

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES¹

1. **HISTORY & OVERVIEW.** The founder was **Charles Taze Russell**, born in Pennsylvania, USA, 1852. In 1884 he formed the "*Zion's Watchtower & Tract Society*" and predicted that Christ would return in **1914**. When Christ did not come then, Russell revised the date to **1918**. He died, however in 1916, without seeing his second false prophecy fail to come to pass.

"**Judge**" **Joseph Rutherford** took over leadership of the organization after Russell's death. He had not learned from Russell's mistakes, and so predicted that Christ would return in **1925**, famously stating over and over that "*Millions Now Living Will Never Die.*" In reality, almost everyone living then has now died, including Rutherford in 1942. In later years he would evince a problem with alcohol. Most JW's were unaware of that though, since Rutherford spent 6 months/year living in a very expensive home that he had had the *Watchtower Society* build near San Diego, California, called "*Beth Sarim.*" This palatial mansion was supposedly built so that the "*ancient worthies*" (e.g. Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, David, etc.) would have a place to live when they returned to earth, in accordance with Jehovah Witness theology. In reality, the only person who ever lived in there was Rutherford, who also availed himself of the opportunity to drive around in one of the two 16 cylinder Cadillac motor cars that the organization purchased and had parked in the garage-ostensibly for the patriarchs to ride around in. *Beth Sarim* is testimony to yet another failed prophecy, and a complete embarrassment to the Watchtower Society. Consequently it was quietly sold around 1952.²

It is Rutherford who developed a clever teaching to explain away the fact that Russell's 1914 prophecy of Christ's return had failed. The "*Judge*" taught that Christ actually had returned in 1914, only invisibly, so only JW's were spiritually perceptive enough to be aware of that fact (sic). Rutherford also created the JW organizational structure and made it sinful to question Watchtower leadership and teaching.

After Rutherford's death, **Nathan Knorr** took over. After his passing, **Frederick Franz** led the organization. It was under Franz's leadership that the Watchtower Society yet again falsely predicted Christ return, teaching and claiming that Christ would return in **1975**. As was the case prior to the failed 1925 prophecy, hundreds of loyal Jehovah's Witnesses sold their homes, postponed marriages or having children, and quit their jobs, etc., in order to give whole-hearted service to the organization in light of Christ's imminent return. And as was the case after the failed 1925 prophecy, thousands of JW's quit the organization after the 1975 prophecy failed. Franz's own nephew Raymond Franz, who was a member of the eighteen man "Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses", resigned from the organization a few years later, because his conscience would not allow him to continue to promulgate such heresy and false teaching. He even wrote a book about it, "*Crisis of Conscience.*"³

Despite such losses due to repeated false prophecies (cf. Dt. 18:20-22 & 13:1-3), the JW organization continues to proselytize and gain new converts. Every five years the JW's lose approximately 300,000-400,000 members who quit the organization, but that is offset by new members, so their numbers remain fairly constant. They work in 210 countries.

They are also the most prodigious publishers of religious material in the world. It has been stated by cult experts that the Watchtower Society prints and publishes more copies of literature in one month, than the Christian publishing world does in one year! They publish two main magazines: "*The Watchtower*" with a circulation of at least 12 million copies in 79 different languages, and "*Awake*" with a 10 million copy circulation.

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² For thorough documentation of "*Beth Sarim*" (complete with photos), see the "*Christian Research Journal*" Elliot Miller editor, Vol. 20, Number 1, September-October, 1997, pp. 22-29.

³ Raymond Franz, "*Crisis of Conscience*" (Commentary Press: Atlanta, Georgia, 1983).

In 1961 the Jehovah's Witnesses produced their own translation of the Bible, called "*The New World Translation*." It was translated by about a half dozen men who were poorly educated, most not having finished high school. None of them was an expert in the biblical languages, with only one having any academic background in Greek, and he was only self-taught in Hebrew! The translation is literally filled with errors and *deliberate* changes-especially where the Bible's teaching contradicts official JW teaching (e.g. Jn. 1:1; 8:58; 10:30; Tit. 2:13; Rom. 9:5; etc). Nonetheless, the inaccuracies and deliberate mistranslations notwithstanding, you can still show a JW that Jesus is God from their New World Translation, as well as answer many of their other theological errors.⁴

Jehovah's Witnesses believe they are God's "*Theocratic Kingdom*," a phrase Rutherford created. Consequently they refused to salute the flag of any country. Neither will they serve in the armed forces of any land. They also refuse to accept blood transfusions due to their faulty interpretation of Gen. 9:4; Lev. 7:27; & 17: 10-14. They believe that to receive a blood transfusion, is to "*eat blood*." Sadly, due to that ridiculous interpretation, hundreds of JW's have died prematurely and needlessly. They also refuse to celebrate any holidays or birthdays, believing them to be pagan traditions. They often cite verses from Ecclesiastes to support such unusual teachings (e.g. Eccl. 7:1-2)

2. **JW FALSE DOCTRINES.** Jehovah's Witnesses have been called "*Apostles of Denial*" because:
 - A. They deny the Deity of Christ! (i.e. that He is God)
 - B. They deny that Christ physically, bodily rose from the dead!
 - C. They deny the Trinity!
 - D. They deny the Deity and also the personality of the Holy Spirit!
 - E. They deny that there is an everlasting hell!
 - F. They deny that a believer's soul goes to heaven when he dies!
 - G. They deny that salvation is by grace through faith alone!

3. **ANSWERING SOME WATCHTOWER (JW) FALSE TEACHINGS.**

A. **IS JESUS, MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL? - NO!**

- (1) **JW teaching:** JW's believe that before Christ came to earth he was the archangel Michael, and that after Christ rose from the dead (spiritually only), he then became Michael again.
- (2) **Biblical refutation:** **There is no verse anywhere that even suggests this error.** Ask a JW to show you just one verse that clearly states that Jesus is Michael the archangel. Don't worry, there is no such verse. Do not settle for a string of references. They may read Dan 10 to you, where it calls Michael "*one of the chief princes*." But Jesus is not mentioned there at all. They may quote I Thess. 4:13 where it says that when Christ comes he will come with "*the voice of the archangel*." But that doesn't say that Jesus is the archangel. That passage also says that Christ will come with "*the trump of God*", but no one would try to say that Jesus is therefore a trumpet!

To refute this erroneous "*Michael is Jesus*" teaching, you should turn them to Dan. 10:13 which states that Michael is just *one of several princes*-but even a JW would not claim that there are several people in heaven equivalent to Jesus. Furthermore, in Jude we read that Michael was not able to rebuke Satan (Jude 8). Compare that with Jesus who rebuked Satan without hesitation (Mt. 4:4, 7, 10)! Furthermore, Jesus is not Michael the archangel because a) He created the angels (Col. 1:16), b) No angel can be called God's Son (Heb. 1:5, and c) No angel can rule the world (Heb. 2:5), whereas Christ rules all (Rev. 19:16).⁵ Bottom line: The Bible is very clear that Michael is *NOT* Jesus.

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⁴ See, for instance, Ian Brown, "*60 Questions Every Jehovah's Witness Should be Asked*" (Ambassador Emerald International: Belfast, Northern Ireland & Greenville, SC, 2002), & the online article, "*55 Questions Every Jehovah's Witness should be asked using the New World Translation*."

⁵ Ron Rhodes, "*Jehovah's Witnesses: What you need to know*" (Harvest House: Eugene, Oregon, 1997), panel 4.

B. IS JESUS GOD? - YES!

- (1) **Christ claimed to be God** - Contrary to statements from Jehovah's Witness literature! Jn. 8:58-"*I Am*"; Jn. 10:30-"*I & the Father are ONE*"; Jn. 14:9-"*He that hath seen me hath seen the Father*"; Jn. 5:17-18; etc. In the Jehovah's Witnesses New World Translation (NWT) they deliberately mistranslate "*I Am*" as "*I have been*." Ask the JW why and they will normally say it's because that is the better translation. At that point show him/her that the NWT translates the Greek words "*ego eimi*" as "*I Am*" **every** time it appears (e.g. 6:35, 41; 8:24; 13:19; 15:5; etc) **except** in John 8:58. Ask them what is the reason for the inconsistency in this translation? "If '*ego eimi*' was translated in John 8:58 the same way it is translated in every other verse in which it appears in their Bible, how would John 8:58 read?"⁶
- (2) **Christ possessed attributes that only God possesses.** (e.g. *Pre-existence*-Jn. 1:15; *Omnipotence*, both in creation-Jn. 1:3, 10 & in preservation-Col. 1:17; Heb. 1:3); *Omniscience*-Jn. 2:24-25; 16:30; 21:17; Col. 2:3; *Omnipresence*-Acts 1:9-11; 7:56; I Thess. 1:10; 4:16; *Immutability* (Unchangeable)-James 1:17 cf. Heb. 13:8; I Pet. 1:24 cf. Heb. 1:10-11; *Eternality*-Heb. 1:8 cf. Micah 5:2; "*Eternal Father*"-Isa. 9:6 cf. Jn. 8:58. It should also be noted that Jesus repeatedly told people that their sins were forgiven by him. Yet He himself stated that *only God can forgive sins* (Mk. 2:7). So whenever He forgave sins, He was indirectly claiming to be God!
- (3) **Christ was called "God" by the apostles & NT writers.** Jn. 1:1-"...*the Word was God*"; John 20:28-"*My Lord and my God*"; Rom. 9:5-Christ called God; Phil. 2:6-Christ was the essence (Gk *morphe*) of God cf. Heb. 1:3 where He is called "...*the exact representation of His (God's) nature*" (NASV),
- (4) **Christ was given or possessed many of the same names and titles as God the Father:**⁷
 - "*Eternal Father*"-Isa. 9:6 cf. Isa. 10:21.
 - "*I Am*"-Jn. 8:58 cf. Ex. 3:14-15 (note that in all the other places in the New World Translation of John where "*ego eimi*" occurs [6:35, 41; 8:24; 13:19; 15:5], it is translated correctly as "*I Am*")!
 - "*God*"-Heb. 1:8; II Pet. 1:1; Acts 2:36, 39; 16:31, 34; 18:25-26; Rev. 7:10-12, 17; Mt. 1:21-23 cf. Isa. 7:14.
 - "*The Alpha & Omega*"-Isa. 41:4; 48:12; Rev. 1:8; 21:6-7 cf. Rev. 22:13 (cf. "*I come quickly*" in vv. 12, 16, 20, & "*I Jesus*" in v. 16).
 - "*The First and the Last*"-Rev. 1:17-18.
 - "*Lord*"-Numerous; "*Lord of All*"-Acts 10:36; Rom. 10:12; "*the Lord of Glory*" I Cor. 2:8 cf. Ps. 24:10 & 96:7-8; "*Every knee shall bow ... to God/Jesus*" Rom. 14:10-12; Phil. 2:9-11 cf. Isa. 45:22-24; "*Lord of the Sabbath*"-Mt. 12:8 cf. Ex. 31:13,17. Prayer was even made to Jesus as "*Lord*"-Acts 7:59-60; 8:24; I Cor. 1:2; II Cor. 12:8-9; I Jn. 5:13-15, etc.
 - "*Saviour*"-Isa. 43:11 & 45:22; I Tim. 4:10; Lk. 1:47 cf. Mt. 1:21; Jn. 1:29; 4:42; Heb. 5:9; Lk. 2:11; etc. In Titus we repeatedly have God the Father called "*our Saviour*" then Jesus also called "*our Saviour*" (Tit. 1:3 cf. v. 4; 2:10 cf. v.13 & 3:4 cf. v. 6).
 - "*Creator*"-Isa. 40:28 cf. Jn. 1:3; Col. 1:16.
 - "*Light*"-Isa. 42:6 & 60:19-20 cf. Rev. 21:23.

⁶ From "*101 Questions every Jehovah's Witness should be asked, using the NWT*" (www.webshowplace.com/question/101quest.html) 29 April, 2006 version.

⁷ Mike Edwards, "*The King of the Kingdom-A Survey of the Evidence for the Deity of Christ the King*", (unpublished paper, Greenville, SC, 1994).

- “*A voice of many waters*”-Ezek. 43:2 cf. Rev. 1:15.
 - “*Righteousness*”-both the Father & the Son are given this title: Jer. 23:6 cf. I Cor. 1:30; Eph. 1:6.
 - “*Jehovah pierced*” -In Zechariah 12:10 we read of the Lord who will one day be “*pierced.*” When the body of Jesus was pierced on the cross, John claimed that that was the fulfillment of Zechariah’s prophecy (Jn. 19:31-37; Rev. 1:7). That would be impossible to explain unless Jesus is God.
 - “*King*”-Both the Father & the Son are called this (Ps. 95:3 cf. Isa. 43:15). In addition Jesus is called “*King of Kings*” (Rev. 17:14; 19:16), while in the OT Jehovah is referred to as the “*God of gods and Lord of lords*” (Dt. 10:17). In 1 Timothy 6:14-16 the word “*He*” has special importance since it is modified by “*King of kings and Lord of lords*”. It can refer either to Christ or God...either way it argues for Christ’s divinity.”⁸ Cf. Rev. 1:12-18. Note also Jer. 10:10 cf. Dan. 7:13-14.
 - “*The Judge*”-While God the Father is indicated as the one who will judge mankind (Ps. 50:4, 6; 96:13; Heb. 12:23-24; I Pet. 1:17), yet we find that the Son will do all the judging (Jn. 5:17-30, esp. v. 22; II Tim. 4:1; II Cor. 5:10 cf. Rom. 14:10; Rev. 2:23 cf. Jer. 17:10; etc). Clearly they are equal!
 - “*The Rock*”-Both the Father and the Son are called the “*rock*” (e.g. Ps. 18:2; I Sam. 2:2 cf. I Pet. 2:6-8; I Cor. 10:4. Note particularly this latter passage in comparison to Ex. 17:6.
 - “*The Redeemer*”-“Both Jehovah and Jesus are given this attribution (Isa. 43:14; Hos. 13:14 cf. Lk. 1:68; 2:38; Gal. 3:13; Eph. 1:17; I Pet. 1:18-19; Rev. 5:9. No mere man or angel can redeem man. Only God can redeem man’s soul (Ps. 49:7-8 cf. 49:15). Thus Jesus, as the redeemer, must be God.”⁹
 - “*Giver of Life*”-“In Deuteronomy 32:39, after saying, ‘...*there is no God besides me,*’ God said He is the one to ‘*give life*’ (cf. Ps. 36:9). Jesus said, ‘*For just as the Father raises the dead and gives them life, even so the Son also gives life...*’ (Jn. 5:21). Just prior to raising Lazarus from the dead, Jesus said, ‘*I am the resurrection and the life...*’ (Jn. 11:25). He went so far as to say that He was the giver of eternal life...”¹⁰
 - “*The ‘Lord’s’ Return*”-Dt. 30:3 says that the Lord (Jehovah) will return at the end when His people re-gather from all the nations-but the fulfillment will be realized in Jesus Christ (Mt. 24:27-31). Such statements are only explainable if Christ is God and co-equal with the Father.
 - “*The Son of Man*”-This title does not deemphasize Christ’s deity at all. Just the opposite! “*Through this title Jesus most clearly expressed His messianic consciousness...the generally accepted source of this title is one of the dream visions of Daniel (Dan. 7:13-14)...some students would trace it to the Book of Ezekiel... (but) Jesus’ use of the title proves conclusively that He is giving it the meaning that it had in the vision of Daniel.*”¹¹ This title is strictly messianic, showing Christ to be the God who will judge this world in the end.
- (5) **Christ accepted worship and possessed glory that only God Has!** Jehovah (God the Father) had said that no one else possesses His glory (Isa. 42:8; 48:11). Yet Christ, in His high priestly prayer, asked to have the glory *restored* to Himself that He had *shared* with God the Father from all eternity (Jn. 17:5). Note also Jn. 5:23 where Christ said “...*that all men should honour the Son, even as they honour the Father.*” In Heb. 1:6 it says, “*Let all the angels of God worship Him.*” If Christ was not

⁸ Josh McDowell, “*Jesus-A Biblical Defense of His Deity*” (Here’s Life Publishers: San Bernardino, California, 1983), p. 39.

⁹ Robert G. Gromacki, “*The Virgin Birth: Doctrine of Deity*” (Thomas Nelson, Inc.: Nashville, Tennessee, 1974), p. 31

¹⁰ McDowell, op cit., p. 46.

¹¹ Chester K. Lehman, “*Biblical Theology, Volume Two: New Testament*” (Herald Press: Scottsdale, Pennsylvania, pp. 137-138).

God, such worship would be blasphemous (cf. Ex. 20:1-6). It should be noted that when people tried to worship either the apostles or angels, they were immediately rebuked and the practice terminated (e.g. Acts 10:25-26; 14:13-15; Rev. 19:10). Yet Christ throughout the Gospels accepted such worship without a second thought. Why? Because He is God!

C. ***THE TRINITY***. Jehovah's Witnesses ridicule this Christian doctrine that has been believed and held by Christians for 20 centuries. They mock the idea, claiming that Christians believe in "three gods" (sic). They also proudly quote Isa. 1:18 which says, "come now and let us reason together." They assert that since they cannot understand the Trinity, and since God commanded us to reason things out, therefore the idea of the Trinity must be rejected. But as Walter Martin has pointed out, of the 88 times in the Bible where reasoning is mentioned, this is the *only* one where man is asked to reason, and as the context indicates it's not in regard trying to understand God, but in reference to dealing with our sin! Actually the Bible clearly teaches that man is not able to comprehend God in His fullness! (e.g. Isa. 55:8-9; Rom. 11:33-35). JW's would be well advised to emulate the attitude and humility of Job (Job 42:2-6). Simply because you can't understand something, doesn't mean that it's not true. Many people don't understand electricity, computers, nuclear physics, atomic theory, or a host of other things-but they still believe in them &/or use them.

(1) All three are called God (i.e. Father, Son, & Holy Spirit)! Father-2 Pet. 1:17; Rom. 1:7; *Son*-Heb. 1:8; Rev. 1:17-18 cf. Isa. 44:6; etc; *Holy Spirit*-Acts 5:3-4.

(2) All three are repeatedly associated together throughout the NT (at *Christ's birth*-Lk. 1:35; at *His baptism*-Matt. 3:16-17; *the great commission*-28:19 [Note, in particular, the use of the singular 'name.' Since three names & individuals are mentioned, to say baptize in the 'name' clearly implies that the three are one]; *a salutation*-2 Cor. 13:14; *regarding Christ's resurrection*-1 Thess. 9-10, Rom. 8:11, Jn. 2:19-21; *regarding spiritual gifts*-I Cor. 12:4-6).

Cautionary note: I would suggest you do *not* use I John 5:7 as a proof text for the Trinity. Without going into a big discussion on textual criticism, I would simply point out that this verse has almost no manuscript support. It was probably injected into the Greek text many centuries later due to pressure from the Roman Catholic Church, since the words are found in the Latin Vulgate. The doctrine of the Trinity is easily and clearly demonstrated with or without this verse, so I would avoid it, to avoid having another subject to argue about with the Jehovah's Witness.

(3) OT intimations of a plurality in the Godhead. A theologian once likened the situation in regard to the teaching of the doctrine of the Trinity in OT vs. that in the NT, as similar to one sitting in a dimly lit room and describing its contents, as opposed to sitting in that same room and describing its contents when bright lights are turned on. Nothing has been added to the room when the brighter lights are turned on, but the individual sees more, due to the increased visibility. So too, in the Old Testament the doctrine of the Trinity appears only subtly, but that doctrine is revealed in complete clarity as we add the NT revelation. Nonetheless, there are a number of very definite intimations of a *plurality* in the Godhead that can be found in the OT. We simply can't say with absolute certainty until we get to the NT exactly *how many* persons there are in the Godhead-though there are intimations, even in the OT, that the number is three (e.g. triple blessings-Num. 6:24-26; triple statements-Isa. 6:3). Here are some of the OT evidences:

(a) **The very first name for God: "Elohim" – Gen. 1:1.** "El" is the Hebrew word for God, but in this case we have a suffix added. The 'im' in Elohim is a full suffix added to the singular noun 'El' to give the intimation of plurality within the one God."¹²

(b) **Plural nouns & pronouns in reference to God – Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7; Isa. 6:8.** Please note the interchange between singular & plural (e.g. Gen. 1:26 cf. v. 27; 11:7 cf. v. 8; Isa. 6:8 cf. v. 9).

¹² Edwards, "The Biblical Doctrine of the Trinity" (unpublished paper, Madison, Ohio, 1980), p. 4.

(c) **The word “one” – Dt. 6:4** “. It should be carefully noted that there are two different Hebrew words used for and translated *the Lord our God is one Lord* as “one.” The term used in every case for God being “one” is the Hebrew term “*echad*”, or its root “*ached*.” This word has the idea of a unity, and the intimation is there in the Hebrew language of the possibility of a large group of people still being called one. “The Hebrew for “one” in the absolute sense, as used in such expressions as “the only one” is “*yacheed*” and is never used in the Hebrew to express the unity of the Godhead. On the contrary, the term “*echad*” which denotes compound unity is for that purpose’ e.g. one flesh-Gen. 2:24; one voice-Ex. 24:3; Tabernacle pieces are one-Ex. 26:11; soldiers smiting the enemy as one man-Judges 6:16; two sticks shall become one-Ezek. 37:19). Another word used for one is the Hebrew word ‘*yachiyd*’ or its root ‘*yachad*.’ This denotes the idea of an absolute one e.g. Isaac’s only (*yachad*) son.”¹³

An Illustration. *We must not try to prove the doctrine of the Trinity with an illustration.* A number of believers have made that mistake. No illustration is adequate to explain the Trinity, and all of them ultimately break down at some point, upon close scrutiny. We build a case for the Trinity with the Word of God. But perhaps the best illustration of how three could be one at the same time may be something in science called the “*Triple-Point of Water.*”¹⁴ “Take water, put it in a vacuum tube under 230mm of gas pressure. Lower the temperature to 0 degrees centigrade, then watch what happens when the temperature hits zero. *All three occur at once, with no contradiction.*”¹⁵

Summary: Since there is only one God (e.g. I Tim. 2:5; Gal. 3:20; Dt. 6:4; Isa. 44:6; etc), yet the Bible calls the all three individuals (Father, Jesus Christ & the Holy Spirit) “God,” there must be three persons in the one God. “*A mystery I admit, but it’s what God has revealed to us in His word.*”¹⁶

D. OTHER JEHOVAH’S WITNESS ERRORS:

(1) **THEY TEACH: “CHRIST’S RESURRECTION WAS ONLY SPIRITUAL.” – FALSE!** Acts 17:31 teaches a bodily resurrection. The word for “body” in Greek is “*soma*.” Only bodies are resurrected in the Bible. cf. Luke 24:39 which states that spirits do *not* have bodies!

(2) **THEY TEACH: “THE HOLY SPIRIT IS A ‘FORCE’ NOT A PERSON.” – FALSE!** You cannot lie to a “force” (Acts 5:3-4). The Holy Spirit is often referred to as “he”, not “it” e.g. Acts 13:2; II Tim. 3:16; II Pet. 1:20-21; I Cor. 3:16; 6:19; II Cor. 6:16; Jn. 16:8, 13-14.

(3) **THEY TEACH: “THE 144,000 ARE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES, AND THE ONLY ONES GOING TO HEAVEN.” – FALSE!** The 144,000 of Rev. 7 & 14 are Jews from the 12 tribes of Israel, whom God will set apart for a special ministry (evangelism?) during the Tribulation period. The JW theory that only 144,000 JW’s get to go to heaven was “cooked up” by early JW leader “Judge” Rutherford, to cover up for the fact that the JW organization had gotten “*over the limit*” in membership numbers. They had promoting the organization by challenging people to come and join them and become part of God’s 144,000 “*chosen ones*.” However once they exceeded that number in membership, something had to be done. So Rutherford said that those who joined before 1935 were part of the 144,000 & the only ones that would be going to heaven, while those who joined later were the “*other sheep*” or the “*great crowd*.” There is of course no biblical justification for such a teaching. Jesus, in speaking to His followers, said “I go to prepare a place for you.” (Jn. 14:1-3). Where did Jesus go? Even JW’s have admitted to me: Heaven. Jesus also said “I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am (heaven), there ye may be also” i.e. heaven, not earth. Another related problem for JW’s: While they say that the “*great crowd*” will be on “*paradise earth*”, their Bible says that the “*great*

¹³ Ibid, interior quote from Emery Bancroft, “*Elemental Theology-Doctrinal and Conservative*” (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1955), p. 37. See also Robert Gromacki, “*The Virgin Birth, Doctrine of Deity*” (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1974), p. 20.

¹⁴ “*Water is an example of a heterogeneous chemical system of one component. The liquid and gas phases, water and water vapor, coexist over a wide range of temperatures and pressures. (But) at one temperature and pressure, called the triple point, all three phases-water (liquid), water vapor (gas), and ice (solid) coexist at equilibrium.*” Microsoft Encarta Encyclopedia 99, “*Phase Rule*”, 1998 edition, p. 1.

¹⁵ Ron Carlson, “*Jehovah’s Witnesses*” videotape lecture, n.d.

¹⁶ Ibid.

crowd” will be in heaven! cf. Rev. 7:15-New World Translation. You might also ask, “Is your 144,000 composed only of male virgins?”(Rev. 14:4)

Ask a JW: “Where does the Bible teach that entrance to the Christian congregation would be closed in the year 1935, with a secondary ‘great crowd’ being gathered after that?” The answer is nowhere!¹⁷

- (4) **THEY TEACH: “SALVATION IS BY WORKS.” – FALSE!** There are plenty of verses that teach that salvation by works is false (e.g. Eph. 2:8-9; Tit. 3:5; Rom. 3:28; Gal. 2:16; etc). But a different way of refuting a JW on this point, is the following: When a JW tells you that you must work to earn heaven or paradise earth, tell them that you know the work they must do to obtain eternal life, and that it’s found in John 6:28-29. There Christ declares that the *work* of God is to **believe** on Jesus Christ. Full stop!

(5)**THEY TEACH: “HELL IS THE GRAVE?” – FALSE!** Jehovah’s Witnesses deny the idea of a place called hell where the unrighteous suffer for all eternity. However hell is real, since the Bible teaches it. Here are a few simple lines of evidence:

(a) **OT “Hell” (Sheol) is not just the grave.** JW’s say that the term “hell” simply means “the grave.” That is false. *Sheol* is actually a broad Hebrew term that has several shades of meaning: “1) A place, often extremely deep, remote, or far away e.g. ‘deepest’ (Dt. 32:22; Job 11:8), the lowest place (contrasted with ascending to heaven-Ps. 139:8), 2) The general place where a person’s soul/spirit goes after death (e.g. Ps. 16:10; 55:15; Isa. 5:14) &, 3) The place where the wicked go upon their decease (e.g. Ps. 9:17 cf. Prov. 15:24; 23:14; Ezek. 32:21, 27). The translation of ‘*sheol*’ as ‘grave’ 31 times in the KJV is unfortunate, since, while a number of passages draw a parallel between ‘hell’ and the ‘grave,’ (e.g. Prov. 5:5; 7:27), the two are **not** synonymous. If *sheol* was equivalent to the grave, then statements such as those found in the verses under #3 above would make no sense (e.g. “The wicked shall be turned into hell [*sheol*] and all the nations that forget God.” But all people eventually go to the grave, not just wicked people.”¹⁸ One source seeking to demonstrate the error of the JW belief that hell (*sheol*) is just the grave has pointed out: i) “A body never goes to *sheol*, but it goes to *qeber* (the grave) 37 times, ii) *Sheol* is never on earth, but *qeber* (the grave) is on earth 32 times, iii) Man never puts anyone into *sheol*, but puts someone into *qeber* 33 times, iv) Man never digs or makes a *sheol*, but he makes a *qeber* 6 times, v) The OT never speaks of touching *sheol*, but he touches *qeber* 6 times.”¹⁹ While both Hebrew words (*Sheol* & *Qeber*) are sometimes translated “hell” in the King James Version, *qeber* clearly refers to the grave (where the body is), while *sheol* refers to the place where a person’s spirit/soul goes upon death.

(b) **“Hades” & “Gehenna” NT Greek words for Hell.**²⁰ Jesus used Hades 11 times (Mt. 11:23; 16:18; Lk. 10:15; 16:23; Rev. 1:18; 6:8; 20:13, 14; I Cor. 15:55; plus references in Acts 2:27, 31).

Gehenna – JW’s say it refers to the grave and a “cutting off” i.e. cessation of existence. Actually Jesus used the Valley of Hinnom at Jerusalem as an illustration of hell. In OT times it was the place of sacrifice, animals cried out and fires rose up. In the NT era it was a garbage dump where smoke and stench rose up and fires burned continuously.

So could Gehenna simply refer to the grave and a cessation of existence? Mt. 5:22-“in danger of hell [Gehenna] fire.” How could a person be in danger of “grave fire?” Mt. 5:29-30, 10:28; 18:9; 23:15, 33; Mk. 9:43, 45, 47. In Mk. 9:44, 46, & 48 Christ explains what it is. Can you get a “grave” out of that? Luke 12:5- “fear him that can destroy both body and soul in hell [Gehenna].” Should we fear the mortician (embalmer, funeral director?), since that is the one who places your body in the grave! Clearly Christ is not using the word *gehenna* with the idea of it being the grave.

¹⁷ David Reed, “Jehovah’s Witnesses Answered Verse by Verse”, cited by Leonard Chretien, “Witnesses of Jehovah” (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon, 1988), p. 137.

¹⁸ Edwards, “Word Study on Sheol,” April, 1996, for a graduate class named “Old Testament Theology.”

¹⁹ “Hell Without Hell”, sermon tape, JVI Ministries, Royal Oak, Michigan, c. 1972.

²⁰ There is a third Greek word translated “hell” (Gk. *Tartarus*), but it occurs only once in the NT & has no bearing on this discussion.

(c) Miscellaneous evidences refuting the JW (& SDA) position that hell is the grave: i) Mt. 3:12-“*Unquenchable fire*”-where is it, if hell is the grave?; ii) Mt. 7:13-“*enter at the straight gate*”, but if hell is the grave Christ wouldn’t have said “*many go in at the broad way*” he would have said *ALL*, since everyone dies and ends up in the grave!; iii) Mt. 13:50- “furnace of fire”(!); iv) Mt. 25:41- “everlasting fire” Some JW’s try to say, “Well the fire is eternal, but not the punishment.” Such a grasping for straws is just that, a grasping for straws; v) Mt. 25:46- “Eternal life...eternal punishment.” The word “eternal” is the same as “everlasting.” So if the punishment isn’t eternal, neither is the life! You can’t have it both ways; vi) Jn. 5:28- “All will be resurrected” But according to JW’s the lost will simply be revived from their ‘soul sleep’ only to be “cut off” i.e. thrown back to the grave or annihilated-which doesn’t make any sense at all. Why bring them up just to send them back? cf. Heb. 6:2; vii) Rom. 2:5- “treasure up wrath for the day of wrath” seems to intimate that there will be degrees of punishment-though all in hell will undoubtedly suffer terribly. The point here though, is that hell must be more than just the grave. After all, are there “degrees of dying?”

(d) The “Beast” (antichrist) & the False Prophet. Please note that they are thrown into “hell” (Rev. 19:20). Yet one thousand years later when Satan is cast into hell, the “beast” and the false prophet are still there (Rev. 20:10)!

(e) “Death” does NOT mean extinction! An important truth often misunderstood is that “*Death*” = “*Separation,*” NOT “*Extinction,*” “Annihilation,” or a “*Cessation of Existence.*” Let me repeat, **death is separation, not extinction.** Ryrie has succinctly summarized the Bible’s teaching: i) Physical death is the separation of body from spirit (Jas. 2:26); ii) Spiritual death is the separation of a person from God (Eph. 2:1); iii) The “Second Death” is eternal separation from God (Rev. 20:14); & iv) “Death to Sin” is separation from the ruling power of sin in one’s own life (Rom. 6:14).²¹

Biblical support for this view: i) **Adam’s sin-Gen. 2:17.** The Bible says “*in the ‘day’ thou eatest, thou shalt surely die*”, yet he still lived over 900 more years. (Note: JW’s try to get around this by saying that “one day = one thousand years”, contending that thus Adam did die in “that day.” Such hermeneutical gymnastics is false. The days were 24 hour days, otherwise how did plants live for “1000” years before the sun began shining? They would have died long before; ii) **Moses-Mt. 17:1-3.** Who did Peter, James & John see with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration? Moses was long dead, yet he showed up there. How can that be if all men sleep in the ground until the future resurrection? In reality it was Moses, because his soul was and still is alive! The inner circle didn’t see a vision (note that the wording in v. 9 literally means, “*that which is seen, a spectacle*”²²); iii) **Jesus statement in John 11:25** “...*whoever lives and believes on me shall never die.*” Since everyone dies physically, Christ must have been referring to the soul! cf. II Cor. 5:8 (“*to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord...*”); Phil. 1:21-23 “*for me to live is Christ and to die is gain* [what gain would it be to sleep in the ground for the past 2000 years?]...*I’m in a straight between two, having a desire to depart* (Gk-“Exodus”) *and be with Christ...*”); I Thess. 4:13-18 (note that the believers will come “*with*” Jesus when He returns. We all know that Jesus is in heaven [Jn. 14:1-3], so deceased believers must be in heaven too, in order to be able to come *with* Him. They cannot be sleeping in the ground).

(f) Other Miscellaneous Scriptural Evidences: i) **Rev. 14:9-11-** “*tormented with fire and brimstone...and the smoke of their torment goes up forever and ever, and they have no rest day and night...*”; ii) **Rev. 20:10-** “*tormented (literally) into the everlasting of the everlasting*”²³; iii) **II Thess. 1:7-11-** “...*in flaming fire, dealing out retribution to those who do not know God...and these will pay the penalty of eternal destruction, away from the Lord and from the glory of His power.*”

(g) Destruction is NOT Annihilation! A light bulb is created to give light. But if you drop it onto a concrete or tile floor, it is “destroyed” i.e. it is no longer able to perform the function for which it was designed and built. But it hasn’t been annihilated, nor has it ceased to exist. It’s all still there, but the pieces of glass, wire, powder can no longer perform the task for which they were designed. Likewise, to

²¹ Ryrie, *The Ryrie Study Bible*, 1978 edition (NASV), p. 1709.

²² Thayer, cited by Walter Martin, “*The Kingdom of the Cults*” (Bethany House: Minneapolis, MN, 1985), p. 90.

²³ Martin, *Ibid*, p. 91.

be “destroyed” in hell means that a person who was created “to glorify God and enjoy Him forever” will never be able to fulfill the purpose for which he was created.

(h) If Hell isn’t eternal, neither is Heaven! – Mt. 25:46. It will not do for JW’s to say that eternal “punishment” = “cutting off.” Compare with I John 4:18 which says that “*fear hath torment*” (i.e. “punishment”). If we insert the phrase “*Cutting off*” in place of torment, the verse simply does not make any sense whatsoever...and it is the *same* Greek word in both places. Clearly then, *punishment* means *punishment*-not “cutting off” or annihilation.

E. HOW TO WITNESS TO A JEHOVAH’S WITNESS.²⁴ “What we are presenting here is an appeal to the heart, not the intellect.” You can debate all day long with a Jehovah’s Witness and get nowhere. But if they see that the organization is not trustworthy, then there is hope that when you share a presentation such as the following one, that they will begin to see that there is something wrong with what they believe. The questions presented here are designed to be asked in the precise order in which they are given.

1) “ARE YOU A CHILD OF GOD?” – Acts 26:17-18. If the Jehovah’s Witness says “Yes”, then ask him how he became one and listen carefully to his explanation. If he says “No”, ask him: They whose child are you?” The basis for this question is Acts 26:17-18: “I am sending you to open their eyes so that they may turn from darkness to light and from the dominion of Satan unto God, in order that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who have been sanctified by faith that is in Me.”

There are only two places or positions for a person to be: Darkness or Light, Forgiveness of sins or not. Under Satan’s power and dominion, or God’s! Eph. 2:1-4 teaches that before being saved they (& we) were “sons of disobedience” & “children of wrath.”

2) “ARE YOU BORN AGAIN?” John 3:3-6; I John 5:1. As this question IF he answers “Yes” to the first question i.e. that he is a “child of God” and believes in Jesus as his Saviour. If he says “No”, ask him: “Why not?”

“He will then proceed to tell you that only 144,000 are born again and going to heaven, and since he intends to live forever on the earth, he doesn’t need to be ‘born again.’ In reply ask: “Can you show me one verse in the Bible that says that only the 144,000 will be born again?” There is no such verse! Do NOT accept a string of Scripture references!

Now ask, “*Do you believe the Bible or only what your organization tells you?*”

3) “DO YOU HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?” – I John 5:1, 11-13. JW’s believe that the judgment which will decide who gets eternal life is yet future and will occur at the end of the millennial reign of Jesus Christ: “*Jehovah God will justify, declare righteous, on the basis of their own merit, all perfected humans who have withstood that final, decisive test of mankind. He will adopt and acknowledge them as his sons through Jesus Christ.*” (from the JW book “*Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*”, p. 400).

The Key Question: “HOW CAN A PERSON BELIEVE IN JESUS CHRIST AS SAVIOUR AND YET NOT HAVE ETERNAL LIFE?”

After all, Jesus said: “*He who believes on me HAS eternal life*” – **John 6:47.**

Review I John 5:1 with the JW: Does he believe in Jesus as the Christ? Then according to this verse he should have been born again! And if he had been adopted by God as His child, he would have eternal life! “So then, when he says that he ‘believes’ in Jesus Christ, his idea or belief is defective and we can understand why God has not received him as His son... Be sure that you present your testimony about what your faith in Jesus...has done for you. When he leaves you, tell him you will not forget him in your prayers.”²⁵

²⁴ Material taken from “*How to Witness to Jehovah’s Witnesses*” by Kenneth R. Guindon, BMM missionary to JW’s in “*Focus on Missions.*”

²⁵ Ibid.