

Question 3: How is it possible the Jews do not believe Jesus claims to be Jehovah God in light of Jesus' I AM statement (John 8:58)?

The 2013 New World Translation states, "Jesus said to them: Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, I have been." But the Westcott Kingdom Greek Interlinear states, "Before Abraham to become, I AM." At which point the religious Jews picked up stones to kill Him. Why? Because Jesus was continually identifying Himself as Jehovah God.

Consider John 5:17-18: "But he answered them: 'My Father has kept working until now, and I keep working.' This is why the Jews began seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God" (2013 NWT).

Now consider John 10:30-33: "I and the Father are one."
[31](#) Once again the Jews picked up stones to stone him. [32](#) Jesus replied to them: "I displayed to you many fine works from the Father. For which of those works are you stoning me?" [33](#) The Jews answered him: "We are stoning you, not for a fine work, but for blasphemy; for you, although being a man, make yourself a god" (2013 NWT).

The Westcott Kingdom Interlinear does not have the indefinite article: "you are making yourself theon (God)."

Interestingly, the NW translators did not add the indefinite article when translating John 5:18:

“This is why the Jews began seeking all the more to kill him, because not only was he breaking the Sabbath but he was also calling God his own Father, making himself equal to God.”

So here, in the NW Translation, we have the same Jews calling Jesus both *a* god, who is false, as well as *the* God who is true.

But such erratic proclamations never occurred, for they clearly understood what He was declaring, As Son of Jehovah, He was eternally self-existing.

The phrase ‘I AM’ speaks to eternal self-existence.

‘AM’ = first person singular present tense of ‘BE’ (Source: any dictionary).

‘BE’ = to exist or live (Source: any dictionary).

Furthermore, we are told in John 19:7, “Pilate said to them: ‘Take him yourselves and execute him, for I do not find any fault in him.’ The Jews answered him: “We have a law, and according to the law he ought to die, because he made himself God’s son” (2013 NWT). They speak of the Law of Leviticus 24:16:

“So the abuser of Jehovah’s name should be put to death without fail. The entire assembly should stone him without fail” (2013 NWT).

The crime which Jesus committed was that of invoking the name of Jehovah as His own.

The JW religion may not believe Jesus was both Jehovah God and human, but Jesus believed it, as did the Pharisees and Sadducees, causing them to relentlessly seek His death.

Is it not curious that not once did Jesus deny He was Jehovah in human form? Had the Jews been mistaken, Jesus had no reason not to deny their charges. As a sinless man, He was obligated to tell the truth.

Exodus 3:14

We biblical Christians understand Jesus' I AM statement refers back to Exodus 3:14. The Septuagint Old Testament was the work of 70 Jewish scholars who translated the Hebrew Scriptures into Koine Greek centuries before the birth of Christ. (Source: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Septuagint>). Thus, their translation of the Hebrew was not biased toward favoring Christianity. Their Greek translation of the Hebrew 'I AM' is exactly that of the Greek translation of Jesus' Aramaic 'I AM': 'Εγώ εἰμι' = ego eimi.' (Source: https://studybible.info/LXX_WH-Brenton/Exodus%203:14).

Bishop Westcott, whom the JW leadership consider a most trustworthy authority of Koine Greek, agrees in the correctness of the translation and comments:

“There can be no doubt as to the meaning of the final answer which follows as a natural climax to what had been said before. Abraham died; Christ was the Giver of life. Abraham was the father of the Jews; Christ was the centre of Abraham's hope.

Abraham came into being as a man; Christ is essentially as God. And this closing revelation is prefaced by the solemn words which fix attention upon its substance. 'Verily, Verily, I say unto you, Before Abraham was - was born, came to be - I AM. The phrase, 'I AM', marks a timeless existence. In this connexion "I was" would have expressed simple priority. Thus, there is in the phrase the contrast between the created and the uncreated, and the temporal and the eternal" (Source: <https://archive.org/details/gospelaccording13unkngoog/page/n242/mode/2up>; p. 140).

On the other hand, the 2013 NWT translates the passage in question as follows:

"But Moses said to the true God: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your forefathers has sent me to you,' and they say to me, 'What is his name?' What should I say to them?" So God said to Moses: "I Will Become What I Choose to Become."

BECOME = (a) come into existence; (2) undergo a change or development; (3) enter or assume a certain state or condition (Source: any dictionary).

The first definition is contrary to Jehovah of the Old Testament who lives in eternity. It is also contrary to the God-man Jesus Christ who claims to be the eternal I AM.

The second definition is contrary to Scripture which states, "For I am Jehovah; I do not change" (Malachi 3:6; 2013 NWT). Also,

“Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today, and forever”
(Hebrews 13:8; 2013 NWT).

The third definition has a ring of truth: “So the Word ***became*** flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of divine favor and truth” (John 1:14; 2013 NWT).

God became man. Yes, that is what we Bible-believing Christians hold as infallible truth. Just as the New World Translation states.