



● Why could Jehovah say, as recorded at Deuteronomy 32:39, "There are no gods together with me," when John 1:1 states that "the Word was with God, and the Word was a god"?

Viewed in their proper setting, these texts in no way contradict each other. They are discussing entirely different matters.

At Deuteronomy 32:39, the point being made is that the false gods of the nations have no share with Jehovah in his saving acts. They are unable to deliver their worshipers from disaster. This is evident from the preceding two verses, which read: "Where are their gods, the rock in whom they sought refuge, who used to eat the fat of their sacrifices, to drink the wine of their drink offerings? Let them get up and help you. Let them become a concealment place for you."

Other parts of this song likewise indicate that these false gods had no share in the expressing of Jehovah's saving power. With reference to the nation of Israel as represented in its forefather Jacob, verse 12 says: "Jehovah alone kept leading him, and there was no foreign god along with him." Apostasy, however, set in among the Israelites, as verses 16, 17 and 21 tell us: "They began inciting him to jealousy with strange gods; with detestable things they kept offending him. They went sacrificing to demons, not to God, gods whom they had not known, new ones who recently came in, with whom your forefathers were not acquainted. They, for their part, have incited me to jealousy with what is no god."

Against this background, we can appreciate that none of such false gods were 'together with Jehovah' in anything that he did. He alone is the true God, whereas the false gods are an unreality, nonexistent and powerless to help their worshipers in time of calamity.

As for the reference to the Word's 'being a god,' it does not disagree with the statement at

Deuteronomy 32:39. Why not? Because the "Word" does not stand in opposition to Jehovah nor is he a rival, as was the case with the false gods. Then, too, in the phrase rendered "the Word was a god," the term "god" is a predicate noun that describes "the Word." Says the noted scholar Westcott, coproducer of the famous Westcott and Hort Greek text of the Christian Scriptures: "It describes the nature of the Word and does not identify His Person." In view of the descriptive nature of the predicate noun for "god" in the original Greek, An American Translation renders John 1:1: "The Word was divine."* The New World Translation, however, retains the predicate noun and indicates the significance of the omission of the definite article by using the indefinite article.

Being God's firstborn Son, "the Word" could rightly be described as a "god" or powerful one, even as are God's other angelic sons at Psalm 8:5. (Compare Hebrews 2:6-8.) But neither the firstborn Son nor the other faithful angelic sons of God stand in opposition to their Creator, or try to equal him or substitute for him, as do false gods. They all recognize that worship is properly directed to Jehovah God alone.—Phil. 2:5, 6; Rev. 19:10.

● Why does the Jewish count of time differ from the chronology published by Jehovah's witnesses?

Since the twelfth century C.E. traditional Jewish reckoning has placed the creation of Adam in the fall of 3761 B.C.E. Jehovah's Christian witnesses, however, have presented as the date for this event 4026 B.C.E. The basic reason for the difference is that Jehovah's witnesses do not rely on ancient traditional Jewish sources such as the *Seder Olam* (attributed to Yose b. Halafta of the second century C.E.). Instead, Jehovah's witnesses give the greatest weight to the chronological material found in the Bible itself. And they tie in this chronological material with the fall of Babylon in 539 B.C.E., an established pivotal date accepted by secular authorities.†

* In *The Translator's New Testament* (1973) a note on John 1:1 states: "There is no article and it is difficult to believe that the omission is not significant. In effect it gives an adjectival quality to the second use of Theos (God) so that the phrase means 'The Word was divine.'"

† For a detailed discussion of chronology, see the book *Aid to Bible Understanding*, pp. 322-348.