

# JEHOVAH WITNESSES

## Key question

What do Jehovah's Witnesses believe and why are they viewed as a cult?

## Key text

### II Corinthians 11:13-15

“For such [are] false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light. Therefore [it is] no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness; whose end shall be according to their works.”

## Introduction

The Jehovah's Witnesses is a non-Christian Cult. Like all cults, the J.W. organization distorts the essential doctrines of Christianity. It denies the deity of Christ, the physical resurrection, and salvation by grace. To support its erring doctrines, the Watchtower organization (which is the author and teacher of all official J.W. theology) has even altered the Bible to make it say what it wants to.

Typical with cults that use the Bible to support its position is a host of interpretive errors:

- Taking verses out of their immediate context.
- Refusing to read verses in the entire biblical context.
- Inserting their theological presuppositions into the text.
- Altering the Biblical text to suit their needs.
- Latching onto one verse to interpret a host of others.
- Changing the meanings of words.
- Proclaiming some passages to be figurative when they contradict their doctrines.
- Adding to the Word of God.

Additionally, the cult requires of its members regular and frequent weekly attendance at their "Bible Study" meetings where they are repeatedly indoctrinated with anti-Christian doctrines. This is done by reading the Watchtower magazine that, basically, does their thinking for them. They are told they will be persecuted when they go door to door teaching their false doctrines, so that when someone disagrees with them, they are justified in being a J.W. They are told they are the only true organization on the earth (like all cults claim). They are strongly encouraged to have friends and acquaintances that are only J.W.'s, thereby keeping outside examination to a minimum. They are told to shun those who leave their group, that way, there is no way to see why someone has left, no way to find out that they are in error from those who have found the

truth. They are generally paranoid as I have witnessed in Internet Chat Rooms where, after asking one question about a Bible text, I was banned from a J.W. chat room. Subsequently, my name was passed around to all other J.W. rooms where I was banned from them as well. Apparently, examination of their doctrines is not allowed.

Primarily, the J.W. organization is a cult because it violates the essential biblical doctrines. The Bible says that Jesus is God in flesh, that Jesus rose from the dead in the same body He died in, and that salvation is by grace through faith. The Watchtower organization denies all three.

The Watchtower organization is a non-Christian organization that uses its people to promulgate false doctrines, sell a multitudinous amount of literature, and expand its grip into the lives of its members and their families. It is a non-Christian cult.

## Jehovah's Witness History

The Jehovah's Witness cult was begun by Charles Taze Russell in 1872. He was born on February 16, 1852, the son of Joseph L. and Anna Eliza Russell. He had great difficulty in dealing with the doctrine of eternal hell fire and in his studies came to deny not only eternal punishment, but also the Trinity, and the deity of Christ and the Holy Spirit. "In 1870, at the age of 18, Russell organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh." In 1879 he sought to popularize his aberrant ideas on doctrine. He co-published The Herald of the Morning magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour and by 1884 Russell controlled the publication and renamed it The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). The first edition of The Watchtower magazine was only 6,000 copies each month. Today the Witnesses' publishing complex in Brooklyn, New York, churns out 100,000 books and 800,000 copies of its two magazines--daily!"

Russell claimed that the Bible could be only understood according to his interpretations. A dangerous arrangement since he controlled what was written in the Watchtower magazine.

After the death of Russell on Oct. 31, 1916, a Missouri lawyer named Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society which was known then as the Dawn Bible Students Association. In 1931 he changed the name of the organization to "The Jehovah's Witnesses."

After Rutherford's death, Nathan Knorr took over. After Knorr, Frederick William Franz became president.

Today the Society is led by Mr. Henschel. The group has over 4 million members world wide. The Watchtower Society statistics indicate that 740 house calls are required to recruit each of the nearly 200,000 new members who join every year.

The J.W.'s have several 'book studies' each week. The members are not required to attend, but there is a level of expectation that gently urges converts to participate. It is during these 'book studies' that the J.W. is constantly exposed to counter Christian teachings. The average J.W., with his constant Watchtower indoctrination, could easily pummel the average Christian when it comes to defending his beliefs.

The J.W.'s vehemently portray the doctrine of the Trinity as pagan in origin and that Christendom, as a whole, has bought the lie of the devil. Along with denying the Trinity is an equally strong denial of the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit, the belief in hell, and eternal conscious punishment in hell.

## Fifteen of their unique doctrinal errors are listed here.

These notes are modified from Reverend Robert B. Mignaird

### 1. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE ABSOLUTE, UNIQUE DIVINITY OF JESUS CHRIST

Scripture demonstrates that the Lord, Jesus Christ, is Jehovah. Isaiah 41:4; 44:6 and 48:12 declare that the attribute of being the "first and last" belongs to Jehovah alone. In Revelation 1:7,8, 11, 17 and 22:23, 14, Jesus Christ is shown possessing this very attribute, thereby making Him the Jehovah of these Isaiah passages, and indeed, of the entire Old Testament. Isaiah 45:22-25 speaks of a universal worship which one day all mankind will render unto Jehovah. Phil 2:9-11 applies this Isaiah passage to Jesus Christ. Isaiah 44:22,23 sets forth Jehovah as the redeemer. Eph. 1:7 establishes Jesus Christ as this redeemer. In Isaiah 45:24 and 54:17, Jehovah is our righteousness. In 1 Cor. 1:30, Jesus Christ is our righteousness. Isaiah 43:11 reserves for Jehovah alone the work of saving man. "Besides Me there is no Saviour." Titus 2:13 teaches that Jesus Christ is the Saviour, thereby establishing Him as the Jehovah of Isaiah Chapter 43. An honest student of the Scriptures will read and compare the verses used above.

### 2. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TEACH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS A CREATED BEING - SIMPLY ANOTHER GOD.

This doctrinal error is achieved through a spurious translation in their New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scripture which renders John 1:1, "And the Word was a god." Isaiah emphatically denies this error in 43:10, 44:6 and 45:5, 21, and shows their translation of John 1:1 to be illegitimate. Four times Jehovah declares the impossibility of there being "another god" or "a god" beside Himself. Every honest student of Scripture must acknowledge the solitary aloneness of Jehovah.

### 3. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT.

Of the many Scripture references which demonstrate this to be false, John 16:13, 14 is representative. Eight times the Lord Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit by the personal masculine pronoun. The Greek word "Spirit" is neuter, but the pronoun employed is not "it" but rather "he" or "himself." Christ was grammatically incorrect, for the pronoun must agree with the noun in gender, but theologically correct in this recognizing the Spirit's personality. Were the Holy Spirit not a person, the pronoun "it" would have been used and the grammar of the passage kept intact. Even the Witnesses' own New World Translation acknowledges the Spirit's personality in the translation of these two verses. The divinity of the Holy Spirit is clearly demonstrated in the following references which the honest student will carefully study: Acts 5:3, 4; 1 Cor. 3:16; 2 Cor. 13:14. In 1 Cor. 12:4-6, the Holy Spirit is called Lord (v. 5) and God (v. 6). In placing Isaiah 6:8-10 along side of Acts 28:25-27, it becomes evident that the God of Isaiah 6 is the Holy Spirit.

### 4. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Though the truth of the Trinity is amusing to the Witnesses, nevertheless, it constitutes part of the revelation of God. The Bible student discovers there is a Person in Scripture known as the Father, who is God (Eph.1:2). There is another Person in Scripture called the Son, Jesus, Jesus Christ, who is God (Titus 2:13). There is still another Person called the Holy Spirit,

Holy Ghost, Spirit of God, who is God (Acts 5:3,4). The one Greek word theos, "God," is used of all three Persons, thus ascribing the same divinity to each. The careful student also notes the fact of the Trinity in Isaiah 48:16, 17; 28:19 and 2 Cor.13:14. The conclusion is simply that there is one God manifest in three Persons known as Father, Son and Holy Spirit, and since each Person is God, the persons are equal.

#### 5. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE BODY, CORPOREAL RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST FROM THE DEAD

False doctrine states "The man, Jesus, is dead; only His spirit arose." The witness of Jesus Christ is quite different (Luke 24:36-45). Even a casual glance at v. 39 dispels any doubt concerning the bodily resurrection. Thomas met the physically resurrected Christ (John 20:24-29), as did the other disciples who ate fish with Him (John 21:12-14). Paul testifies to the corporeal resurrection of Jesus Christ in 1 Cor.15:3-19. The guards at the tomb, the chief priests and Sanhedrin would never have become excited (Matt 28:11,15) if "only His spirit arose."

#### 6. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE BODILY VISIBLE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

They say, "We must not expect Him to come again as a human being. Coming is properly translated presence and refers to the invisible presence of the Lord." In contrast, a Bible student discovers the truth that Jesus Christ IS coming back again physically, literally. In Revelation 1:7 "every eye shall see Him"; in Thess.4:16-17 "the Lord Himself shall descend from Heaven"; and in Acts 1:10-11 He "shall so come in like manner as we have seen Him go into heaven." The testimony of these passages is irrefutable.

#### 7. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PRESENCE OF THE BELIEVER WITH CHRIST UPON DEATH

According to II Cor. 5:8, Phil 1:21-24 and Luke 16:20-22, the believer, immediately upon death, passes into the presence of Christ. The body sleeps in the ground (John 11:11-14), awaiting resurrection (I Cor. 15:20-23), while the soul and spirit, now separated from the body (James 2:26) pass into paradise.

#### 8. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES CHIDE THE BELIEVERS' HOPE OF HEAVEN

John 14:1-3; Phil. 3:20-21; 1 Pet. 1:3-5 and Rev. 3:21 are but a few of the many passages in Scripture which speak of the "living hope" of being with Christ forever.

#### 9. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE REALITY AND ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT

Scripture teaches the reality of hell. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke more of hell than heaven and informs us that hell is a furnace of fire (Matt.13:49-50); a place for Satan and his emissaries (Matt.25:41); and unquenchable fire (Mark 9:42-48). Furthermore, He insisted upon the fact that hell is eternal. The Greek word AIONIOS, which is defined as that which is without end, and which is used to describe the everlasting life mentioned in John 3:16 and the eternity of God in Roim.16:26, is deliberately used by Christ to describe the duration of Hell (Matt. 18:8), and by John in Rev.14:11. Aionios does not have a double meaning. If it means that God is eternal and the life which the believer receives is eternal, then it must mean that hell is also eternal.

#### 10. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PERFECT SALVATION OF CHRIST'S CROSS

Without any warrant from Scripture, the Witnesses teach that the Millenium, the thousand year reign of Christ upon the earth, will afford all mankind, from Adam onward, conditions to earn salvation. No where is this teaching found in the Bible. The Lord Jesus Christ has purchased our salvation on the Cross. Rom 3:21-26, and it remains for man to believe and be saved, (Eph. 2:8-10 and Acts 16:30-31). Salvation is wholly apart from human effort (Rom.3:27-28).

11. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY PATRIOTISM AND SALUTING THE FLAG

Scripture enjoins all believers to be loyal citizens. Rom.13:1-7, I Peter 2:13-15 and Matt.22:21.

12. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE CONFUSED ABOUT THE 144,000

Through good works and sincere effort, it is the hope of the Jehovah's Witness to become one of the 144,000. In the two chapters in which the 144,000 are mentioned, Revelation 7 and 14, the student of Scripture notes that 144,000 are literal Jews of the ancient tribes with no Gentiles among them (7:4-8); are all males (14:4); are virgins (14:4); will minister during the Great Tribulation (14:6-13); and do not earn their office by works. Only imagination, not sound Biblical interpretation, can allow a Gentile sect to claim for its devotees a place among the 144,000.

13. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES USE A PERVERTED TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scripture is a fumbling translation of the New Testament which no reputable Greek scholar will endorse. The Translation has been altered to fit the heresy. For instance, the Greek word for "other", "allos", does not appear in the Greek text of Col.1:16-17, but is inserted four times in their translation to make Christ appear as part of the creation, and hence fit their doctrine that He is a created son, another god. "...because by means of Him all other things were created." This and dozens of other passages make the New World Translation a travesty of God's Word.

14. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS DOCTRINAL SYSTEM IS BASED UPON THE INTERPRETATIONS OF CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL

In 1874, a Brooklyn haberdasher, Charles Taze Russell, announced that he possessed all the truth. In his many volumes, Russell "left scarcely one great truth of fundamental doctrine untouched with his conclusions." (Dr. Wm. E. Biederwolf). As a careful study will reveal, Russell's writings serve as a broad base upon which the Jehovah's Witnesses structure is erected. Presently, the Jehovah's Witnesses are following the fallen conclusions of a rascal who was divorced by his wife, was in trouble in the courts, and who fleeced his followers with "miracle wheat" sold at an exorbitant price, which he claimed would produce 15 times as much wheat as an ordinary bushel.

15. THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES NEGLECT A VAST AREA OF SCRIPTURE TRUTH

A careful analysis of numerous books, pamphlets and magazines turned out by the Watch Tower Publishers reveals only a small percentage of the Bible is used. A mere 6.5% of the Scripture is quoted, leaving untouched the rest of the Word of God.

## Interesting Quotes from The Watchtower Magazine

It is important to understand the psychological hold the Watchtower organization has in the life of the average Jehovah's Witness. The Watchtower organization is the guide, the teacher, the expounder of correct doctrine. The J.W. attends several meetings each week

where he is repeatedly indoctrinated to believe Watchtower doctrines. Every J.W. thinks alike and has the same pat answers because they read from the same sources and are conditioned into thinking the same way: the Watchtower way. So, if you've witnessed to one J.W., you've heard the same arguments they all will use.

In opposition to the Watchtower, according to the Bible, Jesus is the mediator between God and man (1 Tim.2:5). He alone is the one who reveals truth (John 1:17), not the Watchtower organization. As you will read in these quotes, the Watchtower organization subtly takes the place of Jesus. Though it claims to bear witness of Him and point to Him, in reality it takes His place. This is typical for a cult.

- "It should be expected that the Lord would have a means of communication to his people on the earth, and he has clearly shown that the magazine called The Watchtower is used for that purpose." 1939 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses, p. 85.

- "We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization." The Watchtower, Feb. 15, 1981.

- "...people cannot see the Divine Plan in studying the Bible by itself...if he then lays them [Scripture Studies] aside and ignores them and goes to the bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures." The Watchtower, Sept. 15, 1910, p. 298.

- "From time to time, there have arisen from among the ranks of Jehovah's people those, who, like the original Satan, have adopted an independent, faultfinding attitude...They say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago..." The Watchtower, August 15, 1981.

- "Thus the Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible." The Watchtower, Oct. 1, 1967. p. 587.

- "Make haste to identify the visible theocratic organization of God that represents his king, Jesus Christ. It is essential for life. Doing so, be complete in accepting its every aspect." The Watchtower, October 1, 1967, p. 591.

- "If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our Father but his organization as our mother." The Watchtower, May 1, 1957, p. 274.

- "We cannot claim to love God, yet deny his word and channel of communication." The Watchtower, October 1, 1967, p. 591.

- "We should eat and digest and assimilate what is set before us, without shying away from parts of the food because it may not suit the fancy of our mental taste...We should meekly go along with the Lord's theocratic organization and wait for further clarification, rather than balk at the first mention of a thought unpalatable to us and proceed to quibble and mouth our criticisms and opinions as though they were worth more than the slave's provision of spiritual food. Theocratic ones will appreciate the Lord's visible organization

and not be so foolish as to put against Jehovah's channel their own human reasoning and sentiment and personal feelings." *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1952, pp. 79-80.

- "After being nourished to our present spiritual strength and maturity, do we suddenly become smarter than our former provider and forsake the enlightening guidance of the organization that mothers us? 'Forsake not the law of thy mother' (Prov. 6:20-23)." *The Watchtower*, February 1, 1952, p. 80.
- "Never was there a more deceptive doctrine advanced than that of the trinity. It could have originated only in one mind, and that the mind of Satan the Devil." *Reconciliation*, 1928, p. 101.
- "The doctrine, in brief, is that there are three gods in one: 'God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost,; all three equal in power, substance and eternity.'" *Let God Be True*, 1952, p. 100. (Here they misrepresent the doctrine of the Trinity.)
- "Ask the student, 'How many Jehovah's are there?' Let him answer. The answer is obvious that there is only one Jehovah...If he is one Jehovah, then could he be three gods, God the Father, God the Son and God the Holy Ghost, as the Trinitarians teach?" *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1970. p. 210. (Again, the Watchtower misrepresents the doctrine of the Trinity.)

There are four requirements for salvation as taught by the Watchtower magazine of Feb. 15, 1983, p. 12. One of them deals with the Watchtower organization.

"Jesus Christ identified a first requirement when he said in prayer to his Father: 'This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you... Many have found the second requirement more difficult. It is to obey God's laws, yes, to conform one's life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible...A third requirement is that we be associated with God's channel, his organization...To receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization and serve God as part of it...The fourth requirement is connected with loyalty. God requires that prospective subjects of his kingdom support his government by loyally advocating his kingdom rule to others..."

(This information was taken from *The Scholastic Dishonesty of the Watchtower*, by Michael Van Buskirk: Caris Inc. P.O. Box 1783, Santa Ana, CA 92702 and *Dialogue with Jehovah's Witnesses*, by Duane Magnani, and Arthur Barrett, 1983, Witness Inc. Vol. 1, page 274.)