

A Study Of Jehovah's Witnesses #2

Introduction. Based on what we examined this morning, the bottom line is that someone could not reach the doctrinal conclusions of Jehovah's Witnesses without using their own New World Translation along with the continuous flow of literature published by The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. They do not use just the Bible!

A lot of people only know Jehovah's Witnesses by their refusal to celebrate holidays or birthdays, or their refusal to accept blood transfusions. But their differences with the cardinal tenets of the gospel go far deeper. Because Jehovah's Witnesses are quite active in our own neighborhoods, it is advantageous for us to know some of the doctrines which it advocates — and some of the plain Bible teaching which it denies.

Make no mistake, Jehovah's Witnesses spend hours a week preparing for door-to-door encounters. If we are going to teach them the truth, we must know if they really can predict the future, and the fundamental doctrines of this group.

I. Failed Prophecies Of The Jehovah's Witnesses

- A. Jehovah's Witnesses have made several claims for the end of the world.
 - 1. To both Russell and Rutherford, 1799 marked the beginning of the "time of the end." The "presence" of Christ (His invisible return) was supposed to happen in 1874. These dates were borrowed from the Adventists.
 - 2. The prophecy that has caused the largest problem over their existence is what they predicted would take place beginning in 1914. They believed Christ would reign as earth's new ruler in the new kingdom.
 - 3. After the death of Russell, Rutherford succeeded him and attempted to "cover up" the failure while continuing the date setting. Rutherford reset the date to 1918, and nothing happened. In 1920, he published a book, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. It set 1925 as the time of the end. But, that date came and went, with nothing happening.
 - 4. Other dates were hinted at, but in 1966 they began to push a new date, and in 1968, they firmly set 1975 as the time of the end. Of course, that failed and they had to cover-up their failure again.
- B. The scriptures teach that if a prophecy does not come true, it is not from God (Deuteronomy 18:21-22), and therefore you were not to listen to them. If a prophecy did come to pass but the prophet told you to follow an idol (Deuteronomy 13:1-4), you were not to listen to them. If the Jehovah's Witnesses have made so many erroneous prophecies, why should we believe them?

II. A Discussion Of Jehovah's Witnesses Beliefs

- A. Jehovah's Witnesses deny that there are three beings in the Godhead.
 - 1. "Trinitarian nonsense," (Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. V, p. 166). "Senseless, God-dishonoring" (Rutherford, *Reconciliation*, p. 101). "Does not every intelligent person know that if God is ONE person He cannot be THREE" (Russell, Vol. V, p. 166). They state that Satan is the originator of the trinity doctrine. Russell wrote, "To hold that Jehovah God the Father and Jesus Christ His Son are co-eternal is to fly in the face of reason." Reason is used as the "yardstick" to determine the validity of a scriptural doctrine.

2. Christians do not believe that there are three gods in one, but do believe that there are three persons all of the same substance, co-equal, co-existent, and co-eternal. A plurality in the Godhead is very strongly implied in the scriptures. The Bible declares that there are three persons in the Godhead: the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit (cp. Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19-20). When Christ was baptized, all three were present (Matthew 3:16-17).
- B. Jehovah's Witnesses deny that the Holy Spirit is a person and that He is divine.
1. "The Holy Spirit is not a person but an influence" (Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. V, p. 210). They refer to the Holy Spirit as an "It" who is simply an impersonal "active force" that God uses in doing His will.
 2. The Bible teaches that the Holy Spirit is a person, a being (Matthew 28:19-20; John 14:16, 26; 16:8, 13). In Acts 5:3, Peter accuses Ananias of lying to the Holy Spirit, and in v. 4, he declares the Holy Spirit to be God, an equation hard for the Watchtower to explain.
- C. Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ.
1. "Jesus was not God the Son" (Rutherford, *Reconciliation*, p. 113). The Father alone is God, and true worshipers must call him by the name Jehovah. Witnesses are taught that Jesus Christ was merely a manifestation of Michael the archangel in human form — not God, but a mere created being.
 2. The deity of Jesus Christ is one of the cornerstones of the gospel, and as such has been attacked more vigorously throughout the ages than any other single doctrine of the Christian faith. The Bible: "Before Abraham was I AM" (John 8:58). "Thou art my Son this day have I begotten Thee" (Hebrews 1:3, 5). John 20:28: "My Lord and My God." The deity of Jesus is a prime answer to Jehovah's Witnesses, for if the trinity is a reality, which it is, the whole framework of the cult collapses into a heap of disconnected doctrines without even a resemblance of congruity.
- D. Jehovah's Witnesses deny the dual nature of Christ.
1. "Christ was not a combination of two natures" (Russell, Vol. 1, p. 179). To the Witnesses, Jesus Christ was a mere angel — the first one that God created when He created angels.
 2. The Bible teaches that Christ was God and man at the same time — "God manifest in the flesh" (John 1:1-3, 14; 1 Timothy 3:16). "One mediator between God and man, the man Christ Jesus" (1 Timothy 2:5).
- E. Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Christ rose from the dead.
1. "Our Lord's body was, however, supernaturally removed from the tomb; because had it remained there it would have been an insurmountable obstacle to the faith of the disciples" (Russell, Vol. 2, p. 129). "Whether it was dissolved into gases or whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love ... no one knows; nor is such knowledge necessary" (Russell, Vol. 2, p. 129). "Hence it would not surprise us if, in the kingdom, God shall show to the world the body of flesh ... preserved" (Vol. 2, p. 130).
 2. In the scriptures, Jesus promised to raise up the temple of His body (John 2:18-21). He ate with the disciples after His resurrection (Luke 24:30; John 21:12). "Behold my hands and my feet that it is I myself: handle me, and see;

- for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have” (Luke 24:39). That the body of our Lord came forth from the tomb on the third day is the cornerstone of the gospel.
- F. Jehovah’s Witnesses deny that the soul of man lives after death.
1. The soul of man is not eternal but mortal, and it can die. Animals likewise have souls, though man has the preeminence by special creation. “At death it is not the body but the soul which dies” (Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. V, p. 341). They argue from Genesis 2:7 that man is a combination of breath and dust, therefore man is no more than an animal.
 2. The Bible teaches that at death the righteous spirit departs to be in paradise — alive, happy, and rejoicing right then (Acts 7:59; 2 Corinthians 5:6-8). Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that when a man dies he is as dead as a dog. In Luke 16:19-31, the rich man’s body was buried but his soul was in torment (cp. Matthew 10:28). In Matthew 17 and Luke 20:37-38, Jesus was able to refer to Moses, Elijah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in the present tense because they were all still alive in the spirit.
- G. Jehovah’s Witnesses deny that the wicked will be raised from the dead.
1. “There appears to be no Scriptural authority for saying that the wicked will ever be resurrected” (*Children*, p. 361).
 2. The Bible says, “Marvel not at this: for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, And shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation” (John 5:28-29). One cannot believe Christ told the truth and at the same time believe the doctrines taught by Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- H. Jehovah’s Witnesses deny that hell is a punishment after death.
1. Eternal punishment is a punishment or penalty of which there is no end. It does not mean “eternal torment” of living souls. Annihilation, the second death, is the lot of all those who reject Jehovah God and it is eternal. “Eternal torment is not the wages of sin” (Russell, Vol. 5, p. 480). “Eternal torment is a false doctrine” (Rutherford, *Jehovah*, p. 273). On the other hand, the 144,000 live as spirits in heaven. The rest of the righteous, “the great crowd,” live on earth, and must obey God perfectly for 1,000 years or be annihilated.
 2. The scriptures say, “Upon the wicked shall he rain fire and brimstone” (Psalm 11:6); “... shall have their part in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone” (Revelation 21:8); “Vengeance of eternal fire” (Jude 7); “smoke of torment ascendeth up day and night forever” (Revelation 14:11); and, “tormented day and night forever” (Revelation 20:10). Certainly there is punishment beyond death.
- I. Jehovah’s Witnesses deny that Christians owe allegiance to civil governments.
1. Jehovah’s Witnesses do not salute the flag of any nation. In *Let God Be True*, p. 234, it says, “Any national flag is a symbol or image of the sovereign power of that nation. Many national flags bear likenesses of things in heaven, such as stars, sun, etc. ... all such likenesses are embraced in Exodus 10:2-6. The giving of the salute to the flag of any nation is an act that ascribes salvation to

- the flag and to the nation for which it stands.” They also forbid their members to vote or serve in the military.
2. The Bible teaches that we are to obey the laws of the land as long as such do not violate God’s law (Romans 13:1-4).

III. When The Jehovah’s Witnesses Come To Your Door

- A. If a Jehovah’s Witness has never knocked on your door ... just wait — they will. With 8.5 million members in approximately 120,000 Kingdom Halls, Jehovah’s Witnesses have grown because of their massive door-to-door efforts.
- B. Hopefully you’ll realize an opportunity that you have to sow the seed of the kingdom (Luke 8:4-15), to reach a lost soul with the gospel (Mark 16:15), to give a defense (1 Peter 3:15), and to contend for the faith (Jude 3).
- C. There are five actions you can take to raise the likelihood of success:
 1. Prepare beforehand.
 - a) Jehovah’s Witnesses are difficult to deal with, even more so if you are not familiar with their false doctrine. A multitude of books and websites are dedicated to exposing their error.
 - b) I recommend The Interactive Bible. It has an excellent section exposing Jehovah’s Witness errors (www.bible.ca/jw.htm). Familiarize yourself with their notable errors so you can readily spot them.
 2. Get the study into the Bible and out of Watchtower literature.
 - a) When the Jehovah’s Witnesses knock on your door they have a plan. They want to teach you a series of “canned” lessons from one of the Watchtower books. Go along at first. But at some point in the initial visit, pick a topic where their error is obvious and steer the study into the Bible and away from the Watchtower literature.
 - b) This will not be easy. They are nearly unwavering in their preference of their own literature versus the Bible so be firm. Be prepared for the fact that their New World Translation) has been “doctored” to support their false teachings. Use these differences to further demonstrate Jehovah’s Witnesses errors.
 3. Steer the study toward the deity of Christ.
 - a) The most egregious Jehovah’s Witnesses error is their teachings on Christ (1 John 4:2-3). As we saw earlier, Jehovah’s Witnesses deny Christ’s deity by teaching Jesus is a created being, an angel.
 - b) As we have seen earlier, this is in direct contradiction to plain Bible teaching. They also teach Jesus is not eternal, but is a created being, This too contradicts plain Bible teaching.
 4. Exercise patience.
 - a) As you study with a Jehovah’s Witness it is critical to realize you are dealing with someone deceived by a false religion. Be firm, but exercise extreme patience.
 - b) Show them you really care about them and you are not just out to win an argument. It is also very likely they are a neophyte in their false religion. So, as it becomes evident you are trying to teach them, they will most likely call in more experienced Jehovah’s Witnesses, so be prepared.

5. Don't expect immediate results.
 - a) I've never been able to convert a Jehovah's Witness who knocked on my door. But, I have known of the conversion of a Jehovah's Witness so I know it's possible.
 - b) It's critical to remember our duty is to "plant" and "water" and rely on God to give "the increase" (1 Corinthians 3:5-6). Trust the power of the truth (Romans 1:16-17) when it is planted in a "good and honest heart" (Luke 8:15). You may never know it, but fruit will be borne.

Conclusion. This can only scratch the surface of the errors of this cult. They deny just about every fundamental doctrine of the Bible. They are anti-Christian. Their notions of an earthly, literal millennium have no foundation in the scriptures and are positively subversive to the gospel. We want to defend the truth and expose error. We love the Jehovah's Witnesses and will treat them with every courtesy, but we cannot yield to their false doctrine (Galatians 2:5).