

The confusing religion called the Jehovah's Witnesses

The sect known as Jehovah's Witnesses (JWs or the Watch Tower Society) began with Charles Taze Russell in the 1870's. He was raised a Presbyterian, joined the Congregational church, and was finally was influenced by the Seventh-Day Adventist Church. He admits his own problems with traditional doctrines during the time he was with these churches and so eventually founded his own group.

1. Is the Watch Tower Society (WTS) Reliable?

The WTS teaches that the WTS is God's reliable mouthpiece to the nations, and it claims to be God's inspired prophet (WT, 4-1-1972, 197)—and yet its prophecies have repeatedly failed the biblical test that they be true, to wit: I am indebted to an article on Catholic.com apologetics website entitled Stumpers for the Jehovah's Witnesses for much of what follows.¹ This website carries the approval Imprimatur and Nihil Obstat and so is trustworthy.

Year	Teaching and references: WT=Watchtower publication
1889	"The 'battle of the great day of God almighty' (Rev 16:14) which will end in AD 1914 . . ." (<i>Studies</i> , Vol. 2, 1908 edition, 101).
1891	"With the end of AD 1914 The Church will end, (<i>Studies</i> , Vol. 3, 153). Reaffirmed in 1894 (<i>WT Reprints</i> , 1-1-1894, 1605 and 1677).
1897	"Our Lord is now present, since October 1874 AD" (<i>Studies</i> , Vol. 4, 1897 edition, 621).
1916	"The six great 1000 year days beginning with Adam are ended, and that the great 7th day, the 1000 years of Christ's reign began in 1873" (<i>Studies</i> , Vol. 2, p. 2 of foreword).
1917	"Scriptures . . . prove that the Lord's Second Advent occurred in the fall of 1874" (<i>Studies</i> , Vol. 7, 68).
1918	"Therefore, we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the faithful prophets of old" (<i>Millions Now Living Will Never Die</i> , 89).
1922	"The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the scriptures than 1914" (WT, 9-1-1922, 262).
1923	"1925 is definitely settled by the scriptures. As to Noah, the Christian now has much more upon which to base his faith than Noah had upon which to base his faith in a coming deluge" (WT, 4-1-1923, 106).
1925	"The year of 1925 is here. . . Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year" (WT, 1-1-1925, 3).
1931	"There was a measure of disappointment on the part of Jehovah's faithful ones on earth concerning the dates 1914, 1918, & 1925 . . . and they also learned to quit fixing dates" (<i>Vindication</i> , 388, 389).
1939	"The disaster of Armageddon is just ahead" (<i>Salvation</i> , 361).
1941	"Armageddon is surely near . . . soon . . . within a few years" (<i>Children</i> , 10).
1946	"Armageddon . . . should come sometime before 1972" (<i>They Have Found a Faith</i> , 44).
1966	"Six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975 C.E" (<i>Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God</i> , 29).
1968	"The end of the six thousand years of man's history in the fall of 1975 is not tentative, but is accepted as a certain date" (WT, 1-1-1968, 271).

Besides false prophecies, the WTS has misled its members through countless changes in doctrine and practice:

In 1880 worship of Christ is approved, then disapproved in 1964.

The men of Sodom will be resurrected (1879 & 1965) then not (1952 & 1988), and this continued to go back and forth up to the present time.

1903, participation in the military approved, 1951 it was prohibited.

1904 celebration of Christmas approved, 1983 it was condemned.

1917 Flying or displaying the US flag encouraged, 1971 it was condemned as idolatry.

Despite these contradictions, WTS asserts that "It is through the columns of *The Watchtower* that Jehovah provides direction and constant scriptural counsel to his people . . ." (WT, 5-1-1964, 277).

2. Can You Trust the New World Translation?

The *New World Translation* (NWT), the JWs' own Bible version, was created between 1950-61 in several parts, beginning with New Testament (NT). The translation was made by an "anonymous" committee, which transliterated and altered passages that were problematic for earlier JWs.. The text of the NWT is more of a transliteration to fit

¹ See http://www.catholic.com/library/Stumpers_for_Jehovah_Witnesse.asp

theological presumptions than it is a true translation. This can be seen in key verses that the WTS changed in order to fit its doctrines. Yet in the Gospel of John adding or deleting anything from the scriptures is condemned (Rev 22:19).

3. Is "Jehovah" God's Name?

In *Reasoning From the Scriptures* the WTS teaches that "Jehovah" is the proper pronunciation of God's name, and so "Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved" (Rom. 10:13). They continue, "Many scholars favor the spelling 'Yahweh,' but it is uncertain and there is not agreement among them. On the other hand, 'Jehovah' is the form of the name that is most readily recognized, because it has been used in English for centuries . . ." (p. 195). New Testament Greek always uses the word "Lord," and never "Jehovah," even in quotes from the Old Testament (OT). *Encyclopedia Judaica*, *Webster's Encyclopedia*, *Jewish Encyclopedia*, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, *Universal Jewish Encyclopedia* and countless others agree that the title "Jehovah" is erroneous, grammatically impossible, and was never used by the Jews.

4. Do Humans Possess an Immortal Soul?

Another mistake made by JW's is their denial of the immortality of the soul. The Bible mentions the soul approximately 200 times, and it can be seen to have very different meanings according to the context of each passage. Perhaps the strongest contradiction of the WTS doctrine is seen in Christ's descent to Hades. In 1 Peter 3:19, the apostle tells his audience how Jesus "preached to the spirits in prison."

5. Is Hell Real or Not?

The WTS also maintains that everlasting punishment is a myth and a lie invented by Satan. Hell is merely mankind's common grave, and is definitely not a fiery torture, according to them.

According to Scripture, if one is in hell, "he shall be tormented with fire and sulfur . . . the smoke of their torment ascends forever and ever, and day and night they have no rest" (Rev. 14:11). This is an "everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matt. 25:41). Jesus tells his listeners of Lazarus and the rich man, where the rich man dies, and is "existing in torment . . . he sees . . . calls out . . . 'I am in anguish in this blazing fire'" (Luke 16:19-31). Now if hell were "a place of rest in hope" as the WTS teaches, then it is odd that Jesus would choose such contradictory illustrations to convey this. Lastly, Revelation 20 calls hell a "pool of fire . . . [where] they will be tormented day and night, forever and ever"—all who are not in the book of life. So, if one's name is in the book of life, one enters heaven (Rev. 21:27). If it not in the book, then a literal hell awaits.

6. The understanding of Jesus and God.

Catholic Teaching	WTS Teaching
Jesus is the Son of God,	Jesus is the Word who is a god.
the Second Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity,	Jesus and the Archangel Michael are the same being,
Jesus is not a created being	The Archangel Michael was created
God is Three Persons in One God (a Trinity of persons)	God is One, there is no such thing as a Trinity
The Holy Spirit is the Third Divine Person of the Blessed Trinity	The Holy Spirit is a force, and not God
Jesus Suffered died, was buried and rose on the third day according to the Scriptures and showed himself with his wounds to prove who he was.	Jesus is forever dead, he was not raised, his body was disposed of by God (dissolved into its constitutive elements or atoms, therefore he borrowed a body with wound holes to convince Thomas.
Jesus was raised in his body, such that he even ate with his disciples after the resurrection.	Jesus "was raised as an invisible spirit creature, with no physical body"

7. Is Heaven Just for the "Anointed Class"?

The WTS teaches that only the anointed 144,000 seen in Revelation 7 will enter heaven (the "anointed class"), while the remainder that are not annihilated (the "other sheep") will live forever on earth in paradise. However, if there are only 144,000, what do we make of the host impossible to count that we see in Revelation 7:9?

In conclusion, this is a false religion, tailored originally to conform to the obstacles of faith of Mr. Russel, and which is not Catholic or even Christian. If you join it, it will cost you your salvation through the mortal sin of apostasy