

STAND FIRM AGAINST JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

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I. INTRODUCTION

1. We are in a series called Stand Firm.
2. Theme Verse: **1 Corinthians 16:13** "Be alert, stand firm in the faith, be courageous, be strong."
3. Many believers throughout the centuries have fallen from the faith:
 - i. Some have become unbelievers (i.e. Joshua Harris).
 - ii. Some have fallen away from sound doctrine.
 - iii. Rob Bell was one of the most popular pastors in America. A best-selling author. Started a church that became a mega-church.
 1. Then he wrote a book called Love Wins, denying the orthodox doctrine of hell – that it is a place of eternal torment. He taught that because God is love, it follows that eventually God will let everyone into heaven.
 2. Then he came out as a supporter of the homosexual lifestyle. In a radio interview he said that he defined sin as that which damages, and since homosexuality does not cause any damage, then it must not be a sin.
4. To help you stand firm, in this series we are covering some of the most prominent false teachings in our time.
5. Today we are going to study the false teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses.
6. This is not a personal attack on Jehovah's Witnesses. I have some personal friends who are Jehovah's Witnesses. I have worked with them. This is not an attack on them personally, but on the false teachings of their religion.

II. BACKGROUND

1. Official Name: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society
 - i. Also called: Jehovah's Witnesses or the Watchtower Society
 - ii. "Jehovah" is the Hebrew transliteration of the name of God in the OT (aka tetragrammaton; YHWH).

- iii. "Watchtower" is based on a magazine published by the founder called Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence.
- 2. Claim to be the only true Christians; and the only true church; and have the only true understanding of the Bible.
- 3. Founder:
 - i. Charles Taze Russell in 1884.
 - ii. 1870 – He started an independent Bible study focusing on the return of Christ, and published his views in several books.
 - iii. 1879 – He founded the monthly magazine Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence.
 - iv. 1884 – Incorporated Zion's Watch Tower and Tract Society, with Russell as its president.
 - v. From 1886-1916 wrote six books called Studies in the Scriptures which form the basis of JW theology.
- 4. Numbers:
 - i. As of 2007 there almost 7 million active members in 235 countries; 1,084,005 in the United States.

III. DOCTRINAL ERRORS

- 1. JW have too many false teachings to deal with in one message:**
 - i. Jesus did not rise from the dead in His physical body, but only as a spirit being.
 - ii. Jesus was not crucified on a cross, but on a torture stake (pole).
 - iii. Only 144,000 JW will go to heaven; all other JW will spend eternity on the new earth.
 - iv. Blood transfusions are a sin.
 - v. They refuse to vote.
 - vi. They will not salute the flag.
 - vii. They will not sing the "Star Spangled Banner."
 - viii. They do not celebrate Christmas, Easter, birthdays, or national holidays.
 - ix. Their leadership will not allow them to serve in the armed forces.
 - x. They don't serve in politics, vote, lobby, run for office, or participate in any action to change the governments.

- xi. Only 144,000 select JW can understand the Bible. It is an organizational book – giving to an organization. Can only be interpreted by God’s designated organization – the Watchtower Society.
- xii. Only 144,000 are born again; all other JW are called “the other sheep.”
- xiii. Only 144,000 are the true church; all other JW are called the “great crowd.”
- xiv. Only the 144,000 can partake in Communion.
- xv. The Second Coming already occurred when Jesus returned invisibly in 1874. Then they changed the date of his invisible return to 1914.
- xvi. They have their own Bible translation, the New World Translation, in which they have reinterpreted several key verses to fit their interpretation (for example, John 1:1).

2. 7 FALSE TEACHINGS OF JW

i. GOD

1. JW

- a. God’s one true name is Jehovah, by which He must be identified.
- b. Not omnipresent: God is a spirit being, invisible and eternal, but with a spirit body and is not omnipresent.

2. The Bible

- a. God is identified by many names:
 - i. Elohim: God (Gen 1:1)
 - ii. El Elyon: God most high
 - iii. Adonai: Lord (Ps 8:1)
 - iv. El Shaddai: Almighty God (Gen 17:1)
 - v. Yahweh/Jehovah: LORD
 - vi. Yahweh Sabbaoth: Lord of Hosts (1 Sam 1:3)

- vii. In NT times, Jesus referred to God as “Father” (Gk. Patēr; Matt. 6:9), as did the apostles (1 Cor. 1:3).
 - viii. The apostles also often referred to God as God (*theos*), and Lord (*kurios*).
- b. God is omnipresent. **Psalm 139:7-10** “7 Where can I go to escape your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? 8 If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there. 9 If I live at the eastern horizon or settle at the western limits, 10 even there your hand will lead me; your right hand will hold on to me.”

ii. TRINITY

1. JW:

- a. No Trinity.
- b. Jehovah is Almighty God, Jesus is Michael the archangel, and the Holy Spirit is an active, impersonal force.

2. Bible:

- a. There is only one God in three coequal, coeternal persons: The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.
- b. Only One God:
 - i. **Deuteronomy 32:39** “See now that I alone am he; there is no God but me.”
 - ii. **Isaiah 43:10-11** “No god was formed before me, and there will be none after me. I – I am the LORD. Besides me, there is no other.”
- c. Each is called God:
 - i. Father: **Ephesians 4:6** “one God and Father of all, who is above all and through all and in all.”
 - ii. Son: **Hebrews 1:8** “but to the Son: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice.”

- iii. Holy Spirit: **Acts 5:3-4** “3 Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? 4 Wasn’t it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn’t it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God.”
- d. Each is distinct:
 - i. **Matthew 28:19** “Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,”
 - ii. **John 14:26** “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”
 - iii. **John 15:26** “When the Counselor comes, the one I will send to you from the Father —the Spirit of truth who proceeds from the Father—he will testify about me.”
 - iv. **1 Peter 1:1-2** “Peter, an apostle of Jesus Christ: To those chosen, living as exiles dispersed abroad in Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia, chosen 2 according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, through the sanctifying work of the Spirit, to be obedient and to be sprinkled with the blood of Jesus Christ. May grace and peace be multiplied to you.”

iii. JESUS

1. JW:

- a. Not God. He has only the power of a created angelic being.

- b. Was Michael the archangel in his pre-existence who became a man.
 - c. Jehovah's first creation, and only direct creation.
 - d. Not eternal.
 - e. Not equal to God the Father.
 - f. Through Christ Jehovah created all other things.
 - g. Do not worship Jesus.
2. Bible:
- a. Is God.
 - i. Jesus is called God:
 1. The Word was God. **John 1:1** "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."
 2. Thomas said: "My Lord and My God" (John 20:28).
 3. God calls Jesus God. **Hebrews 1:8** "but to the Son: Your throne, O God, is forever and ever, and the scepter of your kingdom is a scepter of justice."
 4. Jesus referred to Himself as "I Am," which was the way that Jehovah identified Himself in the Old Testament to Moses when He spoke from the burning bush (Ex 3:14). **John 8:58** Jesus said to them, "Truly I tell you, before Abraham was, I am."
 - ii. Jesus is God:
 1. It was prophesied. **Isaiah 9:6** "For a child will be born for us, a son will be given to us, and the government will be on his shoulders. He will be named Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace."
 2. Affirmed by the Apostles

- a. **John 1:1** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.”
 - b. **Colossians 1:15** “He is the image of the invisible God.”
 - c. **Colossians 2:9** “For the entire fullness of God’s nature dwells bodily in Christ”
 - b. The creator, not a created being.
 - i. **John 1:1-3** “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. 2 He was with God in the beginning. 3 All things were created through him, and apart from him not one thing was created that has been created.”
 - ii. **Colossians 1:16** “For everything was created by him, in heaven and on earth, the visible and the invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities— all things have been created through him and for him.”
 - c. Two terms to understand:
 - i. Begotten.
 1. **John 3:16 (KJV)** “For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life.”
 2. JW: Begotten = had a beginning.
 3. Greek *monogenes* means one and only, or unique; one of a kind. While God has many children, there is only one divine Son of God, Jesus Christ.
 4. **John 3:16 (CSB)** “For God loved the world in this way: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes

in him will not perish but have eternal life.”

ii. Firstborn.

1. **Colossians 1:15** “He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation.”
2. JW: firstborn = first created.
3. Bible: firstborn = priority, preeminence, and sovereignty.
4. **NIV Study Bible:** “Just as the firstborn son had certain privileges and rights in the Biblical world, so also Christ has certain rights in relation to creation – priority, preeminence, and sovereignty.”
5. In the Jewish world, firstborn was a way of saying that someone was especially honored. The nation of Israel was called firstborn (Ex 4:22), as was David (Ps 89:27). Doesn’t refer to birth order but to a place of honor before God. Paul was saying that Christ has a place of honor over all creation.

iv. **HOLY SPIRIT**

1. JW:

- a. The Holy Spirit is God’s impersonal active force. It is not a person, and has no voice or personality of its own, and is not part of any Trinity.
- b. "With this viewpoint, it is logical to conclude that the holy spirit is the active force of God. It is not a person but is a powerful force that God causes to emanate from himself to accomplish his holy will" (Reasoning, p. 381).

2. Bible:

- a. The Holy Spirit is not impersonal.

- b. The Holy Spirit is referred to with personal pronouns: “He,” not “It.” **John 16:13** “When the Spirit of truth comes, he will guide you into all the truth. For he will not speak on his own, but he will speak whatever he hears. He will also declare to you what is to come.”
- c. He is God. **Acts 5:3-4** **3** “Ananias,” Peter asked, “why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the proceeds of the land? **4** Wasn’t it yours while you possessed it? And after it was sold, wasn’t it at your disposal? Why is it that you planned this thing in your heart? You have not lied to people but to God.”
- d. He does things only a person can do:
 - i. He teaches us and reminds us of all things Christ taught. **John 14:36** “But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.”
 - ii. He speaks. **Acts 10:19** “While Peter was thinking about the vision, the Spirit told him, ‘Three men are here looking for you.’”

v. INTERMEDIATE STATE

1. JW:

- a. When a person dies, their body and soul return to the dust. The life force, spirit-breath, does not return to God, but God keeps the person in His memory and restores him if He should desire to do so.
- b. This is called soul-sleep. For example, when Lazarus died, Jesus said, “Our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep, but I’m on my way to wake him up” (Jn 11:11).
- c. This is called conditional immortality. At the end times, the dead Jehovah’s Witnesses will be resurrected, but everyone else will continue in eternal death.

2. Bible:

- a. The body returns to the dust from which it came.

Gen 3:19

- b. The spirit immediately goes to heaven or hell.

- i. The term "sleep" (Greek: Koimao or Katheudo) was a common biblical euphemism for death. Paul used it only in reference to believers in Christ who had died.

- ii. The thief on the cross (Luke 23:39-43).

- iii. The transfiguration (Mt 17:1-8). Moses and Elijah appeared and had a conversation with Jesus.

- iv. **John 11:25-26** Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me, even if he dies, will live. Everyone who lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?"

- v. **2 Corinthians 5:6-8** "6 So we are always confident and know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 7 For we walk by faith, not by sight. 8 In fact, we are confident, and we would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord."

- vi. **Philippians 1:21-24** "21 For me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. 22 Now if I live on in the flesh, this means fruitful work for me; and I don't know which one I should choose. 23 I am torn between the two. I long to depart and be with Christ—which is far better— 24 but to remain in the flesh is more necessary for your sake."

- c. **D. L. Moody** said to his friends, "One of these days you are going to read in the newspapers, 'D. L. Moody is dead.'" He said, "Don't believe it. At that

moment I am going to be more alive than I have ever been.”

vi. HELL

1. JW:

- a. There is no hell of fire. Wicked people are punished by annihilation when they die.

2. Bible:

- a. Hell is the place of eternal torment for the devil, his angels, and unbelievers.

b. Hell is described as:

- i. Everlasting fire. **Matthew 25:41** “When he will also say to those on the left, ‘Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels!’”

- ii. Eternal punishment. **Matthew 25:46** “And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

- iii. A blazing furnace; a place of sorrow and torment. **Matthew 13:41-42** “41 The Son of Man will send out his angels, and they will gather from his kingdom all who cause sin and those guilty of lawlessness. 42 They will throw them into the blazing furnace where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

- iv. Everlasting destruction 2Th 1:9

c. **Thomas Watson** described hell with three phrases:

- i. Without intermission: “Their pains shall be acute and sharp, and no relaxation; the fire shall not be slackened or abated.” There will be no 15-minute breaks from the torment; no vacations from the torment.

- ii. Without mixture. “Hell is a place of pure justice. In this life, God in anger remembers His mercy, he mixes compassion with

suffering.... But the torments of the damned have no mixture.” There will be no joy in hell; no fun in hell; no pleasure in hell; just torment.

- iii. Without cessation, eternal. “The pleasures of sin are but for a season – but the torments of the wicked are forever.” No annihilation. No unconsciousness.

vii. SALVATION

1. JW:

- a. Saved by works.
 - i. Must have faith in Christ.
 - ii. Must be actively associated with the JW organization.
 - iii. Must obey the rules of the organization.
 - iv. Baptism by immersion.
- b. Cannot know for sure if you are saved.

2. Bible:

- a. Paid for by the death of Christ.
 - i. **1 John 4:10** “Love consists in this: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the atoning sacrifice for our sins.”
- b. Saved by grace, through faith in Christ.
 - i. **Ephesians 2:8-9** “For you are saved by grace through faith, and this is not from yourselves; it is God’s gift— 9 not from works, so that no one can boast.”
 - ii. **Acts 16:31** They said, “Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved—you and your household.”
- c. Can have assurance of salvation.
 - i. **1 John 5:11-13** “I have written these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.”

- d. Good works are the result of salvation, not the cause.
Titus 2:14 “He gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to cleanse for himself a people for his own possession, eager to do good works.”

IV. CONCLUSION

1. When Jehovah’s Witnesses knock on your door, remember this:
 - i. They may carry a Bible, but they don’t interpret it correctly.
 - ii. They may claim to believe in Jehovah, but they don’t believe in the Jehovah of the Bible.
 - iii. They may claim to believe in Jesus, but they do not believe in the Christ of the Scriptures.
 - iv. They may claim to be servants of God, but as long as they teach false doctrine, they are servants of Satan.
2. Jehovah’s witnesses need:
 - i. Our love.
 - ii. Our prayers.
 - iii. Our witness.