

Distinctive Beliefs of the Jehovah's Witnesses

1. The most significant distinctive belief of Jehovah's Witnesses is that the doctrine of the Trinity is unbiblical. They believe that Jesus was not God but actually Michael the archangel. Their argument begins with 1 Thes 4:16, where it says that Jesus will come with the voice of the archangel. They reason further, that since the only archangel named in the Bible is Michael (Jude 9), then Jesus must be Michael the archangel (see also NWT Col 1:16-17). The Bible clearly teaches, however, that Jesus is not an angel (Heb 1:6f), and the divinity of Jesus is evident in a number of passages in the NT (see for example John 1:1; 20:28). As a result of their anti-trinitarian error JW's also believe that the Holy Spirit is only an impersonal force. The personhood of the Holy Spirit, however, is indicated in the NT as well (Acts 13:2; 15:28; etc).

2. Another distinctive belief of the Jehovah's Witnesses is that only 144,000 will enter into Heaven (Rev 7:4; 9:4-10). Their interpretation falters at Rev 7:9 and 14:1-4. In reality, this image of 144,000 in Rev is based on imagery from the Exodus (Exod 12:37-38; 19:15) and intended to show that the NT people of God are the fulfillment of the OT people of God.

3. One of the beliefs that Russell picked up from his Adventist influence was that those who have died are in either a sleep state, or have even ceased to exist. The latter extreme is more prominent among the Jehovah's Witnesses. Adventism bases this belief on its interpretation of very selective texts, most importantly on the first half of a verse in the book of Ecclesiastes which reads: "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing..." (Eccl 9:5a). They believe that this proves that those who have died, even good Adventists, go into a *sleep state* until the resurrection. For this reason, among many others, they have difficulty with Catholic prayers to Saints, since in their theology, the Saints are asleep or as the Jehovah's Witnesses believe, don't even exist (see also NWT 23:43).

However, as with many protestant heresies, this one too is based on a text out of context. If one wants to take the first half of Eccl 9:5 out of its context, and interpret it to mean that the dead are not conscious, then one also has to take the rest of the verse in this manner. The entire verse reads: "For the living know nothing, and they have no more reward; but the memory of them is lost." If this is true then those who have died have no chance of the *reward* of eternal life at the resurrection. Nor will they be remembered at the final judgment. Obviously the Adventist or JW does not want to take things this far. Furthermore, there are a number of passages in the Bible that show that there is consciousness in death (1 Sam 28:3, 12, 14, 15, 20; Luke 16:19-21; 2 Cor 5:6-9; Phil 1:23; 1 Pet 3:19; 4:6; Rev 6:9-11).

General principles of witnessing to Witnesses

1. Become a Missionary-learn the language, study the culture, etc
2. Be Patient and loving (Col 4:5-6; 1 Pet 3:15)
3. Keeping someone out is easier than getting someone out.
4. Doctrinal history is more important than Bible verses.

What to do when they come knocking

1. Take the literature, ask about Russel, ask for a Mission Statement and set of an appointment
2. Study the literature, study Russel (interlibrary loan), and get Charter of WT off of the web.
3. Next meeting ask them about Russel's pyramid idea. Also show them the Charter which says that one of the purposes of the Watch Tower is to promote the "public Christian worship of Almighty God and Christ Jesus."

John 1:1-18

Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. ² οὗτος ἦν ἐν ἀρχῇ πρὸς τὸν θεόν. ³ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ χωρὶς αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο οὐδὲ ἓν. ὃ γέγονεν ⁴ ἐν αὐτῷ ζωὴ ἦν, καὶ ἡ ζωὴ ἦν τὸ φῶς τῶν ἀνθρώπων. ⁵ καὶ τὸ φῶς ἐν τῇ σκοτίᾳ φαίνει, καὶ ἡ σκοτία αὐτὸ οὐ κατέλαβεν. ⁶ Ἐγένετο ἄνθρωπος, ἀπεσταλμένος παρὰ θεοῦ, ὄνομα αὐτῷ Ἰωάννης. ⁷ οὗτος ἦλθεν εἰς μαρτυρίαν ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός, ἵνα πάντες πιστεύσωσιν δι' αὐτοῦ. ⁸ οὐκ ἦν ἐκεῖνος τὸ φῶς, ἀλλ' ἵνα μαρτυρήσῃ περὶ τοῦ φωτός. ⁹ Ἦν τὸ φῶς τὸ ἀληθινόν, ὃ φωτίζει πάντα ἄνθρωπον, ἐρχόμενον εἰς τὸν κόσμον. ¹⁰ ἐν τῷ κόσμῳ ἦν, καὶ ὁ κόσμος δι' αὐτοῦ ἐγένετο, καὶ ὁ κόσμος αὐτὸν οὐκ ἔγνω. ¹¹ εἰς τὰ ἴδια ἦλθεν, καὶ οἱ ἴδιοι αὐτὸν οὐ παρέλαβον. ¹² ὅσοι δὲ ἔλαβον αὐτόν, ἔδωκεν αὐτοῖς ἐξουσίαν τέκνα θεοῦ γενέσθαι, τοῖς πιστεύουσιν εἰς τὸ ὄνομα αὐτοῦ, ¹³ οἳ οὐκ ἐξ αἱμάτων οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος σαρκὸς οὐδὲ ἐκ θελήματος ἀνδρὸς ἀλλ' ἐκ θεοῦ ἐγεννήθησαν. ¹⁴ Καὶ ὁ λόγος σὰρξ ἐγένετο καὶ ἐσκήνωσεν ἐν ἡμῖν, καὶ ἐθεασάμεθα τὴν δόξαν αὐτοῦ, δόξαν ὡς μονογενοῦς παρὰ πατρός, πλήρης χάριτος καὶ ἀληθείας. ¹⁵ Ἰωάννης μαρτυρεῖ περὶ αὐτοῦ καὶ κέκραγεν λέγων· οὗτος ἦν ὃν εἶπον· ὁ ὀπίσω μου ἐρχόμενος ἔμπροσθέν μου γέγονεν, ὅτι πρῶτός μου ἦν. ¹⁶ ὅτι ἐκ τοῦ πληρώματος αὐτοῦ ἡμεῖς πάντες ἐλάβομεν καὶ χάριν ἀντὶ χάριτος. ¹⁷ ὅτι ὁ νόμος διὰ Μωϋσέως ἐδόθη, ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ ἀλήθεια διὰ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐγένετο. ¹⁸ Θεὸν οὐδεὶς ἑώρακεν πώποτε· μονογενὴς θεὸς ὁ ὢν εἰς τὸν κόλπον τοῦ πατρὸς ἐκεῖνος ἐξηγήσατο.

The Divine Name

Masoretic Hebrew **Exodus 3:14**

14 וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה אֱהִי אֲשֶׁר אֱהִי
וַיֹּאמֶר כֹּה תֹאמַר לְבְנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל אֱהִי שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם:

15 וַיֹּאמֶר עֹד אֱלֹהִים אֶל־מֹשֶׁה כֹּה־תֹאמַר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל
יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵי אֲבֹתֵיכֶם אֱלֹהֵי אַבְרָהָם אֱלֹהֵי יִצְחָק וְאֱלֹהֵי
יַעֲקֹב שְׁלַחְנִי אֵלֵיכֶם זֶה־שְּׁמִי לְעֹלָם וְזֶה זְכָרִי לְדֹר דָּר:

Septuagint Greek **Exodus 3:14-15**

14 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πρὸς Μωϋσῆν ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ ὢν καὶ εἶπεν οὕτως ἔρεις τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ
ὁ ὢν ἀπέσταλκέν με πρὸς ὑμᾶς

15 καὶ εἶπεν ὁ θεὸς πάλιν πρὸς Μωϋσῆν οὕτως ἔρεις τοῖς υἱοῖς Ἰσραὴλ
κύριος ὁ θεὸς τῶν πατέρων ὑμῶν θεὸς Ἀβραὰμ καὶ θεὸς Ἰσαὰκ καὶ θεὸς Ἰακώβ ἀπέσταλκέν με
πρὸς ὑμᾶς τοῦτό μού ἐστιν ὄνομα αἰώνιον καὶ μνημόσυνον γενεῶν γενεαῖς

RSV **Exodus 3:14**

14 God said to Moses, "[I AM WHO I AM]." And he said, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'I AM has sent me to you.'"

15 God also said to Moses, "Say this to the people of Israel, 'The LORD, the God of your fathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': this is my name for ever, and thus I am to be remembered throughout all generations.

What happens when the word Adonai (Lord) appears in conjunction with the Divine Name?

וַיֹּאמֶר אֲדֹנָי יְהוָה בְּמַה אֲדַע כִּי אֵירֶשְׁתָּנָה: ^{W^{IT}} **Genesis 15:8**

reader would say "elohim"

"elohim" (אֱלֹהִים) being the word behind the pointing of the divine name here.

RSV **Genesis 15:8** But he said, "O Lord GOD, how am I to know that I shall possess it?"

Jehovah?

The word "Jehovah" is a combination of the vowel points for the word "Adonai" (Lord) and the consonants YHWH. It was popularized by such translations as Young's Literal Translation (1862, 1898) and the ASV (1901), which were popular English translations during early stages of the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Watchtower's New World Translation then took things one step farther by putting "Jehovah" in place of κύριος (Lord) in the NT quotations of the OT (ex. Matt 3:3), and anywhere else they saw fit (ex. Matt 1:20, 22 etc). Total of 237 time in the NT.