

How to Answer Jehovah's Witness Questions

“Mark 10:18—No one is good but God alone”

Jehovah's Witness: In Mark 10:18, when the man called Jesus "Good Teacher," Jesus answered "Why do you call Me good? No one is good except God alone." Jesus admitted that He wasn't God.

Answer: Ask the J.W., "Was Jesus good?" (He won't know how to reply because J.W.'s believe He was a perfect man). Jesus did not say, "I am not God" but said, "No one is good except God alone." Jesus wanted the man to realize that He was God and not just a good teacher. Was Jesus good? Of course He was, which means that He is God. Jesus called Himself good when He said, "I am the good shepherd" (John 10:14). If He was good, then He was God.

“John 10:29—The Father is greater than I”

Jehovah's Witness: How could Jesus be God when he said, "the Father is greater than I" (John 10:29)?

Answer: He called the Father greater because Jesus was speaking of his role of submitting to Him during His time on earth. "Greater" is a **term of position**, not a term of nature. Even though all people are equal in nature, some are greater than others.

The President of the United States is greater than everyone in the country due to his high position. Jesus said, "You know that those who are recognized as rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them; and their great men exercise authority over them. But it is not so among you, but whoever wishes to become great among you shall be your servant." (Mark 10:42-43). Although these people are equal in nature, some are greater than others.

When Jesus humbled Himself by leaving heaven and coming to earth (Phil. 2:6-8), the Father became greater than Him. "For a little while" (during His time on earth) He became "lower than the angels" (Heb. 2:7). Even though He took a lower position for a little while, He kept His nature of deity because Heb. 1:6 says, "Let the angels of God worship Him." While on earth, Jesus was in submission to His Father, who was "greater."

“A father is older than a son”

Jehovah's Witness: A father is always older than a son. Jesus is the son who came into existence after his father, so he could not be God.

Answer: Jesus existed as God in eternity past as "the Word" not as "the Son." John 1:1 says, "In the beginning was the Word...and the Word was God." John 1:14 says, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us." The Word became "the Son" when He put on flesh when He left heaven and came to Earth. "Son" is a title that refers to His humanity. "God" refers to His deity. The "Son of God" is a title that reveals His dual nature as both man and God.

“Only begotten son means Jesus came into existence”

Jehovah's Witness: "Only-begotten son" means he came into existence at a point in time.

Answer: The Greek word for "only-begotten" means "uniquely born" or a "one-of-a-kind birth." "Only-begotten Son" means Jesus is the only one who has ever been born by being conceived of the Holy Spirit, born of a virgin, and possessed the nature of both God and man. It is a description of His unique birth that will never happen again.

“Jesus was Mighty god but not Almighty God”

Jehovah’s Witness: Isaiah 7:6 says, “His name (Jesus) will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God...” Jesus is “mighty god” but not Jehovah, who is “Almighty God.”

Answer: Isaiah 10:20-21 says Jehovah is “Mighty God” And Jeremiah 32:17-18 calls Jehovah “the mighty One.”

“Only 144,000 will be saved”

Jehovah’s Witness: Only 144,000 will be saved and go to heaven. This is the “little flock.” The “other sheep” are the other Jehovah’s Witnesses who live in the kingdom on earth.

Answer: Rev. 7:1-8 says they are 144,000 Jews—12,000 from each of the 12 tribes of Israel. Rev. 14:4 says “These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women, in fact, they are virgins.” They are all males who have never had sex.

This is not the number of people in heaven because Rev. 7:9-10 says, “After these things I saw a great crowd, which no man was able to count, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb . . . and they keep crying with a loud voice, saying “Salvation [we owe] to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.” The “other sheep not of this fold” are the Gentiles.

“The dead know nothing at all”

Jehovah’s Witness: Eccl. 9:5 says “the dead know nothing at all.” When someone dies, the soul ceases to exist.

Answer: Eccl. 9:3 is talking about life here on earth, “under the sun.” Eccl. 12:7 says that the body returns to dust but the spirit returns to God who gave it” (for judgment).

Paul said in Phil. 1:21-24, “For to me, to live is Christ, and to die is gain...But I am hard-pressed from both directions, having the desire to depart and be with Christ, for that is very much better; yet to remain on in the flesh is more necessary for your sake.”

Paul says when he dies it is gain, that he departs, and that he is with Christ which is very much better. If Paul believed in “soul sleep,” then he should have wished that he could live for over a hundred years on earth so he could keep ministering. But the benefit of dying is to be immediately with Christ, which is “very much better” than remaining on earth.

Again he says in 2 Cor. 5:6, 8, “...while at home in the body we are absent from the Lord. We are of good courage, I say, and prefer rather to be absent from the body and to be at home with the Lord.” Paul preferred to be absent from his body so he could be with Jesus. He said we could only be “at home or absent,” not in an in-between state like soul sleep.

In Matt. 17:3-4, Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration. Moses had been dead for a long time (Dt. 34:5) and Elijah was caught up alive to heaven. Moses wasn’t soul-sleeping.

In Rev. 6:9-11, this occurs in heaven: The souls of those who have been slain ask God to judge those on earth who have killed them. Verse 11 informs them that there are more on earth that will die.

“Truly I say to you today, you will be with me in Paradise”

Jehovah’s Witness: Jesus did not say the thief would be with him in Paradise on that day. The *New World Translation* reads, “Truly I tell you today, you will be with me in Paradise.” The comma in your Bible is in the wrong place.

Answer: The phrase “Truly (Verily) I say unto you” is recorded over 70 times in the gospels, but not once does it say, “Truly I say unto you today.” The thief knew that Jesus was talking to him that day. What he needed to know was when he would be with Him in paradise.

Which makes more sense? "Johnny, I am telling you the truth today, I am taking you to the zoo" or "Johnny, I am telling you the truth, today I am taking you to the zoo." Johnny needs to know what day he is going to the zoo, not what day you're talking to him. Jesus wanted the thief to know he would be with Him in Paradise that day.

"Hell is not a literal place but is the grave"

Jehovah's Witness: When Jesus spoke of hell, he was talking about the valley outside Jerusalem where they burned trash and dead bodies. He wasn't talking about a literal place in the afterlife.

Answer: If the valley was merely symbolic, what was it symbolic of? Jesus said it was eternal fire (Matt. 18:8) and unquenchable fire (Mark 9:43,48). Is the valley still burning and is the fire unquenchable? No, it is not, so He was talking about the afterlife. In Rev. 19:19-20, the anti-Christ and false prophet are thrown into the lake of fire alive (obviously, this couldn't be the grave). One thousand years later, they are still not consumed but at "tormented day and night forever and ever" (Rev. 20:10).

Jesus said this about Judas: "It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matt. 26:24, Mark 14:21). If death means the extinction of being, death would end it all for him. However, never to have been born means never to have come into existence. If death means going out of existence, then never to have been born and to die are equivalent conditions; they would both mean nonexistence. If that were true, Jesus would have said, "It will good when he dies," but He didn't say that. Jesus is clearly implying that punishment awaited Judas after he died.

Matthew 25:41-46 makes it clear hell is a place of eternal punishment. The righteous go into eternal life and the wicked go away into eternal punishment. The same Greek word is used for "eternal" in referring to both life and punishment, meaning the duration is the same for both groups.

"You must work for your salvation"

Jehovah's Witness: James 2:24 says a man is justified by works and not by faith alone.

Answer: This is taking a verse out of context because the Bible does not contradict itself.

Eph. 2:8-9 says, "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

Titus 3:5 says we are saved, not on the basis of deeds, but according to His mercy.

Romans 11:6 says it's by grace and not on the basis of works, otherwise grace is no longer grace.

Paul wrote to people who had dead works (works that precede faith). James wrote to people who had dead faith (an intellectual belief with no life to it). It's not faith plus works, but faith that works—a faith that's alive.

"Jesus was the first creation of God"

Jehovah's Witness: Jesus was the first creation of God. The New World Translation says in Col. 1:15-17: "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."

Answer: This passage does not say Jesus was the "first created," but that He was the "first-born." The Bible doesn't use the Greek word for "first created" (protoktizo), but firstborn (prototokos) of all creation.

The word "firstborn" refers to a position of pre-eminence rather than a time of birth. Rights and privileges were usually bestowed upon the child who was born first, but those rights did not always go to him. Manasseh was the first one born, but Jacob (Israel) blessed Ephraim instead of Manasseh and gave him the position of first-born (Gen. 48:13-22). In Jeremiah 31:9, God declares Ephraim to be His first-born, even though Manasseh was born first.

The same is true with Jacob and Esau. Although Esau was the first one born, Jacob (whose name was change to Israel) received his brother's birthright and his father's blessing and became the first-born. The nation of Israel was named after him, and the Lord calls Israel His first-born (Ex. 4:22). Here again, first-born refers to rank and privilege. It means first in importance, not first in time. The nation of Israel was not the first-born of a woman and not even the first nation to exist. But God called it the first-born among all the nations. In the same way, Jesus is the first-born of all creation.

The "first-born of the poor" (Isa. 14:30) means "the poorest of the poor." The "first-born of death" (Job 18:13) means Job's disease was the most terrible of diseases. The "first-born" of the kings means the highest of the kings of the earth (Ps. 89:27). David (v.20) was the last one born in his family but was called the firstborn. The "first-born of the dead" (Col. 1:18, Rev. 1:5) means that Jesus is pre-eminent over death.

The New World Translation adds the word "other" four times, which is not in the Greek. They add to Scripture to make it appear as though Jesus was the first-created thing among God's creation. According to Jehovah's Witnesses, God created Jesus and then Jesus created all other things. **The first-born of all creation means that Jesus is in the highest position, ruling over creation.**