

Mistranslations
**in the Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible,
the "New World Translation"**

Some Examples

by

Dr Trevor R Allin

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Whole books have been written on some of the mistranslations in the Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible. Here, however, is a brief introduction to the subject that I wrote in response to an e-mail from a visitor to this website.

Some parts of it may be useful as a basis for a discussion with Jehovah's Witnesses.

The table on page 8, below, is particularly revealing and easy to follow.

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About the Author

Dr Trevor R Allin graduated from the University of Leeds with a 1st Class Honours degree in Phonetics, French, Spanish and Philosophy and History of Religion. Following studies in linguistics, he undertook original research on a South American indigenous language, for which purpose he lived within the indigenous community and studied the language with native speakers over a period of more than a year. The University of St Andrews subsequently awarded him a Ph.D. for his thesis "A Grammar of Resígaro".

For many years he taught a range of languages up to "Advanced" level standard in state schools in England and in Germany, and in state-recognised schools in Scotland and Spain. He also worked full time over a period of many years supporting and inspecting qualified Modern Language teachers and giving them professional development training. Teaching and examination materials written by him for French, German and Spanish at a wide range of levels, up to and including "A" Level, have been published by mainstream U.K. educational publishers and examination boards, for whom he has written and marked examination question papers.

He is also the published translator of books from Spanish and German into English and is the author of "Curso de Griego Bíblico: Los elementos del Griego del N.T.", the Spanish edition of the leading textbook on New Testament Greek, Jeremy Duff's "The Elements of New Testament Greek".¹ He has taught New Testament (Koiné) Greek to Spanish-speaking adult students in Spain and has delivered lectures in various places in Spain on the important early Greek manuscript of the Bible, Codex Sinaiticus.

¹ Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005

Mistranslations in the Jehovah's Witness version of the Bible, the "New World Translation"

Hello

Thank you for writing. I am glad to hear that my articles have been helpful to you. It is good to know that you are a Christian. In discussing matters with Jehovah's Witnesses, we need to bear in mind that only God can change a person's heart. If people do not want to learn, they will reject whatever is said to them. All we can do is to be faithful to the truth and pray that God's Holy Spirit will work in the minds of the people with whom we speak and affect their attitudes. We also recognise that it will probably take time for them to assimilate new information that is radically different from what they have been told by the Jehovah's Witness Organisation and so now believe.

Dr Jason BeDuhn

As regards Jason BeDuhn, I believe that my article² clearly unmasks him as a person deeply influenced by Jehovah's Witness teaching, probably himself a Jehovah's Witness or a former Jehovah's Witness.

In writing about the text of the New Testament and translations of it, he is clearly beyond the scope of his area of expertise, which is shown by his numerous "faux pas" and "howlers" in his attempts to handle the Greek. It is not surprising that in the fifteen years since he first published his book, not a single Greek expert or specialist in the original text of the New Testament has endorsed his claims. The only people who quote from him approvingly are the Jehovah's Witnesses themselves.

Dr Thomas Howe

In contrast, Thomas Howe is an expert in the languages of the Bible, respected world-wide by academics who are in a position to evaluate his knowledge. His books "Bias in New Testament Translations?" and "The Deity of Christ in Modern Translations"³ give a detailed and impartial accurate linguistic analysis of many of the texts that have been mis-translated by the "New World Translation". (I have a Ph.D. in Linguistics from St Andrews University in Scotland, so I am able to understand and assess objectively what he has written.)

The word "Jehovah" and the Biblical texts

On the "removal" of "Jehovah's name" from other translations, I would point out that this word does not occur in a single one of the thousands of ancient manuscripts of the New Testament – and indeed, the form "Jehovah" does not occur in manuscripts of the Old Testament either, since this is a mistaken transcription of the original Hebrew word.

On the whole issue of the word "Jehovah", I would refer you to my article on Matthew 6:9, which you can find here: <http://livingwater-spain.com/yhwh.pdf> On the *form* of the Hebrew name, see page 8 of that article. On the "removal" of the name, claimed by the Jehovah's Witnesses, see p. 11. As regards the "evidence" that the Jehovah's Witnesses have fabricated, see p. 12-13.

² Here: <http://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf>

³ Thomas A Howe, "Bias in New Testament Translations?", 2010, Charlotte, NC, Solomon's Razor Publishing. Dr Howe is an established academic who has served on the faculty of Bible and Biblical Languages at Southern Evangelical Seminary since 1993.

In 2015 a new book by Dr Howe on the same theme was published: "The Deity of Christ in Modern Translations". This book is available from Amazon (and possibly elsewhere). It appears to be a revised and slightly abbreviated version of the earlier book.

On the Jehovah's Witnesses' "J-texts", which do contain the Hebrew letters יהוה [YHWH], see "Other evidence" on page 13 of the above article and also the article "God's Sacred Name in the Bible", here: http://livingwater-spain.com/Heb_in_LXX_MS.pdf . (Note the underline character _ between words in this link!)

The evidence that the Jehovah's Witness claims are wrong is so clear that even BeDuhn says in his book that the Jehovah's Witness insertion of this word into the NWT New Testament is wrong.⁴

So is he an expert whose judgment should be relied on and quoted (as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim), or not? Or is he only right when he agrees with them, but wrong when he disagrees with them?

As regards your question as to how you should proceed, I will say that arguments along the lines of "my translation is right and yours is wrong" are a waste of time with Jehovah's Witnesses, since they claim that all other translations are wrong, and only theirs is right – which must seem unlikely to impartial observers.

I am

However, you could perhaps focus on just one phrase, the Greek Text ἐγώ εἰμι, for which an approximate English pronunciation would be "eggo amy". "I AM" was a phrase that was repeatedly used by God and to designate God in the Old Testament. This was the case in the original Hebrew text, but was repeated in Greek in the translation that was made by the Jews about 250 years before the time of Christ. It is this Greek text that was used by the Jews at the time of Christ, and both Christ himself and the writers of the New Testament repeatedly quoted from that Greek text. I explain this in my short article called "The significance of the "I AM" statements in the Bible", which you can see here: <http://livingwater-spain.com/iaminbib.pdf>

When Jesus said (John 8:58), "Before Abraham was, I am", the Jews picked up stones to stone him, for he was claiming to be God. They themselves say this with reference to the incident – see John 10:33.

The Jehovah's Witnesses realise that this verse totally destroys their claims about Christ, **so they deliberately change the text of John 8:58!** For a detailed analysis of this verse, see my article on John 8:58, which you will find here: http://livingwater-spain.com/John8_58.pdf

However, below I will give you a much shorter way of demonstrating that the NWT is wrong here. For this, we only need to look at the Jehovah's Witnesses' own "Kingdom Interlinear Text"⁵. This contains the Greek text that they state that they used, Westcott & Hort's "New Testament in the original Greek" of 1881⁶. Under each word of the Greek text they have written their translation into English of that word. In a column to the right, they print the NWT text. Here, it is easy to see where the NWT deliberately mis-translates the original text.

(See reproduction on the next page.)

⁴ See chapter 16 of my review of BeDuhn's book, web link above.

⁵ The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures, Brooklyn, New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1969. Often referred to by them by the initials for the title, "K.I.T."

⁶ Here is not the place to ask why they have not used Greek texts of the New Testament produced since 1881, which include the results of the great discoveries of many older ancient manuscripts that have been made since then. That matter is addressed in my review of BeDuhn's book, <http://livingwater-spain.com/beduhn.pdf>, especially in chapter 4.

John 8:58 in the Kingdom Interlinear Text vs the “New World Translation”

Here is my copy of page 467 of that text. We can see that John 8:58 has the phrase ἐγὼ εἰμι [“eggo amy”] and that the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ own interlinear translation correctly translates this as “I am”, with no other options. However, the NWT changes this to “I have been”.

My article on John 8:58 goes into the details of why this is not possible.

A footnote in their “K.I.T.” shows that they knew what was at stake here: that Christ’s reference to Exodus 3:14 (and to Exodus 3:6!) would be spotted by readers. They claim that the Greek in the verses in Exodus is different. I therefore reproduce on the following pages the Greek text of those two verses. **However, their footnote, reproduced here, deliberately misses out the identical phrase, ἐγὼ εἰμι [“eggo amy”], which is in the original text of Exodus 3:14!** – see page 7, below.

Thus the Jehovah’s Witness note on John 8:58, reproduced here, quotes half of the phrase in Exodus 3:14.

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<p>ἐμαυτὸν, ἡ δόξα μου οὐδέν ἐστιν. ἔστιν myself, the glory of me nothing is. Is ὁ πατὴρ μου ὁ δοξάζων με, ὃν the Father of me the (one) glorifying me, whom ὁμοῖς λέγετε ὅτι θεὸς ὑμῶν ἐστίν, 55 καὶ you are saying that God of you is, and οὐκ ἐγνώκατε αὐτόν, ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα not you have known him, I but have known αὐτόν· κὰν εἴπω ὅτι οὐκ him; and if ever I should say that not οἶδα αὐτόν, ἔσομαι ὁμοῖος ὑμῖν I have known him, I shall be like you ψεύστης· ἀλλὰ οἶδα αὐτόν καὶ τὸν liar; but I have known him and the λόγον αὐτοῦ τηρῶ. 56 Ἀβραάμ ὁ word of him I am observing. Abraham the πατὴρ ὑμῶν ἠγαλλιάσατο ἵνα father of you exulted in order that ἴδῃ τὴν ἡμέραν τὴν ἐμήν, καὶ εἶδεν he might see the day the mine, and he saw καὶ ἐχάρη. 57 εἶπαν οὖν οἱ Ἰουδαῖοι and rejoiced. Said therefore the Jews πρὸς αὐτόν Πεντήκοντα ἔτη οὐπω toward him Fifty years not yet ἔχεις καὶ Ἀβραάμ ἐώρακας; you are having and Abraham you have seen? 58 εἶπεν αὐτοῖς Ἰησοῦς Ἀμὴν ἀμὴν Said to them Jesus Amen amen λέγω ὑμῖν, πρὶν Ἀβραάμ γενέσθαι I am saying to you Before Abraham to become ἐγὼ εἰμί. 59 ἦραν οὖν λίθους I am. They lifted up therefore stones ἵνα βάλωσιν ἐπ’ αὐτόν· in order that they might throw upon him; Ἰησοῦς δὲ ἐκρύβη καὶ ἐξῆλθεν ἐκ τοῦ ἱεροῦ. Jesus but hid and went out of the temple. 9 Καὶ παράγων εἶδεν ἄνθρωπον τυφλὸν And going beside he saw man blind ἐκ γενετῆς. 2 καὶ ᾠρώτησαν αὐτόν οἱ out of birth. And questioned him the μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ λέγοντες Ῥαββί, τίς disciples of him saying Rabbi, who ἥμαρτεν, οὗτος ἢ οἱ γονεῖς αὐτοῦ, sinned, this (one) or the parents of him, ἵνα τυφλὸς γεννηθῇ; in order that blind he should be generated? he was born blind?”</p>	<p>myself, my glory is nothing. It is my Father that glorifies me, he who you say is your God; 55 and yet you have not known him. But I know him. And if I said I do not know him I should be like you, a liar. But I do know him and am observing his word. 56 Abraham the your father rejoiced greatly in the prospect of seeing my day, and he saw it and rejoiced.” 57 Therefore the Jews said to him: “You are not yet fifty years old, and still you have seen Abraham?” 58 Jesus said to them: “Most truly I say to you, Before Abraham came into existence, I have been.” 59 Therefore they picked up stones to hurl [them] at him; but Jesus hid and went out of the temple. 9 Now as he was passing along he saw a man blind from birth. 2 And his disciples asked him: “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, so that he was born blind?”</p>

The “Kingdom Interlinear Text” from the Jehovah’s Witnesses

However, even this half is not helpful to their argument, as anyone will observe who reads the Greek text of the whole discussion between Jesus and the Jewish leaders that is recorded in John chapter 8. The half that the Jehovah’s Witnesses quote here is ὁ ὢν [“ho ōn”], which they explain means “The Being” or “The I AM”.

However, they appear not to have noticed that earlier in the very same discussion between Jesus and the Jewish leaders, Jesus also quotes this half of Exodus 3:14, too!

In John 8:47, Jesus describes himself as “ὁ ὢν ἐκ τοῦ θεοῦ” [“ho ōn ek tou theou”]. This could be accurately translated as “The Being One from God”. This English translation may not be easily understood, and so most translations paraphrase the original in one way or another. The Revised Standard Version is close to the original Greek: “He who is of God”.

We can see the progressive increase in tension between Jesus and the Jewish leaders as this discussion advances, and verse 58 merely confirms the meaning of the phrase that He had used a few minutes earlier (recorded in verse 47).

These words by Jesus were understood by the Jews to be a claim that he was God. They say so later, when commenting on their actions at this point (see John 10:33). They were so outraged by Jesus' use of these phrases that they responded by trying to kill Him.

"I am" in Exodus chapter 3

Exodus 3:6 in the Jewish Greek translation "The Septuagint", often referred to with the Latin letters for 70, "LXX".⁷

The K.I.T. footnote to John 8:58 claims that Jesus' words there are not the same as the Greek words ὁ ὢν ["ho ōn"] in Exodus 3:14, but they are identical to the words ἐγώ εἰμι ["eggo amy"] in Exodus 3:6, as will be clear from the text here, even for those who are not familiar with Greek. I have underlined the key words in red.

Here we have a capital Greek "Ε", which is the same as our modern Roman script "E", whereas in the above printing of John 8:58, a lower case Greek ε ("e") is used.

However, we must remember that in the Greek texts of the Septuagint used at the time of Christ, and in the text of the New Testament, capital letters were used throughout, so these phrases would have been visually identical (as well as acoustically identical, in the spoken form).

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καὶ ἀνεβόησαν, καὶ ἀνέβη ἡ βοή αὐτῶν πρὸς τὸν θεὸν ἀπὸ τῶν ἔργων. ²⁴καὶ εἰσήκουσεν ὁ θεὸς τὸν στεναγμὸν αὐτῶν, καὶ ἐμνή- ²⁴
στη ὁ θεὸς τῆς διαθήκης αὐτοῦ τῆς πρὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ Ἰσαὰκ καὶ ²⁵
Ἰακώβ. ²⁵καὶ ἐπείδεν ὁ θεὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐγνώσθη αὐτοῖς. ²⁵
¹Καὶ Μωϋσῆς ἦν ποιμαίνων τὰ πρόβατα Ἰοθορ τοῦ γαμβροῦ ³
αὐτοῦ τοῦ ἱερέως Μαδιαμ καὶ ἤγαγεν τὰ πρόβατα ὑπὸ τὴν ἔρημον ³
καὶ ἦλθεν εἰς τὸ ὄρος Χωρηβ. ²ὤφθη δὲ αὐτῷ ἄγγελος κυρίου ἐν ²
φλογὶ πυρὸς ἐκ τοῦ βάτου, καὶ ὄρα ὅτι ὁ βάτος καίεται πυρὶ, ὁ ²
δὲ βάτος οὐ κατεκαίετο. ³εἶπεν δὲ Μωϋσῆς Παρελθὼν ὤψομαι τὸ ³
δράμα τὸ μέγα τοῦτο, τί ὅτι οὐ κατακαίεται ὁ βάτος. ⁴ὥς δὲ εἶδεν ⁴
κύριος ὅτι προσάγει ἰδεῖν, ἐκάλεσεν αὐτὸν κύριος ἐκ τοῦ βάτου ⁴
λέγων Μωϋσή, Μωϋσή. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Τί ἐστίν; ⁵καὶ εἶπεν Μὴ ἐγγί- ⁵
σῃς ὧδε· λῦσαι τὸ ὑπόδημα ἐκ τῶν ποδῶν σου· ὁ γὰρ τόπος, ἐν ⁵
ᾧ σὺ ἔστηκας, γῆ ἁγία ἐστίν. ⁶καὶ εἶπεν αὐτῷ Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ θεὸς ⁶
τοῦ πατρὸς σου, θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ θεὸς Ἰακώβ. ⁶
Ἀπέστρεψεν δὲ Μωϋσῆς τὸ πρόσωπον αὐτοῦ· εὐλαβεῖτο γὰρ κατ- ⁶
εμβλέψαι ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ. ⁷εἶπεν δὲ κύριος πρὸς Μωϋσῆν ⁷
Ἴδὼν εἶδον τὴν κάκωσιν τοῦ λαοῦ μου τοῦ ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ καὶ τῆς ⁷
κραυγῆς αὐτῶν ἀκήκοα ἀπὸ τῶν ἐργοδιωκτῶν· οἶδα γὰρ τὴν ὀδυ- ⁷
νην αὐτῶν. ⁸καὶ κατέβην ἐξελέσθαι αὐτοὺς ἐκ χειρὸς Αἰγυπτίων ⁸
καὶ ἐξαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ἐκ τῆς γῆς ἐκείνης καὶ εἰσαγαγεῖν αὐτοὺς ⁸
εἰς γῆν ἀγαθὴν καὶ πολλήν, εἰς γῆν ῥέουσάν γάλα καὶ μέλι, εἰς ⁸
τὸν τόπον τῶν Χαναναίων καὶ Χετταίων καὶ Αμορραίων καὶ Φερε- ⁸
ζαίων καὶ Γεργεσαίων καὶ Ευαίων καὶ Ιεβουσαίων. ⁹καὶ νῦν ἰδοὺ ⁹
κραυγὴ τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ ἥκει πρὸς με, ἀγῶ ἑώρακα τὸν θλιμ- ⁹
μὸν, ὃν οἱ Αἰγύπτιοι θλίβουσιν αὐτούς. ¹⁰καὶ νῦν δεῦρο ἀποστεί- ¹⁰
λω σε πρὸς Φαραὼ βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου, καὶ ἐξάξεις τὸν λαόν μου ¹⁰
τούς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου. — ¹¹καὶ εἶπεν Μωϋσῆς πρὸς ¹¹
τὸν θεόν Τίς εἰμι, ὅτι πορεύσομαι πρὸς Φαραὼ βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου, ¹¹
καὶ ὅτι ἐξάξω τοὺς υἱοὺς Ἰσραὴλ ἐκ γῆς Αἰγύπτου; ¹²εἶπεν δὲ ὁ ¹²
θεὸς Μωϋσεῖ λέγων ὅτι Ἔσομαι μετὰ σοῦ, καὶ τοῦτό σοι τὸ ση- ¹²
μεῖον ὅτι ἐγώ σε ἐξαποστέλλω· ἐν τῷ ἐξαγαγεῖν σε τὸν λαόν μου ¹²
ἐξ Αἰγύπτου καὶ λατρεύετε τῷ θεῷ ἐν τῷ ὄρει τούτῳ. ¹³καὶ εἶ- ¹³
πεν Μωϋσῆς πρὸς τὸν θεόν Ἴδού ἐγὼ ἐλεύσομαι πρὸς τοὺς υἱοὺς ¹³
Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐρῶ πρὸς αὐτούς Ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν ἀπέ- ¹³

²⁵ εἰσίδεν Α
³¹ ἡγαγεν] ἡγεν Α || ² αὐτῳ > Α | φλογὶ πυρὸς] πυρὶ φλογος Β ||
³ τι > Β || ⁵ καὶ] ο δε Β | συ > Α || ⁶ αὐτῷ > Β, in O sub ÷ | θεος
²⁵ pr. ο Α || ⁸ καὶ εἰσαγ. αὐτοὺς > Α | γεργεσαίων .. ευαίων] tr. Α ||
¹¹ εἰμι] + εγω Β (in O sub ✱) || ¹² ο — λεγων > Α | ἐξαποστέλλω compl.]
— στέλω Β, εἶ > Α | ἐξαγαγ. σε] tr. Α | μου > Α* || ¹³ ἐλεύσομαι Β† |
υμῶν (cf. 15. 16)] ημων Β

Exodus 3:6 in the Septuagint

⁷ Rahlfs-Hanhart "Septuaginta", © Stuttgart, 2006: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft

Exodus 3:14 in the Jewish Greek translation, “The Septuagint”

In fact, the same Greek words that Jesus used in John 8:58 do also occur in Exodus 3:14 – but the editors of the K.I.T. chose to suppress them in their footnote that selectively quoted from that verse!

Again, I have underlined the key phrase in red.

The full text of the key phrase does in fact say, ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν [“eggo amy ho ōn”]. It means “I am the one who is”. The first two words are identical to Jesus’ words in John 8:58. By missing these words out in their footnote to John 8:58, which refers to this verse from Exodus, the Jehovah’s Witnesses who produced the “Kingdom Interlinear Text” deliberately withheld information that proves that they themselves were aware that the note that they had written was itself deliberately misleading.

And (as shown on page 5, above) Jesus had used the other half of the Greek phrase that is in Exodus 3:14 a few minutes earlier, also applying it to Himself. (John 8:47)

Aware of the danger to their teaching of allowing this text to stand, in their “New World Translation” the Jehovah’s Witnesses have translated the phrase ἐγώ εἰμι [“eggo amy” – “I am”], which is in the **present** tense in Greek, into the **past** in John 8:58 and – in order to hide the link between these two passages completely! – they have translated the same phrase into the future in Exodus 3:14! There are no two ways of saying this: by these actions, they are not truthfully presenting the unambiguous meaning of the original text. In these verses, their two diametrically-opposed versions of this one same phrase (versions which do not merit the title “translations”) are not linguistically possible. Not my opinion; fact.

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cf Gen 17:1 Rom 9:5

σταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς, ἐρωτήσουσίν με τί ὄνομα αὐτῷ; τί ἐρῶ
14 πρὸς αὐτούς; 14 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωυσήν· Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὢν·
καὶ εἶπεν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ Ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με
15 πρὸς ὑμᾶς. 15 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πάλιν πρὸς Μωυσήν Οὕτως ἐρεῖς
τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ Κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν, θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ
καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ θεὸς Ἰακώβ, ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς· τοῦτό
16 μού ἐστιν ὄνομα αἰώνιον καὶ μνημόσυνον γενεῶν γενεαῖς. 16 ἐλθὼν
οὖν συνάγαγε τὴν γερουσίαν τῶν υἱῶν Ἰσραὴλ καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς
αὐτούς Κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν ὠπταί μοι, θεὸς Ἀβρα-
17 αμ καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ θεὸς Ἰακώβ, λέγων Ἐπισκοπῇ ἐπέσκεμμαι
ὑμᾶς καὶ ὅσα συμβέβηκεν ὑμῖν ἐν Αἰγύπτῳ, 17 καὶ εἶπον Ἀναβιβά-
σω ὑμᾶς ἐκ τῆς κακώσεως τῶν Αἰγυπτίων εἰς τὴν γῆν τῶν Χα-
ναναίων καὶ Χετταίων καὶ Ἀμορραίων καὶ Φερεζαίων καὶ Γεργεσαί-
ων καὶ Εὐαίων καὶ Ἰεβουσαίων, εἰς γῆν ῥέουσαν γάλα καὶ μέλι.
18 18 καὶ εἰσακούσονται σου τῆς φωνῆς· καὶ εἰσελεύσῃ σὺ καὶ ἡ γε-
ρουσία Ἰσραὴλ πρὸς Φαραὼ βασιλέα Αἰγύπτου καὶ ἐρεῖς πρὸς αὐ-
τόν Ὁ θεὸς τῶν Εβραίων προσκέκληται ἡμᾶς· πορευσώμεθα οὖν
ὁδὸν τριῶν ἡμερῶν εἰς τὴν ἔρημον, ἵνα θύσωμεν τῷ θεῷ ἡμῶν.
19 19 ἐγὼ δὲ οἶδα ὅτι οὐ προήσεται ὑμᾶς Φαραὼ βασιλεὺς Αἰγύπτου
20 πορευθῆναι, ἐὰν μὴ μετὰ χειρὸς κραταιᾶς. 20 καὶ ἐκτείνας τὴν χεῖρα
πατάξω τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους ἐν πάσι τοῖς θαυμασίοις μου, οἷς ποιήσω
21 ἐν αὐτοῖς, καὶ μετὰ ταῦτα ἐξαποστελεῖ ὑμᾶς. 21 καὶ δώσω χάριν τῷ
λαῷ τούτῳ ἐναντίον τῶν Αἰγυπτίων· ὅταν δὲ ἀποτρέχητε, οὐκ
22 ἀπελεύσεσθε κενοί· 22 αἰτήσῃ γυνὴ παρὰ γείτονος καὶ συσκήνου
αὐτῆς σκευὴ ἀργυρᾶ καὶ χρυσᾶ καὶ ἱματισμόν, καὶ ἐπιθήσετε ἐπὶ
τοὺς υἱοὺς ὑμῶν καὶ ἐπὶ τὰς θυγατέρας ὑμῶν καὶ σκυλεύσετε
4 τοὺς Αἰγυπτίους. — 1 ἀπεκρίθη δὲ Μωυσῆς καὶ εἶπεν Ἐὰν οὖν
μὴ πιστεύσωσιν μοι μηδὲ εἰσακούσωσιν τῆς φωνῆς μου, ἐροῦσιν
2 γὰρ ὅτι Οὐκ ὠπταί σοι ὁ θεός, τί ἐρῶ πρὸς αὐτούς; 2 εἶπεν δὲ
αὐτῷ κύριος Τί τοῦτό ἐστιν τὸ ἐν τῇ χειρὶ σου; ὁ δὲ εἶπεν Ῥά-
3 βδος. 3 καὶ εἶπεν Ῥίψον αὐτὴν ἐπὶ τὴν γῆν. καὶ ἔρριπεν αὐτὴν ἐπὶ
4 τὴν γῆν, καὶ ἐγένετο ὄφιν· καὶ ἔφυγεν Μωυσῆς ἀπ’ αὐτοῦ. 4 καὶ
εἶπεν κύριος πρὸς Μωυσήν Ἐκτεινον τὴν χεῖρα καὶ ἐπιλαβοῦ τῆς
κέρκου· ἐκτείνας οὖν τὴν χεῖρα ἐπελάβετο τῆς κέρκου, καὶ ἐγένετο
5 ῥάβδος ἐν τῇ χειρὶ αὐτοῦ· 5 ἵνα πιστεύσωσιν σοι ὅτι ὠπταί σοι
κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων αὐτῶν, θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ
6 καὶ θεὸς Ἰακώβ. 6 εἶπεν δὲ αὐτῷ κύριος πάλιν Εἰσένεγκε τὴν χεῖρά

14 μωυσην] + λεγων B† || 15 γενεων > A† || 16 ουν > A: cf. 110 ||
17 ειπον M] -πεν B, -πα A || 22 σκυλευσετε pau.] -σατε B†, συσκευασε-
ται(pro-τε) A
41 ουν > B: cf. 110 | ο θεος] pr. κυριος A† || 5 κυριος > B† || 6 εισ-
ενεγκε] -κον B: item in 7

Exodus 3:14 in the Septuagint

“I am” in John chapter 8

Here is another, perhaps easier, illustration. The Greek phrase “I am / I am not” occurs eight times in John chapter 8. (It occurs twice in verse 23.) Here is the Greek text, my literal translation, the K.I.T. translation, and the NWT translation:

Nº	Reference	Greek ⁸	Literal translation	K.I.T. translation	New World Translation
1	John 8:12	ἐγώ εἰμι	I am	I am	I am
2	John 8:16	οὐκ εἰμί	I am not	not I am	I am not
3	John 8:18	ἐγώ εἰμι	I am	I am	I am
4	John 8:23	ἐγὼ ... εἰμί	I am	I ... I am	I am
5	John 8:23	ἐγὼ οὐκ εἰμί	I am not	I not am	I am not
6	John 8:24	ἐγώ εἰμι	I am	I am	I am
7	John 8:28	ἐγώ εἰμι	I am	I am	I am
8	John 8:58	ἐγὼ εἰμί	I am	I am	<i>I have been</i>

It is thus clear that the first seven times in John 8 that the phrase “I am” occurs, the NWT translates it correctly. The only time it does not is when the accurate translation would undermine their doctrine. They try to justify this with a virtually incomprehensible explanation that refers to a non-existent “rule” of Greek grammar.

One of the current leading experts in Koiné Greek (New Testament Greek) is Dr Daniel Wallace. In his textbook for advanced studies of the language, “Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics”⁹, he responds to the Jehovah’s Witness claim that in John 8:58 ἐγὼ εἰμί [“eggo amy”] is a “historical present” as follows:

- “(1) The fact that the present tense follows an aorist *infinitive* has nothing to do with how it should be rendered [i.e., translated]. ...
- “(2) If this is a historical present, it is apparently the only historical present in the NT that uses the equative verb εἰμί [“amy”].
- “(3) If this is a historical present, it is apparently the only historical present in the NT that is in other than the third person.”¹⁰

We can thus see that in John 8:58, the NWT:

- 1) Contradicts the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ own “Kingdom Interlinear Translation” of the same verse.
- 2) Contradicts their own translation of the same phrase in seven other places in the same chapter (all of them in the same conversation between Jesus and the Jewish leaders).
- 3) Contradicts the rules of Greek grammar (1st point by Wallace).
- 4) Contradicts the actual usage of Greek throughout the whole of the rest of the New Testament (points 2 and 3 by Wallace).

⁸ The rules of Greek accentuation in the written text are complex, resulting in accents being added, removed or changed depending on the surrounding words. This does not change the meaning of the words. An explanation of the rules requires a whole text book, so we will not study it here. Such a textbook is “Greek Accents: A Student’s Manual” by D. A. Carson, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 1985. Published in the United Kingdom by Paternoster Press, Carlisle, Cumbria, 1st edition 1995. Dr Carson is a renowned New Testament research professor and author of more than 35 books. He co-chairs the Biblical Greek Language and Linguistics Section of the Society of Biblical Literature.

⁹ Wallace, Daniel B, “Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics”, Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1996.

¹⁰ *op. cit.*, p. 530, underlining added. See also pp 515 and 531.

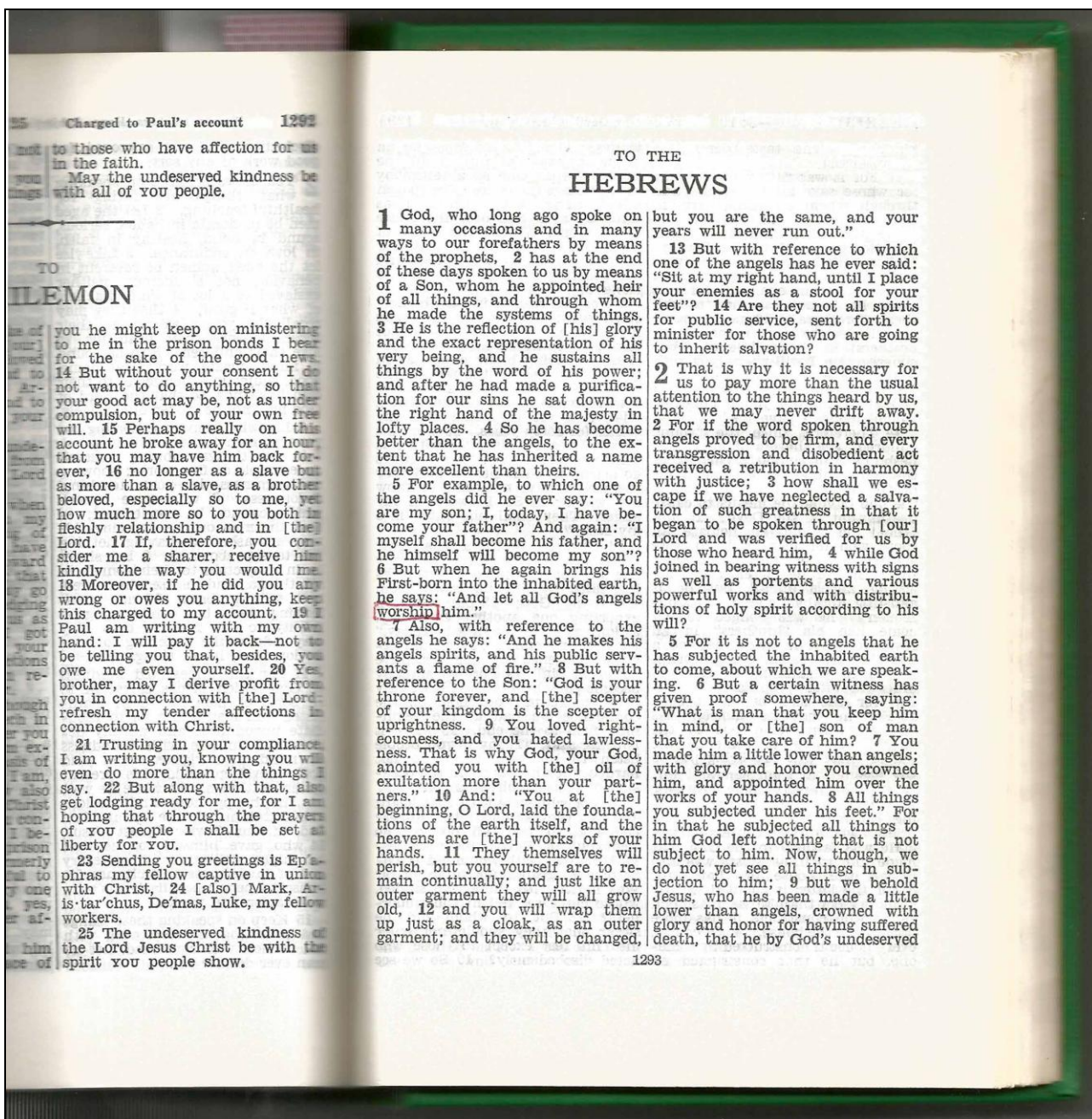
To worship

We could do exactly the same thing with the NWT translation of the word προσκυνέω [proskuneō], which everyone else translates as “to worship” (the principal dictionary definition), and that the NWT *also* translates as “worship” *throughout the New Testament*. This is the word that is used in the New Testament to describe worship of God, for instance, in Matthew 4:10, Revelation 19:10, 22:9, etc.

The *only* time that the NWT does *not* translate it as “worship” is when it is applied to Jesus (e.g., Matthew 2:11, Matthew 14:33, Matthew 28:17.) They even translate it as “worship” when it is applied to the demonical dragon and to the beast, for instance, in Revelation 13:4). *Only with Jesus do they not use “worship” to translate this word – in order to imply that Jesus is inferior to God* (and, we may conclude, even inferior to the demonic dragon and beast in Revelation).

In fact, “by error”, one usage of this word translated as “worship” with reference to Christ did slip through in the NWT, so for Hebrews 1:6 the editions of the NWT up to at least 1969 had “let all God’s angels worship him”. When the Jehovah’s Witnesses spotted that the “him” in this verse means “Christ”, they deleted the word “worship” in subsequent editions of their New Testament and replaced it with their phrase “do obeisance”.

(See reproduction on the next page.)



The original, 1961, printing of the "New World Translation"

Those who have been familiar with Jehovah's Witness publications for a number of years will recognise the green cover of this edition.

In fact, it would be possible to work through much of the New World Translation, showing the inconsistencies in this translation, inconsistencies introduced by the Jehovah's Witnesses in order to avoid clashes with their doctrines. I refer to Howe's books¹¹ for a detailed study of many words and passages.

The NWT revision of 2013

As regards reliability and transparency, the 2013 revision of the New World Translation is even worse, as the people at Jehovah's Witness headquarters have done an even more thorough job of

¹¹ See references above.

hiding their departures from the Greek text. However, this response by me is more than long enough, so we'll leave details of that for another day.

I hope that some of the above will be of help to you.

Yours in Christ

Dr Trevor R Allin

Postscript

A few days later I received the following reply:

Just wanted to say thanks again for your help with this issue. I talked with [the two Jehovah's Witnesses] for almost 2 hours today. I used your table of "I am" in John 8 as one example of mistranslation in the NWT.

They didn't budge an inch and pushed back in various ways, including looking up what Dr. BeDuhn had to say about John 8:58. But without your chart I could not have presented the argument so clearly.

This is what I replied:

Thank you for the feedback. I am not surprised that they didn't budge: they have been taught that everything said by non-Jehovah's Witnesses is false. But they have now seen some of the contradictions in their own publications. The real work in their minds will begin to happen after they left you. If they are sincere about knowing what the Bible really says, what you said to them will go round and round in their minds. We can only pray that they will let the Holy Spirit lead them on and away from all the distortion and deception of the Jehovah's Witness organisation.