

## **INTRODUCTION**

### **I. Review**

#### **1. Cults or Counterfeits**

##### (1) Counterfeits

- i. the gospel may be present within its confession, but has become obscured or distorted, inadvertently or otherwise, by superfluous doctrines, authorities or practices, wherein the gospel is often not central in the life of the community.
- ii. Some are saved.

##### (2) Cults

- i. the gospel is absent from its confession, while at the same time, may leverage the gospel, its language or its components, to advance its doctrines and practices.
- ii. No one is saved.

#### **2. Orthodoxy**

##### (1) ortho (right) + doxy (doctrine)

(1) Doctrine = doctor = teacher

##### (2) Guide

- i. Trinity
- ii. Authority
- iii. Liberty

#### **3. Mormons**

##### (1) Cult or counterfeit?

- i. Rejects the Trinitarian God of the Bible. In particular, the transcendence of the Father, the personhood of the Son, and the work of the Spirit.
- ii. Rejects the authority of Scripture as our final authority
- iii. Rejects salvation by grace alone, through faith in alone, in Christ alone, according to Scripture alone, to the glory of God alone.

## **IV. JW Background**

### **5. Survey**

- (1) When pop singer Prince died at age 57; two years ago yesterday; he was arguably the most famous Jehovah's Witness ever.
- (2) They compose of less than 1% of US adults; yet are among the most ethnically and racially diverse in our country.
  - i. Pew: no more than 4 in 10 member belong to any one racial and ethnic background.
  - ii. 36% white; 32% Hispanic; 27% black; 6% other
  - iii. 2/3 are women (65%); 35% are men
  - iv. Tend to be less educated; Majority (63%) have no more than HS diploma; 43% of evangelicals

## 6. Charles Taze Russell

- (1) The Jehovah's Witnesses started out in Pennsylvania in 1870 as a Bible class led by Charles Taze Russell.
  - i. Like the Mormons, he believe the church had become apostate and corrupted.
  - ii. Named his group the "Millennial Dawn Bible Study," and those who followed him were called "Bible students."
- (2) Russell began writing a series of books he called "The Millennial Dawn," which stretched to six volumes before his death and contained much of the theology Jehovah's Witnesses now hold.
- (3) The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society was founded in 1886 and quickly became the vehicle through which the "Millennial Dawn" movement began distributing their views.
- (4) Group members were sometimes disparagingly called "Russellites."
- (5) After Russell's death in 1916, Judge J. F. Rutherford, Russell's friend and successor, wrote the seventh and final volume of the "Millennial Dawn" series, "The Finished Mystery," in 1917.
- (6) That was also the year that the organization split. Those who followed Rutherford began calling themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses."

## 7. Name

- (1) Isaiah 43:10

## #1 - AUTHORITY

### I. Administration (People)

#### 1. The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society

- (1) Founded in 1886. Currently located in Brooklyn, NY
- (2) They get their authority primarily from their rendering of Matthew 24:45-47

**MATT. 24:45-47** | *"Who then is **the faithful and wise (discreet) servant (slave)**, whom his master has set over his household, to give them their food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you, he will set him over all his possessions."*

- i. Originally Charles T. Russell = faithful and discreet slave
  - ii. By 1927, about a decade after Russell's death, they changed their mind, and set up the Watchtower as the faithful and discreet slave.
- (3) They believe the Watchtower is God's visible representative on Earth.
    - i. Through this organization and no others that God teaches the Bible to humankind.
  - (4) "the true prophetic mouthpiece for God on earth at this time."
    - i. End of world?
  - (5) Without the Society and it's vast literature, people are unable to ascertain the true meaning of the Bible.
    - i. It is the sole proprietor and propagator of God's truth.
    - ii. Means, all true believers, are expected to obey the Watchtower without question as the voice of God.
  - (6) No independent thinking; no outside literature

**Watchtower Magazine** | *"Avoid independent thinking...questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization...fight against independent thinking."*

- i. Threat of disfellowship

(7) So are they right?

- i. Matt 24 goes on to talk about the the wicked servant, in contrast to the faithful one. JW's would argue this is all other apostate church's.
- ii. But their organization did not come into existence until the late 19th century. Does that mean their were no true representatives between Jesus and then?

**MATT. 28:20b** | *"...And behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age."*

- iii. Parable = two servants while master is away; one faithful; one neglecting God's will & self-indulgent.
- iv. Appeal to other texts such as Acts 8: Phillip & the Ethiopian Eunuch reading Isaiah

## II. Interpretation

### 1. The Bible

- (1) It is the final authority for them, but only their version.

### 2. The New World Translation

- (1) Produces its own translation of the Bible
- (2) no translators knew greek/hebrew
- (3) We call this a corruption; more on this when we talk about Jesus.

## #2 - LIBERTY

### I. Heaven

#### 1. Heaven

- (1) They believe the kingdom of God is a real government in heaven that will soon replace human governments and accomplish God's purpose for the earth.
- (2) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the second coming was an invisible, spiritual event that occurred in the year 1914.
- (3) Two peoples of God:
  - i. the Anointed Class (144,000) will live in heaven and rule with Christ; and
  - ii. the "other sheep" (all other believers) will live forever on a paradise earth.

#### 2. Soul

- (1) Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that humans have an immaterial nature. The "soul" is simply the life-force within a person. At death, that life-force leaves the body.

**PHP. 1:21-23** | *"For to me to live is Christ, and to die is gain. If I am to live in the flesh, that means fruitful labor for me. Yet which I shall choose I cannot tell. I am hard pressed between the two. My desire is to depart and be with Christ, for that is far better."*

## II. Salvation

### 1. Ransom Sacrifice



(1) To Satan. Not to God.

**1 TIM. 2:5-6** | "For there is one God, and there is one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all, which is the testimony given at the proper time."

## 2. Works

(1) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that salvation requires faith in Christ, association with God's organization (i.e., Watchtower), and obedience to its rules.

## #3 - TRINITY

### I. God the Father

#### 1. Basically have an orthodox view of the Father.

- (1) The issue is when it comes to the name of God.
- (2) More when discussion "His name"

### II. God the Son

#### 1. Not God

(1) Truly Human

**John 1:1 (ESV)** | "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

**John 1:1 (NWT)** | "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

- i. indefinite article "a"
- ii. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that when Jesus was born on earth, he was a mere human and not God in human flesh.

**COL. 2:9** | "For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily..."

(2) Not Truly God

**COL. 1:15-20 (ESV)** | "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation. For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together. And he is the head of the body, the church. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, that in everything he might be preeminent. For in him all the fullness of God was pleased to dwell, and through him to reconcile to himself all things, whether on earth or in heaven, making peace by the blood of his cross."

**COL. 1:16-20 (NWT)** | "He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and on the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All other things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all other things, and by means of him all other things were made to exist, and he is the head of the body, the congregation. He is the beginning, the firstborn from the dead, so that he might become the one who is first in all things; because God was pleased to have all fullness to dwell in him, and through him to reconcile to himself all other things by making peace through the blood he shed on the torture stake, whether the things on the earth or the things in the heavens."

- i. JW's believe that Jesus was created by Jehovah as the archangel Michael before the physical world existed, and is a lesser, though mighty, god.

**HEB. 1:6-7** | *"And again, when he brings the firstborn into the world, he says, "Let all God's angels worship him." Of the angels he says, "He makes his angels winds, and his ministers a flame of fire." But of the Son he says, "Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, the scepter of uprightness is the scepter of your kingdom."*

### III. God the Spirit

#### 1. Impersonal Force

(1) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force of God and not a distinct person.

#### 2. Person Not A Force

(1) a mind

**ROM. 8:27** | *"And he who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the Spirit..."*

(2) emotions

**EPH. 4:30** | *"And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God..."*

(3) a will

**1 COR. 12:11** | *"All these are empowered by one and the same Spirit, who apportions to each one individually as He wills."*

## CONCLUSION

### I. What's In A Name?

#### 1. Jehovah

(1) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that God's one true name—the name by which he must be identified—is Jehovah.

(2) In fact, the name "Jehovah" has been inserted into the NT by the NWT. Despite the thousands of GK manuscripts, NT always uses "Lord" and "God".

**EZ. 39:6 (NWT)** | *"...they will have to know that I am Jehovah."*

(3) They believe they are the only group that uses his true name.

(4) Biblically, however, God is identified by many names, including:

- i. God (Hb. 'elohim; Gen. 1:1),
- ii. God Almighty (Hb. 'El Shadday; Gen. 17:1),
- iii. Lord (Hb. 'Adonay; Ps. 8:1), and
- iv. Lord of hosts (Hb. yhwh tseba'ot; 1 Sam. 1:3).
- v. NT = Father (patēr; Matt. 6:9)

#### 2. Yahweh

(1) **YHWH** - hebrew only had consonants

i. So where did Jehovah come from?

(2) Might violate 3rd commandment

i. to avoid this, for centuries substituted the name "**Adonai**" (Lord) in public readings of Scripture

(3) Hybrid



- i. Consonants from YHWH; Vowels from (adonai) A-O-A
- ii. YAHOWAH - Jehovah

(4) The term Jehovah, strictly speaking, is not a biblical term. Rather man-made.

- i. Scholars aren't exactly sure how to pronounce YHWH. So to use Jehovah is not wrong.
- ii. But it's almost not His true name.

### 3. Jesus

(1) Why is this important?

- i. Remember: a central feature of Watchtower theology is that Jesus is not Jehovah. He is not God.
- ii. You need to call on the name of Jehovah to be saved.

**LK. 4:8 (NWT)** | *"In reply Jesus said to him: "It is written, 'It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.'"*

(2) Yahweh introduces Himself:

**EX. 3:13-15** | *Then Moses said to God, "If I come to the people of Israel and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" God said to Moses, "I am who I am." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'I AM has sent me to you.'" God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel: 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.' This is my name forever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.*

- i. LORD = YHWH
- ii. I AM - HYH
- iii. Derivative of the same verb - "TO BE"
- iv. to know a name = to know true nature and being
- v. v14 = the expression of his full nature (to be); v15 = shortened to Yahweh
- vi. Same means; used interchangeably

(3) Jesus introduces Himself:

**JN. 8:25** | *So they said to him, "Who are you?" Jesus said to them, "Just what I have been telling you from the beginning..."*

**JN. 8:58** | *Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am."*

- i. Clearly then, Jesus Yahweh.
- ii. Eternally self-existent
- iii. Eternally co-equal with the Father and the Spirit

(4) Every OT title used of Yahweh, in the NT is used of Jesus

- |                 |               |
|-----------------|---------------|
| i. God          | v. King       |
| ii. Alpha/Omega | vi. Judge     |
| iii. Lord       | vii. Redeemer |
| iv. Savior      |               |

(5) The list goes on!



**PHP. 2:9-11** | *Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him **the name that is above every name**, so that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*

**ROM. 10:9,13** | *...because, if you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved...For "everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved".*

**PS. 113:2-4** | *Blessed be the name of the Lord from this time forth and for evermore. From the rising of the sun unto the going down of the same the Lord's name is to be praised. The Lord is high above all nations, and his glory above the heavens.*

