

6. What Do Jehovah's Witnesses Teach About the Trinity?

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From the **TeachingtheWord** Bible Knowledgebase

This is the fifth in a series of articles about the doctrines and practices of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Read [part four](#).

Because they deny the deity of both Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, Jehovah's Witnesses deny the essential Bible doctrine of the Trinity. In fact, they say that those who believe in the Trinity are apostates who will be annihilated by God.

Substituting Man's Reason for God's Word

On their website and in official publications,[1] Jehovah's Witnesses deny the doctrine of the Trinity on this basis: *The idea of one God consisting in three persons cannot be explained by human reason.* In this as in every other area of doctrine, they set man's reason in authority over God's Word. They call the doctrine of the Trinity "confusing, contrary to normal reason, unlike anything in [human] experience."[2] If something cannot be explained by human reason, they say, then the Bible cannot possibly teach it.

Arguing Against a Straw Man

As they do on most subjects, Jehovah's Witnesses argue against a straw-man version of the doctrine of the Trinity, not the authentic doctrine as taught from Scripture alone by Bible-believing Protestants. Instead, they set up their arguments against quotations from the *Catholic Encyclopedia*; passages from the Roman Catholic *Jerusalem Bible*; and statements of popes, Roman Catholic and Greek Orthodox theologians, and other unbelieving scholars who shroud the doctrine of the Trinity in mysticism and church tradition.[3]

Furthermore, the Watchtower Society uses revisionist history and flawed logic to try to make a case that the doctrine of the Trinity is "entirely pagan." It was, they falsely claim, carried over into early Christianity from sources such as Egyptian paganism, Hinduism, and the philosophy of Plato.[4]

Changing Scripture to Suit Their Agenda

As we have discussed in previous articles in this series, the Jehovah's Witnesses' *New World Translation* of the Bible denies the deity of Jesus Christ and presents the "holy spirit" as a mere impersonal force. Placing these false teachings in authority over God's Word causes them to mistranslate many Scripture passages that actually support the doctrine of the Trinity in the authentic original.

Summary of the Watchtower Position: Belief in the Trinity Means Condemnation

Having set up a straw-man version of the Trinity to argue against, supported by citations from their linguistically and spiritually corrupt version of the Bible, the Jehovah's Witnesses conclude their specious argument with these deceitful words, under the heading, "Reject the Trinity" -

There can be no compromise with God's truths. Hence, to worship God on his terms means to reject the Trinity doctrine. It contradicts what the prophets, Jesus, the apostles, and the early Christians believed and taught. It contradicts what God says about himself in his own inspired Word. Thus, he counsels: "Acknowledge that I alone am God and that there is no one else like me." - Isaiah 46:9, *TEV*.

God's interests are not served by making him confusing and mysterious. Instead, the more that people become confused about God and his purposes, the better it suits God's Adversary, Satan the Devil, the 'god of this world.' It is he who promotes such false doctrines to 'blind the minds of unbelievers.' (2 Corinthians 4:4) And the Trinity doctrine also serves the interests of clergymen who want to maintain their hold on people, for they make it appear as though only theologians can understand it. - See John 8:44.

Accurate knowledge of God brings great relief. It frees us from teachings that are in conflict with God's Word and from organizations that have apostatized. As Jesus said: "You will know the truth, and the truth will set you free." - John 8:32.

By honoring God as supreme and worshiping him on his terms, we can avoid the judgment that he will soon bring on apostate Christendom. Instead, we can look forward to God's favor when this system ends: "The world is passing away and so is its desire, but he that does the will of God remains forever." - 1 John 2:17.[5]

Thus Jehovah's Witnesses put their argument against the Trinity in life-and-death terms: If you believe this doctrine, you are siding with apostates and you are under God's condemnation. (And thus they teach, as we shall see in a future article, that you will be annihilated). You can only find God's favor, Jehovah's Witnesses say, by denying the Trinity.

Authentic Christianity in Contrast

The Trinity is a foundational Christian doctrine where even small errors can have large (and devastating) consequences. The doctrine of the Trinity is not merely a technicality. It is essential Christian truth. To believe in the God of the Bible is to believe in the Trinity. To not believe in the Trinity is to not believe in the God of the Bible. Although the word "Trinity" appears nowhere in Scripture, the doctrine of one God revealed in three persons is plainly taught in the pages of God's Word. The Trinity has become a neglected doctrine in the Evangelical church in recent times, to the church's great harm.

Just as the Bible does not set out to prove the existence of God but states it as propositional truth, the Bible also states the doctrine of the Trinity as propositional truth. According to Scripture, the Trinity is the one true, living, and eternal God, who is composed of three united persons of one substance and power, without separate existence. The triune God is revealed in three Persons, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Key passages supporting the doctrine of the Trinity include Deuteronomy 6:4, Matthew 28:19, John 5:19, John 14:16, 2 Corinthians 13:14, and James 2:19.

The Trinity is a doctrine that human wisdom cannot fully comprehend or explain, but that is no argument against it. Human wisdom cannot explain other vital doctrines, such as the creation of the entire universe out of nothing in six days, or God becoming man in the person of Jesus Christ, though the Bible plainly teaches both. (As one would expect, Jehovah's Witnesses deny these two doctrines as well, saying that they don't pass their test of reasonableness.) Authentic Christianity can only be accepted on the basis of belief in God's propositional revelation in His authentic Word.

For more information on the doctrine of the Trinity from Scripture, and on the false teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses on this and other subjects, please see the recommended resources below.

Next: Have any of Jehovah's Witnesses' predictions of future events ever been fulfilled?

References:

1. See, for example, "Should You Believe in the Trinity?" at www.watchtower.org/e/ti/index.htm (as viewed on 9/24/08).
2. "How is the Trinity Explained?" at <http://www.watchtower.org/e/ti/index.htm> (as viewed on 9/24/08).
3. See above, and also "Should You Believe It?" at <http://www.watchtower.org/e/ti/index.htm> (as viewed on 9/24/08).
4. See above, and also "How Did the Trinity Doctrine Develop?" at <http://www.watchtower.org/e/ti/index.htm> (as viewed on 9/24/08). In fact, the Jehovah's Witnesses, like many postmodern scholars, have it backward: The uses of tri-unity in ancient paganism, like the creation and flood accounts of the pagan religions, are *perversions* of God's truth, not the *sources* of those doctrines as found in Scripture.
5. "Reject the Trinity" at <http://www.watchtower.org/e/ti/index.htm> (as viewed on 9/24/08).

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