

Witnessing to a Witness
Understanding and Defending
The Biblical Teaching of the Trinity

I. Class description and goal:

1 Description

- (1) We will spend ninety-eight percent of our time in the biblical text.
- (2) We will pay particular attention to the original language to see the errors of the Watchtower.

2 Goals

- (1) To grow in our understanding of the biblical teaching concerning the Trinity.
- (2) To grow in our understanding of the biblical teaching concerning the deity of Jesus Christ, specifically
- (3) To be able to defend the deity of Christ and the Trinity against Jehovah's Witnesses and other cults who deny the Trinity or the deity of Jesus Christ.
 - A This is in order to win them to Christ, not merely to win an argument.
- (4) To know God better so that our love, fellowship, and utterances can be more honoring to Him, and we can enjoy Him more thoroughly.

II. Cult definition

- a. "A group of persons gathered about a specific person or person's interpretation of the Bible."¹

III. Characteristics of a Cult

- a. They reject one or more of the cardinal doctrines of the Christian faith, e.g., deity of Christ, justification by faith, the Trinity, the sufficiency of Scripture, bodily resurrection, and God as defined in Scripture.
- b. Receive and rely upon extra-biblical revelation or authority.
- c. They have the only correct interpretation.
- d. They follow a latter-day prophet who supersedes what Christ said or Christ himself.
- e. Ask members for total commitment to the organization.

¹ Walter Martin's definition from *Kingdom of the Cults*

- i. The Watchtower in Salt Lake City tells them everything to believe; in contrast, we use different books from various denominations.
- f. Overemphasize minor doctrines
- g. Closed worship services—such as secret temple worship.
- h. Defective Christology and or Trinity—modalism, phantom, God or man, created, etc.

IV. Language Barrier

- a. They redefine Christian terms to fit their system of belief.
 - i. Jesus to a J.W. is Michael the archangel
 - ii. Salvation by grace means plus works
- b. They capitalize on the average Christian not detecting these subtle redefinitions
 - i. Be extremely specific in your use of terms
 - 1. Jesus, the unique, fully God/fully man Son of God, incarnate God.
 - 2. Born of the virgin Mary by the Holy Spirit.
- c. They begin with things like prophecy, the cross versus stake issue, Christmas trees, birthday parties, all of which are peripheral.
 - i. Their intent is to undermine your trust in those who have taught you.
- d. They quote the Bible freely, giving the appearance of really knowing Scripture.
 - i. *****Never hopscotch through the Bible*****
- e. Their literature is written in the same subtle way.

V. Psychological Structure of Cultism

- a. Each cult has its belief system and way of arriving at that belief.
- b. Certain psychological traits
 - i. Close-minded: The organizational structure or a person interprets the facts for the cultist.

1. They can compartmentalize and not follow their beliefs to their logical and necessary conclusions. This makes them, at times, almost impenetrable.
 - i. If the Watchtower is trustworthy, then what about all the false prophecies?
 - ii. If the Watchtower mistranslated the verses about the deity of Christ, what else are they hiding?
- ii. General Antagonism: The cultist almost always identifies his dislike of the Christian message with the messenger.
 1. Therefore, do not show any animosity or dislike of the cultist because of his/her belief.
 2. He will wonder how you can genuinely accept him and not accept his beliefs.
 3. Most cult systems indoctrinate their disciples to believe that anyone who opposes them cannot be motivated by anything except Satan, ignorance, or prejudice. An encounter with a Christian who does not fit this pattern can produce startling results.
 4. Christians must demonstrate:
 - a. Being unprejudiced
 - b. Being reasonably learned in the Scripture
 - c. A genuine love and concern for the welfare of the cultist.
- iii. Their system or leader has all the answers. Therefore, they need not look anywhere else for help, because everyone else is wrong, as others do not agree with their leader or system.
 1. Joseph Smith or other prophets
 2. J.W. and the Watchtower
 3. Rev. Moon and the Moonies

4. This results in institutionalized dogmatism and pronounced intolerance for any position but their own.
 - a. Charles Taze Russell said, “His writings were indispensable to the study of the Scripture, and not to use his writings was to go into spiritual darkness.”²
- c. Isolationism
 - i. They can be cut off from you. You may be working with a J.W., and then suddenly, they refuse to meet with you any longer.
 - ii. They are the only ones that are right
 - iii. Literature that they read
 - iv. Name change, remove from familial environment
 - v. Dietary changes
- d. Their authority
 - i. A J.W. has one authority, and that is the Watchtower.

VI. Introduction to Jehovah's Witnesses

- a. Background
 - i. Charles Taze Russell (2/16/1852-1/8/1942), founder, ca. 1879 as Zion’s Watchtower.
 1. He was reared a Congregationalist and later rejected the doctrine of hell.
 - ii. Franklin Rutherford, successor to Russell
 - iii. Worldwide organization
 - iv. All Christianity is corrupted, and you are the devil
- b. J.W. tactics:
 - i. They are prepared for you
 - ii. Emphasize end times and non-essentials
 - iii. Emphasize verses that depict the humanity of Christ

² *Kingdom of the Cults* in loc

- iv. They will abruptly cease all communication with you
 - v. They hopscotch through the Bible. They are the masters of this tactic.
 - 1. Most Christians end their session with the J.W. in frustration, believing that the J.W. really knows their Bible.
- c. Our counter-offensive
- i. Get prepared
 - ii. Do not let non-essentials confuse you or dominate the dialogue
 - iii. Accept the verses that depict the humanity of Christ, and focus on the ones that depict His deity—neither of you denies His humanity, i.e., limitations.
 - iv. Engage early. Do not wait around when J.W. is influencing someone.
 - v. **DO NOT** let them hopscotch through the Bible like little red riding hood on her way to grandmother's house.
 - 1. **Go to a text and stay there!!!!**
- d. Typical meeting
- i. They will come to your house and want to talk with you. Tell them that you are not able to at this time; then, set up a time to meet and send them on their way.
 - 1. This allows you to get prepared to meet
 - ii. Review your study material
 - 1. Study these notes
 - 2. Listen to the teaching, Witnessing to a Witness,
<https://www.sermonaudio.com/series/57462>
 - iii. Start the meeting by addressing the issue of the deity of Christ directly, and do not deviate from it, regardless of the circumstances.
 - 1. If you disagree about who Jesus is, nothing else matters.
 - iv. Stay on the verse that **you** choose until **you** are through.
 - 1. Acknowledge the verses that they bring up, but do not move from your verse until they have either answered your question or admitted that they do not know.
 - v. After you are done with the verse of your choosing, try to go to another verse of your choosing on the same subject. If not, go to the one they chose, answer it, and go to the one of your choosing.

1. Remember
 - a. They do not know Greek.
 - b. A two- or three-hour meeting, if done correctly, will only require looking at two or three passages.

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Session II

VII. Scripture that Teaches the Deity of Christ

1. Exodus 33:20, John 1:18, John 5:37. These verses say no one has seen or heard God.
 - a. Genesis 18:1 – Jehovah appears to Abraham
 - b. Genesis 18:13 – Jehovah spoke to Abraham

Abraham met Jesus and called him Jehovah. No one has ever seen God the Father.

2. John 5:18 – His enemies knew that if God were His Father, then He would be equal to God in nature.

3. Acts 16:31-34

v31 – A man is told to believe in Jesus

v34 – Says he believed in God. Jesus and God are the same.

4. John 8:58 – Jesus says, “Before Abraham was I am.” In Greek, I am is Ego Eimi. It means *I am*, not I was born.

Exodus 3:14 – God said, “I am sent you,” speaking to Moses. Here, Jesus claims to be the I am.

The Jews knew what Jesus meant because in v59 they began to stone Him. They were not stoning Him because He called them names. He called them names in Matthew 12:34 and 23:33.

They could only stone someone for:

- A. Familiar Spirits – Leviticus 20:27
- B. False Prophet – Deuteronomy 13:5-10
- C. Stubborn Son – Deuteronomy 21:18-21
- D. Adultery – Deuteronomy 22:21-24
- E. Blasphemy – Leviticus 24:10-23

They were stoning Jesus for blasphemy because He claimed to be the I am.

Jehovah's Witnesses consistently translate Ego Eimi *I am* except when it testifies to the deity of Christ. Examples of this from the New World Translation (N.W.T.) – John 10:9, 10:11, 15:1, 6:51, 13:13.

5. John 10:31-33 – Unity of Purpose, will, demands unity of Nature. Jesus is God.

6. What the Old Testament said of Jehovah, the New Testament says of Jesus.

Jehovah - Jesus

- a. Isaiah 44:6, Revelation 1:7-8, 17 (There is only one first and last)
- b. Isaiah 6:1-3, John 12:39-41 (Isaiah called Jesus Jehovah)
- c. Isaiah 40:3, Matthew 3:3 (Isaiah said, Prepare the way of Jehovah)
- d. Isaiah 42:8, John 17:5 (Jehovah will not share His glory)
- e. Leviticus 19:3, Matthew 12:8 (One Lord of the Sabbath)

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Session III

7. Worship

According to Luke 4:8, only God is to be worshipped. But Jesus also received worship.

- A. Hebrews 1:6 – From the angels
- B. Matthew 8:2 – From the leper
- C. Matthew 9:18 – From the ruler
- D. Matthew 15:25 – From the Syro-Phoenician woman
- E. Matthew 20:20 – From James, John, and their mother
- F. Matthew 28:9 – From Mary and Mary Magdalene
- G. Matthew 28:17 – From the disciples
- H. John 9:38 – From the blind man

Jesus never refused their worship. If he were just a man or an angel, He should have refused their worship, because only God is worthy of worship.

Example: Peter refused worship – Acts 10:25-26

Angels (unfallen) refused worship – Revelation 22:8-9

The word for worship in these passages is the same Greek word used for the worship of God.

Greek Proskune'o

Examples: Matthew 4:9-10, John 4:21-24, I Corinthians 14:25, Hebrews 11:20-21, Revelation 11:16.

8. Titus 2:13 – This says God will appear – but the second coming is of Jesus – God will appear because Jesus and God are the same.

Also in Greek rule: When two nouns are joined by the conjunction and (kai) and the first noun has the article (the) and the second one does not, the two are the same person.

9. Acts 20:28 – Church of God that He purchased with His own blood. The antecedent of He is God, so God purchased with His blood – Jesus purchased the church with His blood, so here Jesus is called God.

Note: The N.W.T. adds the word Son which is not in the Greek – His own (son's) blood. This perverts the passage. It is God's blood, not God's son's blood.

10. Zechariah 12:10 – The preceding verses (4, 5, 7, 8, 9) make it clear that Jehovah is talking, so Jehovah was pierced.
11. Jeremiah 23:5-6 – This speaks of Jesus but calls Him Jehovah our Righteousness.
12. Isaiah 9:6 – Jesus is called Mighty God, Eternal Father.
13. Isaiah 7:14 – Jesus is called Immanuel, which means God with us.
14. John 14:7-9 – Seen Jesus, seen the Father
15. John 5:23 – Jesus to be honored like the Father
 - a. To say the Father is not God is to dishonor Him, and the same is true of Jesus. Jesus is to be honored by worship as the Father. If, and He is, Jesus is God, and people say He is not, they dishonor Him and the Father.

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Session IV

VIII. Comparison of Father, Son, and Holy Spirit

1. Attributes of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Christ</u>	<u>Holy Spirit</u>
Omnipotence –	I Peter 1:5	Phil 3:21	Rom 15:19
Omniscience -	Jer. 17:10	John 2:24-25	I Cor. 2:11
Omnipresence -	Jer. 23:24	Matt. 18:20	Ps. 139:7
Immutability -	Mal. 3:6	Heb. 13:8	Heb 9:14
Eternality -	Ps. 90:2	Rev 1:17, Mic. 5:2	Heb. 9:14
Holiness -	Ps. 139:7	Rev. 15:4	Acts 3:14
Truth -	John 7:28	Rev. 3:7	I John 5:6
Fellowship -	I John 1:3	I John 1:3	II Cor. 13:14

2. Works of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are the same

	<u>Father</u>	<u>Christ</u>	<u>Holy Spirit</u>
Creation –	Gen. 1:1	Col. 1:16	Gen. 1:2
Create Man -	Gen. 2:7	Col. 1:16	Job 33:4
Jesus's Death -	Rom. 8:32	John 10:18	Heb. 9:14
Jesus's Resurrection -	Acts 2:24	John 2:19	I Peter 3:18
Man's Resurrection -	John 5:21	John 5:21	Rom. 8:11
Inspiration -	II Tim. 3:16	I Peter 1:10-11	II Peter 1:21
Indwelling	Eph. 4:6	Col. 1:27	I Cor. 6:19
Sanctification -	Jude 1:1	Heb 2:9-11	I Cor. 6:11
Security -	John 10:29	John 10:28	Eph 4:30

Only humans possess the attributes of humans and perform the works of humans.

In the same manner, only God can do the works and possess the attributes of God.

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Session V

IX. Other Significant Passages Affirming Jesus's Deity

1. John 1:1 – This is to be translated *God* not *a god*. Several things prove N.W.T. is wrong.

A. The verb was (used 3 times) denotes continuous action in time past. If he was trying to show Jesus was created, he could have said, “He became,” as in John 1:14.

B. Jehovah's Witnesses' three arguments:

- i. Some say it must be translated *a god* because in Greek, big God is Theou and little god is Theos. Refutation: Theos is translated God several times in N.W.T., example: John 8:54. Note: In Greek, this ending denotes case, not God vs. god.
- ii. Some say it means little god because there is no article (the). Refutation: John 1:6, 12, 13, and 18 are examples of the word God and not god in N.W.T. Note: II Corinthians 4:4 has the article, and it is speaking of Satan.
- iii. Some say because of the anarthrous construction – *the word was God* must be translated *the word was a god*. Refutation: There are many anarthrous constructions that they don't translate that way. They only translate it that way when it teaches the deity of Christ.

Examples:

John 1:49 – English – King of Israel

Greek – King of the Israel – not a king

I John 2:22 - English – Jesus is the Christ

Greek – Jesus is the Christ – not a Jesus

I John 1:5 - English – God is light

Greek – The God is light – not a light

I John 4:8 - English – God is love

Greek – The God is love – not a love

Note: in John 1:1 there are 2 anarthrous constructions. 1. In beginning was the word, 2. The word was God. They, N.W.T., translate the first one *In (the) beginning*, and the last one *a god*. Why do they change?

C. In Greek, the predicate nominative does not take the article.

D. To translate it *a god* is to say that God made a god, Isaiah 43:10.

E. Can't compare Satan or Moses being called gods with John 1:1. They were gods by acclamation, not by nature. They were also limited. Moses was a god in the eyes of Pharaoh, and Satan is a god of this world. *The word was God* is unqualified.

1. Philippians 2:6-11:

v6 Jesus was in the form of God

v7 Jesus took on the form of a bondservant

If in the form of man, He was very man. In the form of God, He was very God.

Equality with God was not something to be held onto or seized. He set aside his self-willed use of his deity to become a man (Queen leaves the country).

He became a man and as the God man, he died, rose, and was exalted.

v9 – He received a name above every name, even the name of Jehovah.

Note: in v6 the N.W.T. adds several words – which are not in the Greek – in order to change the meaning of the verse. The words they add are gave, namely, that, and should. They also separate the present infinitive of Eimi and make it two words, to and be. They also fail to translate “to” = a thing or thing.

2. John 3:16 – “begotten”

(C.S. Lewis paraphrased)

A bird builds a nest but only begets birds.

Man builds a house but only begets man

God builds universe and man but only begets God.

If as Son of man, Jesus was man by nature,
then as Son of God, Jesus is God.

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Session VI

X. Jehovah Witnesses' Key Texts to Disprove Jesus' Deity

1. John 14:28

Answer: God the Father said he was greater, not better. Greater refers to position, not essence. Because Jesus became a servant, the Father was greater in position.

Like the President of the U.S. is greater than I, but not better.

2. Colossians 1:15

Answer: Jesus was firstborn – Prototokos, not first created – Protoktistos. The term "firstborn" designates the one who is the heir. Usually, this was the firstborn (chronologically).

It is a place of preeminence.

Example – Latin – Prime Minister. Margaret Thatcher is not the first Minister England ever had, but she is the preeminent one.

Other Scriptures Where *firstborn* is used:

Psalm 89:27 – God promised to make David his firstborn. We know that David was not chronologically firstborn, but it applies to rank.

Genesis 41:51-52 – Manasseh is called firstborn,

Ephraim is called second born

Jeremiah 31:9 – Ephraim is now called firstborn,

Ephraim is the head of the ten tribes

3. Revelation 3:14

Answer: N.W.T. mistranslates *of God* and puts *by God*. In Greek, it is the genitive case. It would have to be the dative case to translate as N.W.T. does.

The word beginning is Arche. It can mean ruler, rule, power, origin, or source.

Examples: Luke 12:11, I Corinthians 15:24, Luke 20:20.

So, it means he is ruler or source of the creation of God. Note: We get the word architect from Arche. So, Jesus was the architect of creation.

XI. Born Again

1. John 3:3 – All must be born again, not just some.

2. A. I Peter 1:3 – First aorist active participle. Past action. He has begotten *us* – This has already happened. N.W.T. adds the word gave.
B. I Peter 1:23 – Perfect passive participle, nominative, plural, masculine. “You have been born again.” PERFECT tense = completed action in the past with present results. PASSIVE voice = subject (*us*) has been acted upon. N.W.T. adds the words 'given' and 'new'.
3. I John 3:9 – born is perfect passive. This has already happened.
4. I John 5:1 – Perfect passive verb

XII. Salvation by Grace, not Works

Acts 4:12, Ephesians 2:8-9, I John 5:11, Romans 8:28-35, Romans 11:6, Romans 6:23, Romans 3:24, Galatians 2:16, John 1:12.

Note: Works are the fruit of salvation, not the payment for it.

XIII. Understanding God

Jehovah's Witnesses use Isaiah 1:18 to prove that we are only asked by God to believe what we can understand.

Refutation: The Scripture they use is talking about salvation, not understanding the infinite wisdom of God. Several Scriptures say that we do not understand all. Example: Deuteronomy 29:29, Isaiah 55:8-9, I Corinthians 13:9, I Peter 3:16, Romans 11:33-36.

Note: They cannot deny the Trinity just because they cannot understand it.