

# Grace Evangelism

## Evangelizing False Religions & Cults (Pt. 1): Jehovah's Witnesses & Mormons



Summer Evangelism Series

# Helpful Resources

1. *The Kingdom of the Cults* by Walter Martin
2. *Reasoning From the Scriptures With the Jehovah's Witnesses* by Ron Rhodes
3. "When Opportunity Knocks: Reaching Jehovah's Witnesses with the Gospel" by Mike Riccardi on July 6, 2014 at *thegracelifepulpit.com*
4. *The Maze of Mormonism* by Walter Martin
5. <https://thecripplegate.com/why-you-cant-get-to-heaven-through-the-mormon-faith-2/>



# A Brief History of Jehovah's Witnesses

- In 1879, initially founded as the International Bible Students Association (IBSA) in Pittsburgh, PA by Charles Taze Russell, who began publishing a magazine later called *Watchtower*
- In 1884, Russell officially published his doctrine in *The Millennial Dawn*, now referred to as *Studies in the Scriptures* (6 vols.)
- In 1897, Russell's wife left him
- In 1917, Judge Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over presidency after a split over one of Russell's posthumously published works



# A Brief History of Jehovah's Witnesses

- In 1931, under Rutherford the group took to themselves the name “Jehovah’s Witnesses” from Isaiah 43:10, “‘You are My witnesses,’ declares the Lord, ‘And My servant whom I have chosen, So that you may know and believe Me And understand that I am He. Before Me there was no God formed, And there will be none after Me.’”
- Every publication since Russell and Rutherford by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society has been anonymous
- In 1961, completed the translation of *The New World Translation*, claiming to correct the many corruptions that exist in modern translations of the Bible



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 1. They have a heretical (Arian) view of Christ

“The Bible shows that there is only one God.... And that the Son, as the First-born, Only-begotten and ‘the creation by God,’ had a beginning. That the Father is greater and older than the Son is reasonable, easy to understand and is what the Bible teaches.” (*From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, p. 164)

“If Jesus of the ‘New Testament’ is Jehovah of the ‘Old Testament,’ as many claim, should there not be at least one reference saying that Jesus is Jehovah? Yet there is not one.” (*The Watchtower*, Mar 15, 1975: 174)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 1. They have a heretical (Arian) view of Christ

Common Jehovah's Witnesses' 'prooftexts':

- 1) Jn 3:16, "only begotten son" (μονογενής)
- 2) Col 1:15, "firstborn of all creation" (πρωτότοκος)
- 3) 1 Cor 11:3, "God is the head of Christ"



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 2. They teach a false Gospel of works righteousness

“The ‘ransom for all’ given by ‘the man Christ Jesus’ does not give or guarantee everlasting life or blessing to any man; but it does guarantee to every man another opportunity or trial for life everlasting. But the fact that men are ransomed from the first penalty [i.e., Adam’s original sin] does not guarantee that they may not, when individually tried for everlasting life, fail to render the obedience without which none will be permitted to live everlastingly.” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, p. 150)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 2. They teach a false Gospel of works righteousness

“The ransom given does not excuse sin in any; it does not propose to count sinners as saints, and usher them thus into everlasting bless. It merely releases the accepting sinner from the first condemnation and its results, both direct and indirect, and places him again on trial for life, in which trial his own willful obedience or willful disobedience will decide whether he may or may not have life everlasting.” (*Studies in the Scriptures*, p. 152)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 2. They teach a false Gospel of works righteousness

“...to get one’s name written in that Book of Life will depend upon one’s works.” (*The Watchtower*, Apr 1, 1947: 204)

- 1) By submitting to the Watchtower Society as God’s visible organization on Earth
- 2) By regularly attending 5 meetings a week
- 3) By faithfully publishing the good news of the Kingdom



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## **3. They deny the sufficiency & sole authority of Scripture**

“God does not impart his holy spirit and understanding and appreciation of his Word apart from his visible organization.” (*The Watchtower*, July 1, 1965: 391)

“So Jehovah’s visible organization under Christ is a channel for bringing the divine interpretation of his word to his devoted people.” (*The Watchtower*, June 1, 1938: 169)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 3. They deny the sufficiency & sole authority of Scripture

“The Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as a whole, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible. For this reason the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah’s visible organization in mind.” (*The Watchtower*, Oct 1, 1967: 587)

“God has not arranged for [His] Word to speak independently or shine forth life-giving truths by itself. It is through his organization God provides this light.” (*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1957: 174)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 3. They deny the sufficiency & sole authority of Scripture

“Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the Scripture Studies aside, even after...he has read them for ten years...and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the Scripture Studies with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.” (*The Watchtower*, Sept 15, 1910: 298)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## 3. They deny the sufficiency & sole authority of Scripture

*The New World Translation* contains blatant illegitimate alterations to fit their theology.

Colossians 1:16-17, “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.” (NWT)

John 1:1, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.” (NWT)



# Key Doctrinal Errors

## **3. They deny the sufficiency & sole authority of Scripture**

“Let it be remembered that the New World Bible translation committee had no known translators with recognized degrees in Greek or Hebrew exegesis or translation.” (Walter Martin, *Kingdom of the Cults*, p. 93)



# Other Doctrinal Errors

## 4. They deny the Personhood of the Holy Spirit

“As for the ‘Holy Spirit,’ the so-called ‘third Person of the Trinity,’ we have already seen that it is not a person, but God’s active force.” (*The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life*, 1968: 24)



# Other Doctrinal Errors

## **5. They are annihilationist and deny the eternal punishment of Hell as unjust**

“To torment a person eternally because he did wrong on earth for a few years is contrary to justice.” (*You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth*, p. 89)



# Other Doctrinal Errors

## 6. They deny the bodily Resurrection & Return of Christ

“Jehovah God raised him form the dead, not as a human Son, but as a mighty immortal spirit Son.” (*Let God Be True*, p. 40)

“It is a settled scriptural truth, therefore, that human eyes will not see him at his second coming, neither will he come in a fleshly body.” (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 295)



# Other Doctrinal Errors

## **7. They have failed many times to predict the end of the world**

They said it would come in: 1874, 1878, 1881, 1910, 1914, 1918, 1920, 1925, 1975....



# Major Doctrinal Errors

1. They have a heretical (Arian) view of Christ
2. They teach a false Gospel of works righteousness
3. They deny the sufficiency and sole authority of Scripture
4. They deny the Personhood of the Holy Spirit
5. They are annihilationist and deny the eternal punishment of Hell as unjust
6. They deny the bodily Resurrection & Return of Christ
7. They have failed many times to predict the end of the world



# How Should We Respond?

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5. Ask questions to undermine their source of authority



# How Should We Respond?

## 5. Ask questions to undermine their source of authority

- “Do you believe the Bible is sufficient in light of 2 Tim 3:16-17?”
- “If the Watchtower Society is the sole authoritative authority of Scripture, and yet it was not around until the 18th century, then what did the Bible mean to God’s people before then?”
- “If the Watchtower Society has consistently been wrong and had to change its prophecies about the Return of Christ and the Battle of Armageddon, then how can it be trusted as the sole reliable source for Truth?”



# How Should We Respond?

## 5. Ask questions to undermine their source of authority

- “If we cannot rightly understand the Truth from Scripture alone, and we need the Watchtower teaching to guide us, then does that make the Watchtower an infallible authority over Scripture? Do the human authors of the Watchtower claim inspiration like Scripture does?”
- “Since God commands us to test all things by Scripture, and The Watchtower itself invites a critical examination of its contents in light of Scripture—are you willing to examine the teachings of the Watchtower Society in the light of Scripture alone? If you find certain teachings of the Watchtower Society go against what Scripture says, what will you do?”



# How Should We Respond?

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2. Be kind and respectful (*Col 4:6; 2 Tim 2:24-26*)
3. Be clear about your differences up front (*2 Cor 6:14-16*)
4. Don't get side-tracked by too many issues at once
5. Ask questions to undermine their source of authority
6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology (*Mt 22:34-46*)



# How Should We Respond?

## **6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology**

“When talking to a Jehovah’s Witness, you will not be able to force your opinion of what a verse means. But if you can help him to discover problems in Watchtower theology for himself, then you’ve really accomplished a good thing. One great way to help a Jehovah’s Witness discover problems in Watchtower theology is to ask strategic questions based on key verses, all the while remaining tactful and kind.” (Rhodes, *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, p. 19)



# How Should We Respond?

## 6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology

- “If the Holy Spirit is a force and not a Person, then why does Acts 5:3-4 say that Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit and even equate Him with God? And why does Eph 4:30 say that we can grieve the Holy Spirit if it is not a Person? And why does John 16:7 call the Spirit a ‘him’?”
- “If hell is not eternal punishment, then why does Revelation 20:10 describe the lake of fire as the place where unbelievers will be tormented day and night forever and ever?”
- “If Jesus is not raised bodily from the dead, then what is Jesus referring to in John 2:19-21? And in Lk 24:37-43 and John 20:25-27, why does He show his disciples to touch His hands and feet?”



# How Should We Respond?

## **6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology**

- “If Jesus’s Return is invisible and not bodily for all to see, then what does Matthew 24:27, 30 and Revelation 1:7 mean?”
- “If John 1:1 says that Jesus is a god, and John 17:3 says there is only one true God, then is Jesus a true or false God? Or if Isa 45:21 says there is no other God but Jehovah, then in what sense is Jesus a god?”
- “If John 1:3 says that all things were created through Jesus without exception, and Isa 44:24 says that Jehovah made everything by Himself, then doesn’t that imply that Jesus is the Creator and not created?”



# How Should We Respond?

## **6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology**

- “If Titus 2:13 says that Jesus Christ is our Savior and Isaiah 43:11 says there is no savior besides Jehovah, then doesn’t that imply that Jesus is Jehovah?”
- “If John 12:41 says that Isaiah saw Jesus’ glory, and Isa 6:3 speaks of the same event referring to Jehovah, then doesn’t that mean Jesus is Jehovah?”
- “If Isaiah 40:3 prophesied of Jehovah, and Mark 1:1-3 attributes that to Jesus, then doesn’t that imply that Jesus is Jehovah?”
- “If Isaiah 44:6 says the Jehovah alone is the First and the Last, but Revelation 1:17-18 identifies Jesus as the First and the Last, then doesn’t that mean Jesus is Jehovah?”



# How Should We Respond?

1. Open the door for the Word, not your home (*Col 4:3, 5; 2 Jn 10*)
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3. Be clear about your differences up front (*2 Cor 6:14-16*)
4. Don't get side-tracked by too many issues at once
5. Ask questions to undermine their source of authority
6. Turn to specific passages to show inconsistencies in their theology (*Mt 22:34-46*)
7. Give them the real Gospel (*Gal 2:16; Eph 2:8-9; Rom 4:5-8; Rom 5:19*)

