

# WHEN THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES VISIT

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## INTRODUCTION:

- A. Illustration: Two Jehovah's Witnesses come by your house... what do you do?**
1. Most of the time we are cordial to them, tell them where we attend, and then part ways
  2. Two months two came by my house and some good studies have come from it!
    - a. At first I didn't think they would come and study because most haven't in the past
    - b. In the beginning I didn't tell them I was a preacher, which may have helped, but eventually that came out and to my surprise the studies have continued!
    - c. It has been an opportunity to present the truth from God's word to someone for the first and my prayer is that there will be much good to come from it eventually
- B. When we meet or visit with a member Jehovah's Witness organization, we do not need to simply write off any chance of reaching them with the truth!**
1. They visit and we tell them where we go to church and we are not interested in changing:  
→ They leave a magazine behind which we might scan before we throw it away
  2. Sometimes we may not want to study in-depth with them because we either do not know what they believe or we are scared we won't be able to defend the truth well enough
  3. My hopes with this lesson is two fold: To familiarize you with their group and to show how some of their foundational beliefs match up with what God's word says!

## I. WHAT IS THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS ORGANIZATION?

- A. The History Of The Jehovah's Witness Organization:**
1. It all began in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania in 1872 at the hands of Charles Taze Russell:
    - a. While they will not readily admit it, Russell was under the influence of the teaching of the Adventist group which impacted much of his teachings!
    - b. Note: The Adventist group had claimed to calculate the return of Jesus Christ
    - c. The Adventist group is also the religious sect from which the Branch Davidians came who died in Waco, Texas under the leadership of David Koresh
  2. In 1876 Russell began co-publishing "The Herald of the Morning" magazine with two men named Barbour and Patton: This was an Adventist paper
    - a. This became an excellent avenue for promoting his ideas among a large audience
    - b. When the editors of the paper predicted the return of Christ in 1878, obviously missing it, they claimed to receive "new light" on this & other doctrines
    - c. Because he didn't agree with some of the new teachings, Russell broke away and formed the "Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Return"
    - d. He focused on disproving the teachings of Barbour and Patton → He had no problem with subjects like the trinity till AFTER he broke away from them!
  4. The Jehovah Witnesses have had several leaders...
    - a. After Russell died, Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over as president of the Watch Tower Society which was known the International Bible Students Association
    - b. He renamed the organization in 1931 to "The Jehovah's Witnesses"
    - c. There have been several presidents come and go since Russell and Rutherford: Nathan Korr, Fredrick Franz, Milton G. Henschel, and others
    - d. What's interesting is how J.W.'s reject most of the teachings of their original two presidents – How do we know they wont reject current teachings & leaders?
  5. Where do we find such an organization or offices as a president? (**Eph. 4:11ff**)
- B. What Is The Watchtower Society As We Know It Today?**
1. The Watchtower Society is the organization that oversees the Jehovah's Witnesses:
    - a. The Watchtower Society determines what is taught and believed by their members
    - b. Instead of searching the scriptures, their members are to search the watchtower magazines – That determines what they believe & teach! (**Acts 17:11**)
    - c. The society produces over 100,000 books 800,000 magazines... DAILY!

- d. Their members are not allowed to read material published by other religions, seriously question what they are taught, or to take a different position!
2. The Watchtower Society calls themselves “God’s Spirit-Directed Prophet”
  - a. **Question:** If they’re God’s prophet, how come they keep changing their teaching on various subjects and why have they gotten numerous prophecies wrong?
  - b. As soon as they discover that they have been wrong they do an about face and say, “We never said that!” or “We’ve received a clearer light on the subject”
3. Let’s observe just a few of the many prophecies & teachings which proved to be false:
  - a. They flip-flop! Originally they taught the higher powers of **Romans 13:1** is the secular government, in 1929 this was rejected as false doctrine making the higher powers God and Christ, now they’ve returned to the previous view.
  - b. In 1908: “...We consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the kingdom of God, will be accomplished at the end of AD 1914” (The time is at hand; 1908 ed. Pg. 99)
  - c. In 1974: “Yes, the end of this system is so very near! Is that not reason to increase our activity? Reports are heard of brothers selling their homes and property and planning to finish out the rest of their days in this old system in the pioneer service. Certainly this is a fine way to spend the short time remaining before the wicked world’s end.” (Kingdom Ministry, May ‘74, pg. 3)
  - d. They again predicted the end in 1925 & 1975 – Members quit jobs & when those dates came & passed they lost ¾ of their membership!
  - e. They’ve changed many teachings that have been disproven through discoveries: Forbade blood transfusions, organ transplants, & vaccinations! Sun bathing recommended for medical benefit & denied possibility of space travel!
4. With all this in mind, how can they be a true prophet of God? (**2 Peter 1:19-21**)

### C. What Is The New World Translation Of The Bible?

1. Any Jehovah’s Witness will reject any version of the Bible as authoritative except for their own “New World Translation”
  - a. In fact, if you press them they will identify every other translation as being the result of the deception and influence of the devil!
  - b. When you study with them & a translation difference exists, they’ll discount yours!
2. It’s easy to see that their translation is the product of twisting scripture to fit their doctrine!
  - a. They change words that would seem to contradict their doctrine, inconsistently translating Greek words & they add words that aren’t in the original texts!
  - b. JW’s do not claim the translators knew Greek! They say, “A translation committee of experienced anointed Christians was organized to produce the New World Translation...” (WT, Oct 15, 1997: How the Bible Came To Us pg 11-12)
  - c. Five translators produced it → 4 out of the five knew no Greek or Hebrew! In fact, when asked in court to translate Gen. 2:24 from Hebrew Franz, the only one who knew any Greek or Hebrew, said he could not! He could not translate Hebrew or Greek! He only took 2 years of Greek and then dropped out!
  - d. How could their translation be any more than a paraphrase! A doctrinal nightmare!
3. There are numerous passages that are translated far differently in the NWT than in any other translation we have... why would that be the case?
  - a. **John 1:1** → “The Word was God...” is changed to “The Word was a god”
  - b. **Colossians 1:16-20** → “Other” is added five times making the passage teach that Jesus is a created being – “By Him were all *OTHER* things created”
  - c. **Matthew 2:11** → “Bowed down & worshipped Him...” is changed to “Did obeisance to him...” → Don’t recognize Jesus as deity, thus unworthy of worship
4. Greek scholars discount the NWT as being a reliable translation of the original text!
  - a. Dr. William Barclay: “It is abundantly clear that a sect which can translate the New Testament like that is intellectually dishonest”
  - b. Dr. Bruce M. Metzger: “A frightful mistranslation, erroneous, & pernicious,” – “If the Jehovah’s Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists”

- c. Dr. Julius Mantey: “I have never read any N.T. so badly translated... it is a distortion of the N.T. The translators used what J.B. Rotherham had translated in 1893, in modern speech, and changed the readings in scores of passages to state what Jehovah’s Witnesses believe and teach. That is a distortion not a translation.”

## II. THE FUNDAMENTAL BELIEFS OF THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES AND THE BIBLE:

### **A. At the heart is their concept of God, Jesus Christ, & the Holy Spirit:**

1. The Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that recognizing a three person Godhead is pagan!
  - a. **Quote:** “Is Jehovah a Trinity – three persons in one God? No! Jehovah, the Father, is the only true God” (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 22)
  - b. This doctrine really contradicts itself! Because they teach that Jesus is “A God” thus they believe in multiple gods making themselves polytheistic!
2. They teach Jesus, while a god, is not deity like Jehovah God!
  - a. **Quote:** “Jesus is the only Son that God created by himself. Jehovah used the prehuman Jesus as his “master worker” in creating all other things in heaven and on earth” (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 6)
  - b. In their version John 1:1 reads, “...the word was with God & the word was a God”
  - c. Jesus did not deny worship like every other created thing should! (**Matthew 14:33**)
  - c. If, as they teach, Jesus is not God nor was He ever equal to God, Jesus sinned not only in His words but also His self-conception! (**Phil. 2:6-7**)
  - d. He is called “The Alpha & Omega” (**Rev. 1:17-18**), “Mighty God” (**Isaiah 9:6**), the “I AM” (**John 8:58**), the “Lord thy God” (**Mat. 4:7**), “God with us” (**Mt. 1:23**)
3. They teach that the Holy Spirit is merely God’s active force!
  - a. “What, though, is the holy spirit? It is not a person like God. Rather, it is God’s active force.” (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 5)
  - b. The Holy Spirit is said to teach, speak, and it has a mind! (**Acts 13:2**)
4. The Bible does teach there is more than one being called God! (**Col. 2:9**)

### **B. They also believe in, at least a form of, the doctrine of “Total Inherited Depravity”**

1. Likely borrowed from Calvinism, they teach children are born with the guilt of Adam’s sin!
  - a. **Quote:** “Adam passed on sin to all his children. That is why we also grow old, get sick, and die... Romans 3:23; 5:12.” (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 6)
  - b. **Quote:** “Sadly, Adam lost this precious life not only for himself but also for his future offspring... Yes, all of us have inherited sin from Adam” (What Does The Bible Really Teach, pg. 49)
2. What does the Bible really teach concerning children inheriting Adam’s sin?
  - a. The very passage they use as proof shows that we die spiritually not because of Adam’s sin but “because all have sinned” (**Romans 5:12**)
  - b. The whole purpose of Ezek. 18 is to show that such teaching is a “false proverb!”
  - c. Yes, it is true that we all experience sickness, pain, suffering, and ultimately death as a result of Adam’s sin (**I Cor. 15**) – But we don’t inherit his guilt!

### **C. It’s also apparent that Premillennialism has impacted them as they look for Christ to return and establish a kingdom on this earth:**

1. **Quote:** “God’s kingdom will replace all human governments. It will rule as the only government over the entire earth.” (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 13)
  - a. They arrive at this conclusion from misunderstanding a vision Daniel interpreted, and taking as earthly some passages that are intended to be spiritual in nature
  - b. (Dan. 2:44) Daniel sees four kingdoms: They see the first three kingdoms as before Christ then jump to today and make the fourth the American/European union!
2. Though their doctrine on this changes often, they believe in two groups of saved people:
  - a. The first group is a literal 144,000 which includes many of the Christians in the 1<sup>st</sup> Century, along with certain Jews to whom God has revealed their status
  - b. The second group is everyone else! They realize if only 144,000 can be saved

- then many would be hopeless!
- c. The 1<sup>st</sup> group goes to heaven while the 2<sup>nd</sup> group gets to live in paradise on earth
  3. Jesus made it clear His kingdom was not an earthly kingdom! (**John 18:36**)
  4. Jesus showed when this kingdom would come! (**Mark 9:1; Matthew 24:34**)
    - a. Either it came in that generation's time or there's 2,000 year old men alive!
    - b. What amazing is they applied this passage to show that "Millions now living will never die" (Harp of God – written in 1921!!!!)
  5. The New Testament also shows people entering that kingdom in the First Century!
    - a. Kingdom came with power... that power seen coming in Acts 2 on Pentecost!
    - b. Members of Christ's church seen as kingdom citizens! (**Col. 1:13-14, Eph. 2:19**)
    - c. Yet the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the kingdom didn't come till 1914!!!
  6. Paul pictures Christ as reigning now and when He returns He will deliver the kingdom to His Father and put an end to His rule, authority, & power! (**1 Cor. 15:24**)

#### **D. They also deny that man has any existence apart from the body!**

1. In fact, they teach that a person, his body, soul, and spirit are all the same thing!
  - a. **Quote:** "When a person dies, he ceases to exist... Not even one part of us survives the death of the body... We do not possess an immortal soul or spirit." (What Does The Bible Really Teach, pg. 58)
  - b. When I asked a Jehovah's Witness then what hope he has if he ceases to exist he replied, "All who die are a memory of God and He will bring us back"
  - c. One reason for this is a failure to realize that sometimes "souls" refers to individuals sometimes it refers to their spirits (**Like Ezekiel 18:4**)
2. The Bible teaches that man does have a soul (or spirit) that exists apart from the body!
  - a. James writes that the body without the spirit is dead! (**James 2:26**)
  - b. What was Stephen praying for? "Lord Jesus receive my spirit!" (**Acts 7:59**)
  - c. If all we are is a memory of God – What was Paul expecting? (**Phil. 1:23**)
  - d. This concept makes no sense when you read passages like (**2 Cor. 5:1ff**)
3. Because of this concept they reject that Jesus' resurrection was a bodily resurrection!
  - a. **Quote:** "Jesus died and was resurrected by God as a spirit creature, and he returned to Heaven." (What Does God Require Of Us, pg. 7)
  - b. Two questions: "What was Jesus then doing when He told the disciples to feel of the wounds from the crucifixion?" and "Where did the body go?"
  - c. Jesus plainly said that His body would be resurrected! (**John 2:18-19, 21**)
4. Closely tied to this concept is their rejection of an eternal Hell!
  - a. Maybe its due to mistranslations in the past, but they make no distinction between Sheol, Hell, Hades, The Grave, and Death → They think they're synonyms!
  - b. What's taught concerning the wicked day seems somewhat conflicting → Some of their publications teach that God will raise the wicked and give them one more chance... others say they simply cease to exist – even as a memory of God
  - c. God's word teaches an eternal destruction: (**2 Thess. 1:9; Mark 3:29; Matt. 25:46**)

**CONCLUSION: XXX**