

- ****Introduction: Returning to Hebrews 13:8-9****
 - Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever
 - Warning against strange doctrines
 - The early church faced pressure to return to the old covenant system
 - Hebrews 7: Christ's priesthood superior to the Levitical priesthood
 - Hebrews 8: Christ mediates a better covenant
 - Hebrews 9: Christ's sacrifice superior to animal sacrifice
 - Hebrews 10: Christ offered one sacrifice for sin forever
 - False teachings about Jesus then and now
 - Some denied His humanity; others denied His deity
 - 2 John 7: Warning about deceivers
 - Ephesians 4:14: Warning against spiritual immaturity and doctrinal instability
- ****Purpose of This Study****
 - Apologetics: understanding what the Bible teaches versus other world religions
 - Focus: Jehovah's Witnesses – core doctrine compared to Scripture
 - Goal: not to malign JWs but to show doctrinal differences
 - God loves JWs and desires their salvation
- ****Background on Jehovah's Witnesses****
 - Founded by Charles Taze Russell
 - 1870: Organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh at age 18
 - 1876: Elected "Pastor" of the group
 - 1879: Founded the Herald of the Morning, which became the Watchtower
 - Russell and Judge Rutherford (his successor) taught Jesus is the first and greatest creation of Jehovah
 - Roots in Arianism: the 4th-century heresy that Jesus was created by the Father
- ****Core JW Doctrines vs. Scripture****
 - ****1. Jesus as a Created Being (the Archangel Michael)****
 - JW teaching: Jesus is Michael the archangel, not God
 - Watchtower (1958): "Who Is the Archangel Michael?"
 - Scriptures JWs use
 - Jude 9: Michael contending with the devil
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16: The Lord descends with the voice of an archangel
 - Problems with the JW interpretation
 - 1 Thessalonians 4:16 does not say Jesus is the archangel, only that He descends with the voice of one
 - By JW logic, Jesus would also be a trumpet
 - Michael appeals to a higher authority – he does not rebuke Satan himself
 - If Michael is Jesus, Jesus would be appealing to someone above Himself

- What the Bible teaches
 - Hebrews 1:4-6: Jesus is much better than the angels; angels worship Him
 - Hebrews 1:13: No angel is told to sit at God's right hand
 - Hebrews 2:5: The world to come is not subject to angels
 - 1 Peter 3:22: Angels and powers are subject to Jesus
 - Hebrews 1:8: The Father calls the Son "God" — Greek word "theos"
 - John 1:1: "The Word was God" (JW New World Translation changes this to "a god")
 - Isaiah 43:10; 44:6; 44:8: There is only one God
 - John 8:58: "Before Abraham was, I am" — Jesus takes the divine name
 - John 10:30-33: Jews understood Jesus was making Himself equal to God
 - John 20:28: Thomas declares "My Lord and my God"
 - Colossians 1:15-17: Jesus is the creator of all things
 - NWT inserts the word "other" to make Jesus a created being
 - "Firstborn" (prototokos) means preeminence, not first in order of creation
 - Philippians 2:5-6: Jesus existed in the form of God and did not consider equality with God something to be grasped

- **2. The Trinity**

- JW teaching: The Father is God, Jesus is a creation, the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force
- What the Bible teaches about the Holy Spirit
 - The Spirit speaks (Acts 13:2)
 - The Spirit teaches (John 14:26)
 - The Spirit has a will (1 Corinthians 12:11)
 - The Spirit can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30)
 - Forces cannot do these things — only persons can
 - The Spirit can be lied to (Acts 5:3-4): lying to the Holy Spirit is lying to God
 - John 16:13: The Spirit is personal — "He will guide you into all truth"
- The Trinity demonstrated in Scripture
 - Matthew 28:19: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit named together in baptism
 - 2 Corinthians 13:14: Three persons, one God
 - Matthew 3:16-17: All three persons present at Jesus' baptism
 - John 17: Jesus prays to the Father — they cannot be the same person
 - John 14:16: The Spirit is "another Helper" — a distinct person
- The resurrection and the Trinity
 - The Father raised Jesus from the dead
 - Jesus said He would raise Himself (John 2)
 - The Spirit raised Jesus from the dead
 - All three persons involved — evidence of the Trinity
- Jesus shares the glory of the Father (John 17)
- Defining the Trinity

- God is not one being in three beings, nor one person in three persons
- God is three persons in one being
- Being: what makes you what you are
- Person: what makes you who you are
- Three equal persons sharing one divine nature — Yahweh
- Any religion denying the Trinity does not share Christian doctrine

- ****3. Works-Based Salvation****
 - JW teaching: Must join the Watchtower, perform door-to-door work, and remain faithful to earn eternal life

 - What the Bible teaches
 - Ephesians 2:8-9: Salvation is by grace through faith, not works
 - Titus 3:5: Not by works of righteousness
 - John 3:16: Eternal life by believing in Christ

- ****4. Denial of the Bodily Resurrection****
 - JW teaching: Jesus rose spiritually, not physically; He became a spirit
 - Main verse used: 1 Peter 3:18 — "made alive by the Spirit"
 - Problems with the JW interpretation
 - Being raised by the Spirit is grammatically different from becoming a spirit
 - 1 Peter 3:21 connects salvation to the resurrection of Jesus Christ

 - What the Bible teaches
 - Luke 24:38-39: Jesus says "a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have"
 - John 20:27: Thomas touches His wounds
 - The Emmaus road: Jesus walked, talked, and ate with His disciples
 - Jesus told the disciples to handle Him and see

- ****5. Invisible Return of Christ in 1914****
 - JW teaching: Christ returned spiritually in 1914 and began ruling in heaven
 - What the Bible teaches
 - Matthew 24:27: His coming will be like lightning — visible
 - Revelation 1:7: Every eye will see Him
 - Acts 1:11: He will come in the same manner as He was seen going

- ****6. Denial of Hell (Eternal Conscious Punishment)****
 - JW teaching: The wicked are annihilated
 - What the Bible teaches
 - Matthew 25:46: Eternal punishment versus eternal life
 - Revelation 20:10: Torment day and night forever and ever
 - Mark 9:47-48: The worm does not die and the fire is not quenched

- ****7. The Watchtower as God's Only Channel****
 - JW teaching: Must obey the Watchtower Society to understand truth

- What the Bible teaches
 - 2 Timothy 3:16-17: Scripture alone equips the believer for all doctrine
 - No human organization is God's only channel
- ****8. Only 144,000 Go to Heaven****
 - JW teaching: 144,000 literal people go to heaven; everyone else hopes for paradise earth
 - What the Bible teaches
 - Revelation 7:5-8: The 144,000 are Jews from every tribe of Israel during the end-times tribulation
 - Luke 12:32: "Little flock" was spoken to the disciples; "little" is not a fixed number
 - John 10:27-28: Jesus gives eternal life to all His sheep
 - Revelation 7:9: A great multitude no one could number — not a separate group living on earth
 - John 14:1-3: Jesus prepares a place for all believers
 - Philippians 3:20: Our citizenship is in heaven
 - Salvation is for everyone who calls on the name of the Lord
- ****The Trinity in the Old Testament****
 - Plurality within God
 - Genesis 1:26: "Let us make man in our image" — cannot refer to angels
 - Genesis 3:22: "The man has become like one of us"
 - Genesis 11:7: "Let us go down"
 - Isaiah 6:8: "Who will go for us?"
 - The Angel of the LORD as a divine person distinct from God
 - Exodus 3:2-6: The Angel of the LORD speaks, then identified as God
 - Judges 13:18-22: Manoah says "We have seen God"
 - A picture of Christ before His incarnation
 - The Son in the Old Testament
 - Psalm 2:7, 12: The Son is spoken of as a divine person
 - The Holy Spirit as a person in the Old Testament
 - Genesis 1:2: The Spirit active in creation
 - Isaiah 63:10: The Spirit can be grieved
 - Psalm 51:11: David prays for the Spirit not to be taken from him
 - Isaiah 48:16: A Trinitarian verse in the Old Testament
 - A divine speaker says "The Lord GOD has sent Me, and His Spirit"
 - Father, Son, and Spirit all present in one verse
 - Context: Isaiah 48:12-13 — God identifies Himself as the first and the last, the creator
- ****A Simple Way to Explain the Trinity****

- Truth 1: There is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 45:5)
- Truth 2: The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are each God
 - Father: 1 Peter 1:2
 - Son: John 1:1; Hebrews 1:8
 - Holy Spirit: Acts 5:3-4
- Truth 3: The Father, Son, and Spirit are distinct persons
 - Matthew 3:16-17: All three present at the baptism
 - John 14:16: "Another Helper" — a distinct person
 - John 17: Jesus prays to the Father