

Dealing with the Jehovah's Witness' View of Jesus

By Dr. David A. DeWitt

- *What is the best way to answer the claims of the Jehovah's Witness?*
- *What are the most obvious problems with the Jehovah's Witness' view that Jesus is not God?*
- *What are the most basic arguments that prove Jesus is God?*

The objective of this brochure is not to give a review of the Jehovah's Witness' cult in general but to give you some specific information in dealing with their denial of the deity of Christ. This is their most significant heresy and requires every believer to be equipped to make a defense of the hope that is within us (1 Peter 3:15).

Having said that, there are a few things we should keep in mind about the Jehovah's Witness' view of Jesus:

- (1) They deny the deity of Jesus Christ, saying Christians (Trinitarians) are polytheists.
- (2) They claim that Jesus, in His pre-incarnate state, was the Archangel Michael.
- (3) They say Jesus was a created being, using passages like John 14:28, *the Father is greater than I*.
- (4) They believe Jesus is now a spirit being, a god (John 1:1), not **the** God, i.e., not one having the same substance of deity as Jehovah God.

The basic task of the believer when confronting the Jehovah's Witness is to demonstrate that the Bible teaches the undeniable deity of Jesus Christ.

Jesus did not begin His ministry by saying, "I am God." He did not come out of the water of John's baptism declaring that He was God, the Messiah, and the Jehovah of the Old Testament. If He had, He would have been crucified immediately, before His time. Jesus orchestrated His own crucifixion at precisely the right time. But first, He revealed God, showed us what the perfect man should be, and trained the twelve to start the church. As He did so, He clearly declared His deity.

Dr. Ron Allen, Professor of Old Testament at Dallas Theological Seminary, told the following story (when addressing the Relational Concepts' School of Discipleship in the Fall of 1998). He said he was reading the Old Testament with a Jewish rabbi. After several years, they agreed to read some of the New Testament. They read John 10. In the middle of the reading, the rabbi stood up, threw the Bible on the floor, spat on it, began cursing, and said, "That *!?!#* Nazarene is claiming to be God!" Any serious reading of the life of Jesus of Nazareth will lead to that conclusion.

Here are some specific answers to the Jehovah's Witness' false teaching about Jesus:

(1) To believe in the Trinity is not polytheism

Polytheistic gods don't really exist. Polytheism is the belief in many ultimate (or supernatural) beings. But distinct ultimate beings don't agree. Actually, many of the troubles on earth--everything from a thunderstorm to a war--might be blamed on fighting among the gods. But Jesus said, *He who has seen Me has seen the Father; I am in the Father and the Father is in Me* (read John 14:9-11). Jesus said that what He spoke was what God the Father spoke (John 14:10) and what the Holy Spirit teaches was what the Father and the Son also teach (John 16:13-14). Trinitarianism is definitely not polytheism.

(2) Jesus was not an angel

Angels do not receive worship (Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9). They are good spirit beings who did not join Satan in his rebellion against God (Revelation 12:1-9). But Jesus did receive worship on several different occasions (Matthew 8:2; 9:18; 14:33; Luke 24:52; John 20:28; and Revelation 5:8-14). Jesus is declared to be superior to angels and the angels are commanded to worship Him (Hebrews 1:6-8, *see also* John 17:5).

(3) Jesus was not a created being

God the Father is greater than God the Son because His role as Father makes Him the head over all things (1 Corinthians 11:3, 15:20-28). But the Father's headship over the Son does not make Him more God than the Son any more than a man being the head over a woman (1 Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:22-25) makes the man more human than the woman. Jesus was the only begotten Son of God in that (a) He was of the same essence as God the Father and in that (b) He was the only one begotten of God in human flesh. *The Word became flesh and dwelt among us* (John 14:13-14). But He was not created. In other words, there is no time when He was not.

The Jehovah's Witnesses use Colossians 1:15 and claim "the firstborn of all creation" means Jesus was created. The problem is: (1) The Greek word used here is *prototokos* = "first born" not *protoktisis* = "first created." (2) Firstborn is a position of inheritance, as Jacob had the rights of the firstborn even though Esau was born first. (3) Jesus was the Creator (v. 16), and one cannot create Himself.

(4) Jesus was God, not "a god"

John 1:1 totally destroys the Jehovah's Witness' position, so they have to say Jesus was "a god," in their own "New World Translation." But they do not translate it that way in other places where *theos* occurs without the definite article (ex. John 1:6, 12, 13, 18; 3:2; Romans 1:7; Hebrews 10:31). Besides, no Jewish author would ever call someone "a god." That would be polytheistic.

John 10:34 is used to say the word "god" can refer to spirit beings. This is a quote from Psalm 82:6 where it means representatives of God. Even if "god" is a spirit being, all humans, angels, and God are spirit beings. It does not say Jesus was not also God, the eternal Creator spirit Being.

Here are some biblical basics about the deity of Jesus Christ:

(1) Jesus performed functions that only God could do

- He forgave sin (Mark 2:1-12).
- He created all things (John 1:1-3; Colossians 1:16-17).
- He displayed omniscience (John 1:47-49).
- He raised Himself from the dead (John 2:19).
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(2) Jesus was Jehovah (Yahweh), the God of the Old Testament who revealed Himself to the patriarchs

See John 12:38-41; Romans 10:9-13; 14:9-11. John 1:18 shows us that the Jehovah (Yahweh) God who revealed Himself to Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, and Joshua was indeed Jesus Christ.

(3) Jesus is to be worshipped

Therefore also God highly exalted Him, and bestowed on Him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those who are in heaven, and on earth, and under the earth (Philippians 2:9-10; see also Revelation 5:6-14). No good person ever receives worship (Acts 14:8-15; Romans 1:25), and God condemns the worship of anyone other than the Trinity (Acts 12:20-23).

(4) Jesus is included with God the Father

Jesus is not referenced as one of the saints nor with the angels but with the Godhead (Matthew 28:19; Galatians 1:1; 2 Corinthians 13:14).

(5) Jesus is specifically called God

- By the Old Testament (Isaiah 7:14 with Matthew 1:22; Isaiah 9:6)
- By the New Testament (John 20:28; Romans 9:5; Titus 2:13; 2 Peter 1:1)
- By God the Father (Hebrews 1:8)
- By Himself (John 10:25-33; see also John 4:25-26; Mark 15:1; Isaiah 9:6)
- Jesus is called God 145 times in the New Testament (1 Corinthians 1:2, 3, 7, 8, 10, etc.)

Questions and Answers

Q: *What is the best way to answer the claims of the Jehovah's Witness?*

A: By dealing with the deity of Jesus Christ. All other issues are peripheral to this one.

Q: What are the most obvious problems with the Jehovah's Witness' view that Jesus is not God?

A: They believe Jesus was an angel and is a spirit being created by God. These things are denied by the Bible.

Q: *What are the most basic arguments that prove Jesus is God?*

A: He said so. The Old and New Testaments say so. He was the Creator, the forgiver of sin, the Jehovah of the Old Testament, and the One who raised Himself from the dead.