

**BIBLICALLY TESTING THE SPIRITS**  
**"Part I: Testing MAJOR Jehovah's Witness' Beliefs With John 1:1-18"**  
**(John 1:1-18)**

Introduction: (To show the need . . . )

(1) The scene is all too familiar: you hear the doorbell ring, and cross the living room to open and meet two people. They ask you a provocative question or open with an interesting line, something like, "No other generation has heard so much talk about the end of the world. Many fear that the world will end in a nuclear holocaust . . . Could this world really end? If it did, what would it mean? Has a world ever ended before?"

Then they hand you some literature, probably a tract like "Will This World Survive?" and ask if you would like to talk with them about God and eternal destiny. You then learn they are Jehovah's Witnesses.

**Though we may feel uncomfortable and close the door, we may wonder, "Well, WHAT DO I believe so that I can KNOW just WHY I cannot accept these Watchtower Society beliefs?!"**

(2) These questions are worth answering, for the Jehovah Witness Watchtower Society has some serious problems:

(a) Going back as far as 1889 in predicting that the battle of Armageddon would occur in 1914 (cf. The Time Is At Hand, p. 101, 1908 ed.), and as late as 1968 (cf. Watchtower, Aug. 15, 1968, p. 494 "Why Are You Looking Forward To 1975?"), this group has **repeatedly** predicted the end of the world, setting **dates** in the process, only to be proven **wrong**. However, Deuteronomy 18:22 tells us not to believe a prophet if just **one** of his predictions proves false! That spells real Biblical trouble for the Watchtower Society!

(b) The founder of the movement, Charles Taze Russell, was frequently in trouble with the law. His wife was given a decree of divorce because the Judge of the High Court of Ontario felt that "no woman of ordinary sensibility could live with a man of so much egotism and arrogance." He made his physically ill followers turn over their fortunes to his group while hypocritically condemning other clergy for taking up collections. (Van Balaan, The Chaos Of The Cults, p. 259)

Well, Matthew 7:15-16 tells us we will know false prophets by their fruits, or resulting actions, and such "fruits" of the founder of the Watchtower Society does not put the group in spotless standing!

**So, can we KNOW just WHY we stand on our views as we do and WHY we differ with the Jehovah's Witnesses?**

(We turn to the sermon "Need" section . . . )

**Need: "I've run into Jehovah Witnesses and know their beliefs are a problem, but I need to know where I stand, and WHY! Any ideas?!"**

- I. **We must test all beliefs, for there is much error around, 1 John 4:1.**
- II. **GOD via Scripture GUIDES the WAY for us to do so (as follows):**
  - A. We must see if a group properly asserts the Incarnation of Christ, that He is the Creator God come in the flesh, 1 Jn. 4:2-3; 1 Cor. 12:3.
  - B. We must see if a group properly asserts salvation by faith alone in Christ or if it wrongly makes man's merit a means of it, Gal. 1:8-9; 3:3.
  - C. In discussing false doctrine, we must view Scripture with each error:
    1. Paul tells us to be wise in the truth **while staying** "unmixed" with error, Rom. 16:17, 19 (B.K.C., N.T., p. 50 1).
    2. This ends in God's giving us discernment victory over Satan, v. 20.
    3. So as an aid to keep ourselves **unmixed** with error, we view **Scripture WHILE VIEWING EACH errant view as we go!**
- III. **Accordingly, we view these MAJOR Jehovah's Witness' ERRORS using John 1:1-18, taking each errant view with Scripture as we go:**
  - A. Regarding the deity of Christ, though Jehovah Witnesses believe John 1:1 teaches Jesus was **merely "a god"**, John 1:1 **with its literary, grammatical and historical contexts** teaches Jesus was **the Jehovah!**
    1. Jehovah's Witnesses teach that since there is no definite article before "God" in the John 1:1 phrase ". . . and the Word was God," John **allegedly** meant Jesus was '**a god**', or a **created** being and **not** Jehovah God, Metzger, Jehovah's Witnesses & Jesus Christ, p. 75.
    2. However, the **normal**, or **literal, grammatical, historical context** shows John meant the **opposite** -- that Jesus is **Israel's Jehovah!**
      - a. Literally, (a) verses 3 and 14 teach that all that has been created was made by Christ, and that without Him was not anything created that was made. (b) Since no one creates Himself, John 1:3 means Jesus was not created, and is then **the Creator God!**
      - b. Grammatically, "God" in John 1:1, a predicate nominative, **precedes** the verb "was", so it does **not** have the definite article (UBS Grk. N.T., p. 320; Colwell's Rule as cited in Metzger, *Ibid.*). Thus, we should **expect** there to be **no** definite article **without** our having to translate the phrase to mean "a god."

- c. Historically, (a) John records Thomas' confession of Jesus of Nazareth as "My Lord and my God" in John 20:28. (b) Well, Thomas, John and Jesus were all **post-exilic, orthodox** and hence **very anti-idolatrous Jews**. They then asserted Judaism's celebrated Deut. 6:4 "Shema" that Israel's Lord **ALONE** was God. (c) Well, that makes Thomas' confession make Jesus Israel's only God! (b) As Jesus **condones** Thomas' confession, and John records it for us to **believe** in it (20:31), John, Thomas **and Jesus** all **meant** that *Jesus of Nazareth* was **the Old Testament Jehovah Creator GOD of Israel!**
- B. Regarding man's obtaining salvation, where the Jehovah's Witnesses teach one gains eternal life by being a faithful servant of God with works, John 1:12-13 asserts it comes by faith alone in Jesus Christ:
- 1. The Jehovah Witness book, The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, p. 79 **claims** that ". . . the Bible holds out hope of eternal life for all . . . who would become faithful servants of God" (a "servant" being one who does what **Jehovah's Witnesses** say pleases God!).
  - 2. Yet, John 1:12-13 teaches salvation is by **faith alone** in Christ:
    - a. If one **believes on Christ**, God gives him the right (*exousian*, Ibid., B.K.C., N.T., p. 272) to be a "born" son (*tekna*) of God, John G. Mitchell, Fellowship, p. 63; UBS Greek N.T., p. 321.
    - b. Now, becoming a "born" son of God occurs apart from any human **effort** or **merit**: (a) John writes that such a relation arises independent of natural human descent ("not of blood"). (b) He notes this relation arises independent of any parental **decision** to produce children ("nor of the will of the flesh"). (c) He notes that this relation arises independent **even** of a **husband's** (literally *andros*) will where the **wife** may **not** have willed it (UBS Grk. N.T., p. 321)! Thus, John **labors** to show that this spiritual birth is **NOT** of **human** production in any **imaginable** way, but is **entirely** of **GOD ALONE!**
    - c. Thus, eternal life comes only from God through faith alone in Christ apart from any human effort or merit. The claim of the Jehovah's Witnesses on gaining eternal life by works is in error!

**Lesson Application:** (1) According to John 1:1-18, in **CONTRAST** to **MAJOR** beliefs by Jehovah's Witnesses, (a) *Jesus of Nazareth is the Creator Jehovah God (Jn. 1:1,3, 14)*. Also, (b) *salvation is by God's grace, by His unmerited favor as God saves all who simply believe in Christ as their personal Savior from sin (Jn. 1:12-13)*. (2) Hence, we must (a) *reject errors to the contrary on these points that are made by the Jehovah's Witnesses* and (b) *simply believe in Christ alone for salvation*. (c) Also, *true believers will also assert that Christ is God come in the flesh, 1 John 4:1-4!*

**Conclusion:** (To illustrate the sermon lesson . . . )

(1) A group of former Jehovah's Witnesses, "We Help Jesus" out of Whittier, California, who have been saved by faith in Christ have done studies in Scripture about the Person of Christ. As **further** evidence for the deity and identity of our Lord, listed below are some of **their** references to the Old Testament "Jehovah" that also picture Jesus of Nazareth as that very Old Testament "Jehovah" God:

(a) In the Old Testament, in Exodus 3:14, where God appeared to Moses in the burning bush, we have this record: "And God said unto Moses, I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you."

(b) In the New Testament, in John 8:58, we read of Jesus speaking to the Jews with this record: "Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily I say unto you, Before Abraham was, I AM."

Again, in John 18:4-6, we read of Jesus in Gethsemane, and we quote for the specific emphasis of the original Greek: "Jesus therefore knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them [the armed group of v. 3 that had come to arrest Him], Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I AM. And Judas also, which betrayed him, stood with them. As soon then as he had said unto them, I AM, they went backward, and fell to the ground."

**Our Lord Jesus is indeed the Jahweh, or "Jehovah" of the Old Testament!**

(2) And, lest we think that people who are committed to the Jehovah's Witness beliefs are beyond being saved, consider the following: in the Nepaug River some years back, I baptized a little lady from Hartford named Irene. Irene was a **former** Jehovah's Witness! Little Irene has boldly witnessed at great physical risk to herself on the streets of Hartford to members of the Latin Kings gang!

When I baptized her, Irene came up out of the water, clasping her hands and glancing to the sky, privately worshipping the Lord Jesus as her **God** and Savior!

**So, pray for Jehovah's Witnesses that they may be saved as GOD sends them QUALIFIED, KNOWLEDGEABLE witnesses!**