

Why the New World Translation Should Not Be Used for Serious Bible Study

The *New World Translation* (NWT), the official Bible of Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Bible & Tract Society), is widely considered by scholars and theologians outside the Watch Tower Society to be a distorted version of the Holy Scriptures. While the Jehovah's Witnesses claim it is a faithful translation, a careful examination reveals significant issues that make it unsuitable for serious Bible reading and study.

1. Doctrinal Bias Over Textual Integrity

One of the most glaring problems with the NWT is that it was deliberately translated to support the unique doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Instead of allowing the original Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek texts to speak for themselves, the translators altered key passages to align with their theological positions.

For example, in John 1:1, the NWT reads:

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a **god**.”

This rendering introduces polytheistic implications and undermines the traditional Christian understanding of Christ's divinity. The definite article present in the Greek text (*ho Theos*) is ignored, despite the overwhelming scholarly consensus that John 1:1 affirms Christ's full divinity.

2. Anonymous and Unqualified Translators

Unlike respected translations such as the American Standard Version (ASV) or English Standard Version (ESV), which are produced by teams of credentialed biblical scholars, the NWT was translated by anonymous individuals whose academic qualifications remain unverified. When the identity of some translators was eventually revealed, it was found that they lacked formal training in biblical languages, raising serious concerns about the accuracy of their work.

3. Tampering with the Divine Name

The NWT inserts the name “Jehovah” into the New Testament (Christian Greek Scriptures) over 200 times, despite the fact that no known Greek manuscript contains the Tetragrammaton (YHWH). While the divine name appears in the Hebrew Bible, there is no textual basis for inserting it into the New Testament. If they translated from the original Aramaic New Testament they would be justified for using the divine name in the New Testament (since it uses “Mar Yah” meaning “Lord Yahweh”), however, they used the Greek instead. This editorial decision serves only to reinforce the unique theological stance of Jehovah's Witnesses, rather than to faithfully represent the original text.

4. Alterations to Key Doctrinal Passages

Several passages have been deliberately mistranslated to fit Jehovah's Witness theology:

- **Colossians 1:16-17** (NWT): "because by means of him all **other** things were created..."

The word "other" is added despite not appearing in the original Greek. This change subtly demotes Christ from being the Creator to merely a created being.

- **Luke 23:43** (NWT): "Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise."

The placement of the comma alters the meaning of Christ's words to suggest that the thief on the cross would not immediately be with Jesus in paradise, contradicting the traditional Christian belief in the afterlife.

5. Lack of Scholarly Acceptance

No mainstream biblical scholar outside the Watch Tower Society endorses the NWT as a reliable translation. Many scholars, including those with expertise in Greek and Hebrew, have criticized it for theological bias and inaccuracies. Even comparative studies of various Bible translations consistently rank the NWT among the least faithful to the original texts.

Choose a Faithful Translation

For serious Bible reading and study, believers should turn to reputable translations produced by teams of qualified scholars. Versions such as the **New American Standard Bible (NASB)**, **English Standard Version (ESV)**, **American Standard Version (ASV)**, or the **World English Bible** offer faithful and accurate renderings of the inspired Scriptures.

The New World Translation is a deliberate distortion of God's Word. Anyone seeking to grow in faith and understanding of Scripture should avoid the NWT and rely on versions that uphold the integrity of the biblical text.