**John 1:1, "The word was a god"**

In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.*The New World Translation*

This is one of the most common verses of contention between the [Jehovah's Witnesses](http://carm.org/religious-movements/jehovahs-witnesses) and Christians. Their false assumption is that Jesus is not God in flesh, but Michael the archangel who became a man.  Therefore, since they deny that [Jesus is divine](http://carm.org/christianity/christian-doctrine/jesus-two-natures-god-and-man), they have altered the Bible in [John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1) so that Jesus is not divine in nature.  The New World Translation has added the word "a" to the verse so it says, "...and the Word was **a** god."  The correct translation for this verse is "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God."  This is how it is rendered in the NASB, NIV, KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV, etc.

The New World translation is incorrect in its translation of this verse for several reasons.  First of all, the Bible teaches a strict monotheism.  To say that Jesus is "a god" is to suggest that there is another god besides YHWH, which is contrary to scripture ([Isaiah 43:10](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2043.10); [44:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2044.6),[8](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2044.8), etc.).  Of course, the Jehovah's Witnesses will respond that Jesus is not the Almighty God, but a "lesser" kind of God.  He is the "mighty God" as is referenced in [Isaiah 9:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%209.6), "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."  Therefore, they say that Jesus is the mighty god, but not the Almighty God.

The immediate problem with this explanation is that YHWH is also called the Mighty God in[Jeremiah 32:18](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jeremiah%2032.18) and [Isaiah 10:21](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2010.21).  In all three verses, including [Isaiah 9:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%209.6), the Hebrew word for "mighty" (*gibbor*) is used.

* [Isaiah 10:20-21](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2010.20-21), "Now it will come about in that day that the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.  21A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God."
* [Jer. 32:18](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jer.%2032.18), "who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God, the LORD of hosts is His name."

We can see that the Jehovah's Witness explanation is not valid.  Both the Son and God are called the Mighty God.

Furthermore, how many actual gods are there in scripture?  The obvious answer is that there is only one God in existence.  Though there are others who have been falsely called gods ([1 Cor. 8:5-6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/1%20Cor.%208.5-6)) or even said to be "as God" like Moses ([Ex. 4:16](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ex.%204.16); [7:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Ex%207.1)), there is only one real God ([Gal. 4:8-9](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Gal.%204.8-9); [Isaiah 44:6](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2044.6),[8](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2044.8)). If Jesus is "a god" that was "with God" in the beginning, then is Jesus a true god or a false god?

But, the Jehovah's Witnesses often claim that Jesus is a god in the sense that Moses was called a god.  But, Moses was not called a god.  Rather, he would be "as God."

* "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be as God to him, ([Exodus 4:16](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Exodus%204.16)).
* "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet,'" ([Exodus 7:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Exodus%207.1)).

Why was Moses going "as God" to Pharaoh?  Because Moses was given the authority and power to display powerful miracles that decimated much of Egypt.  Was Moses really a god?  Being "as God" in regards to power given to perform miracles over Egypt is not the same thing as being called "a god" that was in the beginning with God, ([John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1)).

John was a strict Jew, a monotheist. Does the Jehovah's Witness really think that John would be saying that there was another God besides Jehovah, even if it were Jesus? Being raised a good Jew, the apostle John would never believe that there was more than one God in existence. Yet, he compared the word with God, said the word was God, and that the word became flesh ([John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1),[14](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.14)).

[John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1) in a literal translation reads thus:  "In beginning was the word, and the word was with the God, and God was the word."  Notice that it says *"God was the word."* This is the actual word-for-word translation.  It is not saying that "a god was the word."  That wouldn't make sense.  Let me break it down into three statements.

1. "In beginning was the word..."
(en    arche      en  ho  logos)
	1. A very simple statement that the Word was in the beginning.
2. "and the word was with the God..."
(kai  ho  logos  en  pros ton theon)
	1. This same Word was with God.
3. "and God was the word." -- Properly translated as "and the Word was God."
(kai theos en   ho  logos)
	1. This same Word was God.

Regarding statement 3 above, the correct English translation is "...and the Word was God," not "and God was the word."  This is because if there is only one definite article ("ho"="the") in a clause where two nouns are in the nominative ("subject") form ("the**os**" and "log**os**"), then the noun with the definite article ("ho"="the") is the subject.  In this case "ho logos" means that "the word" is the subject of the clause.  Therefore, *"...the Word was God"* is the correct translation, not "God was the Word."[1](http://carm.org/religious-movements/jehovahs-witnesses/john-11-word-was-god#footnote1_pa3hbfj) But this does not negate the idea that John is speaking of only one God, not two, even though the Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that Jesus is "a god," or the "mighty god" as was addressed above.

Is there suddenly a new god in the text of [John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1)?  It is the same God that is being spoken of in part 2 as in part 3.  How do the Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that the word had somehow become **a** god in this context, since there is only **one** God mentioned? Remember, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus was Michael the Archangel.  Therefore, is there any place in the Bible where an angel is called "a god," besides Satan being called the god of this world in [2 Cor. 4:3-4](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/2%20Cor.%204.3-4)?

**John 20:28 - "Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'"**

In the Greek in [John 20:28](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%2020.28) Thomas said to Jesus, "ho kurios mou, kai ho theos mou," *"The Lord of me, and the God of me."* If Jesus was not God, but "a" god, then shouldn't Jesus have corrected Thomas?  Shouldn't Jesus have said, "No Thomas, I am not **the** God.  I am **a** god."?  But Jesus did not.  To do so would have been ludicrous.  Nevertheless, the Jehovah's Witness will say that Thomas was so stunned by Jesus' appearance, that he swore.  This is ridiculous because it means that Thomas, a devout man of God, swore in front of Jesus and used the Lord's name in vain in violation of [Exodus 20:7](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Exodus%2020.7).  This is hardly the case since we find no New Testament equivalent of a disciple of Christ using God's name in vain.

In conclusion, [John 1:1](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/John%201.1) is best translated without the "a" inserted into the text.  *"The Word was God"* is the best translation.  This way, we do not run into the danger of polytheism, with Jesus being "a god."  We do not have Thomas the disciple swearing and using God's name in vain.  And, we do not have the problem of Jesus being a "mighty god" and yet not **the** God -- even though God Himself is called the Mighty God ([Jeremiah 32:18](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Jeremiah%2032.18); [Isaiah 10:21](http://biblia.com/bible/nasb95/Isaiah%2010.21)).