

The Web of the Watchtower

- An Opportunity to Witness at your Doorstep
 - How many of you have friends or family members involved in Jehovah's Witnesses?
 - How many have had JWs knock on your door?
 - Have you ever come home to find a booklet called *The Watchtower* or *Awake* on your doorstep?
 - They often try harder to reach us than we do to reach them
 - Evangelical focus (economic motives)
 - They have to buy all the material they share with you
 - They may ask you for a contribution, or they may not
 - But either way, the WTBT Corporation has a guaranteed revenue stream
 - JW "witness work"
 - An average JW spends at least 10 hours / month
 - A "Pioneer" commits to 90 hours / month
 - Trying to "earn" their way to heaven
 - They know what they believe, and why they believe it
 - They actually practice witnessing situations by play-acting and interactive multimedia presentations
 - They know – at least superficially – what we believe
- Why should we witness to JWs?
 - They are "happy" in their beliefs, and often don't want to hear what we have to say
 - "Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect" (1 Peter 3:15).
 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth" (Acts 1:8).
 - They come to you. They want to discuss God, Jesus, and the way to Eternal Life. They are trained to answer your questions, and respond to your challenges. If you engage them with "gentleness and respect," you may be planting a seed that will lead to someone's salvation.

JWs say they are "Christians." They usually try to distinguish themselves from "Christendom." But they refer to themselves as Jehovah's **Christian** Witnesses. Are they?

- Differences in Non-Essentials

- The “torture stake”
 - “Soul Sleep”, God’s name
 - Differences in Essentials
- 3 *Essential* Christian Doctrines
- The Doctrine of God (The Father; the Son; the Spirit; the Trinity)
 - You must have the proper object of your faith
 - The Doctrine of the Bible (Scripture Alone)
 - They would agree with us on the necessity of God’s Word
 - But they have their own translation (the NWT), with its own idiosyncratic translations.
 - The Doctrine of Salvation (Grace Alone through Christ Alone)
 - Salvation = Resurrection or Survival of Armageddon
 - One of the distinctive of the JW sect is “Date-Setting”...
 - This is why it’s so vital that they always have dates for the Great Battle just comfortably far in the future.
 - They have a works-based “plan” of salvation, based on membership in the WT, belief in their peculiar doctrines, and door-to-door witnessing.
- Conclusion: Despite their claims, they really aren’t “Christians” in any sense of the word we would understand.

Why JWs Don’t Believe What We Do

- “All Cults deny the Deity of Christ and salvation by Grace alone and replace them with a works-based theology” (John MacArthur)
- “What is the difference between Christianity and all other religions? That’s easy: Grace!” (C.S. Lewis)
- KEY: We are called to be witnesses. We convert NO ONE. This is the Holy Spirit’s job.

Historical Background

- Charles Taze Russell
- From the official website of the Watchtower:
 - In the early 1870’s, a rather inconspicuous Bible study group began in Pennsylvania. Charles Taze Russell was the prime mover of the group. In July 1879, the first issue of the magazine *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence* appeared. In 1881 Zion’s Watch Tower Tract Society was formed, and in 1884 it was incorporated, with Russell as president. The Society’s name was later changed to Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

- Russell was the quintessential rationalist. He attempted to rid his “Bible Students” of the trappings of anything that he construed to be “spiritualism.”
 - He based his teachings on 1 Cor 14:33. What he couldn’t figure out, he explained away.
 - Who was Russell’s God, then?
- He wrote the Multi-Volume *Studies in the Scriptures*
 - He knew the Bible well, but wrote, **“if anyone lays the 'Scripture Studies' aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years - if he then lays them aside 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.*”**
- Fundamental Teachings of “Pastor” Russell
 - Denial of the Trinity
 - Denial of the existence of the Soul
 - When the Bible uses the term “soul,” it’s really means “life force”
 - When someone dies, he’s really dead; his “life force” is gone.
 - Denial of Hell and eternal punishment
 - Hellfire is a demonic doctrine
- The “faithful and discreet slave organization”
 - Originally, “Pastor Russell” called himself the Faithful and Discreet Slave, who dispenses spiritual food for the sheep, when appropriate.
 - This teaching began to change soon after Russell died in 1916.
 - First, the Witnesses were taught that the Slave was not an Organization
 - Next, they were taught that the Slave was both Russell AND the Organization (“because our dear Pastor and the Organization are really one in the same”)
 - Finally, the teaching changed again into the present teaching: Russell never claimed to be the Slave and it’s always been the Organization.
 - Several splinter groups were formed when Russell died, the largest being the loosely organized “Bible Students.”
 - Joseph Rutherford assumed Presidency after Russell. Organized the Governing Body of JWs.
 - Originally, comprised of the Anointed. Now, in theory, can be any Witness in good standing (but practically, the role has been significantly reduced and restructured, and the candidate must have served a long time as an elder in the Brooklyn HQ, which is called Bethel)
 - “The Bible is an Organizational Book, and can only be understood with God’s Organization in mind.” (WT)
 - God’s sole Channel of Communication

Core Beliefs

- Christ is the Angel Michael; Jesus is a “perfect Man”
 - The Pre-Human Son of God was not God Himself
 - He was, instead, the first-born (first-created) Arch-Angel Michael whose “life force” was transferred into the human Jesus.
 - Jesus lived a perfect life and, after his resurrection – which was as a spirit - his life force was transferred back into Michael
 - Jesus’ physical body was dissolved into atoms

- Christ’s atonement merely makes salvation possible
 - Works-based theology
 - No assurance of salvation (because you can lose your salvation by leaving the WT)
 - It is estimated that several hundred thousand have left the WT over the last 20 years!

- Salvation depends on belonging to the Watchtower, not on faith in Christ
 - “Come to Jehovah’s Organization to be saved!”
 - Salvation, for Witnesses”, is equivalent to resurrection post-Armageddon
 - Or, better yet (for the Witness), survival of Armageddon
 - The Anointed Class and the Other Sheep
 - Only “anointed” Witnesses go to Heaven to live with God
 - There are only 144,000 Anointed
 - All others are called the “other sheep class. They thus have a sort of “two-tier” plan of salvation.
 - People continue to be tested throughout the Millennium
 - Those who are found wanting are destroyed by God
 - They used to teach only people born prior to 1914 were members of the Anointed. This was changed to the Anointed had to have joined the WT before 1935. There is also a “replacement factor” to account for those that fell away and Jehovah immediately selects a replacement for them.
 - Who knows why this change was necessary?

- Jehovah is the true name of God, and He must be addressed by that name, or one’s prayers are not heard. They are Jehovah’s witnesses; not Christ’s (despite the Bible teaching otherwise (Acts 1:8)).

- God has a “spirit body” with a physical location in space. He is not transcendent.
 - They used to teach Heaven was located in the Pleiades constellation.
 - Now, they say His physical location is unknown.

- The Holy Spirit is God’s “active force.” It is impersonal, and required by God to perform any action on planet earth.
- Only the Anointed can understand the Bible
 - The WT provides the Anointed as a vehicle to teach the other sheep
 - This belief has been downplayed in recent years
- Pacifism
 - More on this later
- Unity of beliefs, which ‘prove’ they are God’s organization
 - Or, that they are merely under an authoritarian system which enforces conformity
- Rejection of “pagan” influences (the cross; flag saluting; birthdays; Christmas)
- Blood transfusions/vaccinations
 - Blood transfusions are never allowed
 - Blood “parts” may be transfused
 - Vaccinations are allowed, but only recently
- Christendom is a corrupt, pagan-influenced organization ruled by Satan
 - Particular animus towards the clergy, whom they view as corrupt teachers leading the ignorant into darkness.

False Prophecies and Date-setting

- 1874
 - 2nd Coming/Rapture
 - Now said to be “invisible Return” when Christ scoured the earth and found only Russell’s Bible Students being faithful to God’s Word
- 1914
 - Armageddon/End of World
 - Now said to be the “end of this system of things” (their translation of Greek KOSMOS=“world”)

- The official WT website still has material detailing how the world was “shattered” by WWI.
- 1925
 - Return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob
 - Largely ignored or spiritualized
- 1975
 - Armageddon/End of World
 - Largely ignored, blamed the individual members who got overly excited
 - I have seen recent WTs that admit that the leadership bears some responsibility
- I thought I’d never see the WT set another date for the End of World, but
- 2034?
 - Based on 1914 + 120 (Noah)

Doctrinal flipflops

- Christ should/should not be worshipped
 - “All creatures in heaven and earth shall worship Jesus as he worships the Father.” (WT, 8/15/1941)
 - “Do not erroneously conclude that Christians are to worship Christ. That is not what the Bible taught.” (WT, 7/15/1959)
- Christ is not/is the Angel Michael
 - “‘Let all the angels of God worship him’ [that must have included Michael, the chief angel, hence Michael is not the Son of God]” (WT, 11/1879).
 - “‘Michael the great prince’ is none other than Jesus Christ himself. – Daniel 12:1” (Worldwide, p. 169).
- The residents of Sodom will/will not/will/will not be resurrected
 - The men of Sodom will be resurrected. (WT, 7/1879)
 - The men of Sodom will not be resurrected. (WT, 6/1/1952)
 - The men of Sodom will be resurrected. (WT, 8/1/1965)
 - The men of Sodom will not be resurrected. (WT, 6/1/1988)
- JW’s should not/should/should not celebrate Christmas

- Don't quibble about the date; join in with the world and celebrate Christmas (WT 12/1/1904)
- We all need to face up to the fact that Christmas and its music are not from Jehovah, the God of truth. Then what is the source? ... Satan the Devil. (WT 12/15/1983)
- Military service issues
 - No command in the Scriptures against military service (WT, 8/1/1898)
 - JWs...have also declined to do noncombatant service or accept other work assignments as a substitute for military service. (UNITED, p. 167)
- Are JWs prophets?
 - Who will be Jehovah's prophet? Who will be the modern Jeremiah? The plain facts show God has been pleased to use Jehovah's Witnesses. (WT, 1/15/1959)
 - JWs are not infallible or inspired prophets (WT, 5/15/1976)
 - God has on earth a people, all of whom are prophets or witnesses for God...JWs. (WT, 6/8/1886)

The New World Translation

- Background (KJV and Emphatic Diaglott)
 - Sold by the WT prior to 1950
 - The Emphatic Diaglott by Benjamin Wilson supports the NWT in at least one important verse – Jn 1:1 – at least in the interlinear translation.
- NWT of Christian Greek Scriptures
 - History
 - 1950 – The New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures
 - Revised in 1951
 - Further revisions subsequently
 - 1961 – The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures
 - 1969 – The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures
 - Translation Committee
 - Officially anonymous “to avoid giving credit to men”
 - Former Witnesses who worked in WT headquarters at the time have revealed the names of the translators.
 - Frederick Franz – the primary translator and only member of the committee with any formal training in the original languages (1 year of undergraduate work in Greek)
- Controversial Translations

- John 1:1
 - ...and the Word was a god
- John 8:58
 - Before Abraham was, I have been
- Col 1:16-17
 - Because by means of him all other things were created ...all other things have been created 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. (as in the 1950 edition; subsequent editions placed “other” in square brackets).
- What the Scholars say (the following have all spoken negatively about the NWT):
 - Dr. Julius R. Mantey
 - Dr. Bruce M. Metzger
 - Dr. J.J. Griesback
 - Dr. Eugene A. Nida
 - Dr. William Barclay
 - Dr. F.F. Bruce

- Scholars Commonly Cited by Jehovah's Witnesses in Support of the NWT

William Barclay

<p>"theos [in John 1:1c] becomes a description, and more of an adjective than a noun...[John] does not say that Jesus was God" (Barclay, <i>Many Witnesses, One Lord</i>, p. 23 – 24).</p> <p>- The Watchtower, May 15, 1977, p. 320</p>	<p>"The only modern translator who fairly and squarely faced this problem is Kenneth Wuest, who said: 'The Word was as to his essence, essential deity.' But it is here that the NEB has brilliantly solved the problem with the absolutely correct rendering: 'What God was the Word was'" (Barclay, p. 23).</p> <p>"The Watchtower article has, by judicious cutting, made me say the opposite of what I meant to say. What I was meaning to say, as you well know, is that Jesus is not the same as God, to put it more crudely, that is of the same stuff as God, that is of the same being as God, but the way the Watchtower has printed my stuff has simply left the conclusion that Jesus is not God in a way that suits themselves. If they missed from their answer the translation of Kenneth Wuest and the N.E.B., they missed the whole point" (A letter to Donald P. Shoemaker, 8/26/1977. A photocopy of this letter can be found in Watters, Thus saith ... the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, p. 74).</p>
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B.F. Westcott

<p>Bishop Westcott, coproducer of the noted Westcott and Hort Greek text of the Christian Scriptures says: "It is necessarily without the definite article inasmuch as it describes the nature of the Word and does not identify his person." (Quoted from page 116 of <i>An Idiom Book Of New Testament Greek</i>, by Professor C. F. D. Moule, 1953 ed.).</p> <p>- from <i>Aid to Bible Understanding</i>, p. 919, in support of the NWT rendering of John 1:1</p>	<p>"On the other hand it needs to be recognized that the Fourth Evangelist need not have chosen this word-order, and that his choice of it, though creating some ambiguity, may in itself be an indication of his meaning; and Westcott's note (in loc.), although it may require the addition of some reference to idiom, does still, perhaps, represent the writer's theological intention: 'It is necessarily without the article (theos not ho theos) inasmuch as it describes the nature of the Word and does not identify His Person. It would be pure Sabellianism to say "the Word was ho theos". No idea of inferiority of nature is suggested by the form of the expression, which simply affirms the true deity of the Word. Compare the converse statement of the true humanity of Christ v. 27 (hoti hious anthropou estin...)." (Moule, p. 116, emphasis added</p>
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Archbishop Newcome

<p>Newcome, 1808, "and the word was a god"</p> <p>- from a prominent Jehovah's Witness website. The Watchtower has provided a somewhat fuller citation:</p> <p>"and the word was a god." The New Testament in an Improved Version, Upon the Basis of Archbishop Newcome's New Translation: With a Corrected Text (SYBT, p. 27).</p>	<p>This citation is actually not from Newcome's translation. Instead, it appears in a version that was "corrected" by Thomas Belsham and an unnamed Unitarian Committee using unknown translation principles. Newcome's New Testament was published in 1796; the "corrected" version appeared in 1808.</p>
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G O S P E L
ACCORDING TO
St. . . J O H N.
THE Word was in the beginning, and the
Word was with God, and the Word was God.

It is misleading, to say the least, to imply that Newcome himself (a bona fide Greek scholar) is responsible for the rendering of a Unitarian Committee whose credentials we are not able to verify.

Witnessing to Witnesses

- The best way to witness to anyone is simply ask them questions about what they believe and why they believe it.
- Below are several preliminary questions to ask the Witness. These questions do not involve interpreting passages of the Bible (that comes later), but relate to their view of *how to interpret the Bible*, as well as God's way of relating to man. You will find these questions very effective with all but the most hardened of Witnesses.

Common Sense Questions

These first three questions establish a foundation of common sense perceptions about the Bible and Christianity, which are generally denied by cults. This is especially true with Jehovah's Witnesses. Often they will answer yes to these questions anyway, to save face or avoid embarrassment. If so, you will need to direct their attention back to their answers when they "deny" them later.

Do you believe that the Bible was written to all people?

(Acts 17:30; 1 Cor. 1:2)

Do you believe that anyone, anywhere, who just had a Bible, and no other literature, could understand it and be saved?

("No" answer reveals that they believe the Bible is not enough, but a leader or organization is needed; "Yes" answer is contradictory to Watchtower teaching.)

Next, a statement about the dangers of various religious organizations should be made, such as, "Today more than ever before there are many religious groups which lead people astray from true Christianity. Let's see if we can agree on certain identifying marks of such groups."

Then proceed with the following objective questions. It is better to leave the questions "third person" (or hypothetically apply them to yourself) rather than applying them directly to the person you are speaking with, or his organization. Instead of saying, "Does your organization...?" you might say, "What if an organization...?" or "What if I...?" That way you avoid getting their defenses up. They will have to apply it to themselves soon enough in the conversation, or you can draw the connection later yourself. Get them to see the point *before* it hurts! (2 Sam. 12:1-14)

Do you think a person should examine not only the teachings, but also the history of any religious organization before deciding it is the truth?

(A history of deception and unfulfilled prophecies is most incriminating!)

What if I joined one of these groups and later discovered fraud at the top of the organization, or that they have altered their teachings or prophecies? Should I stay in it?

(Most cults have had serious scandals and shakeups involving fraud and politics at top levels. Since they claim to be God's only true people, their claim would be highly suspect.)

Both Deuteronomy 18:20-22 and Matt. 24:11,23-27 warn us of false prophets. How would one identify a false prophet using these verses?

(They speak in the name of God and it doesn't come true!)

What would you think if members of a certain religion were not allowed to read other religious literature?

(Shows authoritarian rule and fear of the facts, as well as an inability to use discernment. Witnesses are not allowed to read other religious literature.)

The Mormons claim that one must study their books to attain to an accurate knowledge of the Scriptures, even though they also use the Bible. What do you think of that?

(All cults believe this, as their leader is the sole interpreter of Scripture same is true with Witnesses.)

If I were examining the Mormons, etc., do you think it would be a good idea to read books by ex-members?

(A difficult question for the cult member to answer, as it is self-incriminating if they say yes or no. If they say, "no," show how easy it would be to get sucked into a cult that you haven't fully examined. If they say, "Yes," then ask them why they haven't read books by ex-members of their group.)

Questions to Provoke Thought

These are questions that cause the cultist to see the inconsistency of their position on certain issues. What you are doing is making them commit to a Biblical or scholastic precedent, then allowing them to see that the Watchtower actually *denies* that precedent. They will either struggle with the contradiction (though not displaying the struggle visibly) or they will shut their minds off to further discussion on the issue by either trying to change the subject or running away. Rather than being third person objective questions, or applying them generally or hypothetically, you are now applying it to the Watchtower specifically. Since the organization is the real culprit rather than the individual Witness, apply the questions to the organization, not "Jehovah's Witnesses." This will help avoid the feeling that they are being personally attacked.

Can the Bible be interpreted correctly only by the Watchtower?

(Acts 17:11; 1 John 2:26,27 "Yes" answer contradicts Scripture, "No" answer contradicts Watchtower GB 166, 167, 171)

What method does the Watchtower use to interpret Scripture?

They say that they just accept it literally, and interpret symbolic passages by other passages that bear on the discussion; *Reasoning*, p. 204, 205. Yet they break this rule continually, often opting for a "symbolic" understanding of something that they cannot accept literally due to their preconceived theology. Example: John 3:3,5,7; Matt. 24:26-30; John 1:1; Rev. 1:7.

Scholars talk about the historical, grammatical, interpretive method of understanding what the Bible says. (Explain.) Do you think this is a good method?

(Defined as taking into account the historical and cultural meaning of a saying or word and its linguistic significance in order to interpret it correctly. The Watchtower ignores the historical significance of countless passages and interpret the Bible arbitrarily. Example: Luke 16:16-31 and John 10:16.)

Do prominent scholars, either secular or religious, support the Watchtower interpretations of Scripture?

(The scholarly community as a whole is against Watchtower interpretation, both from the Christian and agnostic sectors, due to their dishonest methods and theological bias. While the Watchtower loves to quote scholars on certain points, it is almost always a half-truth or is taken out of context to support their position. At times they will quote from obscure sources which they present as being noteworthy sources, yet are not even recognized in their field as authorities.)

Does the Watchtower believe all other "Christian" groups are false?

(Yes, they do; but see Matt. 7:3; 25:31-46)

Does a person have to be part of the Watchtower organization to be saved?

("Yes" answer cannot be supported by Scripture (Mark 9:37-41). "No" answer contradicts the Watchtower. GB 52, 53, 163, 164)

What does the Watchtower consider as proof that they are the real Christians? Are these marks exclusive to the Watchtower, or are they shared by other religions? (examine each one individually)

(They will give certain standards based on outward appearance rather than heart factors; their "love" is not unconditional love (Matt. 5:43-48), but is dependent upon obedience to the organization; they substitute friendship based on common doctrinal positions for friendship based on the love of Christ. Challenge the "exclusiveness" of each mark by comparing with other cults.)

Review and apply questions from the first section (*Common Sense Questions*) to the Watchtower now. You are causing them to think about how the WT denies these basic truths.

Force Them to Face the Facts

If you make it this far, you have caused no little disturbance in the mind of the Witness, though he/she may not show it visibly. It is important to be calm and kind above all. You are forcing them to break down the wall they have erected in their mind that protects them from questioning the authority and security of their "mother." The following questions are designed to force them to face the fact that the organization has claimed to be a prophet "like Ezekiel and Jeremiah"; that they have made false prophecies in the name of Jehovah over and over; that they are a relatively new religion that supports itself primarily through distribution of literature; and that they claim to be the only channel or mediator to God. If they deny the truthfulness of any of this, challenge them to investigate the Watchtower material along with you, so that you can see the light as well. If they defend the Watchtower position, review the former questions once more, so that they will at least see that they are no different than any other cult.

Does the organization or leadership claim to be a prophet of God?

(They have plainly said they are a prophet of God just like Ezekiel and Jeremiah. Compare Deut. 18:20-22. GB 58, 59, 61)

Does the leadership claim special direction from God that others cannot receive directly from God?

(They claim the "faithful and discreet slave" is a channel through which the truth flows from Jehovah down to the average Witness. GB 61, Mark 9:38-42)

Can you come to Christ as your mediator?

(Their answer is "no" for 99.7% of the Witnesses. GB 169)

Has the organization made prophecies that have not come true?

(Deut. 18:20-22. GB 62-82, 97-106)

Have your doctrines changed significantly in the past history of your organization?

(Reveals the uninspired source of their doctrine, as well as their effort to harmonize inconsistencies. GB 172)

How long has this religion been around? Can this be demonstrated historically?

("According to the Bible, the line of witnesses of Jehovah reaches back to faithful Abel." *Reasoning*, p. 202. They thus try and make it appear as if the Jewish patriarchs and the apostles believed the same way they did, which can be proven false historically. Furthermore, they cannot point to any group or person in the last 2000 years that were "true" Christians, at least until Russell came along. Typical cult reasoning. GB 48)

Does your religion sell anything to support itself?

(2 Cor. 2:17 while the Watchtower denies selling its literature in more affluent countries, financial reports reveal that 67% of their income comes from the production and door-to-door sales of literature. They are dishonest in this respect. GB 121-128)

The Witness may not even allow you to proceed beyond a few of these questions, as the questions are quite effective in convicting the Witness of inconsistencies and cultic

attitudes. Yet, even so, you will have planted seeds of doubt that force them to either think more about what you have said and examine it further, or flee in fear, refusing to allow their mind to open up again on these questions.

Scripture Ping Pong – Let the games Begin!

The Trinity

The Correct Definition:

One God in Three Divine Persons

Equal in Substance and Attributes

Unequal in Role

- The Father sends the Son (“The Father is greater than I” – Greek *meizon* = greater in role, not greater in nature)
- The Son asks the Father to send the Holy Spirit (“another Comforter”)
 - What kind of a substitute for the Son would an ‘active force’ be?
- There is only One God
 - Deut 6:4 / Mark 12:28-29
 - Ex 15:11
 - Is 45:5-6
 - 1 Kings 8:60
 - Ro 3:30
 - 1 Tim 2:5
 - James 2:9
- Are there really pagan “Trinities?”
 - Hindu “Trimurti”
 - *“the Trimurti developed after the time of Christianity and has little or nothing in common with the Holy Trinity in Christianity.”*
 - Isis / Osiris / Horus
 - **Isis** - a female goddess.
 - **Osiris** - husband of Isis.
 - **Horus** - son of Isis and Osiris.
 - Also, this triad was not considered *one* God (as in Christianity) but rather *three separate gods*.
- Is the Trinity “reasonable?”
 - Is it a logical contradiction?
 - Can it be fully comprehended?
 - No! It can’t be fully comprehended
 - Can it be “apprehended?”
 - Yes!
 - To [Apprehend](#), [Comprehend](#). These words come into comparison as describing acts of the mind. Apprehend denotes the laying hold of a thing mentally, so as to understand it clearly, at least in part. Comprehend denotes the embracing or understanding it in all its

compass and extent. We may apprehend many truths which we do not comprehend. The very idea of God supposes that he may be apprehended, though not comprehended, by rational beings.

- Is the Trinity to be found in the OT?
 - Gen 1:26-27; 3:22
 - Is 6:3, 8 / John 12:41
 - Is 44:24 / John 1:3; Col 1:16; Heb 1:10-11 (Ps 102:25)
 - Is 48:12ff
 - Hos 1:6-7
- Is the Trinity to be found in the NT?
 - Matthew 28:16ff – The Great Commission

 - Matthew 28:16ff – The Great Commission
 - The significance of the “Name”
 - Authority, power, presence
 - The “Name” of God
 - Singular name = singular authority
 - The significance of baptism
 - The initiation into God’s Church
 - Baptized with Christ in His Death
 - Raised with Christ in His Resurrection
 - The significance of “the”
 - Three persons or individuals
 - Disproves “modalism”
 - Proves the personhood of the Holy Spirit
 - The Three are equated
 - Three Persons with One authority initiate the believer into salvation

- Is the Trinity to be found in the NT? (Continued)
 - John 5:16-27
 - John 1:1 – “The Big Kahuna!”
 - Why the confusion over 17 simple words?
 - What have they done to your song, John?
 - *You shall not add to the word which I am commanding you, nor take away from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I command you. (Deut 4:2)*
 - *Do not add to His words, Or He will reprove you, and you will be proved a liar. (Prov 30:6)*
 - *I testify to everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues which are written in this book; and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his part from the tree of life and from the holy city, which are written in this book. (Rev 22:18-19)*
 - ...and why have they done it?

- Since the earliest days of the church, John 1:1 has been a key verse in establishing the true Deity of Jesus
 - *"The Father of the universe has a Son, who also being the first begotten Word of God, is even God."* – Justin Martyr, *First Apology* ch. 63; c. 150 a.d.
 - *"...and the Word was God,' of course, for that which is begotten of God is God."* – Irenaeus *Against Heresies, Book I, ch. 8, section 5; c. 180 a.d.*
 - *"His Son Jesus, the Word of God, is our Instructor.... He is God and Creator."* – Clement of Alexandria, *Instructor, Book I, ch. 11; c. 200 a.d.*
 - *"The Logos is God, being the substance of God."* – Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies, Book X, ch. 29; c. 210 a.d.*
 - *"In the beginning was the Logos and the Logos was with God and the Logos was God. What is the basic meaning and purport of Scripture? It contains, as we have often said, a double account of the Savior..God and Man" – Athanasius, Oration Against the Arians, Book III; 355 a.d.*

- John 1:1a
- "In the beginning..."
- What beginning?
 - Genesis 1:1
 - Greek Old Testament: *En Arxe...*
 - John 1:1: *En Arxe...*
 - A beginning or "the" beginning
 - Context = Creation of all things
 - JW Theology
 - Does Genesis 1:1 depict the creation of all things? What about the angels?
 - Rabbi's from Jesus day believed angels were created during the 7 days of creation
 - There is no evidence that Jews conceived of a beginning before The Beginning
 - The Word's being with God from the "beginning" must here refer to the beginning of Jehovah's creative works. This is confirmed by other texts identifying Jesus as "the first-born of all creation," "the beginning of the creation by God" (Col. 1:15; Rev. 1:1; 3:14). Thus, the Scriptures identify the Word (Jesus in his prehuman existence) as

God's first creation, his firstborn Son
(*Aid to Bible Understanding*, p. 918).

- Job 38:7
- Genesis 2:1 “all their hosts”
- “Was” the Word
 - Significance of “was”
 - Already existing
 - Greek tense signifies continuous existence in the time period specified.
 - The Word was existing in the Beginning
 - John 1:1b
 - “and the Word was with God”
 - The significance of “with”
 - Greek PROS = an intimate, “face to face” relationship
 - The Word is a Person
 - Only Persons can be “with” each other in this way
 - The “imperfect” tense signifies continuous existence in the time period specified (i.e., “the beginning”) – same tense as ‘was’ in John 1:1a
 - Summing up John 1:1a and 1:1b:

“In the beginning (of all creation) the Word was already existing, and the Word was (continually) intimately with God (the Father)

- John 1:1c
 - “and the Word was God”
 - “The Word had the same nature as God”
 - Greek has no word for “a” or “an.” Many nouns in Greek without the article are indefinite (“a something”).
 - The word “God” in 1:1c does not have the article
 - But Greek Grammarians are agreed that the lack of the article does not mean that 1:1c should be translated “a god.”
 - Greek scholars tell us that nouns without the article often point to the qualities, character, or nature of the noun
 - John 1:18 (“No one has seen God...”) – there is no article before “God” in this verse!
 - Other verses that say the same thing:
 - John 5:19
 - John 10:33
 - Col 2:9
 - Does the Bible speak of God’s Nature?

- Deut 32:17-21; Gal 4:8 (other gods are not gods “by nature”)
 - John’s poetic language points to God having the same sense in 1:1b and 1:1c
 - Writers in the NT end a phrase with a word, then repeat that word at the beginning of the next phrase. See Ro 5:3-5.
 - The “X” pattern (“Chiasm”)
 - Mark 2:27
 - (A) Sabbath (B) for (C) Man
 - (C1) Man (B1) for (A1) Sabbath
 - John 1:1
 - (A) Word (B) was (C) God
 - (C1) God (B1) was (C1) Word
 - “In the beginning was Felix, and Felix was with the Feline, and Felix was Feline.” If we understand that “the Feline” is a housecat, what kind of cat is Felix?
- Summing up John 1:1a, 1:1b, and 1:1c:

“In the beginning (of all creation) the Word was already existing, and the Word was (continually) intimately with God (the Father), and the Word had the same nature as God.”

The Deity of Christ

- How many verses can you find in which Jesus is called “God?”
 - John 1:1; 1:18; 20:28
 - Rom 9:5
 - Titus 2:15
 - 2 Peter 1:1
- Some other verses to consider
 - John 10:30
 - Col 1:15
 - Col 2:9
 - John 17:5
 - Rev 1:17 (Isa 44:6)
 - Rev 1:8, 22:12-13
- Jesus is worshipped
 - John 5:23 and Rev 5:13
- The Apostles pray to Jesus
 - Acts 7:54 – 60
 - Maranatha! (1 Cor 16:22; Rev 22:20)
- Old Testament Passages referring to YHWH are used by New Testament writers of Jesus without qualification
 - Heb 1:1-10 (Ps 102:25-27)

- Acts 4:12 (Joel 2:32)
- Phil 2:5-11 (Is 45:23)
- Jesus forgives sins, gives eternal life, will judge the earth (John 5)
- Jesus promises to always be with us (Mat 28:20)
- Jesus does not change (Heb 13:8)

Some Common Objections

- *Deut 6:4*
 - God is “one,” not three.
 - *The Hebrew word for “one” can mean a composite unity*
- *John 1:1b*
 - *The Word is “with” God – he cannot simultaneously **be** God*
 - *The Greek has the definite article (“The God”) thus designates a person, namely the Father*
- *John 14:28*
 - *Jesus says the Father is greater than he is – therefore, he can’t be God*
 - *The Greek word translated “greater” means greater in role or status, not nature*
 - *Jn 13:16 “A servant is not greater than his master”*
- *John 10:33ff*
 - *Jesus says he’s the Son of God – not God Himself*
 - *It is vital that we keep this verse in context:*
 1. *He has implicitly agreed that He is the Messiah (v. 25).*
 2. *He has said that the Jews are not “His sheep,” to whom He will give eternal life (v. 28).*
 3. *He has said that no one can snatch His sheep from His hand (v. 28).*
 4. *He has said that His Father is “greater than all” (v. 29).*
 5. *He has said that no one can snatch His sheep from His Father’s hand (v. 29).*
 6. *He has said that He and His Father are one (v. 30).*
- *John 17:3*
 - *Jesus says the Father is the only true God – so Jesus can’t be God*
 - *What else is Jesus supposed to call the Father?*
 - *Jesus states emphatically that eternal life is this: Knowing the Father in an intimate way *as well as* His Son. Salvation depends on knowing both Father and Son. Jesus is the “way, the truth, and the life.” No one comes to the Father but through the Son, for it is the Son who “explains” the Father, the beloved and One and Only Son who is in the heart of the Father. The Son does everything the Father shows Him, is one with the Father, and assures us that when we have seen Him, we have seen the Father as well. The Son is God in every sense the Father is (1:1), does whatever the Father does (5:19); is to be honored equally with the Father (5:23), and is confessed as Lord and God (20:28).*
- *1 Cor 8:6*
 - *Paul distinguishes the one God (the Father) from Jesus (the one Lord).*

- He is often mentioned alongside the Father and Son (1 Cor 12:4-6; 2 Cor 13:14; Eph 2:18; 1 Pet 1:2) – no other person or “force” is ever so mentioned.
- He has attributes associated with God alone
 - Eternal (Heb 9:14, John 14:16)
 - Omnipresent (Ps 139:7-10)
 - Omnipotent (Ps 104:30, Ro 15:19)
 - Omniscient (Isa 40:13-14; 1 Cor 2:10-11)
 - Sovereign (John 3:8)
 - Creator (Gen 1:2; Job 26:12; 33:4; Ps 104:30)
 - Regenerates (Ezek 37:1-14; John 3:5-6; Titus 3:5)
 - Resurrects (Ezek 37:12-14; Ro 8:11)
 - Acts with authority in the Church (Acts 13:2, 4; 15:28; 16:6-7)
 - He affected the virginal conception of Christ (Matt 1:18-20; Luke 1:35)
 - Leads believers to faith in Jesus as Lord (1 Cor 12:3)
 - Leads believers to call God “Father” (Rom 8:15-16; Gal 4:6)
- If the Holy Spirit is a Person, He can only be God. So – is He a person, distinguished from God?

The Personhood of the Holy Spirit

- He comes from the Father (John 15:26)
- He is sent by the Father and the Son (John 16:7; 14:26) See also John 14:18; Acts 2:33; 16:7; Ro 8:9-10
- Personal pronouns are used of Him
 - John 15:26; 16:13-14 – “Paracletos” = “he”
 - Acts 10:19-20 - “I”
 - Acts 13:2 – “me”
- Personal activities
 - Speaks (Mark 13:11; Acts 13:2; 21:11; 1 Tim 4:1; Heb 3:7; 10:15)
 - Reveals (Luke 2:26; 1 Peter 1:11)
 - Guides into all truth (John 16:13)
 - Teaches (Luke 12:12; John 14:26)
 - Comforts, counsels, helps and loves the believer (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7; Rom 15:30; James 4:5)
 - Encourages (Acts 9:31)
 - Warns (1 Tim 4:1)

- Appoints to office (Acts 13:2; 20:28)
- Is grieved (Isa 63:10; Eph 4:30)
- May be lied to (Acts 5:3)
- May be resisted (Acts 7:31)
- May be blasphemed (Matt 12:31-32)

- He gives gifts to whom He wills (1 Cor 12:11)

- “Another Comforter” (John 14:16) Greek: ALLON PARAKLĒTON
 - Compare 1 John 2:1; Greek PARAKLĒTON
 - ALLON = another of the same kind; hĒTEROS = another of a different kind
- Compare to the WT’s teaching on Satan as a person:
 - “Is the Devil a personification or a person? ... Can an unintelligent ‘force’ carry on a conversation with a person? ... only an intelligent person could....’Every quality, every action, which can indicate personality, is attributed to him in language which cannot be explained away” (*Awake*, 12/8/1973).