

How do Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings about Christ compare with Scriptures?

From *Christian Answers . Net*

Many people are confused about the Jehovah's Witnesses. People have written to ask if they are Christians or do they worship a different God? The following article may help to answer this important questions.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Christians have some things in common. For example, they share common concerns about religious apostasy, and they teach against Evolution.

Jehovah's Witnesses and Christians do, however, differ on many important doctrines. In an attempt to keep this article to a reasonable length, let us not concentrate on ALL the differences. Rather...

...LET US INVESTIGATE THE MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE, THE PERSON OF JESUS CHRIST.

JW's believe that Jesus Christ was a perfect man, and that He is a person distinct from God the Father. However, they also teach that before His earthly life, Jesus was a spirit creature, Michael the archangel, who was created by God and became the Messiah at His baptism. According to Jehovah's Witnesses, Jesus is a mighty one, although not almighty as Jehovah God is. According to John 1:1 in their Bible, *The New World Translation*, Christ is "a god," but not "the God." They teach that Jesus "was and is and always will be beneath Jehovah" and that "Christ and God are not coequal".

Does the Bible confirm their beliefs, or does it teach the orthodox Christian concept that Christ is God? This is an extremely important question. Consider the following points:

1. The Christ of the New Testament is the Jehovah of the Old Testament.
 - Isaiah wrote about seeing Jehovah in Isaiah 6:1-10.

- In John 12:31-42, we are told that Isaiah saw Jesus' glory and spoke of Him
- In Exodus 34:14 we are to worship no one but Jehovah.
- In Hebrews 1:6 the angels worship Christ.
- In Isaiah 44:6 Jehovah is called the first and the last (confirmed in Revelation 1:8),
- but in Revelation 22:13 Christ is the first and the last.

These verses demonstrate that the name “Jehovah” is used for both God the Father and of God the Son. Although they are distinct persons they are each called “Jehovah” because they each possess deity.

2. The deity of Christ is taught in Scripture.

In Matthew 1:23, Christ is called “Immanuel,” which means “God with us.”

When Thomas touched Jesus' wounds, after the resurrection, he exclaimed, “My Lord and my God” (John 20:28). There is no basis whatsoever for saying, as some JW's say, that Thomas was referring to Christ when he said “my Lord,” but was referring to God (Jehovah) when he said “my God.”

Instead, Thomas called Christ both his Lord and his God. And Christ did not correct him! Colossians 2:9 clearly confirms the deity of Christ when it states that in Him “all the fullness of the divine quality dwells bodily” (*New World Translation*). Stephen called Jesus “Lord” (Acts 7:59,60), and we are to confess Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9; I Cor. 12:3). “Lord” in these verses is *Kurios*, which is the Greek word for Jehovah in the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament. It is evident from this that Christ the Lord (*kurios*) is Jehovah God.

3. Attributes of Christ show that He is God

Jesus Christ knows all things (John 1:48; 2:25; 6:64; 14:30; 21:17). He is all-powerful (Matt. 28:18; Heb. 1:3), sinless (John 8:46), eternal (Mic. 5:2), and unchanging (Heb. 13:8). Since only God possesses these attributes, Christ must be God.

4. Certain works of Christ show that He is God.

Jesus Christ has the power to forgive sins (Mark 2:5-7; Eph. 1:7), give eternal life (John 10:28; 17:2), judge the world (John

5:22, 27), and control nature (Matt. 8:26). Since only God can do these things, Christ must be God.

5. Christ received worship as God.

Jesus is worshipped by the angels (Heb. 1:6) and by man (Matt. 14:33), and yet only God is to be worshipped (Ex. 34:14). Christ Himself said that worship is due to God alone (Matt. 4:10), and yet He accepted worship. If Jesus in His pre-existent state were the archangel Michael, how could He have received worship, since angels are not allowed to receive worship (Rev. 19:10)? If Christ were not God, then worshipping Him would be idolatrous.

6. Jesus Christ is called “the mighty God” in Isaiah 9:6. JW’s have a ready answer for this verse. They explain that Christ is “the mighty god.” but not “the almighty.” They say that Christ is the mighty, never the almighty and that Jehovah is the almighty God, never the mighty. However, Jeremiah 32:18 shows that Jehovah is the mighty One. Therefore, since Christ is the mighty God (Isaiah 9:6) and Jehovah is the mighty God (Jer. 32:18), they are both God. They both possess full deity.
7. Christ is God, the Creator of all things according to Colossians 1:15-17.

JW’s refer to this passage to support their teaching that Christ was created by Jehovah (for example, *Let God Be True*, p.35). This is based primarily on the words, “the firstborn of all creation,” in verse 15. However, if this verse was teaching that Jesus Christ is the first created being made by God, the word “first-created” would have been used of Christ, not the word “firstborn.” These are two different words in the Greek, with two different meanings. “First-created” is *protoktistos*, and “firstborn” is *prototokos*. Colossians 1:15 does not use the *protoktistos*, “first-created.” Instead it uses *prototokos*, which means an heir, a begotten one, the first in rank. The teaching of Colossians 1:15 is that Christ is first in rank above all creation; He is the Heir of all things. He is prior to all creation and superior over it.

The JW’s *New World Translation* adds the word “other” four times in Colossians 1:15-17, so that the passage states that Christ created “all other things,” everything except Himself. However, there is no basis for adding “other.” It certainly does not occur in the Greek manuscripts. The translators of the

New World Translation admit this by putting “other” in brackets. This “translation” attempts to comply with the assumption that firstborn means first-created. But, as shown, this is not the meaning of firstborn, and therefore it is also wrong to add the word “other.” There is no verse in the entire Bible that states that Christ was created by Jehovah!

8. Christ claimed to be equal with God in John 10:30. JW's believe that this verse, “I and the Father are one,” means that Christ was one with God the Father in purpose and not in nature and essence. However, if that was all Christ was saying, why did the Jews want to stone Him? They themselves thought His purpose was the same as God's. Verse 33 of John 10 explains that they wanted to stone Him because of blasphemy, because He claimed to be God!

The deity of Christ is the central point of the Scriptures. It clearly teaches that Christ is God. The teachings of the Jehovah's Witness' concerning Jesus Christ clearly contradict the teachings of the Bible. Passages such as Philippians 2:5-11 tell us that Jesus Christ, who existed as God, took the bodily form of a humble servant so that He could die on the cross in our place. “Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord (*kurios*), to the glory of God the Father.”

Historically, the JWs are best known for their practices of refusing: (1) to serve in the military; (2) to salute the flag; (3) to celebrate Christmas, birthdays, or other holidays; and (4) to give or to accept blood transfusions. [Rejecting the medical practices of vaccinations, organ transplants, and blood transfusions, the Watchtower has caused the deaths of many of its members throughout its history. Interestingly, vaccinations and organ transplants have now been acknowledged by the Watchtower as acceptable

practices, contradicting their previous doctrinal position.] (Although some of these practices are neither Biblical nor unbiblical in and of themselves, depending upon one's motives and the exact nature of the practice, the *reasons* the JW's give for them often are unbiblical.)

Below are the highlights of what JW's believe concerning their source of authority, the Godhead, Christ, sin, salvation, heaven and hell, etc.:

1. Source of Authority. JW's claim the Bible as their final authority, but Russell's writings, especially *Studies in the Scriptures*, are considered "the light of the Scriptures." JW's have their own translation of the Scriptures (*New World Translation*, published in 1961), which reflects *the binding interpretations* of the group's leaders. The JW's' *New World Translation* greatly perverts the Scriptures to avoid placing themselves under the judgment of God (cf. Jn. 1:1; 8:58; I Tim. 2:6; Ac. 10:36; Col. 1:16-17; 2:9-10; etc.). Hence, the leader's interpretation of the Bible, not the Bible itself, is the final authority of JW's. *The Watchtower* magazine is one of the JW's main sources of doctrine, and is considered authoritative by its members.

2. Trinity. JW's believe that God is not a triune God, but only "Jehovah God" (*Let God Be True*, pp. 100-101); they teach that Trinitarianism is a belief in three gods, and thereby, Satan-inspired polytheism. Rutherford wrote: "... sincere persons who want to know the true God and serve him find it a bit difficult to love and worship a complicated, freakish-looking, three-headed God. The clergy who inject such ideas will contradict themselves in the very next breath by stating that God made man in his own image; for certainly no one has ever seen a three-headed human creature" (*Let God Be True*, 2nd ed., pp. 101-102).

3. God the Father. Known as Jehovah, the Watchtower considers Him to be the only true eternal God, the Almighty. They write, "There was, therefore, a time when Jehovah was all alone in universal space" (*Let God Be True*, p. 25). Being alone, the first creative act of Jehovah was to create

His

Son.

4. Jesus Christ. Since JW's do not believe in the Trinity, they also do not believe that Jesus is God in

the flesh. They add the word “other” four times to Colossians 1:16,17, teaching that Christ was God’s *first* creation, i.e., the reincarnation of Michael the archangel created by Jehovah, rather than *the Creator*. [The “Watchtower” teaches that Jehovah God created Michael the Archangel before the foundation of the world; Michael was His only begotten son by virtue of the fact that he was the only creature directly created by Jehovah. It was this created Michael who became the JW Jesus (i.e., a denial of the eternity of Christ). JWs say that “Since actual conception took place, it appears that Jehovah God caused an ovum or egg in Mary’s womb to become fertile, accomplishing this by the transfer of the life of his first born son (Michael) from the spirit realm to the earth” (*Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 920). “Marvelously, Jehovah transferred the life-force and the personality pattern of his first born heavenly son (Michael) to the womb of Mary. God’s own active force, his holy spirit, safeguarded the development of the child in Mary’s womb so that what was born was a perfect human” (*Reasoning*, p. 255).] JWs also add an “a” in John 1:1, making the verse read, “the Word was *a* god” (which in essence, makes the JWs guilty of the same polytheism of which they accuse Trinitarians).

5. Use of Name Jehovah. JWs use the name “Jehovah” only for God (in order to distinguish between God and Jesus Christ), while failing to recognize that Jesus is the fulfillment of “Jehovah” in Isaiah 40:3 and Matthew 3:3. **[HJB]**

6. Resurrection of Christ . JWs deny the bodily resurrection of Christ through their teaching that the body of Christ was annihilated by God — not risen — but rather a new one was *created* three days after His death. This they call the “resurrection” of Christ. Thus, Jesus was “resurrected” as a “glorious spirit creature” and does *not* now have a glorified physical body. Instead, they claim Jesus arose spiritually and only “materialized” at various times after His resurrection so He could be seen alive. (*Awake!*, 7/22/73, p. 4)

7. The Holy Spirit. JWs deny the deity of the third person of the Trinity, as either God or as a person; they claim that the Holy Spirit is only an impersonal “active force of Almighty God which moves His servants to do His will” (*Reasoning From the Scriptures*, pp. 406-407; *The Watchtower*, 6/1/54, p. 24). They have written, “But the holy spirit has no personal name. The reason for this is that the holy spirit is not an intelligent person. It is the impersonal, invisible active force that finds its source and reservoir in Jehovah God

and that he uses to accomplish his will even at great distances, over light years of space” (*Let Your Name Be Sanctified*, p. 269).

8. Sin. JWs believe that the first man, Adam, disobeyed Jehovah when tempted by the angel Lucifer, who was jealous of man. As a result of disobedience, Adam and all his descendants lost the right to life and so became liable to death. This liability is applied to temporal death only.

9. Salvation . JWs claim everlasting life is a reward for doing the will of God and carrying out one’s dedication — in other words, salvation is a reward for good works. (JWs are expected to spend five hours per week in door-to-door visitation and witnessing, are responsible for selling twelve subscriptions to *The Watchtower* magazine each month, and are responsible for conducting a “Bible study” each month in the homes of their converts.) According to JW theology, a person has one of three possible destinies. The Anointed (144,000) will be in heaven to reign with Jehovah God. The rest of the faithful Jehovah’s Witnesses (not of the 144,000) will live forever on a paradise Earth. Both of these classifications are determined to a great extent on membership in the Watchtower organization as well as going door-to-door spreading the message of the Watchtower. Those people who are not members of the Watchtower organization will be destroyed by Jehovah God and cease to exist. There is no concept of eternal punishment or hell in Watchtower theology (*Let God Be True*, pp. 90-95, 289). They also believe that men will have a second chance, after death, to be saved.

10. The Body of Christ. JWs believe that the members of the spiritual Body of Christ, or “Christian Congregation,” number only 144,000 (Rev. 7:4-8). Most of those members of Christ’s Body are now deceased and are reigning with Jesus in heaven since 1918. (Anybody born after 1936 cannot be in that number.) The remaining members still on earth, approximately 8,000 (out of whom are selected the “Governing Body”), are known as the “Remnant.” They are collectively known as Jehovah God’s “channel of communication” to men. They are the only ones “born again” and are the only ones who have a hope of going to Heaven. The rest of Jehovah’s faithful witnesses only hope to be worthy enough to inherit the Earth, and will never see “Jesus/Michael,” nor will they ever go to Heaven. All “so called Christendom” will be destroyed at Armageddon.

11. Soul Sleep. JW's deny the immortality of the soul. They do not believe the soul can exist apart from the body, but that a corpse remains in an unconscious state in the grave waiting for the resurrection. [HJB]

12. Annihilation of the Wicked. JW's teach that the "second death" is annihilation and extinction — the wicked will cease to exist and will not suffer everlasting torment. They claim that a "doctrine of a burning hell" is "wholly unscriptural," "unreasonable," "contrary to God's love," and "repugnant to justice." [HJB] They claim that "hell" is the grave.

13. Prophecy . The Bible lists six identifying marks of false prophets, any one of which is sufficient for identification: (1) through signs and wonders they lead astray after false gods (Dt. 13:1-4); (2) their prophecies don't come to pass (Dt. 18:20-22); (3) they contradict God's Word (Isa. 8:20); (4) they bear bad fruit (Mt. 7:18-20); (5) men speak well of them (Lk. 6:26); and (6) they deny that Jesus, the one and only Christ, has come once and for all in the flesh (1 Jn. 4:3), thereby denying His sufficiency in all matters of life and godliness (2 Pe. 1:3). Most cults are founded upon false prophecies, which, if pointed out, offer an effective way to open blind eyes and rescue cultists. Russell's false prophecies formed the basis for what became The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society and the Jehovah's Witnesses. Russell declared that the Second Coming had taken place invisibly in October 1874, and the Lord was truly present, and that in 1914 the faithful (the 144,000) would be translated to heaven and the wicked destroyed. Armageddon (which began in 1874) would culminate in 1914 with the complete overthrow of earth's rulers and the end of the world. C.T. Russell, still on earth, died in 1916.

In the early 1920s, JW's zealously distributed on the streets and from door to door a book titled *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. It was prophesied, "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914 ... we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old ... to the condition of human perfection" ("*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*," *The Watchtower*, 7/15/24, p. 89). The JW's even built a house in San Diego where the patriarchs were to live and tried to deed it to King David. (The house was quietly sold in 1954.) In the early 1940s, JW's were declaring that Armageddon, only

months away, would end World War II and the defeat of the Nazis would usher in God's rule on earth (*The Watchtower*, 12/41). Their book, *Children*, suggested that plans to marry and have children be postponed until after Armageddon. It's been a long wait! Not giving up, they later prophesied that God's millennial kingdom would commence in 1975. Again JWs were told not to engage in any plans for this world, including marriage and having children. Many quit their jobs, sold their homes, and dedicated themselves to going door to door. (Source: 3/97, *The Berean Call*.) All in all, the Watchtower has predicted the end of the world for 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975, and 1989.

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