



WIN Program: Witnessing in Neighborhoods

Advanced Class on Jehovah's Witnesses

Week Three: Supplemental: Jehovah's Witnesses and Trinity

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If Jesus is God, then who did He pray to?

by [Matt Slick](#)

This is a very common question and the answer is found in understanding the [Trinity](#) and the [incarnation](#) of Jesus.

The Trinity is the doctrine that there is only one [God](#) in all existence. This one God exists as three persons: The Father, The Son, and the Holy Spirit. They are not three gods, but one God. Each is a separate person, yet each of them is, in essence, divine in nature.

A close analogy of the [Trinity](#) can be found by looking at the concept of time. Time is past, present, and future. There are three "aspects" or "parts" of time. This does not mean that there are three "times," but only one. Each is separate, in a sense, yet each shares the same nature, or essence. In a similar way, the Trinity is three separate persons who share the same nature.

The Incarnation

The doctrine of the incarnation in Christian teaching is that Jesus, who is the second person of the Trinity, added to himself human [nature](#) and became a man.

The [Bible](#) says that Jesus is God in flesh, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.....and the word became flesh and dwelt among us," ([John 1:1, 14](#)); and, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form," ([Col. 2:9](#)). Jesus, therefore, has two natures. He is both God and man.

Jesus is completely human, but He also has a [divine](#) nature.

GOD

He is worshiped ([Matt. 2:2,11; 14:33; 28:9](#))
He is prayed to ([Acts 7:59; 1 Cor. 1:2](#))
He was called God ([John 20:28; Heb. 1:8](#))
He was called Son of God ([Mark 1:1](#))
He is sinless ([1 Pet. 2:22; Heb. 4:15](#))
He knew all things ([John 21:17](#))
He gives eternal life ([John 10:28; 17:2](#))
The fullness of deity dwells in Him ([Col. 2:9](#))

MAN

He worshiped the Father (John 17)
He prayed to the Father ([John 17:1](#))
He was called man ([Mark 15:39; John 19:5](#)).
He was called Son of Man ([John 9:35-37](#))
He was tempted ([Matt. 4:1](#))
He grew in wisdom ([Luke 2:52](#))
He died ([Rom. 5:8](#))
He has a body of flesh and bones ([Luke 24:39](#))

As a man, Jesus needed to pray. When He was praying he was not praying to Himself, but to God the Father.

If Jesus is God, then why did He not know the time of His return?

In [Matt. 24:35-37](#) Jesus said, "Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words shall not pass away."³⁶ "But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."³⁷ "For the coming of the Son of Man will be just like the days of Noah."

If Jesus is God in flesh, then shouldn't He know what the day and hour of his return would be? After all, God knows all things. Therefore, if Jesus doesn't know all things, then He cannot be God.

This objection is most often raised by the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#) but is also echoed by the [Christadelphians](#). It is a good question.

Jesus was both God and man. He had two natures. He was divine and human at the same time. This teaching is known as the hypostatic union; that is, the coming-together of two natures in one person. In [Heb. 2:9](#) that Jesus was ". . . made for a little while lower than the angels . . ." Also in [Phil. 2:5-8](#), it says that Jesus "emptied Himself, taking the form of a bond-servant, and being made in the likeness of men . . ." [Col. 2:9](#) says, "For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form." Jesus was both God and man at the same time.

As a man, Jesus cooperated with the limitations of being a man. That is why we have verses like [Luke 2:52](#) that says "Jesus kept increasing in wisdom and stature, and in favor with God and men." Therefore, at this point in his ministry he could say He did not know the day nor hour of His return. It is not a denial of His being God, but a confirmation of Him being man.

Also, the logic that Jesus could not be God because He did not know all things works both ways. If we could find a scripture where Jesus does know all things, then that would prove that He was God, wouldn't it?

He said to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you love Me?" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Tend My sheep" ([John 21:17](#) - NASB).

Jesus did not correct Peter and say, "Hold on Peter, I do not know all things." He let Peter continue on with his statement that Jesus knew all things. Therefore, it must be true.

But, if we have a verse that says that Jesus did not know all things and another that says he did know all things, then isn't that a contradiction? No. It is not.

Before Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection He said the Father alone knew the day and hour of His return. It wasn't until after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection that omniscience is attributed to Jesus. As I said before, Jesus was cooperating with the limitations of being a man and completed His ministry on this earth. He was then glorified in His resurrection. Yet, He was still a man (cf. [Col. 2:9](#); [1 Tim. 2:5](#)). After Jesus' resurrection, He was able to appear and disappear at will. This is not the normal ability of a man. But, it is, apparently, the normal ability of a resurrected and glorified man. Jesus was different after the resurrection. There had been a change. He was still a man and yet He knew all things.

For further reading please see [the two natures of Jesus](#).

John 1:1, "The word was a god"

In [the] beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.
The New World Translation

This is one of the most common verses of contention between the [Jehovah's Witnesses](#) and Christians. Their false assumption is that Jesus is not God in flesh, but Michael the archangel who became a man. Therefore, since they deny that [Jesus is divine](#), they have altered the Bible in [John 1:1](#) so that Jesus is not divine in nature. The New World Translation has added the word "a" to the verse so it says, "...and the Word was **a** god." The correct translation for this verse is "In the beginning was the Word and the Word was with God and the Word was God." This is how it is rendered in the NASB, NIV, KJV, NKJV, ASV, RSV, etc.

καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος
and God was the word

The New World translation is incorrect in its translation of this verse for several reasons. First of all, the Bible teaches a strict monotheism. To say that Jesus is "a god" is to suggest that there is another god besides YHWH, which is contrary to scripture ([Isaiah 43:10](#); [44:6,8](#), etc.). Of course, the Jehovah's Witnesses will respond that Jesus is not the Almighty God, but a "lesser" kind of God. He is the "mighty God" as is referenced in [Isaiah 9:6](#), "For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us, and the government will rest on His shoulders, and His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace." Therefore, they say that Jesus is the mighty god, but not the Almighty God.

The immediate problem with this explanation is that YHWH is also called the Mighty God in [Jeremiah 32:18](#) and [Isaiah 10:21](#). In all three verses, including [Isaiah 9:6](#), the Hebrew word for "mighty" (*gibbor*) is used.

- [Isaiah 10:20-21](#), "Now it will come about in that day that the remnant of Israel, and those of the house of Jacob who have escaped, will never again rely on the one who struck them, but will truly rely on the LORD, the Holy One of Israel.
²¹A remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the mighty God."
- [Jer. 32:18](#), "who showest lovingkindness to thousands, but repayest the iniquity of fathers into the bosom of their children after them, O great and mighty God, the LORD of hosts is His name."

We can see that the Jehovah's Witness explanation is not valid. Both the Son and God are called the Mighty God.

Furthermore, how many actual gods are there in scripture? The obvious answer is that there is only one God in existence. Though there are others who have been falsely called gods ([1 Cor. 8:5-6](#)) or even said to be "as God" like Moses ([Ex. 4:16](#); [7:1](#)), there is only one real God ([Gal. 4:8-9](#); [Isaiah 44:6,8](#)). If Jesus is "a god" that was "with God" in the beginning, then is Jesus a true god or a false god?

But, the Jehovah's Witnesses often claim that Jesus is a god in the sense that Moses was called a god. But, Moses was not called a god. Rather, he would be "as God."

- "Moreover, he shall speak for you to the people; and it shall come about that he shall be as a mouth for you, and you shall be as God to him, ([Exodus 4:16](#)).
- "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'See, I make you as God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron shall be your prophet,'" ([Exodus 7:1](#)).

Why was Moses going "as God" to Pharaoh? Because Moses was given the authority and power to display powerful miracles that decimated much of Egypt. Was Moses really a god? Being "as God" in regards to power given to perform miracles over Egypt is not the same thing as being called "a god" that was in the beginning with God, ([John 1:1](#)).

John was a strict Jew, a monotheist. Does the Jehovah's Witness really think that John would be saying that there was another God besides Jehovah, even if it were Jesus? Being raised a good Jew, the apostle John would never believe that there was more than one God in existence. Yet, he compared the word with God, said the word was God, and that the word became flesh ([John 1:1,14](#)).

[John 1:1](#) in a literal translation reads thus: "In beginning was the word, and the word was with the God, and God was the word." Notice that it says "*God was the word.*" This is the actual word-for-word translation. It is not saying that "a god was the word." That wouldn't make sense. Let me break it down into three statements.

1. "In beginning was the word..."
(en arche en ho logos)
 1. A very simple statement that the Word was in the beginning.
2. "and the word was with the God..."
(kai ho logos en pros ton theon)
 1. This same Word was with God.
3. "and God was the word." -- Properly translated as "and the Word was God."
(kai theos en ho logos)
 1. This same Word was God.

Regarding statement 3 above, the correct English translation is "...and the Word was God," not "and God was the word." This is because if there is only one definite article ("ho"="the") in a clause where two nouns are in the nominative ("subject") form ("theos" and "logos"), then the noun with the definite article ("ho"="the") is the subject. In this case "ho logos" means that "the word" is the subject of the clause. Therefore, "*...the Word was God*" is the correct translation, not "God was the Word."¹ But this does not negate the idea that John is speaking of only one God, not two, even though the Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that Jesus is "a god," or the "mighty god" as was addressed above.

Is there suddenly a new god in the text of [John 1:1](#)? It is the same God that is being spoken of in part 2 as in part 3. How do the Jehovah's Witnesses maintain that the word

had somehow become a god in this context, since there is only **one** God mentioned? Remember, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus was Michael the Archangel. Therefore, is there any place in the Bible where an angel is called "a god," besides Satan being called the god of this world in [2 Cor. 4:3-4](#)?

John 20:28 - "Thomas answered and said to Him, 'My Lord and my God!'"

In the Greek in [John 20:28](#) Thomas said to Jesus, "ho kurios mou, kai ho theos mou," "*The Lord of me, and the God of me.*" If Jesus was not God, but "a" god, then shouldn't Jesus have corrected Thomas? Shouldn't Jesus have said, "No Thomas, I am not **the** God. I am a god."? But Jesus did not. To do so would have been ludicrous. Nevertheless, the Jehovah's Witness will say that Thomas was so stunned by Jesus' appearance, that he swore. This is ridiculous because it means that Thomas, a devout man of God, swore in front of Jesus and used the Lord's name in vain in violation of [Exodus 20:7](#). This is hardly the case since we find no New Testament equivalent of a disciple of Christ using God's name in vain.

In conclusion, [John 1:1](#) is best translated without the "a" inserted into the text. "*The Word was God*" is the best translation. This way, we do not run into the danger of polytheism, with Jesus being "a god." We do not have Thomas the disciple swearing and using God's name in vain. And, we do not have the problem of Jesus being a "mighty god" and yet not **the** God -- even though God Himself is called the Mighty God ([Jeremiah 32:18](#); [Isaiah 10:21](#)).

This article is also available in: [Español](#)

- [1](#). Chapman, B. (1994). *Greek New Testament Insert*. 2nd ed., revised. Quakertown, PA: Stylus Publishing. Also, see J. P. Luow, *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament: Based on Semantic Domains*, electronic edition of the 2nd ed., New York: United Bible Societies, p. 592.

John 17:3, "The only true God."

"And this is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom You have sent," ([John 17:3](#)).

The Jehovah's Witnesses, among others, cite [John 17:3](#) as a proof text to deny the [Trinity](#) and claim that Jesus Christ is not God. They reason is that if Jesus were God, then He would not have called the Father, "the only true God." If the Father is the only true God, then it must require that Jesus cannot be God.

Τὸν
μόνον
ἀληθινὸν
Θεὸν

The
only
true
God

First of all, it is not proper to make a theological doctrine out of one verse. Of this the Jehovah's Witnesses are sometimes guilty. Nevertheless, they do tend to take one or two verses on a subject and use them to interpret all the others. Instead of getting a balanced position, they arrive at an interpretation that is in agreement with their theological position. This is called "proof-texting" and is something the Jehovah's Witnesses do frequently.

Second, the context of Jesus' comment was that He was speaking as a man to His God. Remember, Jesus is both God and man, second person of the Trinity, the word made flesh ([John 1:1,14](#)). Since He was both divine and man, as a man He would naturally and properly say that His Father was the only True God. He was not denying His own divinity, but affirming the Trueness of God as was done in the OT: 'And now, O Lord our God, deliver us from his hand that all the kingdoms of the earth may know that Thou alone, Lord, art God,' ([Isaiah 37:20](#)). The truth is that Jesus was a man made under the Law ([Gal. 4:4](#)) and as a man He would be subject to God. Only in this case, Jesus was subject to the Father. That is why Jesus called the Father the only true God. But it is not a phrase that excludes Christ for Christ Himself said "Before Abraham was, I am," ([John 8:58](#)) and did not deny being called God by Thomas in [John 20:28](#).

Third, [John 17:3](#) must be examined in the light of the totality of scripture. We see that Jesus is called God in [John 1:1,14](#); [8:58](#); [20:28](#); [Col. 2:9](#); [Heb. 1:8](#). Therefore, [John 17:3](#) cannot be interpreted in a way that disagrees with other scriptures. Of course, some people simply state that [John 17:3](#) cannot allow for Jesus being God. But the simple fact is that Jesus is called God by God and others. Therefore, the whole of scripture must be harmonized.

Fourth, this verse reflects the sonship of Jesus. The Father and the Son have a unique relationship. Jesus is the eternal Son. The terms Father and Son denote a relationship which is why God is called the God of the Son in [2 Cor. 11:31](#).

Fifth, Jesus identifies Himself with the Father. Jesus is in the Father and the Father is in Jesus ([John 10:38](#)). Jesus is one with the Father ([John 10:30](#)). They are not divided in essence. So, in one sense Jesus is in the Father and if the Father is the only true God, then Jesus is the True God. Also, in [1 John 5:20](#), Jesus is called the only true God: "And we know that the Son of God has come, and has given us understanding, in order that we

might know Him who is true, and we are in Him who is true, in His Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God and eternal life." Jesus is not contradicting the word.

Sixth, if we are to be consistent using the Jehovah's Witness logic that the Father is the only true God, then the following verses present a problem -- if we use their logic.

1. "For certain persons have crept in unnoticed, those who were long beforehand marked out for this condemnation, ungodly persons who turn the grace of our God into licentiousness and deny our only Master and Lord, Jesus Christ," ([Jude 4, NASB](#)).
 1. Does this mean that the Father is not our Master and Lord? Of course not. Yet, Jesus is called our only Master and Lord.
2. "There was the true light which, coming into the world, enlightens every man.¹⁰ He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him," ([John 1:9-10](#)).
 1. Here we see Jesus being called the true light. Does this mean that the Father is not the true light? If not, then we have both the Son and the Father being the true light.
3. "And Jesus said to him, "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone," ([Mark 10:18, NASB](#)).
 1. Does this verse mean that Jesus is not good? Jesus said only God was good. Then, if we use the Jehovah's Witness logic, Jesus is not good. Of course, that doesn't make any sense.
4. I, even I, am the Lord [YHWH]; And there is no savior besides Me," ([Isaiah 43:11](#)).
 1. We know that Jesus is the Savior. Again, according to Witness logic, Jesus could not be the Savior since the Bible tells us that YHWH is the only Savior.
5. "Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, Who alone works wonders," ([Psalm 72:18, NASB](#)).
 1. Jesus performed many miracles. But if the Lord [YHWH] is the one who alone performs wonders, how then can it be that Jesus also?
6. "Thus says the Lord, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the Lord [YHWH], am the maker of all things, Stretching out the heavens by Myself, And spreading out the earth all alone,'" ([Isaiah 44:24, NASB](#)).
 1. According to [John 1:3](#) and [Col. 1:16-17](#) Jesus made all things. With JW logic you would have a problem.
 2. [Col. 1:16-17](#) says, "For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities, all things have been created by Him and for Him.¹⁷ And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together," (NASB). Since God is alone created all things, how could Jesus have done it? For more on this subject see the JW paper on [Col. 1:16-17](#)

As we can see, we cannot simply make a doctrine out of one verse. To do so is to invite error and it only serves to use the Bible to validate preconceived ideas about doctrine.

Col. 1:15, "firstborn of all creation"

by [Matt Slick](#)

"He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of all creation; because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist." ([Col. 1:15-17](#), for context. The New World Translation - Emphasis added. Note the NWT's addition of 'other' into the text four times. This is discussed here.)

ΠΡΩΤΟΤΟΚΟΣ
"firstborn"

The Jehovah's Witnesses interpret the word "firstborn" here to mean "first created" because it is consistent with their theological presupposition that Jesus is a created thing. Of course, Jesus, the word became flesh ([John 1:1,14](#)) is not a created thing. But that hasn't stopped the Watchtower organization from claiming He is. Nevertheless, there is a Greek word for "first created" and it was in use at the time of Paul's writing to the Colossians. He did not use it here. The Greek for "firstborn" is proto with tikto which would give us "firstborn" and that is what we find here in [Colossians 1:15](#). The Greek for "first created" would be proto with ktizo and it is not used here.

Second, the biblical use of the word "firstborn" is most interesting. It can mean the first born child in a family ([Luke 2:7](#)), but it can also mean "pre-eminence." In [Psalm 89:20, 27](#) it says, "I have found David My servant; with My holy oil I have anointed him...I also shall make him My first-born" (NASB). As you can see, David, who was the last one born in his family was called the firstborn by God. This is a title of preeminence.

Third, firstborn is also a title that is transferable:

- [Gen. 41:51-52](#), "And Joseph called **the name of the first-born Manasseh**: For, said he, God hath made me forget all my toil, and all my father's house. And **the name of the second called he Ephraim**: For God hath made me fruitful in the land of my affliction" (NASB)
- [Jer. 31:9](#), "...for I am a father to Israel, and **Ephraim is My firstborn** (NASB)."

Scripture best interprets scripture. Firstborn does not require a meaning of first created as the Jehovah's Witnesses say it means here. "Firstborn" can mean the first born person in a family and it can also be a title of preeminence which is transferable. That is obvious since Jesus is God in flesh ([John 1:1,14](#)) and is also the first born son of Mary. In addition, He is the pre-eminent one in all things. The Jehovah's Witnesses should consider this when they examine [Col. 1:15](#). They should also abandon the Watchtower which guides them in their thinking and believing.

Col. 1:16-17, "...all [other] things were created by him..."

by [Matt Slick](#)

"because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lordships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. 17Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist." *The New World Translation - Emphasis added*

The Jehovah's Witness organization has altered the biblical text to suit to its theological presupposition that [Jesus](#) is a created thing. This is why the new world translation adds the word "other" four times in [Col. 1:16-17](#), even though it is not in the Greek text. There exists two Greek words for "other": *allos* which means another of the same kind; and *heteros* which means another of a different kind. Paul could have used either word here if he wanted to show that Jesus was "another" created thing. But he did not. There is no linguistic reason at all to insert this word here four times -- unless you are trying support the presupposition that Jesus is not God.

τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν ἔκτισται
in him all things have been created

Below is a copy out of the Jehovah's Witness Kingdom interlinear. This book has the Greek words and their exact English translation underneath each word. The right hand column is how the New World translation renders the Greek into the English. I have added red squares is in order to demonstrate the additions into the English text that are not supported in the Greek.

In the New World Translation you will notice that the word "other" is in brackets. This is an admission that the words are not in the original text. Of course, the Watchtower Organization claims that the insertion of the word "other" four times is necessary to clarify the text. It isn't. If anything, it misleads the reader. Nevertheless, if you have the opportunity, ask a Jehovah's Witness to read the text without saying the word "other." Usually, he will have difficulty. Also, ask him what he thinks the text is saying without the word "other" added in. It will be an interesting discussion.

<p>COLOSSIANS 1: 16—31</p> <p>εἰκὼν τοῦ Θεοῦ τοῦ ἀοράτου, πρωτότοκος image of the God the invisible, firstborn πάσης κτίσεως, 16 ὅτι ἐν αὐτῷ of all creation, because in him ἔκτισθη τὰ πάντα ἐν τοῖς οὐρανοῖς it was created the all (things) in the heavens καὶ ἐπὶ τῆς γῆς, τὰ ὀρατὰ καὶ and upon the earth, the (things) visible and τὰ ἀόρατα, εἴτε θρόνοι εἴτε the (things) invisible, whether thrones or κυριότητες εἴτε ἀρχαὶ εἴτε ἐξουσίαι· lordships or governments or authorities; τὰ πάντα δι' αὐτοῦ καὶ εἰς αὐτὸν the all (things) through him and into him ἔκτισται. 17 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔστιν πρὸ it has been created; and he is before πάντων, καὶ τὰ πάντα ἐν αὐτῷ all (things) and the all (things) in him συνέστηκεν, 18 καὶ αὐτὸς ἔστιν ἡ it has stood together, and he is the κεφαλὴ τοῦ σώματος, τῆς ἐκκλησίας· head of the body, of the ecclesia;</p>	<p>895</p> <p>the image of the in- visible God, the first- born of all creation; 16 because by means of him all [other] things were created in the heavens and upon the earth, the things visible and the things invisible, no matter whether they are thrones or lord- ships or governments or authorities. All [other] things have been created through him and for him. 17 Also, he is before all [other] things and by means of him all [other] things were made to exist, 18 and</p>
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Basically, Jehovah's Witness theology maintains that God created Jesus and then Jesus created all other things.¹ If follows that if Jesus "was used by Jehovah in creating all other things" then Jesus was with God and used by God as the instrument of creation. Unfortunately for Jehovah's Witnesses, God says that He created the heavens and earth "all alone."

"Thus says the LORD, your Redeemer, and the one who formed you from the womb, 'I, the LORD, am the maker of all things, stretching out the heavens by Myself, and spreading out the earth all alone'" ([Isaiah 44:24](#)).

If the Jehovah's Witness is correct, then how is it possible for the LORD (YHWH, or Jehovah) to stretch out the heavens by Himself, all alone (not angels with Him), and yet Jesus "the first created thing," be the one who did it? They can't both be true to the Jehovah's Witness.

The truth is that Jehovah is the name of God. God is a trinity, and therefore Jesus can be the creator of all things and YHWH can do it by himself since God is Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

This is a very simple and direct demonstration in Scripture that Jesus is the Lord God in flesh. If He is not, then the Jehovah's Witnesses have a biblical contradiction on their hands.