

DEITY OF CHRIST IS JESUS CHRIST REALLY FULLY GOD?

The most frequent challenge you, as a Christian today, will encounter about the deity of Jesus is from a Jehovah's Witness at your front door. It probably won't come up in the first conversation, but in time the visitor will explain that Jesus is not at the level of Jehovah God. He is a created being, a powerful but lesser god, specifically the archangel, Michael. If the conversation continues, your visitor will pull out a copy of *The New World Translation* and show you John 1:1, *In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was **a god***. He will readily acknowledge that this refers to Jesus Christ, but will tell you that this translation is what the Greek grammar requires. By the way, the New Testament was written in Greek and all our English versions are translations from the Greek text.

If you checked your *New International Version* on John 1:1, you would read, *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word **was God***. How did your Bible get "the Word was God" with a capital "G"? If you were to translate right out of the Greek without smoothing the translation for the English ear, it would read like this, *In beginning was the word, and the word was **with the god**, and the word **was god***. Note that the Greek text didn't capitalize the words "God" or "Word." Note also that the definite article ("the") is missing from "god" in the last phrase. The Jehovah's Witnesses will tell you that because the definite article is missing, the translator must supply an indefinite article, i.e., "a." This is simply bad Greek grammar and the Jehovah's Witnesses do this because they come to the text with their minds already made up that Jesus is not fully God. By the way, they do not practice their own grammatical rule consistently. In verses 6, 12, 13 and 13:3, the word "God" appears without the definite article and in each case the *New World Translation* renders it "God" with a capital "G."

Here's what scholars say about the grammar of John 1:1.

In Greek, when the definite article is used, it often stresses the individual, and, when it is not present, it refers to the nature of the one denoted. Thus, the verse can be rendered, "and the Word was of the nature of God." The full deity of Christ is supported not only by general usage of the same construction, but by other references in John to Jesus being God (cf. 8:58; 10:30; 20:28) and the rest of the NT (cf. Col. 1:15-16; 2:9; Titus 2:13)

Furthermore, some NT texts use the definite article and speak of Christ as "the God." So it does not matter whether John did or did not use the definite article here - the Bible clearly teaches that Jesus is God, not just a god (cf. Heb. 1:8)

*That Jesus is Jehovah (Yahweh) is clear from the fact that the NT attributes to Jesus characteristics which in the OT apply only to God (cf. John 19:37 and Zech. 12:10). (Geisler and Howe, *When Critics Ask*, Victor Books, Wheaton, Illinois, 1992, 403)*

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