

A Guide To Studying The Bible With Those Who Come Knocking At Your Door

We often complain among ourselves that no one wants to study the Bible these days. We spend our time and money traveling to foreign countries to evangelize the lost because those "fields are white for harvest" (**John 4:35**) How many times have you had sincerely religious people knock on your door desiring to study the Bible with you? I have lost count and up until recently politely declined their invitations assuming it would be a waste of time because they are so indoctrinated in their beliefs. That unscriptural attitude changed two months ago when they again came knocking. I had an epiphany as I opened my front door. Who am I to assume that God's Word (**Hebrews 4:12**) is incapable of reaching the heart of anyone? How would I answer God on Judgment Day when He reminds me of the many times I prayed for opportunities to teach the lost, then asks me why I turned away those who repeatedly came to my door desiring to study the Bible? In addition to a negative attitude about them, our lack of knowledge and confidence about where to start the study may also be holding us back (**1 Peter 3:15**)

After a few minutes of friendly conversation the Jehovah's Witness (JW) asked me if I would be interested in studying the Bible with him and I immediately answered "Yes I would!" He seemed somewhat surprised as we set up a time for him to return. He asked me to be thinking about what subjects I would like to study. In the days ahead I researched the history and doctrine of the JW and thought about topics to begin our study. I settled on "The Person of Jesus as God the Son and Savior" using **Luke 19:10** as the foundational verse for our study.

Our first 2-hour meeting was spent getting to know each other and providing background information on ourselves and our religious beliefs. This was not anticipated, but proved very helpful in setting the tone for future studies.

Early in our study I decided to use the JW New World Translation (NWT) Bible in order to avoid the constant "my translation vs. your translation" argument that would inhibit our study. Although use of this inaccurate translation made it more difficult to substantiate my beliefs, it was not impossible. When fallible people attempt to change God's inspired Word to support their doctrine they often overlook contradictory passages. I downloaded the JW app to my I phone which includes the NWT.

Below are the results of my research that served as the basis for my Biblical discussions with the JW. It is my hope and prayer that this information will prove beneficial and encourages you to take advantage of the next opportunity to study God's Word with those who come knocking at your door.

I. Topics for discussion:

A. Person of Jesus - who is he?

1. Savior: (**Lk 2:11**) "For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. (**Eph 5:23**) "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is head of the church; and He is the Savior of the body." (**Gal 3:26-27**) "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ." (**Rom 6:3-4**) "Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death? ⁴ Therefore we were buried with Him through baptism into death, that just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."

i. **Gen 3:15** "I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring^[a] and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."

ii. **Gen 22:18** "and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed, because you have obeyed my voice."

iii. **Mt. 1** Linage of Christ from Abraham

iv. **Lk 2:11** "For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."

v. **John 14:6** "Jesus said to him, "I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

vi. **John 10:9** "I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture."

vii. **Eph 5:23** "For the husband is the head of the wife even as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior.

viii. **Gal 3:26-27** "for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷ For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ."

2. Deity: See discussion below on JW publication "Good News from God" chapter four.

B. Organization of the one church of the Bible?

1. Christ is its head: (**Eph 5:23**) "For the husband is head of the wife, as also Christ is **head of the church**; and He is the Savior of the body." (**Mt 16:18**) "And I also say to you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it." (**Acts 4:11**) "This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief **cornerstone.**' (Peter and John before Sanhedrin) (**1 Peter 5:3-4**)" nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

2. Elders/Shepherds/Bishops oversee each congregation (**1 Tim 3**) (**Titus 1:5**) "For this reason I left you in Crete, that you should set in order the things that are lacking, and appoint elders in every city as I commanded you—"(**1 Tim 5:17**) "Let the elders who **rule well** be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

C. How is a person saved from their sins? Hear (**Rom 10:17**); Believe (**Mark 16:16**); Repent (**Luke 13:3**); Confess (**Rom 10:9**); Baptized (**Rom 6:3-4; 1 Peter 3:21**); Be faithful till death (**Rev 2:10**)

D. Purpose of baptism? (**1 Pet 3:21; Rom 6:3-4; Acts 22:16**)

E. What Law are we under today? (**Col 2:14; Gal 3:24-25; Jas 1:25; Gal 6:2**)

F. The church and the kingdom are the same institution
(*JW's do not believe this*)

1. **Mt. 4:17** "From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (*soon to be established-early 1st century*)

2. **Mt 16:16-19** "Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."¹⁷ And Jesus answered him, "Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah! For flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but my Father who is in heaven.¹⁸ And I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock^[a] I will build my church, and the gates of hell^[b] shall not prevail against it.¹⁹ I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth shall be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth shall be loosed^[c] in heaven."

3. **Mark 9:1** "And he said to them, "Assuredly, I say to you that there are some standing here who will not taste of death till they see the kingdom of God present with power"

4. **Acts 2:36-39; 41,47** "Let all the house of Israel therefore know for certain that God has made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you crucified."³⁷ Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?"³⁸ And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. (keys to kingdom / terms of entrance - Mt 16:19)"³⁹ For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself."

5. **Acts 2:41,47** "So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day (to the body/church/kingdom of Christ) about three thousand souls. "praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to their number day by day those who were being saved. (*church/kingdom was in existence*)

6. **Col 1:13-14** "He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred (past tense/existed) us to the kingdom (church) of his beloved Son, ¹⁴ in whom we have redemption, the forgiveness of sins. (*salvation (redemption) is found only in Christ's body, His church, Eph 5:23*)

7. See further discussion of this topic below on JW publication "Good News from God" chapter seven.

G. JW publication "Good News from God"

Chapter 4 "Who is Jesus Christ?": (*JW's do not believe that Jesus is Deity. They believe God the Father created Him before the creation of our universe. They also do not believe that Jesus and the Holy Spirit are a part of the Godhead.*)

1. All persons were/are created at conception by God when He instills His spirit in us. Our physical bodies are simply a temporary home for our God-created, immortal spirit.

2. **Isaiah 9:6** (NWT) "For a child has been born to us, A son has been given to us; and the rulership will rest on his shoulder. His name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace" (prophesy of Jesus' (God the Son) coming)

3. **Jeremiah 23:5-6** (NWT) "Look! The days are coming, declares Jehovah, when I will raise up to David a righteous sprout (**Mt 2:23** referenced - Christ) and a king will reign and show insight and uphold justice and righteousness in the land. In his days Judah will be saved, and Israel will reside in security. And this is the name by which he will be called: Jehovah is Our Righteousness." (prophecy of Christ being called Jehovah)

4. **Mt 1:23** (NWT) "Look! The virgin will become pregnant and will give birth to a son, and they will name him Immanuel, which means, when translated, "With us is God" (fulfillment of the prophesy of Jesus' (God/Jehovah) coming)

5. Only God can forgive sins (**Mk 2:7**) (NWT). Jesus forgave sins (**Lk 5:20; 7:48; Mt 9:2; Mk 2:5.**) (NWT) Either Jesus is God (Deity) or the Holy Spirit inspired scriptures (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**) are incorrect.

6. Why would Christ command us to baptize in the name of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit if all three entities were not part of the Godhead (deity)? (**Mt 28:18-19**)

7. Jesus is currently King over His Spiritual Kingdom (His church) (**Mt. 16:18-19; Eph 5:23**). Satan is ruler of all the earth (**John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11; Mt 4:8-9**) He could not have offered all the kingdoms of the earth to Christ if he did not control them. **Hebrews 10:12-13** is referring to the end of time when Satan will be defeated and Christ will turn the reign of His Kingdom over to his Father (**1 Cor 15:23-28**)

Chapter 7 "What is God's Kingdom?":

Christ's church and His Kingdom are one in the same institution.

1. Things that the church and the kingdom have in common:

- A. In **Mt. 16:18-19** Jesus speaks of them as being the same. He was going to build His church and give the keys to (terms/conditions of entrance) the church / kingdom to Peter

- B. Christ's church and kingdom began at the same time:
 - i. **Mk 9:1; Lk 24:49; Acts 2:1-4**. The kingdom began on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**
 - ii. **Acts 2:47**. The church began on the day of Pentecost in **Acts 2**.

- C. Christ's church and kingdom began at the same place:
 - i. **Isa 2:2,3**. The kingdom would begin in Jerusalem
 - ii. **Acts 2:47**. The church began in Jerusalem

- D. Christ's church and kingdom have the same leader:
 - i. **1 Tim 6:15; Mt. 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25**. Jesus is king of His kingdom
 - ii. **Eph 1:22; 5:23**. Jesus is head of the church

2. Jesus Christ is King of Kings - If Jesus Christ is the King of kings and is reigning at the right hand of God then it is absolutely necessary that He have a kingdom to reign over. A king without a kingdom has no honor. The Bible does not say that Jesus is a prince waiting on a kingdom, waiting on power to rule. He has all authority and power to rule now and He is ruling today (**Mt. 28:18; 1 Cor 15:25**).

3. The Way:

- A. "The Church" in **Acts 8:3** and "the way" in **Acts 9:2** are the same.
- B. In **Acts 19:8** Paul preached "The Kingdom of God" and some spoke evil of "the way." This shows that the Kingdom and "the way" are the same.
- C. In **Acts 22:4** Paul persecuted "the way" which is the church, **Acts 8:3**

The Way is the Church; The Way is the Kingdom; therefore The Church is the Kingdom (A = B; A = C; therefore B = C)

"Good News From God" Chapter 14 "Why Does God Have an Organization?" and "Who Are Doing God's Will Today" Chapter 20 "How Does the Governing Body Function Today?" (*JW's believe they have scriptural authority for a "Governing Council" to oversee elders in local congregations*)

During the first century the Apostles and church leaders in Jerusalem served a specific purpose based on a specific set of circumstances that existed ONLY during the early days of the formation of Christ's church. During that time period the congregations that were founded by the Apostles did not have men with experience in overseeing the work of their congregations nor did they have the complete divine written revelation of God's Word to guide them.

This temporary situation necessitated temporary oversight by the inspired Apostles and those church leaders, many if not all, who received miraculous powers by the "laying on of hands" by the Apostles. Once God's Word had been revealed and produced in written form in its entirety and made available to individual congregations the need for and availability of these miraculous powers ceased when the Apostles and church leaders with those powers died (**1 Cor 13:8-12**). Many translations use the word "perfect" in **1 Cor 13:10** to describe that which had come, leading some to assume Paul was referring to a person not an object. The NWT correctly uses the word "complete" referring to the revealed Word of God.

The scriptural organization of Christ's church was never intended to include an authority hierarchy above the elders over each autonomous local congregation after the complete revelation of God's Word in the first century. Christ (Chief Shepherd), as head of His church (**Rom 16:16; Eph 5:23**) delegated limited authority to local shepherds (elders) in each congregation to carry out His mission on earth (**Lk 19:10**). It is worthy to note that Paul provided Timothy in **1 Timothy 3** very specific qualifications for elders, and deacons working under those elders, in individual autonomous congregations, but provided no such qualifications for any positions of authority above the local congregations. If these positions were more important and held more authority than local elders why would God not have provided specific qualifications for them also? Logic would lead us to understand that local shepherds are directly accountable to the Chief Shepherd without any intervening authorities.

The unscriptural practice of Bishops (elders) overseeing multiple congregations came about in the second century and later and has led to much of the apostasy Christ's church experienced in history. This diversion from the first century church organization recorded in the New Testament was what inspired men in the late 1800's to attempt to restore Christ's church to its original structure and organization.

"Who Are Doing Jehovah's Will today" Chapter 19 "Who Is The Faithful and Discreet Slave Class?"

Faithful and Discreet Slave Class - This term apparently refers to the deacons (servants) whose qualifications are given in **1 Timothy 3**. As mentioned above, this is a position reserved in each local congregation for men who work under the oversight of local autonomous elders serving in the various ministries of those congregations. We read of the precursor to deacons in **Acts 6:1-7** where the Apostles (precursors to elders) asked the Jerusalem congregation to identify seven men for them to appoint to carry out the work of daily distribution to the widows. It is worthy to note the process with which these servants were chosen and appointed to this work by the congregation and apostles. It serves as a guideline for appointing elders and deacons in today's local congregations.

**Additional information on the JW doctrine can be found at christiancourier.com*

***I believe it is beneficial to keep the initial focus of the study on the person of Christ as Savior and His mission to seek and save the lost (**Lk 19:10**) through His church/kingdom. JW's have extreme beliefs concerning "end times" that would be best studied if and when agreement can be reached on salvation issues.*

**** I was disappointed when the JW's decided to end our study because they felt we were too far apart in our beliefs, but I was not deterred as to my mission as a Christian (**1 Cor 3:6**) It may be only in eternity that we will know the outcome of our labors.*

Conclusion

After spending eight hours in discussions and study with the JW's I developed respect and admiration for their dedication serving God and evangelizing the world for their cause. Unfortunately they have zeal without knowledge (**Romans 10:2**)

