

Understanding & Reaching Jehovah's Witnesses

History:

- **Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society** (Brooklyn, New York) ("Watchtower & Awake" Magazine)
- **Charles Taze Russell #1** (1852-1916)
 - * Presbyterian/Adventist background
 - * 1800's prophetic curiosity
 - * Assistant editor of Adventist magazine
 - * No theological education (no Greek/Hebrew)
 - * 1879 Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence
 - unique Bible interpretation (no Greek foundation)
 - International Bible Students Association (Russellites)(to disprove eternal hell)
 - * 1886 The Millennial Dawn
 - "Studies in the Scriptures"
 - "Our beliefs are in complete harmony with every statement of the Bible." (Studies in the Scriptures 1:348)
 - * Believed 1874 was the beginning of Christ's visible return/presence
 - * Believed in 1910 the rapture of faithful will take place before God's wrath released
 - * 1914 Battle of Armageddon/End of the world/Christ's invisible return/set up his kingdom
 - * Pyramidology (see Russell: Studies in the Scriptures, p. 342, 1901,1923; Thy Kingdom Come, V. 3)
 - (see "Watchtower", May 15, 1925, p.148)
 - (Doctrine discarded in 1928. See "The Watchtower", 11/15,1928, p.344)
 - * Seen as the "wise and faithful servant"
 - (The Harp of God, 1921, p.239; "The Watchtower", 4/1920, p. 100,101)
- **Joseph F. Rutherford #2** (1916-1942)
 - * Split – "Russellites" broke away from organization
 - * Organization becomes the "faithful and discreet slave" collectively ("Watchtower", 2/15/1927.)
 - * Baptist background
 - * Changed Russell's teaching about Christ's spiritual presence in 1914.
 - * Adopted title "Jehovah's Witnesses" (Jehovah alone is seen as God)
 - (Isaiah 43:10 Referring to Israel? Was God without a witness for 2000+ years? New Testament focus is on being a witness of Jesus Christ –Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 13:30,31; Philippians 2:9-11/Isaiah 45:22-24)
 - * Theocratic control of Organization (all other governments are satanic)
 - * Required door-to door/literature distribution
 - * Emphasis on Old Testament
 - * Claimed angelic encounters
 - * Believed 1918 Armageddon would take place/God would destroy Christians (The Finished Mystery)
 - * Stated in 1925 "millions now living will never die"
 - * Believed that world anarchy would take place in 1920/1925
 - * Wrongly predicted that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob would be resurrected/return in 1925.
 - Lived in the mansion at Beth Siream where prophets were to return.
 - * 1931 removed Jesus/cross and emphasized Jehovah only
 - * Alcoholic at death
- **Nathan Knorr #3** (1942-1977)
 - * Loyalty to Organization
 - * Watch Tower Bible School training full time missionaries
 - * The New World Translation of the Bible (example: Psalms 23 bad English translation)
 - (None of the translators of this version knew Greek or Hebrew.)
 - (Franz stated in Edinburgh (11/25/1954) court testimony to be unable to translate Hebrew.)
 - (It is not based on any Hebrew or Greek manuscript evidence for the translation.)
 - * 1975 End of the World/Armageddon (Many left organization when prophecy proved false.)
- **Frederick W. Franz #4** (1977-1992)
 - * Leading theologian/only leader with little Greek training
 - * 1914 as Christ's invisible return,
 - * 1935 as the rapture of the 144,000 (heavenly calling)
 - * 1975 as Armageddon/ world's end/Millennium
 - * Discipline against dissidents

- **Milton G. Henschel #5** (1992 to 2000)
 - * 13 million members presently
- Present: **Governing Body** (central leadership committee)(12+ individuals)

Claims Of Jehovah's Witnesses:

- They say they accept the Bible as their only authority.
- Yet, they deny the:
 - * Trinity
 - * Deity of Christ
 - * Deity of the Holy Spirit
 - * Jesus' bodily resurrection/future visible return
 - * Salvation by Faith alone
 - * Eternal punishment of the wicked (no eternal, conscious punishment in hell)
 - * Heaven to all who believe (limited heaven) or eternal security
- Their source of authority:
 - * The Organization (sole channel for truth)(unquestioned obedience)(Matt. 24:45-47) (Watchtower, 1/15/1969, p. 51)
 - * Publications: (Watch tower, Awake)
 - * The New World Translation of the Bible
 - * The Governing Body
- Believe Jesus began invisible return and reign in 1914
- Believe those prior 1935 - 144,000/reign in heaven
- Believe those after 1935 - paradise on earth

Practice: They do not salute the flag, say pledge of allegiance, celebrate holidays, birthdays, give blood transfusions, vote, or serve in the military.

* JW's do not say they are born again, do not take communion, or have the hope of heaven unless they are part of the 144,000 which was baptized before 1935.

* JW's will not read anything from apostates.

Fear: Disfellowshipping /shunning (put out of the organization)(outside at Armageddon/wrath of God)

The Arian Controversy:

325 AD Council of Nicea

Basic Beliefs: (2 Timothy 4:2-5; Acts 17:2,3,11; Titus 1:9)

The Bible:

"...People cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself... if (someone) lays the *Scripture Studies* aside... and goes to the Bible alone... within two years he goes into darkness... If he had merely read the *Scripture Studies*... and had not read a page of the Bible...he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures." (Russell, "The Watchtower", September 15, 1910. p.298; Studies in the Scriptures, 1988, p.33)

"(The Watchtower Organization) is God's sole collective channel for the flow of Biblical truth to men on earth." ("The Watchtower", July 15, 1960. p.439)

"...the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organization in mind." (The Watchtower, October 1, 1967, p. 587; October 1, 1994, p.6; August 15, 1981, pgs. 28,29; and December 1, 1981, p.27)

"...no matter how much Bible reading we have done, we would never have learned the truth on our own. We would not have discovered the truth regarding Jehovah, his purpose and attributes, the meaning and importance of his name..." (The Watchtower, December 1, 1990, p.19)

The Bible Says...

John 17:17 "Thy word is truth."

2 Timothy 2:15 "...rightly dividing the word of truth."

2 Timothy 3:14-17 "All Scripture... is profitable... that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work."

2 Peter 1:3 " His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises..."

2 Peter 1:20,21

2 Corinthians 9:8

Acts 17:11

False Prophecies:

(Zion's Watch Tower, 2/1881, p.3) "New 'light' of truth can not contradict former truth."

- Russell: 1874 - Armageddon, Jesus would return (the second coming of Christ)
(Studies in the Scriptures, v.4, 1897, p.621)
(Creation, 1927, p.289)
(Prophecy, p. 65)
("The Watchtower", 3/1/1922, p.67)
1878/1910 - Rapture of the saints,
1914/1915/1918 - End of world.
"The world will end before generation who saw the events of 1914 pass away."
1914 - Jesus returned invisibly to set up his Kingdom on Earth.
(The Truth Shall Make You Free, 1943, p. 300)
(Let God Be True, 1946, p. 250)
(Men's Salvation Out OF World Distress At Hand, 1975, p.288)
(Studies in the Scriptures, v.2, 1888, p.98,99 - later additions changed; v.3, 1891,p.126; v.3, 1913, p.228; v.3, 1923, p.228)
(Light, v.1, 1930, p.194)
1918 - Downfall of Christianity
- Rutherford: 1925 - Abraham, Isaac, Jacob would be resurrected. (Ps. 45:16)
Built a house in San Diego for them "Beth-Sarim"
(Salvation, 1939, p.311)
(The New World, 1942, p. 104)
(Millions Now Living Will Never Die, 1920, p. 88-90)
("The Watchtower" stated in 7/15/1924, p. 211, "The year 1925 is a date definitely and clearly marked in the Scriptures, even more clearly than that of 1914."
1935 Limitation of heaven/earthly paradise.
- Franz: 1975 - Armageddon, End of human history, Millennium would begin.
(Awake, 10/8/1966, p. 19)
(Watchtower, 7/15/1894, p. 1675)
(Our Kingdom Ministry, 3/1968, p. 4; 5/1974, p.3)
(Watchtower, 6/15/1976, p. 441) "understanding based on wrong premises"

The Bible Says: (warning about false prophets)

Jer. 29:8; Deut. 18:18-21; Ezek. 33:33

God:

- Reject the doctrine of the Trinity (Let God Be True, p. 101,111)
- Jehovah is said to be the only name for God
OT:Jehovah/YHWH or I AM(LORD) = Eloheim (God) = Adoni (Lord) (Same God - different names)
Deuteronomy 6:4; 4:35,36,39
Jeremiah 10:10; Isaiah 53:6; 45:5,21
Exodus 20:2,3
NT: "Lord" (kurios) – God (theos) (never Jehovah)
- Jehovah is a transliteration of YHWH consonants and vowels from Adonai (a-o-a)
- YHWH is pronounced "Yahweh"
- Jesus never addressed the Father as Jehovah (Matt. 6:9)(Rom. 8:15; Gal. 4:6)
- reference, p. 59,60, Reasoning from the Scriptures with Jehovah's Witnesses.

Jesus Christ:

- a god, not Almighty God (different substance)("mighty" but not "Almighty")
(Arianism – Jesus different substance than the Father)
John 1:1 change to "a god" not "God" (NWT) (see John 17:3 Is Jesus a true or false god?)
Luke 20:38 "He is a God not of the dead, but of the living."
(note 12x times "God" is used. Only one is changed to "a god".)(16 out of 282 in NWT)
(other examples: Matt. 5:9:1:23; ; Jn. 1:6,18; 20:28; Heb. 1:8)
The Watchtower Society misquotes several Greek scholars to make it seem they agree with their rendering of John 1:1. However, that is not the case.
Problem of polytheism – many gods (Deut. 32:39; Is. 43:10; 44:8; 45:5)
(Passages where the definite article is not used: Matt. 5:9; 6:24; Lk. 1:35,78; 2:40; Jn. 1:6,12-13,18; 3:2,21; 9:16,33; Rom. 1:7,17-18; 1 Cor. 1:30; 15:19; Phil. 2:11,13; Titus 1:1)
John 8:58 changed to "I have been" not "I AM"
(note other uses of "I AM" in ch. 8/9)

John 14:28 (see Jn. 17:5; Philip. 2:6-8; Heb. 2:17)
- if Jesus was God, did God die in the grave?
- if Jesus was God, did he pray to himself?

- a man/created being/angel/God's agent (had a beginning) Michael the Archangel
Proverbs 8:22,23 (context 'wisdom'/royal birth)
Revelation 3:14 "the beginning of creation"
Colossians 1:15 "firstborn" –
Insert the word "other" in Col. 1:15-18 (NWT) which changes meaning
John 3:16 "begotten"
Deny the incarnation of Jesus Christ
- spiritual resurrection (without a body)(deny the bodily resurrection of Jesus)(tomb occupied)
(Luke 24:31; John 20:14,15,17)(Let God Be True, p. 138)
- returned invisibly, spiritually in 1914 and is reigning from heaven ("presence")
- not to be worshipped (Heb. 1:6 NWT)

The Bible Says...

- Jesus was of the 'same substance'/essence of Father
Philippians 2:6; Colossians 1:15,17,19; 2:9; Heb. 1:3,10
- Jesus claimed to be God, was given title of God, seen as co-equal & co-eternal
John 1:1,15; 5:23; 8:58,59; 10:30; 14:9,10; 20:28
John 1:1 "shared essence – different person" "Equal with God, yet distinct from Father."
"When everything came into being, He already was"
John 8:58 "eternally preexistent" (I AM)(Ex. 3:14)
(see also Is. 41:4; 43:10,13,25; 46:4; 48:12; Jn. 13:19; Rev. 4:8 "I am he")
Philippians 2:5-11
Isaiah 40:3 "prepare the way of the LORD... our God..." (see Mk. 1:2-4 fulfilled)
(compare John 12:41 with Isaiah 6:1-5; 42:8)
(see also Rom. 9:5; Col. 2:9; Titus 2:13; Phil. 2:5-11)
- "Begotten", means designated, not created or made.
(Ps. 2:7; Jn. 1:14,18; 3:16; 1 Jn. 4:9)
Hebrews 5:4-10
'Only begotten' = 'unique/sole representative'
Hebrews 11:17 (Ishmael/Isaac)
- "Firstborn" means preeminence of position/superiority.
- "Firstborn" is not a reference to birth (see Heb. 1:6; Col. 1:18; Rev. 1:5)
Ephraim over Manasseh (Gen. 48:14,17-19)
Esau/Jacob (Genesis 25:23-33; Mal. 1:1)
Reuben, Judah, Joseph (1 Chronicles 5:1,2)
- Jesus wasn't the first raised from dead. (Col. 1:18)
(Luke 7:14,15; 8:53-55; John 11:43,44)
- "The beginning of the creation of God" means primary source, beginner, or originator.
Jesus' role in creation was to be the agent through whom all was brought into being.
Hand's-on "architect" (Gk: arche)
(see Revelation 3:14; John 1:3; Hebrews 1:2,10; Colossians 1:16-18)(Isaiah 44:24 "alone")
(see also use of "beginning" (arche): Rev. 1:8; 21:6; 22:13)
- Jesus is given the title of the Alpha and Omega.
(Revelation 1:8,17,18; 2:8; 21:6,7; 22:12,13,16; Isaiah 41:4; 44:6; 48:12)
Great question: When did God die and come back to life? See Revelation 1:18. (Jesus)
- Jesus rose bodily from the grave. (Matthew 28:7,9; Luke 24:3,23,37,39,41-43; John 2:20,21; 20:2, 25, 27,28; 1 Corinthians 15:1-4; Romans 10:9,10)(ate, touched, similar wounds)
- Jesus will come back visibly. (Revelation 1:7; Acts 1:11; Mark 13:26,27; Matthew 24:26,27,30)

- Jesus accepted worship and was worshipped. (Matt. 2:10-12; Jn. 5:23; 9:38; Lk. 24:52; Matt. 14:33; 28:9; Heb. 1:6; Acts 14:11-15; Luke 4:8)
- Jesus was able to forgive sin (Mark 2:5-12; John 8:21,24)

Rejection of the Cross:

- Jesus was crucified on an upright stake. "The cross is a religious symbol of paganism." (Watchtower, November 15, 1993, p.9)

The Bible Says... (use of word "cross")

Matthew 27:37
John 19:17,19,25
Luke 24:39,40

Holy Spirit:

- they believe the spirit is only the invisible active force of Almighty God
 - They reject the personality/Deity of the Holy Spirit. (see Eph. 4:30; Jn. 14:26)
 - Problem: How do you grieve, lie to, or sin against a force? (Eph. 4:30; Acts 5:3; Matt. 12:31; Heb. 10:29)
 - How does a force have personality? (referred to as a "he" not an "it") (Jn. 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:8-11; Lk. 11:13; Ti. 3:5,6; Rom. 15:30; 8:14,15,26; Gal. 4:1-5; Acts 10:19-21; 13:2,4; 1 Cor. 2:13)
 - How does a force have a mind? (1 Cor. 2:10-12; Jn. 16:13; Is. 11:2; 40:13; Rom. 8:27; Eph. 1:17)
 - How does a force have a will? (1 Cor. 12:11; Acts 16:6-11; 8:29; Rom. 8:14)

The Bible Says: Holy Spirit = God or LORD (Jehovah)

Acts 5:3,4/1 Cor. 3:16,17; 6:19,20
Acts 28:25 and Is. 6:8/Heb. 10:15 and Jer. 31:33

Salvation By Works:

- "...prove by obedience... their worthiness of life eternal." (Studies in the Scriptures, V.1, p.158)
- "Those who faithfully carry out their dedication will be rewarded with everlasting life..." (Let God Be True, p. 298)

The Bible Says...

Ephesians 2:8,9; Titus 3:5
Rom. 3:20-28; 4:3-8; 9:16, 30-32; 10:2-4
Galatians 2:16,21; 3:2,3,10,11

No Hell:

(They believe in annihilation/wicked cease to exist at death/no immortal soul/no eternal punishment)
(They believe hell is simply the grave.)

The Bible Says...

2 Thessalonians 1:7-9
Matthew 25:41,46
Revelation 20:11-15

Limited Heaven: (Matthew 23:13)

- 2 divisions - "little flock" (Luke 12:32) "faithful servant" "other sheep" (John 10:16)(after 1935)
- only 144,00 will receive the heavenly reward. (Those baptized before 1935.)(Matt. 24:45-47)
Problem: 144,000 are Jews in Matthew 7 who witness during the Tribulation.
- those baptized after 1935 are part of the "great crowd" will experience paradise on the earth in the flesh. (Revelation 7:9)
- those before Christ are "other sheep" or "great crowd".

The Bible Says...

John 10:16 1 shepherd – 1 flock
John 3:16 "Whosoever" Anyone who believes receives eternal life/heaven.
1 Peter 1:3,4 "hope in heaven, reserved for you!"
Hebrews 11:13-16; 12:23; Psalms 16:9-11; 49:15
Luke 23:40-43

2 Corinthians 5:6-8; 12:2-4
Ephesians 3:6
1 Thessalonians 5:9,10; 4:16,17
(check out John 17:20,24 in NWT)

Witnessing To Jehovah's Witnesses:

The Mission: Acts 26:17,18

The Method:

1. Prayer (Colossians 4:2-5; Ephesians 6:19)
 2. Humility (1 Peter 3:15; 2 Timothy 2:23-25)
 3. Proclaiming Truth (2 Corinthians 4:2; 1 Corinthians 2:1-5)
- Personal request them to read aloud a Bible passage/re-read Bible passages
 - Thoroughly discuss each passage before you go on to the next one.

Passages To Think Through:

John 1:1 "a god"?

John 3:16 "only begotten Son" (1:14)

John 14:28 "the Father is greater than I"

John 20:17 "my God"

1 Corinthians 8:6

1 Corinthians 11:3 "the head of Christ is God"

1 Corinthians 15:28 "in subjection to the father"

Colossians 1:15-17 "firstborn of all creation"

Revelation 3:14 "beginning of God's creation"

Discussion Passages:

Isaiah 43:10 "Witnesses" referring strictly to Israel. New Testament focus is on being a witness of Jesus Christ – Acts 1:8; 2:32; 3:15; 4:33; 13:30,31)

2 Peter 1:20,21 "Interpretation" means "unloosing" or origination/authorship.

John 17:3 "Knowledge" refers to a personal relationship with God (see Matt. 7:21-23)

Acts 20:20 "House to house" refers to house churches of the early church (Acts 2:46; 5:42; 12:12).

There was no centralized church building in the early church. (Col. 4:15; Rom. 16:5; 1 Cor. 16:19)

Colossians 1:15-18 Christ is the agent of creation, creator of all things, supreme, preeminent, he is the end for which all things exist, he existed before all things, he is eternal, unending, everything depends on him to sustain them.

Colossians 2:9 not divine qualities but the totality of divine power and attributes. He is absolutely and fully in essence – God.

Zechariah 12:10 "They will look on Me (YHWH) whom they have pierced." Jesus is called Jehovah.

Revelation 3:14 "beginning" also means one who begins, origin, source, creator, first cause or ruler."

(Jn. 1:3; Rev. 19:16; Lk. 20:20; Jude 6)

Proverbs 8:22,23 speaks of "wisdom" personified, not Jesus (see ch. 1-9)

"We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. Are its teachings in full harmony with God's Word, or are they based on the traditions of men? If we are lovers of the Truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination." (The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, 1968, p.13)