

## Who Do They Say He Is--#2 Jehovah's Witnesses

Introduction: Our world presents many conflicting views on the person and work of Jesus of Nazareth. Even professing Christians may be confused about Christ, Who He was and is. This summer, in order to understand and appreciate more fully the uniqueness of our faith, we are exploring various teachings and examining our own beliefs.

Today, we compare the teachings of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, more commonly known as Jehovah's Witnesses. Founded in the 1880's by Charles Taze Russel, the Witnesses follow these teachings about Jesus:

- He is not divine, but was created as the angel Michael.
- His death only provides an opportunity for salvation through obeying God's laws.
- He rose from the grave as only a spirit person who occasionally materialized.
- He has already, invisibly returned to earth.

The Bible clearly presents the divine identity of Christ:

### I. Jesus' self-statements.

He claimed to be God. Jesus' I AM statements equaled assertions of divinity. LORD – "Yahweh" ("I am that I am"). Bread, Light, Gate, Shepherd, Resurrection, Way-Truth-Life, Vine. (John 6, 9, 10, 11, 14, 15.)

Christ declared Himself to be divine. He was condemned by the religious leaders, not because they misunderstood Him and His claims, but because they understood Him all too well.

- (Jesus said) "If you do not believe that I am the one I claim to be, you will indeed die in your sins." John 8:24.
- "I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" At this, they picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus hid himself, slipping away from the temple grounds. John 8:58-59.
- (Jesus said) "I and the Father are one." Again the Jews picked up stones to stone him, but Jesus said to them, "I have shown you many great miracles from the Father. For which of these do you stone me?" "We are not stoning you for any of these," replied the Jews, "but for blasphemy, because you, a mere man, claim to be God." John 10:30-33.
- (Jesus asked) "Why then do you accuse me of blasphemy because I said, 'I am God's Son'? Do not believe me unless I do what my Father does. But if I do it, even though you do not believe me, believe the miracles, that you may know and understand that the Father is in me, and I in the Father." Again they tried to seize him, but he escaped their grasp. John 10:36-39.

- The high priest said to him, "I charge you under oath by the living God: Tell us if you are the Christ, the Son of God." "Yes, it is as you say," Jesus replied... Then the high priest tore his clothes and said, "He has spoken blasphemy! Why do we need any more witnesses? Look, now you have heard the blasphemy. What do you think?" "He is worthy of death," they answered. Matthew 26:63-66.

### II. Doctrinal statements.

The Bible contains numerous explanations and affirmations on the identity and nature of Jesus Christ.

- He is the image of the invisible God.... Colossians 1:15-19.
- The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word.... Hebrews 1:1-3
- In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the One and Only, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.... No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. John 1:1-18.
- II Corinthians 11:4-6; Galatians 1:6-9; Revelation 1, 22.

### III. Personal responses of New Testament believers.

Repeatedly, people who encountered Jesus recognized Him correctly as divine and worshiped Him, an action reserved to be directed only toward God.

- His disciples, after Jesus walked on the water and stilled the sea: Then those who were in the boat worshiped him, saying, "Truly you are the Son of God." Matthew 14:33.
- After Jesus healed the man born blind: Then the man said, "Lord, I believe," and he worshiped him. John 9:38.
- Thomas to the risen Christ: "My Lord and my God!" John 20:28.
- In a post-resurrection appearance of Christ: When they saw him, they worshiped him. Matthew 28:17. See also Luke 24:52.

Conclusion: In addition, there is the witness of early Christian history.

Councils, such as in Nicaea in 325 A.D. confirmed what the apostles had taught, what scriptures had recorded, and what the church had always believed.

With the Bible as our supreme source of authority, Christians can confidently conclude that Jesus was and is divine, the Incarnation of God Himself, the God-man Who lived, died, rose, ascended, reigns, and someday will return to redeem all those who trust in Him alone for their eternal salvation. Does that include you? Who do you say that Jesus is? What is He to you?