

Jesus in Christianity vs. Jehovah's Witnesses

A comprehensive comparison of how mainstream Christianity and Jehovah's Witnesses understand the person and work of Jesus Christ, examining key theological differences that shape each faith tradition.



Understanding the Divide



Two Perspectives, One Figure

Both Christianity and Jehovah's Witnesses center their faith on Jesus Christ, yet their understanding of His identity, nature, and role differs fundamentally. These differences aren't merely academic—they shape worship practices, salvation theology, and daily Christian living.

This presentation examines nine critical areas where these traditions diverge, providing biblical references that each group uses to support their positions.

The Question of Identity

Mainstream Christianity

The Eternal Son: Jesus is the eternal Son of God, not created but begotten. He is "the Word" who existed with God from eternity and is fully God (John 1:1).

Key verse: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Jehovah's Witnesses

The First Creation: Jesus is the first and greatest of God's creations, identified as Michael the Archangel in his pre-human existence.

According to Watchtower teaching, he was created by Jehovah and used as the agent for all other creation.

Biblical Tension: John 1:1

The Translation Debate

Traditional Translation: "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God."

New World Translation (JW): "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god."

This single verse encapsulates the core disagreement. Mainstream Christianity sees this as clear evidence of Jesus' full divinity, while Jehovah's Witnesses interpret it as showing Jesus as a lesser divine being, subordinate to Jehovah.



The Nature of Divinity

Christianity: Full Divinity

Jesus possesses the complete nature of God, co-equal and co-eternal with the Father. Philippians 2:6 states He was "in very nature God," and Hebrews 1:3 calls Him "the exact representation of God's being."

- Worshipped by angels (Hebrews 1:6)
- Called "Lord and God" (John 20:28)
- Forgives sins (Mark 2:5-7)
- Receives prayer (Acts 7:59)

Jehovah's Witnesses: Lesser Divinity

Jesus is "a god" in a lesser sense—mighty and divine but not Almighty God. He is always subordinate to Jehovah and serves as His chief agent and representative.

- Created by Jehovah
- Inferior in power and authority
- Not worthy of worship
- Mediator, not equal deity

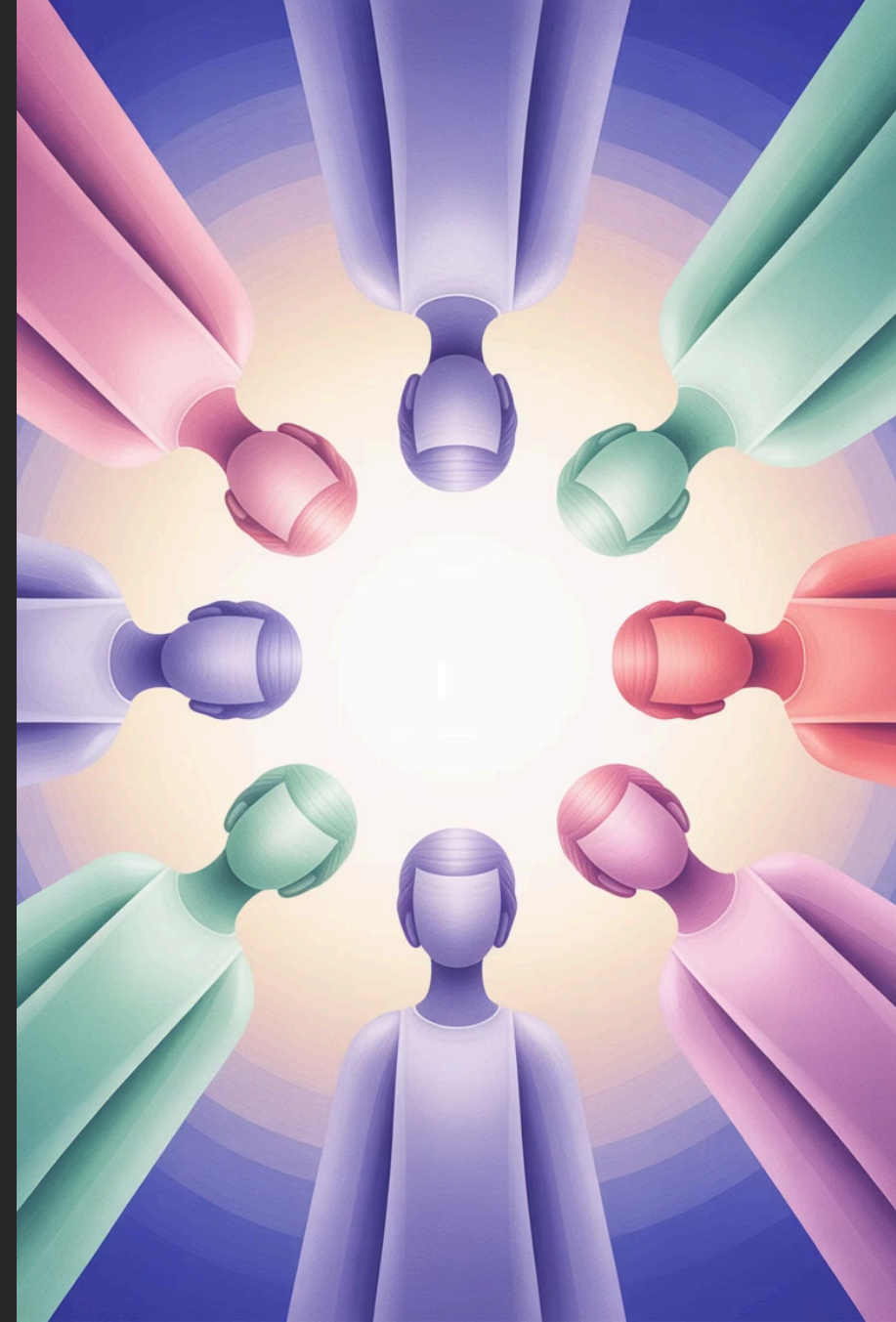
The Paradox of Worship

⊗ **Biblical Tension: Hebrews 1:6**

"And again, when God brings his firstborn into the world, he says, 'Let all God's angels worship him.'"

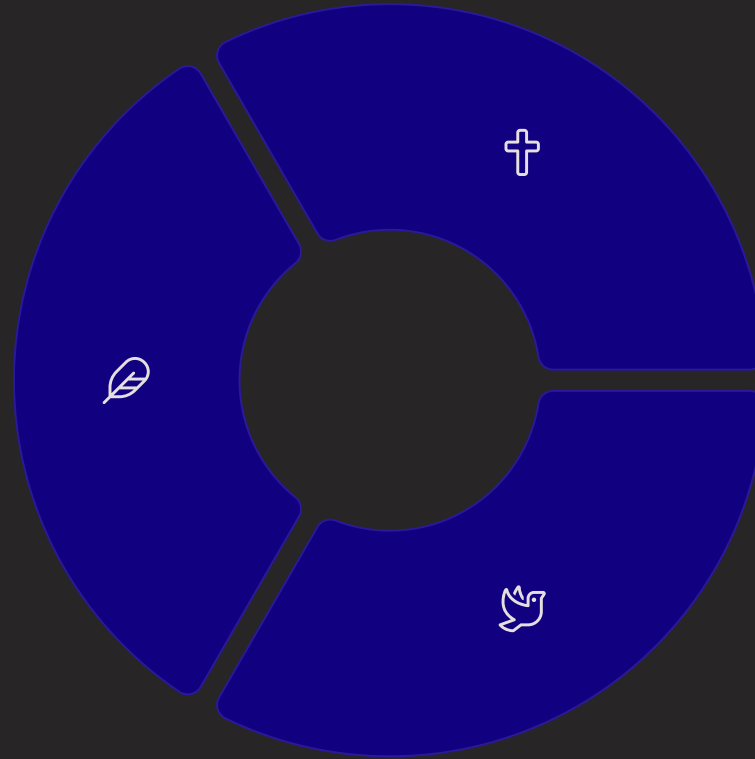
This verse presents a significant challenge for Jehovah's Witness theology. If Jesus is Michael the Archangel—a created being—why would God command all angels to worship him? Scripture consistently teaches that worship belongs to God alone (Exodus 20:3-5).

Mainstream Christianity sees this as natural evidence of Jesus' divine nature, while Jehovah's Witnesses must explain why an angel would receive worship typically reserved for Jehovah.



The Trinity Doctrine

The Father
First person of the Trinity, eternally
generating the Son



The Son

Second person, eternally begotten, incarnate
as Jesus Christ

Holy Spirit

Third person, proceeding from Father and
Son, active in creation and redemption

Christianity: One God eternally existing in three distinct persons—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit—each fully God yet maintaining perfect unity of essence.

Jehovah's Witnesses Reject the Trinity



A Different Understanding

Jehovah's Witnesses firmly reject the Trinity doctrine as unbiblical and pagan in origin. Their position:

- **Jehovah** is one person, the only true God
- **Jesus** is His first creation, now exalted
- **Holy Spirit** is God's active force, not a person

They argue the word "Trinity" doesn't appear in Scripture and that the doctrine emerged from Greek philosophical influence on early Christianity.

Scriptural Evidence for Trinity

Matthew 28:19

"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

Note: "Name" (singular) encompasses all three persons

Acts 5:3-4

"Then Peter said, 'Ananias, how is it that Satan has so filled your heart that you have lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied just to human beings but to God.'"

The Holy Spirit is directly called God

2 Corinthians 13:14

"May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

Three persons blessing together as equals

The Virgin Birth: Two Interpretations

1

Christianity

God Incarnate: The eternal Son of God took on human nature through the virgin birth. The Holy Spirit miraculously caused Mary to conceive, resulting in the God-man Jesus Christ.

Matthew 1:23: "The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')."

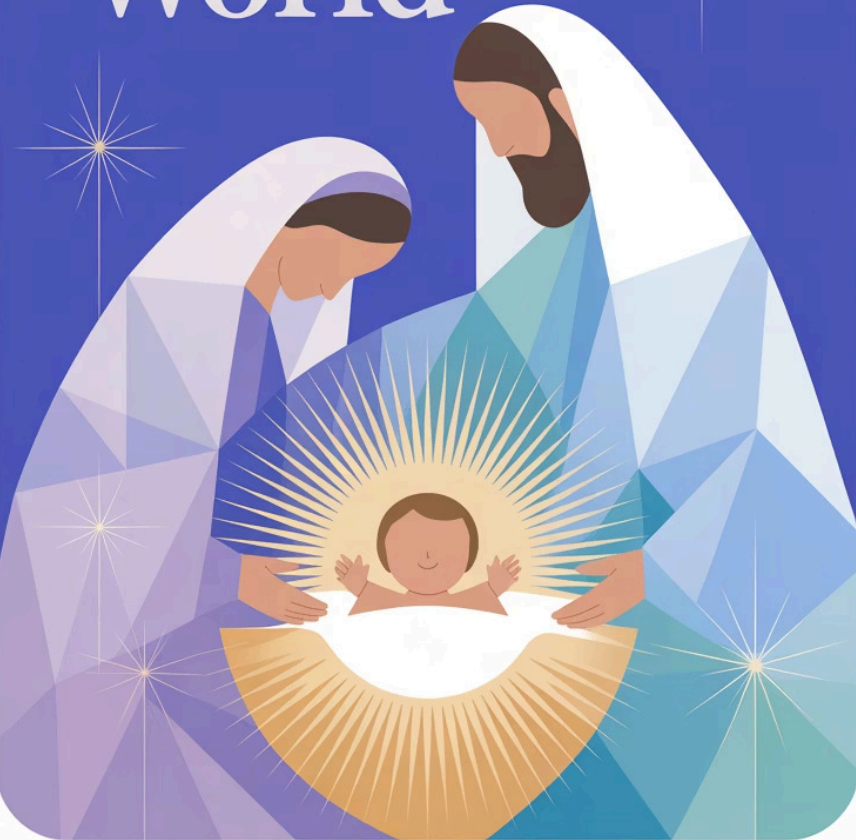
2

Jehovah's Witnesses

Life Transfer: Jesus' heavenly life force was transferred into Mary's womb by Jehovah. He was born as a perfect human being, but not as God incarnate.

They emphasize his perfection and sinlessness while denying his divine nature in human form.

Joy
to the
World



"God With Us"

Immanuel

"The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and they will call him Immanuel (which means 'God with us')." - Matthew 1:23

The name Immanuel presents another theological challenge. If Jesus is merely a perfect human or created being, how can He be called "God with us"? Mainstream Christianity sees this as prophetic confirmation of the Incarnation—God literally dwelling among humanity in the person of Jesus Christ.

Death and Resurrection: Critical Differences

Christianity

The Cross

Jesus was crucified on a Roman cross, died, and was buried. On the third day, He rose bodily from the dead, appearing to disciples in His physical resurrection body.

Physical Resurrection

Luke 24:39-43 records Jesus eating fish and inviting disciples to touch His wounds, proving His bodily resurrection.

Jehovah's Witnesses

The Torture Stake

Jesus died on a single upright stake (not a cross), which they view as a pagan symbol. The traditional cross is rejected as unbiblical.

Spiritual Resurrection

Jesus was raised as a spirit creature, not in a physical body. His post-resurrection appearances were materializations, not the same physical form.

The Evidence of Luke 24

Biblical Evidence: Luke 24:39-43

"Look at my hands and my feet. It is I myself! Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones, as you see I have... They gave him a piece of broiled fish, and he took it and ate it in their presence."

This passage directly contradicts the Jehovah's Witness teaching of a purely spiritual resurrection. Jesus explicitly demonstrates His physical nature by:

- Inviting physical touch
- Showing wounds in hands and feet
- Eating food in their presence
- Distinguishing Himself from a "ghost"



Salvation: Grace vs. Works

Christianity: Grace Alone

Salvation is entirely by God's grace through faith in Jesus Christ.

Works are the result of salvation, not the cause.

Ephesians 2:8-9: "For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast."

Jehovah's Witnesses: Faith + Works + Organization

Salvation requires faith in Jesus, but also faithful works and loyalty to Jehovah's organization (the Watchtower). Only 144,000 go to heaven; others inherit paradise earth.

Members must engage in regular field service, meeting attendance, and organizational submission.



PARADISE
EARTH

The 144,000 and Paradise Earth

144,000

Heavenly Class

Only 144,000 anointed ones will rule with Christ in heaven. This number is considered nearly complete.

8M+

Great Crowd

Millions of "other sheep" will live forever on a paradise earth, serving under the heavenly government.

This two-class system is unique to Jehovah's Witnesses. Mainstream Christianity teaches that all believers receive the same eternal inheritance—eternal life in God's presence, whether conceived as heaven or a renewed earth.

Romans 10: Salvation by Confession

Tension: Romans 10:9-10

"If you declare with your mouth, 'Jesus is Lord,' and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved."

Paul's words emphasize faith and confession alone for salvation. There's no mention of organizational loyalty, works requirements, or different classes of believers. This passage challenges the Jehovah's Witness teaching that salvation requires ongoing works and submission to the Watchtower Society.

The Second Coming: Visible vs. Invisible

Christianity

Future & Visible: Jesus will return bodily and visibly to judge the living and the dead. Every eye will see Him when He comes in glory.

Acts 1:11: "This same Jesus, who has been taken from you into heaven, will come back in the same way you have seen him go into heaven."

1

2

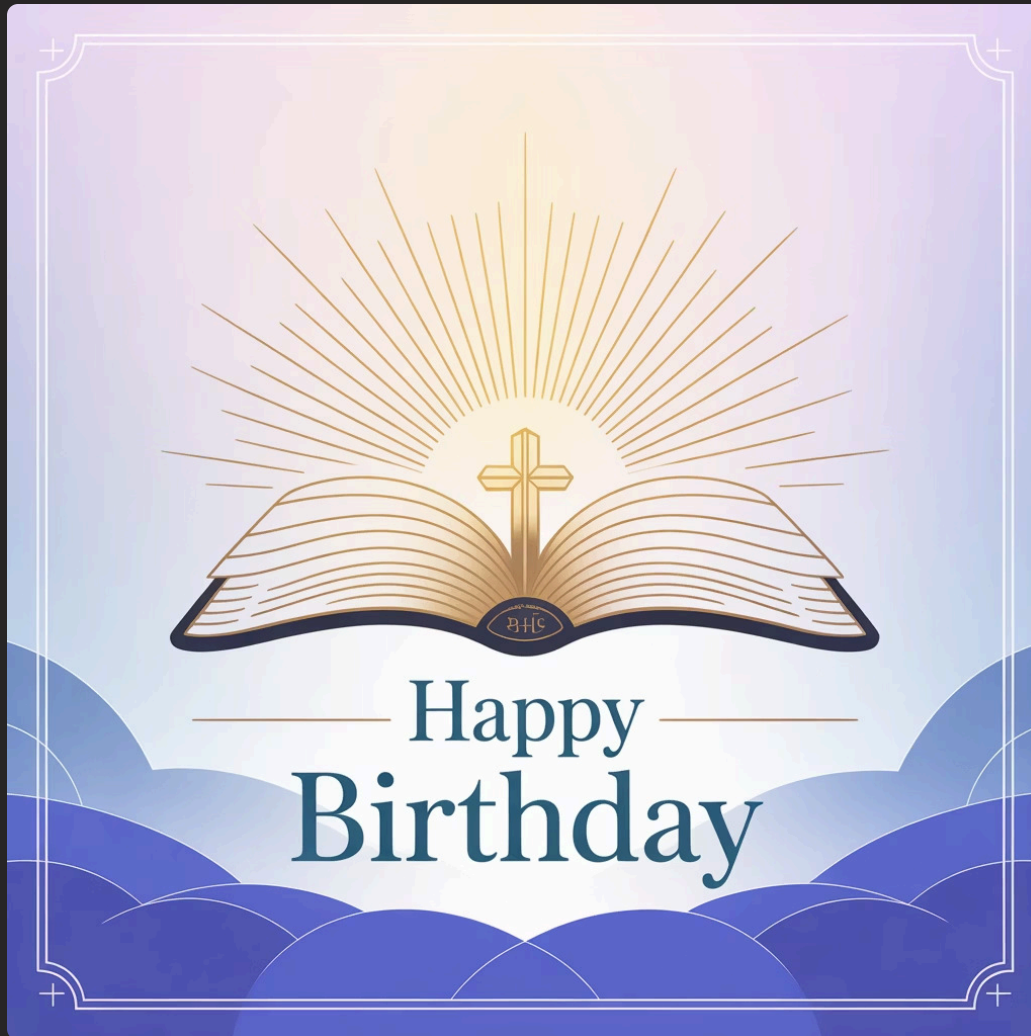
Jehovah's Witnesses

1914 & Invisible: Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 and began ruling from heaven. The "signs" indicate we're in the final days before Armageddon.

His presence is spiritual and discerned through world events, not a visible appearance.

Scripture and Authority

Christianity



Scripture Alone: The Bible (66 books of Old and New Testaments) is the final authority for faith and practice. Individual believers can read and interpret Scripture with the Holy Spirit's guidance.

2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness."

Jehovah's Witnesses



Organization + Scripture: While they use the New World Translation, interpretation comes through the "faithful and discreet slave" class (Watchtower leadership).

Watchtower publications are essential for understanding Scripture. Individual interpretation is discouraged without organizational guidance.

Distinctive Practices



Celebrations

Christianity: Generally celebrates Christmas, Easter, birthdays as expressions of joy and thanksgiving.

JW: Forbids Christmas, Easter, birthdays, considering them pagan in origin or self-glorifying.



Evangelism

Christianity: Various forms of evangelism and missions work.

JW: Systematic door-to-door preaching is required of all active members, tracking hours spent in field service.



Medical Decisions

Christianity: No restrictions on blood transfusions or medical procedures.

JW: Strictly forbids blood transfusions based on Acts 15:29, even in life-threatening situations.



Lord's Supper

Christianity: Regular communion/Lord's Supper for all believers.

JW: Annual Memorial where only the anointed 144,000 partake; others observe only.

The Central Question

Who is Jesus?

Christianity

Almighty God incarnate: The eternal Son, co-equal with the Father, who became man to save humanity. Salvation comes through faith in Him alone by grace.

"My Lord and my God!" - Thomas (John 20:28)

Jehovah's Witnesses

Created being: The archangel Michael, Jehovah's first and greatest creation, through whom all else was made. Salvation requires faith plus works and organizational loyalty.

"The firstborn of all creation" - (Colossians 1:15, NWT)

These differences aren't merely academic—they fundamentally shape how each group understands worship, salvation, and the Christian life. Understanding these distinctions helps explain why mainstream Christianity and Jehovah's Witnesses, despite sharing reverence for Jesus, represent distinctly different religious traditions.