

“A Different Gospel”
(Jehovah’s Witnesses)

Announcements:

- **Graduation Sunday** - Prayers over 5th & 12th graders
- **Pentecost Sunday** (Holy Spirit poured out and church began!)

Title: “A Different Gospel”

Normally, we teach **Book by Book, Verses by Verse (Expositional)** but taking a **three week** break...

- Holy Spirit was stirring in my heart as we were teaching through 2 Corinthians recently:

*2 Cor 11:2-3 - “I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a **pure virgin to Christ**. But I fear, lest somehow, as the serpent **deceived** Eve by his craftiness, so your minds may be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ.”*

- **(1) Protection & (2) Purity**

*2 Cor 11:4 - “For if he who comes preaches **another Jesus** whom we have not preached, or if you receive **a different spirit** which you have not received, or **a different gospel** which you have not accepted—you **may well put up with it!**”*

- **(3) Proclamation**

This is one of the **roles of an elder/overseer**...

*Titus 1:9, ESV - “He must hold firm to the trustworthy word as taught, so that he may be able to give instruction in **sound doctrine** and also to **rebuke those who contradict it.**” (equipping the saints)*

But not just the role of an overseer, also **God has challenged each believer**...

*Jude 1:3 - “Beloved, while I was very diligent to write to you concerning our common salvation, I found it necessary to write to you **exhorting you to contend earnestly** for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” -*

- As **Christ’s ambassadors** in a fallen world, we must be prepared to engage
- *We’re called to **go out into the world, and when you do, what will you find? Various faith’s!***

So, in light of these Biblical passages, this is important to God and commanded to us in the Scriptures.

For the next three weeks, we will be looking at **three false Gospels** that present **A different Jesus**.

- I selected these three because they are the most prevalent and most missional.
 - **Week 1: Jehovah’s Witnesses (Let em know “J-Dubs!”)**
 - **Week 2: Mormonism**
 - **Week 3: Islam**
- For each, we will look at the same **10 points**: *History, Scriptures, Father, Son, Spirit, Humanity, Salvation, Afterlife, Nuances, and how to converse* (brief with each, some more than others)

Today, I will be explaining the beliefs of **Jehovah’s Witnesses** so we can better understand where their theology departs from the clear teaching of Scripture.

- **Booklets** (hold one up) more coming in mail next week. **Email resources** this upcoming week.

But before I dive in, let me share just a couple things from my heart, to prepare our hearts:

- **Theology!** “*You are not children: why should you be treated like children?*” (C.S. Lewis)
- **Unashamedly & UNAPOLOGETICALLY** call out *false teachers and those deceived* by them...
- I am doing so **with Genuine Love**. They’re made in God’s image. *But not for grace in my life...*
- **NUANCES of belief** out there. Not all are even aware of the full teachings of their organization.
- Ephesians 6:12 - “*We do **not wrestle against flesh and blood**, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this age, against spiritual hosts of wickedness...*” - It’s a **spiritual battle**. Not our enemies. **Pray** for their eternal salvation...

Let’s Pray

Jehovah’s Witnesses

- Show of hands - *Have any of you had a Jehovah’s Witness knock on your door?*
- **Largest door knocking religion in the world.**
- “*Opportunity knocks once. But, if you hear a second knock, it’s probably a Jehovah’s witness :)*”
- *Two ladies a few months ago - went straight to Jesus being God. Backed away little by little...*

>>> **History - When, who, and how was it founded?**

- Movement **began in 1870** (*first off, can we just start by recognizing any movement that **comes late to the game** usually isn’t a good movement to follow?*)
- In 1870, near Pittsburgh Pennsylvania, a man named **Charles Taze Russell (Image)** started his own Bible study because he no longer liked the teachings of his church. **Warning alert!**
- He named his group the “**Millennial Dawn Bible Study**” and he began writing a series of books called “**The Millennial Dawn**” - wrote 6 volumes before his death - theology originated.
- Then, **in 1886**, an organization was officially formed called “**The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.**” (what they go by still today). They started **distributing the books...**
- **In 1879**, Charles Russell started a magazine called “**Zion’s Watchtower and Herald of Christ’s Presence**”. *Name is important, promoted that Christ returned invisibly in 1874 (“*in spirit*”)
- **In 1908**, they moved the Watchtower Org from Pennsylvania to New York (*located still today...*)
- After Russell (the founder’s) death, **in 1916** the torch was then carried by a man named **Judge J. F. Rutherford (Image)** who wrote the seventh and final volume of the Millennial Dawn series.
- Then **in 1917**, Rutherford developed a large following who soon after began calling themselves “**Jehovah’s Witnesses**” - *because of their emphasis on the name “Jehovah” (more on this...)*

***Another important aspect of their history are the repetitive “**date settings**” for the return of Christ.

- Originally predicted Christ’s return in **1874**, later changed the date to **1914**. (**invisibly**)
- They also promoted that “**Armageddon**” would happen at the return of Christ in which (*in their view*) God would destroy all human governments and establish His kingdom on earth. Dates...
 - **1914, 1915, 1918, 1925, 1941, 1946, 1950, 1975** and many other proclamations (**in print!**) (*surprisingly, very few J-Dubs know about these date changes...*)
- **Date Setting Eclipse (May 17th - yikes!)** - Loud, now quiet. **Be careful** with date setting folks.
- Deuteronomy 18:20-22, NLT - “*...any prophet who falsely claims to speak in my name or who speaks in the name of another god **must die.***’ **But you may wonder, ‘How will we know whether or not a prophecy is from the Lord?’ If the prophet speaks in the Lord’s name but his**

prediction does not happen or come true, you will know that the Lord did not give that message. That prophet has spoken without my authority and need not be feared."

- The **Watchtower claims** to be the "true prophetic mouthpiece for God on earth at this time"

****Despite the repeated false prophecies*, the Watchtower Society has grown into **one of the largest most influential cults of our time**. Recent study in 2023 estimated **over 8.5 million** world wide.

- I mentioned earlier they often *go door-to-door*, their *organization requires that of all*.
- You might also see them in *public places* with a stand or display with *lots of literature*...
- The **Watchtower Magazine** is **by far** the **LARGEST religious materials publisher in the world**. *Over 45 million copies per month in 100's of languages* (not including *other printables* (various books, pamphlets, and "**Awake!**" magazine))

All this ties into our second point...

>>> **Bible - What Scripture(s) do they read?**

- Anything **The Watchtower Society** prints is viewed as the **Authoritative Word from Jehovah**.
- *If the magazine says it, you are required to believe it and do it, and you can't argue against it.*
- *Does anyone see the problem here? A few folks based out of New York tell you what God says?*
- *In addition* to the *Watchtower society* being viewed as the *prophetic mouthpiece of God*, the J-Dubs also have *their own Bible translation* called the **New World Translation (or NWT)**.
- Released on **August 2nd, 1950** at a J-Dub's convention in *Yankee Stadium, New York*.
 - **NT Greek translation** released in *1950* at the convention.
 - **OT Hebrew translation** released in five volumes in *1953, 1955, 1957, 1958, and 1960*.
 - **Completed version of OT & NT** released in *1961*. (*numerous revisions* - 2013 recent)
- *A completely new rendition of the Bible to fit all of their doctrines (by the "anointed" witnesses)*
- Completely **butchers the original languages** and just *altered it* wherever they needed to.
- I'll just give you one famous example of this that many folks are aware of...
- *John 1:1 - "In the beginning was the Word [AKA: Jesus], and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."* But the NWT renders it **"and the Word was a god"** (*added a greek article*)
- *Purposefully stripping away* Christ's divinity and equality with the Father.

From a protestant, orthodox Christian perspective, this is a big deal. It's a *fundamental departure* from the authority of Scripture alone ("**Sola Scripture**") which is one of the *core foundations* of our faith.

- *As devout Christians*, we hold to **inerrancy and infallibility** of the **66 canonized books** of the Bible. *The Bible is God's revelation to mankind*.
- **No other organizations or publications** can *supersede or even be given equal authority* to the *unadulterated written word of God*. It is **the standard** by which all things are judged.
- As God's people we're called to "*rightly divide*" (2 Tim 2:15) His word, and to be like "*the Bereans*" (Acts 17:11).
- Can I just comment that one of the *best ways to combat false doctrines* is to *know your own Biblical doctrine* - (i. E. "*Foundations of the faith class*")

>>> **God, the Father - Who is God?**

- **Not much difference here** between what we believe and Jehovah's witnesses believe.
- They rightly affirm God the Father as revealed in the Bible is the **one true God of the universe**.
- One *nuance to point out*, is the **strict need** to refer to God specifically as "**Jehovah**"

- Not Lord, or God, or YHWH, or Adonai, etc... (*inserted Jehovah in 1000's of places in NWT*)
- To them, refusing to use the **"right name of God"** is a big deal (*keep in mind when conversing*)

*God the Father is not the issue with J-Dubs, but the views of *Jesus and the Spirit are...* (no trinity!)

- They **deny that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are three co-equal, co-eternal persons** within the **one Being of God**.
- For Jehovah's Witnesses, **Jehovah alone is the eternal, supreme Being** worthy of being called Almighty God.

****So are Jesus and the Holy Spirit also God in the same way the Father is?*

>>> **Christ, the Son - Who is Jesus?**

****This is by far the biggest issue with Jehovah's Witnesses****

- **They believe Jesus is a created being.** Specifically, he is a manifestation of **"Michael the archangel"**, the first *created being* of God. *Straight from their website...*
- The **Bible nowhere teaches** that Jesus was **"created"** nor that he is **"Michael"**
- But the Jehovah's witnesses **strip Jesus of His deity**. Claiming He is **not Jehovah God...** "g"
- Niow, *we could go absolutely crazy* on a **plethora of verses** right here if we wanted to. We could spend a couple hours looking at verses *that point to the deity of Jesus*. That **HE IS GOD**.
- **Here's just a couple references and points of clarification...**
- *Isaiah 9:6* - "For unto us **a Child is born**, Unto us a Son is given; And the government will be upon His shoulder. And His name will be called: Wonderful, Counselor, **Mighty God**, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace." - *Who they talkin bout?*
- *Matthew 1:23* - "Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and **bear a Son**, and they shall call His name **Immanuel**," which is translated, **"God with us."** - *Who they talkin bout?*
- *John 1:3* - "**All things** were **made through Him**, and without Him nothing was made that was made." - *Who they talkin bout?*
- *Col. 1:15* - "He [Jesus] is the **image of the invisible God**, the **firstborn** over all creation..."
- J-Dubs, will say, "look, we got ya here. It says, He was **"firstborn,"** meaning He was **created**."
- The Greek word there for **Firstborn** is **"Protokos"** = Superior, Preeminent in rank, Above.
- There's another word in Greek for **"first created"** (*protoktistos*) and Paul **did not use that word**.
- Jesus is **superior to all of creation**. *Preeminent in rank above it all. Next verses teach that...*
- *Colossians 1:16-17* - "For by Him [Jesus] **all things** were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist."
- The JDubs try to do the same thing with **Jesus being the "begotten" son...**
- *John 3:16* - "For God so loved the world that He gave His **only begotten Son**, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."
- **Begotten** does not mean **made or created**. The greek word is **"Monogenes"** = (*Monos = one*) & (*Genes = "kind" or "type"*)... **Put it together** = **"unique" or "one of its kind"**
- Jesus is **not saying that God the Father created Him**. He's saying that **He is God's only, unique, one-of-a-kind Savior!** - *Meaning, there is no other!*

*****So, is Jesus God? YES!**

- Many of the **early church patriarchs** in the *first 3 centuries* are all recorded *quoting the deity of Jesus*: "Ignatius of Antioch, Polycarp of Smyrna, Justin Martyr Tatian, Melito of Sardis, Irenaeus of Lyons, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Novatian of Rome" (look em up!)
- *The Bible teaches it, the early church taught it, who are we to change it?*

One more note about Jesus, the Son. Sadly the J-Dubs **do not recognize His bodily resurrection.**

- A couple **quotes directly from the Watchtower website** *as of yesterday* regarding *Jesus' body after His death* - "It was disposed of by Jehovah God, dissolved into its constituent elements or atoms... He caused Jesus' body to disappear, but not corrupt, meaning that it was dissolved, disintegrated back into the elements from which all human bodies are made."
- *Can you imagine teaching an **easter morning message** with that? Not fun...*
- *Luke 24:36-40* - "Now as they [the disciples] said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, "Peace to you." But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, "Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. **Handle Me** and see, for **a spirit** does not have **flesh and bones** as you see I have." When He had said this, **He showed them His hands and His feet.**"

*****Okay, that's pretty clear! Jesus is God. He died, and He rose again, with a physical body!**

>>> Holy Spirit - Who is the Holy Spirit?

- Not much to say here other than the J-Dubs **deny that the Holy Spirit is God. The third member of the Holy Trinity.** They believe the Spirit to be an **"impersonal force" (electricity)**
- **In their NWT**, on *many* occasions, they have *changed the Greek language* so as to refer to the Holy Spirit as an **"it"** or an **"object"** and are seeking to remove **"divine personhood..."**
- **But, the Bible clearly teaches** that the Holy Spirit is a **person**. Always with **"masculine personal pronouns"** and that He is a **helper & counselor** that: *convicts, guides, teaches, indwells, comforts, and empowers* His people. He can even be **"grieved..." (Eph 4:30)**
- According to *conservative, devout, true followers of Christ*, the Holy Spirit is the **third person of the Triune Godhead, co-equal and co-eternal** with the Father and the Son.
- One key example is in the Book of Acts (*after Ananias lied...*), Peter asks Ananias...
 - *Acts 5:3* - "Why has Satan filled your heart to **lie to the Holy Spirit?**"
 - *Acts 5:4* - "...you have not lied to men but **to God.**"
 - Here the biblical text clearly **equates the Spirit with God Himself.**
- *The Holy Spirit was there at creation; moved the prophets of God with His Words, indwells and empowers believers as the new temples, and regenerates us to be born again of the Spirit.*

>>> Humanity & Sin - What is the nature of man?

- *On the surface*, Jehovah's Witnesses appear to **affirm human sinfulness.** *And they do...*
- They believe in *sin passed down from Adam* which causes us to be **"born imperfect and inclined toward error" (website)** (not born "bad", just "imperfect" and sometimes "prone to sin...")
- They **do not** teach that this **inherited sin has eternal separated us** from God and that we are **spiritually dead** because of it...
- *Romans 3:10,23* clearly teaches there is **"No one righteous, no not one... [and that] ...we've all sinned and fall short of the glory of God"**

- [Psalm 51:5](#) - "Behold, I was **brought forth in iniquity**. And **in sin** my mother conceived me."
- "**What is man and how can I be saved?**" are summed up beautifully in **Romans 5...**
- [Romans 5:12, 18](#) - "Just as **through one man sin entered the world**, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned... therefore, as through one man's offense **judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation**, even so through one Man's righteous act the free gift came to all men, **resulting in justification of life**"

*****Sinful man is lost without a savior. He must be born again of the Spirit, by grace, through faith**

>>> **Means of Salvation - How can I be saved?**

- Sadly, the Jehovah's Witnesses **add some stuff** to salvation. It's not by grace, through faith, but also in keeping **firm obedience to the Watchtower organization**.
- Listen to this quote right out of one of their books, **You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth (p. 255)**: "There will only be one organization—God's visible organization—that will survive the fast-approaching 'great tribulation' ...**you must be part of Jehovah's organization, doing God's will, in order to receive his blessing of everlasting life.**"
- According to the JDubs - **if you want to be saved**, you must **belong to their organization** and be faithful in what they call "**kingdom work**" (mainly door-to-door ministry) - "**Works-based**"
- **Very different from the Bible's declaration...**
- [Ephesians 2:8-9](#) - "For **by grace** you have been saved **through faith**, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, **not of works**, lest anyone should boast."

>>> **Views on the Afterlife - Where am I going?**

There's a big **twisting of both Heaven & Hell**

Heaven (*Two Levels: Heavenly Hope and Earthly Hope*)

- **Heavenly Hope:**
 - **ONLY 144,000** will go to heaven to rule with Christ. They alone are the "**anointed ones**"
 - **The Bible does not teach that** (*misinterpreted [Rev. 7 & 14](#) - Israel in the Tribulation*)
 - [Revelation 7:9](#) - "...I looked, and behold, a great multitude **which no one could number**, of all nations, tribes, peoples, and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb..." (*countless souls standing before the throne of God in heaven*)
 - But J-Dubs claims only 144,000 will make it and that this number was filled between the time of Christ and 1935. It's FULL!
- **Earthly Hope:**
 - **Everyone else** will live here on a paradise like earth apart from Christ
 - One of their popular books spells this out: **You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth**.

Hell - *What about everybody who does not convert to the Watchtower society?*

- The Watchtower Society teaches the **Doctrine of Annihilationism**. You just cease to exist.
- **But the Bible does not teach that**. The Bible teaches that suffering for those who end up in **hell will be eternal**. [Revelation chapters 19-20](#) teach this clearly.
 - In [Revelation 19](#), at the end of the Tribulation period, **Jesus returns on a white horse**.
 - Immediately following His return to earth, the "beast (antichrist) and the False prophet" are thrown into the lake of fire...

- [Rev. 19:20](#) - “The **beast** was captured, and with him the **false prophet**... these two were cast alive **into the lake of fire** burning with brimstone.”
- Following this, Jesus sets up His **kingdom on earth** and **reins for 1,000 years**...
- **But notice what is said at the end of the 1,000 year reign**...
- [Rev. 20:7,10, NASB](#) - When the thousand years are completed, **Satan** will be released from his prison, and will come out to deceive the nations... and the devil who deceived them was thrown into **the lake of fire** and brimstone, **where the beast and the false prophet are also**; and **they** will be tormented **day and night forever and ever**.
- You trackin? There’s a **lake of fire**. *Antichrist, false prophet, now Satan himself. And it lasts how long? THEY (all three in there) tormented day and night forever and ever...*
- [Rev. 20:15](#) - “Anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast **into the lake of fire**.”

To reiterate, the **Bible speaks of two eternal locations**:

- **Eternal life** in the *NEW heavens & NEW earth (not separate)*, for *ALL who place faith in Christ*.
- And the **eternal lake of Fire** for *ALL who reject Christ and His salvation*.
- Jesus’ Words...
- [Matthew 25:46, NIV](#) - “They [the unsaved] will go away to **eternal punishment**, but the righteous to **eternal life**.” - **Two eternal locations**. *In neither, do you cease to exist...*
- **This is why it’s so important that people turn to Jesus and be reconciled to God before the coming Day of Judgement.**

>>> **Extra Nuances - Anything else I should know?**

- Forbidden from celebrating *birthdays* and *many holidays* out of *fear of idolatry*. They are not allowed to *serve in the military* or *salute the flag* either.
 - *I say, let’s give them grace in their areas of conviction. (I would want the same)*
- Also, not allowed to have *blood transfusions*. *That’s okay if they’re convicted of that...*
- A key thing to point out though, is that it’s *more than just “individual” convictions*, these rules come in the form of **“control & manipulation”** from the **Watcher Tower Society**.

>>> **Conversation - What do I say to them?**

- **Recognize they are in bondage**. For them, *to disagree with* (or even *question*) anything from **The Watchtower** is to **rebel against Jehovah Himself**. The JH Watchtower holds all the **“truth”**
- **Pray for them and be compassionate** towards that aspect of their deception. **The grips of Satan are on them...**
- But one of the goals is to *plant seeds of distrust in the Watchtower* (**Dates & Duets! (Deut 18)**)
- Do not accept a *Bible study* going through their *“literature.”* *That’s what they’re trained to do...*
 - *“State of the world” and “God’s plan for Paradise on earth...”*
- Be aware they’re *not allowed to attend your church* or *read any of your literature* either...
- With them, it’s all about **planting & watering seeds**. *Use the name Jehovah if you can...*
- Engage them with *kindness, love, and respect* (not the **“flame thrower”** approach... blasting)
 - *Being harsh only fortifies them* - they believe that **“persecution” is evidence of truth**...
- **Most importantly**, minister the **goodness of Jesus** in your life (**testimony of grace! Joy!**)
 - **This will be the most effective with this people group! Know your audience...**

Closing

Yes, the **Jehovah's Witnesses are deceived** and are **a cult** and **populate false doctrine**.

- They have believed and are promoting a **"Different Gospel"** and **"Another Jesus"**
- They are in grave error about: *Christ, The Holy Spirit, Heaven & Hell, Means of salvation...*

These verses stand out to me with **how we should minister** to them...

*2 Timothy 2:24-26 - "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be **gentle to all**, able to teach, **patient**, in **humility correcting those who are in opposition**, if God perhaps will **grant them repentance**, so that they may **know the truth**, and that they may **come to their senses** and **escape the snare of the devil**, having been **taken captive by him** to do his will."*

PRAY