grammar**. In fact, the late Dr. Mantey had on several occasions issued statements concerning the misquotation of his statements by the Witnesses, and directed a letter of request to the Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn demanding references

and quotes from his book be removed from their publications. His request was ignored!

The practice of wrenching a quote from its context is common in many of the Watchtower's publications, mainly because it is the only way the Society can present even a veneer of scholarly respectability for their theology. That the source they quote disagrees with their theology is secondary, so long as the source says **something** that they can use.

The Society will also misrepresent a source if that person says something that they agree with.

The **Watchtower** magazine (Dec. 1, 1980) for example, cites an article in **U.S. Catholic** magazine (April 1980) in which a United Methodist clergyman expresses his doubts about the existence of hell as it is taught by Orthodox Christianity. The Watchtower Society, which itself denies the existence of hell, naturally appealed to this apparent agreement with their theology by a mainline Protestant minister.

What the Society failed to mention is that the Rev. Robert Short, the author of the article, is a universalist. Rev. Mr. Short believes that all people are going through hell right here on earth and that God, being a loving God, will save us all and let us all go to heaven, regardless of our beliefs and deeds in this life. It would be tough to find a doctrine further from the Society's position on this matter. The Society holds the view that there is **no** hell at all and that anyone who does not please Jehovah God by being one with them will not be saved, but will be annihilated.

Not only has the Society misrepresented Rev. Mr. Short's views in order to support their own position, but their use of a universalist, regardless of his clerical credentials, as a representative of Orthodox Christianity and other Protestant clergy is misleading.

Recent research has uncovered a more startling example of misrepresentation in the Society's use of the works of Johannes Greber. The Society cites him in three currently used publications as lending support to their doctrines.

Certainly, Greber should be a favorite among the Jehovah's Witnesses today. His stand on many of their major doctrines is identical. For example, in his writings, Greber has said: "There is no union of three persons in no Trinity in the sense in which you (Christians) teach. God is an individual person. Only the Father is God." Further he says "Christ Himself was not God, but only the first of God's sons."

Because of a need to support his heretical doctrines, Greber likewise published his own translation of the New Testament. He says that he was told by the spirit world that there were places in the New Testament, in modern Bibles, in which a word has been changed to the extent of altering the sense of the text. When he inquired and asked for a reference, he was given John 20:28. The spirit announced to Mr. Greber, that Thomas did not proclaim Jesus as his Lord and God, but rather as his Lord and Master. Greber then, because of further announced discrepancies, proceeded to translate with the aid of spirits, his New Testament "without restriction to the dogma of any church."

In line with this thinking, the most striking comparison with Watchtower interpretation is Greber's rendering of John 1:1: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God; and the Word was a god."

His translation of this verse is currently quoted in two Society publications, **Make Sure of All Things, Hold Fast to What is Fine** (p. 489) and **The Word, Who is He According to John** (p. 5).² The Greber citation is used as an example of a modern translation that also used "a god," thus agreeing with the New World Translation.

But would the Society be so eager to cite Greber if they knew of his background or, if they know of his background, are they eager to make known to their rank-and-file members what Johannes Greber did, how he came to some of his theological conclusions and the method he used in translating the New Testament?

Little is known about the origins of the **New World Translation**. The Society would like the same to be true about Greber's **New Testament** translation. However, information provided by the Johannes Greber Memorial Foundation (the organization currently selling his books) proves even more devastating to the Society's already-damaged credibility.

Greber was a Roman Catholic priest who lived in Germany during the early 20th century. In 1923, a series of experiences led him to become interested in spiritism, or communication with spirit beings. He recounts these experiences in an autobiographical section of another of his books, **Communication with the Spirit World of God**. The spirit beings he was communicating with told Greber that much of what he believed about Christianity was false. They announced that the reason Christendom was so full

of false beliefs and misunderstood doctrines was that the Bible was full of inaccuracies and mistranslations. So, inspired by these spirits, Greber, set out to do his own New Testament translation.

In the words of the Johannes Greber Memorial Foundation, here is how Greber went about his work:

The New Testament, as interpreted by the scholarly Pastor Johannes Greber, has as its source the oldest manuscripts in the world, made available to pastor Greber for study and translation through the courtesy and cooperation of theological experts and museums the world over. This is an absolutely independent translation, without restriction to the dogma of any Church.

The task was not simple. Many contradictions between what appears in the ancient scrolls and the New Testament as we have grown to know it, arose and were the subject of his constant prayers for guidance -- prayers that were answered and the discrepancies clarified to him by God's Spirit World.

At times, he was given the correct answers in large illuminated letters and words passing before his eyes. Other times, he was given the correct answers during prayer meetings. His wife, a medium of God's Spirit World, was often instrumental in conveying the correct answers from God's Messenger's to Pastor Greber.

The Bible is clear in forbidding all contact with occult spirits professing to bring messages from the spirit world. Saul lost his life for seeking to contact the spirit of Samuel through the medium at Endor (1 Samuel 28). The Watchtower Society has on several occasions rightly warned their followers to stay away from such spiritism.³ One notable reference is found in the 1965 edition of **Make Sure of All Things, Hold Fast to What is Fine** (p. 470). Here the Society emphasizes the need to stay away from and to "**DESTROY OBJECTS RELATED TO SPIRITISTIC PRACTICES**". However, the Society is desperate for support for their denial of Christ's deity. They thus ignore the Bible and their own standards by using a translation inspired by the spirit world for endorsement. Further, they attempt to hide the demonic nature of this support from their followers. Nowhere is given even a hint that Greber's translation was made with the aid of spirits and the mediumship of his wife.

Moreover, the view adopted by the Jehovah's Witnesses in reality makes them polytheists. Christians hold to and affirm the one true God (John

17:3). However, the Witnesses say that this one true God is only the Father (Jehovah) and that in addition Jesus is "a god". This then leads one to the conclusion that either Jesus is a false god or that there are two true Gods, both of which are false doctrines and contradicted by God's Word.

The idea that Jesus is not God is a lie, and like all lies, is inspired by the Father of lies, Satan (John 8:44). Satan will use any means he can attempt, to keep us from believing the truth that Jesus is Yahweh, even to the extent of inspiring corrupted versions of the Bible, such as Greber's New Testament (and the Society's "New World Translation") which strip Jesus of His Deity. Satan and his demons know that unless a person believes that Jesus is the Eternal God (John 8:24 -- ego eimi = I AM) that person will die in his sins. The Society wants people not to believe that Jesus is God, but that He is the archangel Michael.

The Society, in drawing upon Greber, has ignored and disobeyed God's Word. (Lev. 20:6, 27; Isaiah 8:19). Further, because of these quotes and their origin, the Society must lie to both their followers and the public. During the past two years, the Society has purchased copies of Greber's **New Testament and Communication with the Spirit World of God** from the current publisher and distributor, known as the Johannes Greber Memorial Foundation in Teaneck, N.J. (see Fig. 1). As shown, the Society on Dec. 20, 1980 acknowledged the receipt of books ordered by them and sent to them by this foundation. However, when a letter of inquiry dated Nov. 25, 1981 was sent to the Society in Brooklyn, N.Y., asking where the Greber translation could be obtained, the Society replied on Dec. 10, 1981 that they could not furnish an up-to-date listing. In fact, the address that the Society gave as the publisher's was that of a building demolished several decades ago. (see Fig. 2)

The Society, time and again, has tried to cover up Christ's deity by any method they could use. Further, the Society's attempt to hide Greber's occult source of information has led them to mislead inquirers seeking copies of Greber's works. This should cause all Jehovah's Witnesses who love the truth seriously to examine and consider the facts presented here and the deceitful nature of the Watchtower organization.

The Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be "an open and honest people, not suspiciously secretive" (Kingdom Ministry, July, 1975). Their conduct regarding the Greber New Testament translation does not follow that pattern. A recent issue of the *Watchtower Magazine*

stresses honesty in an article entitled "Why Be Honest". Here we are told that "Since the time of man's creation, Jehovah has been consistent in his requirement that his true worshippers be honest in all things". This again emphasizes the Watchtower's failure to follow their own standards. The Society, knowing that spiritism is forbidden by the Bible, and realizing the spiritistic origin of Greber's translation, has withheld these facts from both their members and the public.

In their passion to justify their rendering of John 1:1, the Society has fulfilled Paul's statement in II Thessalonians 2:10-11. The Society has refused to love the truth and for this cause, God sends upon them a strong delusion, to make them believe what is false.

Footnotes:

(1) The Watchtower Society claims to do the same. In their book All

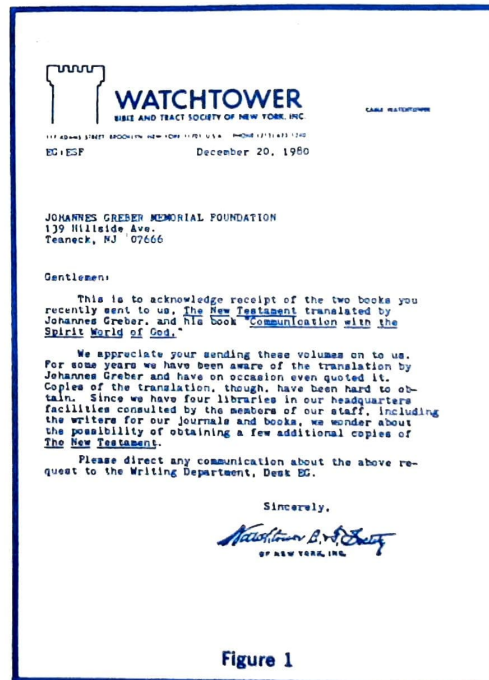


Figure 1

Scripture is inspired of God and Beneficial, the Watchtower says (on page 323) when speaking of all the many Bible translations. "all these translations, even down to the very latest, have their defects. There are inconsistencies or unsatisfactory renderings, infected with sectarian traditions or worldly philosophies, and hence not in full harmony with the sacred truths that Jehovah has recorded in his Word." The Society claims to fill the need for an accurate version with their **New World Translation**.

(2) The Society also cites Greber a third time. This quotation is found in **Aid to Bible Understanding** (page 1134). Here the Watchtower uses Greber's interpretation of Matthew 27:52, 53 to make it appear that the resurrection of the saints at Christ's death was not a raising from the dead, but merely the earth exhuming the dead bodies due to the earthquake.

(3) Numerous references can be found throughout Watchtower publications warning of the extreme dangers of contacting Spirits from beyond. A 64 page booklet **Unseen Spirits - Do They Help Us? or Do They Harm Us?** reiterates the Watchtower position to have nothing to do with spiritism. Also see pages 61-64 of **The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life**, where we are told that "wicked spirits mislead men and women ... through spiritism."

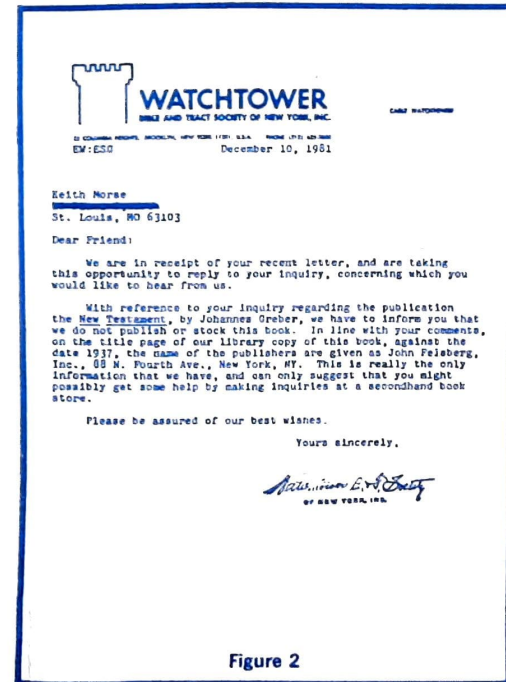


Figure 2