

March 22 Topic: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (THE WATCHTOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY)
Homework March 23-28 (for discussion on March 29)

To view the Jehovah's Witness lecture online: <http://www.tlc.org/tuesday-morning-bible-study/>

Day 1: THE NAME "JEHOVAH"

Jehovah's Witnesses at your door will almost always emphasize that a person must use the "correct name" of God, "Jehovah", in order to be properly and acceptably worshipping him. They'll tell you it is wrong to *fail* to use the correct name. In fact, they say, one of the marks of God's true "organization" is that it consistently uses God's correct name and "makes his name known". They will then show you the New World Translation of the Bible (a translation made by the Watchtower... to bolster Watchtower doctrines), which has the name "Jehovah" throughout the Old *and* New Testaments.

It's important to know that in the Bible when God names himself the name is packed with **revelation** about *who* he is and what he intends *to do*. *It's not just an identifying label*, like "Susan" or "Bob".

Read Exodus 3:11-15. In verse 14, what name does God give to Moses? What does this name reveal about God? (Hint: Revelation 1:4 is a paraphrase of the name!)

In verse 15, what name does God say to use to answer the Israelites?

In your Bible, it probably says **LORD** in all capital letters. When you see this throughout the Old Testament, it is the Hebrew word **Yahweh**. *Yahweh* actually means "He is" (when God says His name he says, "I am"!). It's from the word "Yahweh" that we get the word **Jehovah**.
(See Digging Deeper if you want more info!)

God also revealed himself with other names in the Old Testament, such as El Shaddai (*God All Sufficient* -Micah 2:1), El Elyon (*God Most High* - Ps. 18:13), *Adonai* (Lord - Ps. 114:7), *Ancient of Days* (Daniel 7:9), and *Elohim* (God-Isaiah 40:1).

Do you think it's more important to know the exact name of God, as an identifying label, or to know *who* God is and what he has done and will do? Why?

Digging Deeper

Ancient Hebrew had no vowels. *Yahweh* in ancient Hebrew is transliterated as YHWH. It is sometimes called the "**tetragrammaton**" which means "the four letters".

Jews considered the name YHWH too holy to pronounce, so when they were reading the Torah out loud they would replace YHWH with *adonai*, which means "Lord". Even when the Hebrew Scriptures were translated into Greek (the Septuagint) the Jewish translators almost always used the Greek word for Lord (*kurios*) in place of the divine Name.

Eventually, some time in the middle ages, the four letters were combined with the vowel sounds from *adonai*, and the result was *Yahowah*, or **Jehovah**.

Read Matthew 6:9. In the Lord's Prayer, how does Jesus tell us to address God? What is Jesus revealing to us about God by using this title?

Jesus prays that God's *name* would be "hallowed" or honored as holy. But neither Jesus nor any of the apostles or New Testament writers use the name *Yahweh* or its equivalent, not in *any* of the thousands Greek manuscript copies we have of the New Testament. (*All* of the instances of "Jehovah" in the *New World Translation* New Testament are inserted by the Watchtower, not based on any manuscripts.) What do you think Jesus meant by "hallowed be your *name*" if he wasn't referring to the literal name *Yahweh*?

Read John 14:8-10 and John 17:6. In John 17:6, Jesus tells the Father that he has "revealed your name" to his followers. (If you are using the NIV or NLT version, there is a text note that tells you the Greek is literally "your name"). Jesus taught almost exclusively to the house of Israel. Although the Jewish people in his day may not have *spoken* the name of Yahweh out loud, they certainly knew it. How could Jesus have "revealed" God's name to people who already knew it? How does John 14:8-10 shed light on this question?

PRAYER: Your Father in Heaven is the one who was, who is, and who is to come. Yahweh! Praise him for loving you so much that he calls you to be his own child. Call him "Abba", Father! Thank him for sending Jesus to show us who God is.

Day 2: THE NAME OF JESUS

Read Matthew 1:21 and Luke 1:31. Joseph and Mary were each separately instructed to give Mary's child the name "Jesus"—which in Hebrew is Yeshua (or Yashua). God must have thought the choice of name was important! "Bob" or "Henry" would not do! Yeshua means "Yahweh Saves". Why do you think this name is significant, especially in light of the other questions you pondered yesterday?

Jesus often used the phrase "in my name". Jot down what he said we should do "in his name":

Mark 9:39	
Matthew 24:9	
Matthew 18:5	
Matthew 18:20	
Matthew 19:29	
John 14:13	
John 15:16	
John 20:31	

What do the Apostles say about the name of Jesus?

Acts 4:12	
I Corinthians 1:2	
Colossians 3:17	
Philippians 2:9-11	
James 5:14	
I Peter 4:14, 16	

Prayer: Every knee should bow at the name of Jesus, and confess that he is Lord! Do that today!

Day 3: JESUS, PART 1

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is a *created being*; he is God's only begotten son because God created him directly. In heaven he was Michael, the Archangel. He is so mighty he is called *a god* (John 1:1, in the Watchtower's *New World Translation*), but he is not to receive the kind of worship due to God Almighty alone. As the first created being, Jesus was "used" by God to create all other things. Jesus' mission was to making known his Father's name and kingdom, and to give his life as a ransom.

First Created?

Read Colossians 1:15 and Psalm 89:20,27. Jehovah's Witnesses claim that when the Bible calls Jesus the "firstborn" that this means he was "first created". But David is called the Lord's "firstborn", even though he was Jesse's youngest child (I Samuel 16:11). Israel is also called the Lord's "firstborn" (Exodus 4:22), even though there were other nations around before Israel. What does this tell you about the term "firstborn" and how it is used in the Bible?

Michael the archangel?

Read Hebrews 1:6-14; Hebrews 2:5 & 8. What argument is the writer of Hebrews making about the position of the Son versus angels? How do these verses negate the idea that Jesus is a high-ranking angel?

Spiritual, not bodily, resurrection?

Read Luke 24:39; John 2:19-21. The Watchtower teaches that Jesus did not have a bodily resurrection, but was raised as a mighty spirit that can "appear" as a body. How do these verses contradict that doctrine?

A god? Or God!

Read Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1. What are the titles given to Jesus?

Read Colossians 2:9. What dwells in Christ?

Hebrews 1:3. How does this verse support the truth that Jesus was God incarnate?

Prayer: Pray for those who are caught in the grip of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Many are held by fear of disfellowshipping and the devastating loss of family contact.

Day 4: JESUS, PART 2

When we studied Islam, we looked at various claims Jesus made about himself that shows he was not just a prophet. Jesus did things, said things, and claimed things that directly copies Old Testament references to Jehovah. These claims and deeds would be blasphemous unless he was indeed the eternal Word made flesh.

Old Testament Scripture	New Testament Scripture	What did Jesus do, call himself, claim about himself, or in other ways identify himself with Jehovah:
Isaiah 40:8	Matthew 24:35	
Isaiah 41:10	Matthew 28:20	
Psalms 107:28-29	Mark 4:38-39	
Nehemiah 9:14	Luke 6:5	
Isaiah 43:13 (and Deut. 32:39)	John 10:28	
Psalms 23:1	John 10:11	

Read Psalm 110:1 and Mark 12:35-37. What point is Jesus making by asking his question?

Read Ezekiel 34:17 and Matthew 25:31-33. In Ezekiel 34, the LORD condemns the shepherds of his people, the leaders who did not care properly for the flock. He promises that he himself (vs.

11,15) will come and shepherd his flock. Jesus calls himself the Good Shepherd in John 10:11. In Matthew 25:31-33, in what other way does he identify himself as the Shepherd of Ezekiel 34:17?

Digging Deeper
Ezekiel 34:17 & Matthew 7:21

Your Bible may read “Sovereign Lord”, “Lord God” or “Lord Jehovah” in Ezekiel 34:17. In Hebrew it reads *adonai* (Lord) *Yahweh*, but in the Septuagint (the Greek translation of the Hebrew Scriptures, well known in Jesus’ day) it reads *kurios kurios* —Lord Lord.

Prayer: When you place your trust in him, Jesus gives you eternal life and no one can pluck you from his hand! Thank him his great gift of salvation and love!

Day 5: JESUS, Part 3

One of the most notable features of the New Testament is how many Old Testament verses about Jehovah (Yahweh) are applied to Jesus, showing us he is Jehovah. Look up these verses and write down the points of comparison.

Old Testament Scripture	Said about Yahweh (Jehovah)	New Testament Scripture	Said about Yeshua (Jesus)
Isaiah 44: 6		Rev. 1:17	
Isaiah 44:24		John 1:3	
Isaiah 45:23		Philippians 2:10-11	
Isaiah 43:11		2 Timothy 1:10	
Psalms 100:3		Titus 2:14	
Isaiah 45:5		John 1:1	
I Chronicles 16:8		I Corinthians 1:2	
Psalms 6:9		Rev. 2:23	
Psalms 102:25-27		Hebrews 1:10-12 (for the context see vs. 8)	
Deut. 11:1		John 14:15	
Joel 2:32		Romans 10:9-13	

The Watchtower teaches that Jesus is to be honored, but not worshipped.

Read Revelation 4:9-11 and Revelation 5:6-14. In this heavenly throne room vision, what descriptions indicate that the Lamb is being worshipped?

Think about it

Let's assume for a moment that the Jehovah's Witnesses are correct, that Jesus is not God, but is a created being. Who really is then our savior? It's not God! It's the lesser god Jesus. While it's true that Jehovah *sent* Jesus to earth to die and provide a ransom for sins—he didn't actually save us *himself*. He couldn't accomplish our salvation *by himself*. In fact, the greatest *love* comes from the created being Jesus, not from Jehovah God. As Jesus himself said "There is no greater love than to lay down one's life for one's friends." (John 15:13).

It's only when we understand the triune nature of God that Romans 5:8 makes sense:

But God demonstrates his own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Prayer: Pray the throne-room prayer, "Worthy is the Lamb who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise! To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb, be praise and honor and glory and power for ever and ever!"

Day 6: THE TRINITY: FATHER, SON AND HOLY SPIRIT

The Watchtower denies the doctrine of the trinity, because the word “trinity” is not in the Bible and because Jesus, in his humbled position as a man (Philippians 2:6-8) calls the Father “greater than I”. They teach that the holy spirit is not a person but God’s “active force” or “energy” in the world.

Look up the following verses and write down what you find that indicates that the Holy Spirit is a person, not just an impersonal “force”.

Scripture:	Characteristic that indicates personality:
John 14:16-17 and John 16:7-8	
Acts 5:3-4	
Romans 8:26-27	
I Corinthians 12:11	
Ephesians 4:30	
I Peter 1:2	

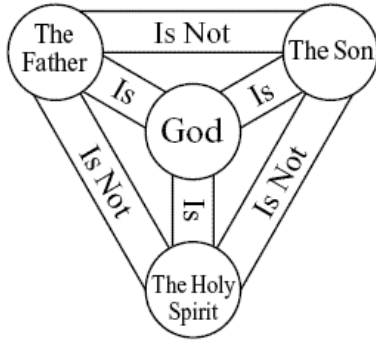
Read Matthew 28:19. How many persons are mentioned in this baptism formula? How many names? What does this teach us?

Read I Corinthians 12:4-6. This passage has parallelism that shows Paul’s trinitarian theology. He would have been familiar with this classic Hebrew poetic device, found throughout the Old Testament. Parallelism uses synonyms to enhance the meaning of the words.

Fill in this chart to help you see what Paul is saying.

varieties of _____	but	same _____
varieties of _____		same _____
varieties of _____		same _____

What can you learn from the way Paul arranged these words?



This is an illustration of what we discover in Scripture. There is one being called “God”, whose name is Yahweh (Jehovah). The Father is God. The Son is God. The Spirit is God. The Father, Son and Spirit are all persons. But the Father is not the Son, the Son is not the Spirit, the Spirit is not the Father. So there are three persons in one God. A tri-unity.

This is difficult for us to grasp because in our experience there is one “person” per (human)being. The idea of more than one person in a being sounds like something out of a psychology book. But humans are *finite* beings. We cannot apply the limitations of a finite being to the *infinite* God. There is no other being like God.

Why does the doctrine of the Trinity matter?

Aside from the fact that God has revealed himself to us in this way, there is a deeper significance that goes to the very nature and attributes of God. I like this explanation from Kevin DeYoung:

We worship a God who is in constant and eternal relationship with himself as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Community is a buzz word in American culture, but it is only in a Christian framework that communion and interpersonal community are seen as expressions of the eternal nature of God. **Likewise, it is only with a Trinitarian God that love can be an eternal attribute of God.** Without a plurality of persons in the Godhead, we would be forced to think that God created humans so that he might show love and know love, thereby making love a created thing (and God a needy deity). But with a biblical understanding of the Trinity we can say that God did not create in order to be loved, but rather, created out of the overflow of the perfect love that had always existed among Father, Son, and Holy Spirit who ever live in perfect and mutual relationship and delight.

Prayer: Hallelujah (or Alleluia) literally means: *Hallelu* (praise) *Yah* (Yahweh). When we say Hallelujah, we are saying Praise Jehovah—his whole being! Sing this hymn, if you know it (the chorus of All Creatures of our God and King):

*Praise, praise the Father, Praise the Son,
and Praise the Spirit! Three in one!
Oh praise him, oh praise him,
Alleluia! Alleluia! Alleluia!*