

What's the Difference

Christianity vs. Jehovah Witness

Jesus' prayer for His church, more so than anything else, was that we would be unified. But how is that achievable? Clearly there are some things that stand in the way of unity but what are they? As we drive through our community there are a lot of churches that gather together and there are distinct differences between them. Can we unite and what must the criterion be for this union? That is what we are going to be addressing over the next few weeks and **my hope is that this series will help those who are new to Christianity to understand some of the foundational truths that anyone who calls themselves a Christian must believe, and also help us understand where the lines of unity must be drawn.**

Today we are going to look at the church known as the **Jehovah's Witnesses**. I think most of us have seen people going door to door or encountered a person at our door wanting to give us some free literature and discuss the teachings of the Watchtower Organization.

Are Jehovah's Witnesses really Christians? <http://www.jw-media.org/beliefs/beliefsfaq.htm> (website)

Anyone who calls themselves a Christian, regardless of denominational affiliation, must believe in the deity of Christ or in other words that He is God. This is something clearly taught in the bible but it is something the Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe. They also deny that the Holy Spirit is God and to support their own beliefs have created a bible translation all of their own called the "New World Translation". For example:

John 1:1, 14 (NLT) In the beginning the Word already existed. The Word was with God, and the Word was God. So the Word became human and made his home among us. He was full of unfailing love and faithfulness. And we have seen his glory, the glory of the Father's one and only Son.

John 1:1, 14 (NWT) In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. So the Word became flesh and resided among us, and we had a view of his glory, a glory such as belongs to an only-begotten son from a father; and he was full of undeserved kindness and truth.

What do the experts say about this translation? (website)

Dr. J. R. Mantey "A shocking mistranslation." "Obsolete and incorrect." "It is neither scholarly nor reasonable to translate John 1:1 'The Word was a god.'"

Dr. Bruce M. Metzger "A frightful mistranslation." "Erroneous" and "pernicious" "reprehensible" "If the Jehovah's Witnesses take this translation seriously, they are polytheists."

Dr. James L. Boyer "I have never heard of, or read of any Greek Scholar who would have agreed to the interpretation of this verse insisted upon by the Jehovah's Witnesses...I have never encountered one of them who had any knowledge of the Greek language."

Dr. Walter R. Martin "The translation... 'a god' instead of 'God' is erroneous and unsupported by any good Greek scholarship, ancient or contemporary and is a translation rejected by all recognized scholars of the Greek language many of whom are not even Christians, and cannot fairly be said to be biased in favor of the orthodox contention."

The interesting thing to me is that there are many other places in the New World Translation that actually conflict with their teachings. But they have covered that problem as well...

"...the Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible...the Bible cannot be properly understood without Jehovah's visible organization in mind" (Watchtower, October 1, 1997, p. 587)

"Jehovah God has also provided his visible organization, his "faithful and discreet slave," made up of spirit-anointed ones... Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do. (Watchtower, December 1, 1981 p.27)

The Watchtower Society obviously believes that the authority of Christ's teachings has been given to them as an organization to pass along to an individual and that no singular person can understand God's will for their lives. But that is not what the NWT bible even teaches. Jesus' own words were that the Holy Spirit would reveal one truth individually to all of His followers.

1 John 2:27 (NASB95) As for you, the anointing which you received from Him abides in you, and you have no need for anyone to teach you; but as His anointing teaches you about all things, and is true and is not a lie, and just as it has taught you, you abide in Him.

In case you missed it let me point something out here. Jesus distinguishes himself from the Father and the Holy Spirit but specifically states that all are working together. Jesus states that everything He has come from the Father and that the Holy Spirit is sent not to act on His own but to tell us as individuals only what Jesus tells Him to say. What we see here is a relationship amongst the Trinity which is a term used to describe the unity of God subsisting in three distinct but equal Persons. But the Jehovah's Witness do not believe that there is a Holy Spirit

1 John 2:27 (NWT) And as for YOU, the anointing that YOU received from him remains in YOU, and YOU do not need anyone to be teaching YOU; but, as the anointing from him is teaching YOU about all things, and is true and is no lie, and just as it has taught YOU, remain in union with him.

The Jehovah's Witness have a slightly different take on this...