

“The Divinity of Jesus Christ and the Jehovah’s Witnesses”

Ecclesiastes 1:9

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Ecclesiastes 1:9, NKJV

I. Introduction:

A. How many have been given difficult questions--ones that you cannot answer--by a Jehovah’s Witness or a Mormon? I will mostly focus this evening on the Jehovah’s Witnesses, or JW.’

1. Most of us can relate...Walter Martin once commented that most Christians can be transformed into a theological pretzel by a recent convert to the Watchtower Society.
2. They minister many questions about the divinity of Christ.
3. Some of the questions they ask have been asked for many years – because they’re effective.

B. Many of the answers are found in church history and the writings of the great theologians. So, before we get into the material, let’s define “THEOLOGIAN.”

1. Definition of a Theologian according to Dr. Henry Holloman:
“A person who seeks to collect sufficiently or exhaustively and interpret accurately the biblical facts about a particular theological topic and formulates doctrines from these biblical facts.

a. A doctrine is a conclusive summary statement drawn from all the biblical evidence about a given subject or divine revelation.

C. Then, in many ways, each of us should be a good theologian. All of us, to one extent or another, go through this process. So do cult members, however, with one fundamental difference: Their position is rigid and dictated to them.

The Doctrine of Christ

II. What is the doctrine of Christ? It contains several areas:

A. His divinity

B. His incarnation

1. Including the virgin birth and its implications

C. His work on the cross

III. We will concentrate on the divinity of Christ and some of the objections thrown at us by the Jehovah's Witnesses, as well as a little history of that organization.

IV. The first two centuries of the church:

A. The divinity of Christ was not questioned. **The Apostolic fathers and the generation that followed were more concerned with issues of survival under intense persecution and transmission of the Apostolic teachings to their flocks.**

1. Spoken of by Ignatius (100 - 117):

He referred to Jesus as God, using the terms "begotten" and "only Son of the Father." Additionally, he also affirmed Christ's pre-existence, as well as both His humanity and divinity in union with the persons of the Godhead.

B. From about 160 to 200, the church fathers were concerned with sects that rose up, called Gnostics. The Christian version of this error attempted to blend Greek philosophy with Christianity. You ended up with something that was neither Christian nor Greek philosophy. One Marcion, in particular, believed that the God of the Old Testament and the God of the New Testament were different, with the Old Testament God being inferior.

1. During this time, Origen of Alexandria came along. He taught,

a. Eternal Generation of the Son. This particular position has become the cornerstone of Trinitarian doctrine.

V. The Most Serious Problem: Arianism

A. Arius of Alexandria

1. A disciple of Origen and an elder in the Alexandrian church.

2. What he said:

The Son logos is a created divine being who participates in the divine logos. The logos is, therefore, a creature of the Father and not God in the full sense of the word. . .the logos is mutable (it can change) by nature.

The logos came to dwell in the body of the man known as Christ.

In other words,

- a. There was a time, in fact, when Christ did not exist
 - b. In addition to being a created being, he is subordinate to the Father and one with Him only in His agreement by force of will. Does this sound at all familiar? The Jehovah's Witnesses believe very much the same thing.
- B.** This belief became very popular among the church hierarchy at the time, though not among the people in the churches.

It is to be constantly remembered that these speculations were the business of the theologians. They neither expressed nor affected to express the mind of the Church. The great body of the people drew their faith, then, as now, immediately from the Scriptures and from the services of the sanctuary. . . They addressed themselves to the Father as the creator of heaven and earth, and as their reconciled God and Father, and to Jesus Christ as their Redeemer, and to the Holy Ghost as their sanctifier and comforter. . . This state of confusion was, however, a great evil, and in order to bring the Church to an agreement as to the manner in which this fundamental doctrine of Christianity should be stated, the Emperor Constantine summoned the First Ecumenical Council, to meet at Nice, in Nicomedia, A. D. 325.

C. The council of Nicea, A. D. 325:

1. 300 bishops from the eastern church met
2. Constantine presided over the council
3. A great theologian, Athanasius, opposed the Arians
4. The Arians were defeated
5. The Nicene Creed was developed

The Watchtower Society

I. Founded about 1879 by Charles Taze Russell, with the publishing of the first *Herald of the Morning*. This has subsequently become the *Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom* or, as we know it, *The Watchtower*.

A. First incorporated as the "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1884.

B. He subsequently published six books, which are still being used today, entitled *Studies in the Scriptures*. The seventh book, added later, was called *The Finished Mystery* and caused a split in the organization. The largest part continued to follow Russell's disciple, J. F. Rutherford. Under Rutherford, the organization eventually became the Jehovah's Witnesses, taking that name in 1931 in Columbus, Ohio. Russell taught until he died in 1916 and was succeeded by Rutherford, who led the organization until his death in 1942.

1. Succeeded by Nathan Knorr, who founded the Gilead Missionary Training School.
2. Succeeded by Frederick Franz in 1977. The organization has become stronger with each succeeding leader.

C. The organization admits that its founder was Charles Russell but disavows any theological influence from him--he was proven to be a fraud in open court and is an embarrassment.

II. Theological Orientation:

- A. Anti-Trinitarian
- B. Influenced by the Millerite movement of the 1850's
- C. Some beliefs held in common with the SDA.
- D. They are classified as a "particularly aggressive take of the teachings of Arius of Alexandria."

III. Some particularly outrageous statements from the Jehovah's Witnesses (Watchtower Organization)

A. The Trinity:

"Satan is the originator of the trinity doctrine."

"The plain truth is that this is another of Satan's attempts to keep God-fearing persons from learning the truth of Jehovah and his Son, Christ Jesus. No, there is no trinity."

B. The divinity of Christ

". . . the true Scriptures speak of God's Son, the Word, as 'a god.' He is a 'mighty god,' but not the Almighty God, who is Jehovah."

". . . the Bible shows that there is only one God. . . 'greater than His Son.'... 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."

A Biblical View of the Trinity

I. God is ONE.

(Deuteronomy 6:4 NKJV) (Deuteronomy 4:39 NKJV)

II. There is more than one person in the Godhead:

(Genesis 1:26, NKJV) (Matthew 28:19, NKJV)

III. Each of these persons is God:

A. We will only concern ourselves with the Divinity of Christ:

1. God is the creator:

(Genesis 1:1)

2. Jesus is the creator:

(John 1:3 NKJV)

Note: If “nothing was made that was made” except by Jesus, how could he be a created being? John’s statement in John. 1:3 is exclusive of any other creative acts.

3. Only God is worthy of worship:

(Isaiah 42:8 NKJV) (Exodus 34:14 NKJV)

4. Jesus is worthy of worship:

(Hebrews 1:6 NKJV)

5. Jesus and Jehovah God are one and the same person:

(Isaiah 6:9 NKJV) (John 12:39–41 NKJV)

(Isaiah 44:6 NKJV) (Revelation 21:6 NKJV)