

Jehovah's Witnesses



John 1:1 post

JW PowerPoint

Sources

- Jehovah's Witnesses:
 - Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc. *Let God Be True (LGBT)*. Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1946.
 - Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania. *The Truth that Leads to Eternal Life (TLEL)*. Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1968.
 - New World Bible Translation Committee. *The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures (KIT)*. Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1985.
 - _____. *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures (NWT-G)*. Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1950.

Origins

- Founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1879
- Second president Joseph Franklin Rutherford, 1917 to 1942.

Who Is God?

- With respect to omnipotence:
 - “As the Creator, Jehovah is the Source of all existence and power and of every good quality, and his works are perfect” (*LGBT* p. 26)
- With respect to his eternal nature:
 - “There was...a time when Jehovah was all alone in universal space. All life and energy and thought were contained in him alone.” (*LGBT* p. 25)

Who is God?

- Jehovah did not become God until he began creating.
 - “Then the time came when Jehovah began to create. First at that time, he came to be *God* to all his creation” (italics in original; *LGBT* p. 25)
- “God is a Spirit” (John 4:24, *NWT-G*)
- But: “Although he is the *Great Spirit*, the great intelligent active Personage invisible to man...” (*LGBT* p. 25–26, emphasis mine).

The Name “Jehovah”

- Derives from the Hebrew verb for “to be.”
- In Genesis 3:14, God says “I Will Be” (Hebrew *eh-yeh*) is his name.
 - Not future tense, but “imperfect” tense, which implies God’s existence and his actions are ongoing.
 - This is a first person form, because God himself is speaking; equivalent to when Jesus says “I am” (Ἐγώ εἰμι, \eh-go ay-mee\) in John’s Gospel.

The Name “Jehovah”

- In Exodus 3:15, we find the name as it appears in the rest of the Old Testament (יהוה *yeh wah*), but some Jews read adonai when they come upon this form (called the “tetragrammaton”), so the vowels of *adonai* were applied to the word, thus “ya ho wah” or Jehovah.
 - However, doing this violated rules of Hebrew, and Latinizing it changed the y to i (original Latin), which became j in English.

The Name “Yahweh”

- Many modern Jews read “haShem” (= “the Name”) when they come to God’s name in the text, and this probably represents where we get “Yahweh” from. It is a more accurate reflection of the Hebrew.
 - In English translations of the Old Testament, God’s name is translated as LORD, in small caps, to distinguish it from the general title *adonai*.

Who Is Jesus?

- Jesus was born October 1, 2 B.C. (*LGBT* p. 36).
- “Prior to coming to earth, this only-begotten Son of God did not think himself to be co-equal with Jehovah God; he did not view himself ‘equal in power and glory’ with Almighty God.”
- “Originally, the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god” (John 1:1, *NWT-G*).

Addressing John 1:1

- For a full explanation, see my blog post on John 1:1. Click the QR code below or go to <http://sundaymorninggreekblog.wordpress.com/2011/05/15/john-1-the-word-was-god/> to read the post.

Addressing John 1:1

- In a nutshell, the issue with whether Jesus is “a god” or the second person of the divine trinity (God the son) hinges on the Colwell Rule:
- In Greek, if a noun without “the” comes before the “to be” verb (in this case, “was”), this noun describes properties of the noun that comes after the “to be” verb and has “the” with it. (compare John 4:24 & 1 John 4:8)

Addressing John 1

- So John 1:1 could read, “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was divine [like God].”
- This must be qualified by Colossians 1:15–20.

Titus 2:13

- Another rule of Greek grammar confirms the divine nature of Jesus. When you have the following construction in Greek, the two nouns (X & Y) refer to the same person.

“The X and Y”

- Conditions:
 - The X has “the” with it; the Y does not
 - Neither X nor Y can be plural
 - Neither X nor Y can be impersonal or abstract
 - Neither X nor Y can be proper nouns (names)

Titus 2:13

- The *KIT* misrepresents this rule in Appendix 2E by citing examples with plural nouns to disprove the rule.
- “the appearing of the glory *of our great God and Savior, Jesus Christ,*”
- See also 2 Peter 1:1: “our God and savior Jesus Christ.”

Jesus in Revelation

- Alpha & Omega passages:
 - Revelation 1:8, 21:5–7, 22:13–16, 22:7. Note who is speaking in each instance.

Holy Spirit

- “The *holy spirit* is the invisible active force of Almighty God which moves his servant to do his will” (LGBT p. 108, emphasis mine, holy spirit not capitalized in original).

Hell

- “Hell: A Place of Rest in Hope” (LGBT ch. 8).
 - “Hell” is equated with the Hebrew concept of Sheol, the abiding place of the dead. It is not a place of punishment in JW teaching.
 - “Gehenna” is the place of annihilation of all souls that reject Jehovah’s kingdom.
 - Interesting note: In this chapter, the JWs point out that it was illegal to throw live animals into Gehenna (Valley of Hinnom). Yet God can throw living souls into “Gehenna”?

End Times

- JWs believe and teach that Jerusalem was destroyed in 607 B.C., but all evidence points to the event happening in 587 B.C. Why is this important?
 - They date the establishment of God's kingdom on earth 2520 years after the fall of Jerusalem, which means Christ returned in 1914 and set up his invisible kingdom. (*TLEL* ch. 10; *LGBT* pp. 251–252)
 - One JW missionary was excommunicated for insisting on correcting the date to 587 B.C. (Chretien, *Witnesses of Jehovah*, ch. 9)

End Times

- JWs predicted that 1975 would be the “one generation” after 1914 when the world would end and paradise would be established. Obviously, that never happened.

Who Goes to Heaven?

- Only 144,000 will inherit heavenly eternal life (*TLEL* ch. 9, “The Reason Why a ‘Little Flock’ Goes to Heaven”).
- The present earth never ends (*TLEL* ch. 11, “The Last Days of This Wicked System of Things”).
- Our physical bodies die, and God destroys the soul after that, but then our bodies (and souls?) are resurrected to live eternally on the present earth, transformed into a paradise (*TLEL* ch. 12, “Righteous Rule makes Earth a Paradise”).