

Refuting Jehovah's Witnesses on the Deity of Jesus

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was the first created being of Jehovah, therefore, he is not fully God. They believe that only Jehovah is the true Almighty God. Jesus was known as the archangel Michael in the First Testament, who became the human Jesus in the Second Testament. He left his body in the grave after his resurrection, and his spirit ascended into heaven to become known as the archangel Michael again. They believe Jesus is *a* god just like the angels and Satan are called gods in the Bible. But they believe that Jesus is not the Almighty God.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny the most essential claim of the Second Testament, that Jesus Christ is the Almighty God and one with Yahweh (who they call Jehovah). Although there are many Scriptures that attest to the full deity of Jesus this paper will focus on the ones that Jehovah's Witnesses use to deny the full deity of Jesus and discuss other passages you can use to refute them. One of the best books on showing how both the Bible and Jesus believed that He was the full deity of Yahweh is *Putting Jesus in His Place* by Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski (www.amazon.com/Putting-Jesus-His-Place-Christ/dp/0825429838). You will be able to read your Bible alongside theirs (*New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*; NWT) and prove to them that Jesus is the fullness of God.

Jesus Is God in John 1:1

The most famous verse Jehovah's Witnesses use to make the point that Jesus is merely a god is John 1:1.

“In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was *a* god” (John 1:1; NWT).

In the Greek there is no definite article (“the” in English”) before the last word “god” in the verse. In many cases in the Greek when there is no definite article before a noun then an indefinite article (“a” in English) is communicated. Thus, they say it should be translated as “*a* god.” However, this is not always true in Greek because Greek does not use the article like English does and there are always exceptions to the rule in Greek (as well as in English).

Unfortunately, the only way to prove that the “Word” (Jesus) should be understood as *the* God is to be a master in Greek, which you nor they are.¹ But one thing that you can point out to them is that “God,” clearly referring to the Almighty God (and the Jehovah's Witnesses would agree) appears five other times in John 1:3-18 all without the article before the word “God.”² Yet they would never say that these references to “God” should be understood as “a god” for the context makes it clear that these references to “God” are Jehovah (Yahweh) the Almighty God. In fact,

¹ For a technical discussion see Daniel B. Wallace. *Greek Grammar Beyond the Basics: An Exegetical Syntax of the New Testament*, pp.206-70; Matthew Halsted. *The Word and The Watchtower: An Exegesis of John 1:1* (<https://carm.org/the-word-and-the-watchtower-an-exegesis-of-john-1-1>); Donald Hartley. *Revisiting the Colwell Construction in Light of Mass/Count Nouns* (<https://bible.org/article/revisiting-colwell-construction-light-masscount-nouns>).

² Robert M. Bowman Jr. and J. Ed Komoszewski. *Putting Jesus in His Place*, pp. 140-141.

there are many scholars that argue against Jehovah's Witnesses' translation of John 1:1, whom the Jehovah Witnesses have misleadingly referenced as scholars who support their translation.³

Jesus Is Not the Only Begotten Son

Jehovah's Witnesses often make the argument that John 3:16 (also John 1:18) says that Jesus was created by God because of the word "begotten" used in the *King James Bible* and their *New World Translation*.

"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only *begotten* son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16; NWT, KJV)

This is a horrible mistranslation of the Greek word *monogenēs*, which actually means 'unique' or 'only one of its kind.' Show the Jehovah's Witness Heb. 11:17.

"By faith Abraham, when he was tested, as good as offered up Isaac—the man who had gladly received the promises attempted to offer up his only *begotten* son" (Heb. 11:17; NWT, KJV).

The word "begotten" here comes from the same Greek word *monogenēs*. The passage says that Isaac was Abraham's "only begotten son." Yet Isaac was not Abraham's only son, for Ishmael was Abraham's first-born son. It is clear from the context that the author of Hebrews is not making the point that Isaac was literally Abraham's only son, but rather that Isaac was unique, one of a kind when it came to the fact that he, not Ishmael, would inherit the promises of God. Thus, it is clear that the author's emphasis is not on the creation or birthing of Isaac. John is thus saying that Jesus is the unique and only one who granted believers salvation through His death, and that no other being has done so.

In the First Testament Isaac, Jacob, Judah, Ephraim are all given the first-born title by their fathers even though none of them were biologically the first-born son. This title 'first-born' did not communicate biological facts but headship. All this shows that God is more interested in communicating the headship and uniqueness of these men and Jesus than He is in biological facts about their existence.

Jehovah's Witnesses also point to Rev. 3:14 as proof that Jesus had a beginning. They would say that Jesus calls himself the "beginning of the creation of God," which means he had a beginning.

"To the angel of the congregation in Laodicea write: These are the things that the Amen says, the faithful and true witness, the *beginning* of the creation by God" (Rev. 3:14)

The word "beginning" comes from the Greek word *arche*, which is the root word in the English word "architect." The point is that he is the architect or origin of creation, not that he had a beginning. The Greek word *arche* is also used of the Almighty God in Rev. 21:5-6.

"Then He who sat on the throne said, 'Behold, I make all things new.' And He said to me, 'Write, for these words are true and faithful.' And He said to me, 'It is done! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the *Beginning* [*arche*] and the End. I will give of the fountain of the water of life freely to him who thirsts.'" (Rev. 21:5-6)

³ See *The dispute on Jn.1:1* at www.letusreason.org/JW38.htm for quotes from these many scholars.

If you argue that Rev. 3:14 says that Jesus had a beginning, then you would also have to argue that Rev. 21:6 states that the Almighty God who sits on the throne of heaven also has a beginning.

John 1:3 states that all things were created through the Word (Jesus). If he were a created being, then John could not say that Jesus had created *all things* since he did not create himself. The passage makes it clear that there was nothing in all of creation that he did not create. Therefore, he could not have been a created being since he was responsible for the origin of all things.

“Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made.”
(John 1:3)

In 1 Cor. 8:6 Paul states clearly that there is one God. But he also states that God, the Father created “all things” and then states that Jesus created “all things.” If you argued that Jesus created all things does not prove that he is fully God then neither can you prove that God, the Father creating all things means that He is fully God. If Jesus is responsible for all things like God, the Father is, then this makes him equal in authority over creation with God, the Father.

“Yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” (1 Cor. 8:6)

Michael and Jesus Are Not the Same

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the archangel Michael and Jesus are the same. However, the Bible only mentions Michael five times and in none of them is Michael connected to Jesus (Dan. 10:13, 21; 12:1; Jude 1:9; Rev. 12:7). You can prove to Jehovah's Witnesses that Michael and Jesus are not the same being by using their own Bible. First Dan. 10:13 makes it clear that Michael is not unique, that he is one of many leading princes or angels in heaven. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Michael/Jesus is unique and above all the angels.

“But Michael, one of the leading princes, came to help me, because I was left there with the kings of Persia.” (Dan. 10:13)

In Jude 9, Michael made it clear that he did not have the right to rebuke the devil and that only the Almighty God had that right. Michael called on Him to rebuke the devil. Yet there are countless times in the Gospel where Jesus said he had the authority to rebuke the devil and demons and did so (Matt. 4:10; 17:18, Lk. 4:41). Not only does this mean that Michael and Jesus are not the same, but that Jesus is God because he was able to rebuke the demons, which Michael said only God could do.

“But even the archangel Michael, when he was disputing with the devil about the body of Moses, did not dare to bring a slanderous accusation against him, but said, ‘The Lord rebuke you.’” (Jude 9)

Jesus Is Equal to the Almighty God

Jehovah's Witnesses often point to John 14:28 and Mark 13:32 to make the point that even Jesus said that the Father is greater than him and there are things that only the Father knew, and he did not know. Therefore, Jesus is lesser than God, the Father.

“You heard me say, ‘I am going away and I am coming back to you.’ If you loved me, you would be glad that I am going to the Father, for the Father is greater than I.” (John 14:28)

“But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.” (Mark 13:32)

This must be understood in the context of the incarnation of Jesus Christ. Jesus who is equal to God, relinquished the right to exercise his power and knowledge while he was on earth as a human. Show them Heb. 2:9, which explains that Jesus relinquished His power and lowered Himself temporarily while he was on earth.

“But we see Jesus, who was made *lower than the angels for a little while*, now crowned with glory and honor because he suffered death, so that by God’s grace he would experience death on behalf of everyone.” (Heb. 2:9; italics mine)

This passage makes it clear that Jesus was lowered temporarily and was even placed under the authority of angels but is now elevated back up to His position of sitting on the throne of God. Even Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jesus is greater than the angels, so they would have to acknowledge some kind of temporary lowering of Jesus while he was on earth. Phil. 2:5-7 also makes this point.

“You should have the same attitude toward one another that Christ Jesus had, who though he existed in the form of God did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped, but emptied himself by taking on the form of a slave, by looking like other men, and by sharing in human nature.” (Phil. 2:5-7)

Do not let Jehovah’s Witnesses focus on the “did not regard equality with God as something to be grasped” part, for before that it says, “who though he existed in the form of God.” If Jesus is the exact form of God, then he is God. Also, the word “grasped” is more accurately translated “exploited.” This passage shows that Jesus is God, but he did not exercise or exploit that authority during His ministry on earth. The passage then goes on in Phil. 2:9-11 to make the point that because Jesus faithfully lowered himself, God then lifted him back up to his authority as God.

“Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.” (Phil. 2:9-11)

Heb. 1:1-4 also makes the point that Jesus was God before his death and resurrection and was elevated after his resurrection to be superior to the angels, which means that temporarily he was not superior. This passage also states that Jesus is the glory of God and the exact copy of God. If one is the glory of God and the exact image of God, then he is God.

“In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God’s glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. After he had provided purification for sins, he sat down at the right hand of the Majesty in heaven. So he became as much superior to the angels as the name he has inherited is superior to theirs.” (Heb. 1:1-4)

Col. 2:8-10 also makes it clear that Jesus is not a god or partial god but that all the fulness of God's deity is in him, making him the same as the Almighty God.

“Be careful not to allow anyone to captivate you through an empty, deceitful philosophy that is according to human traditions and the elemental spirits of the world, and not according to Christ. For in him all the *fulness of deity lives in bodily form*, and you have been filled in him, who is the head over every ruler and authority.” (Col. 2:8-10; italics mine)

Jesus Is the Alpha and Omega, the Almighty God

Another way to show Jehovah's Witnesses that Jesus is the Almighty God is in Revelation. First show them Rev. 21:5-7 and ask them who is speaking. They will say it is Jehovah God. Ask them if there is any other being who is the “Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End.” They will answer that only Jehovah the Almighty God is.

“He who was seated on the throne said, ‘I am making everything new!’ Then he said, ‘Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true.’ He said to me: ‘It is done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End. To the thirsty I will give water without cost from the spring of the water of life.’” (Rev. 21:5-7)

Then show them Rev. 22:12-13 and ask them who is the one coming soon. They will say that it is Jesus. Then point out that Jesus just called himself the “Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” so he must be the Almighty God.

“Look, I am coming soon! My reward is with me, and I will give to each person according to what they have done. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End.” (Rev. 22:12-13)

But they may say that in Rev. 22:13 the speaker changes to Jehovah. Then show them Rev. 1:17-18 and ask them if only Jehovah is the “First and the Last” then when did He ever die and come back to life. They have to answer that Jehovah never did and therefore have to acknowledge that it is Jesus calling Himself the “First and the Last.”

“When I saw him, I fell at his feet as though dead. Then he placed his right hand on me and said: ‘Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.’” (Rev. 1:17-18)

This is not an exhaustive proof of the deity of Jesus from the Bible, but it will give you a starting point when talking to Jehovah's Witnesses. If they are willing to come back for a second visit, then you will have time to research and present more passages from the Bible to them on the deity of Jesus.