Comprehensive Analysis: Contradictions Between Jehovah's Witnesses Doctrine and the New Testament

Introduction

This document provides a thorough analysis of contradictions between Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine—as taught by the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society and reflected in the New World Translation—and the New Testament, using original Greek texts. In historicist interpretations of Revelation 2–3, the church in Sardis (Revelation 3:1–6) most closely corresponds to Jehovah's Witnesses. It is a group with a reputation of being alive through vigorous Bible study and preaching activity, yet its works are unfinished before God because of foundational departures from the plain teaching of Jesus and the apostles.

Revelation 3:1–3 (Greek): Καὶ τῷ ἀγγέλῳ τῆς ἐν Σάρδεσιν ἐκκλησίας γράψον· Τάδε λέγει ὁ ἔχων τὰ ἑπτὰ πνεύματα τοῦ θεοῦ καὶ τοὺς ἑπτὰ ἀστέρας· οἶδά σου τὰ ἔργα ὅτι ὄνομα ἔχεις ὅτι ζῇς, καὶ νεκρὸς εἶ. γίνου γρηγορῶν καὶ στήρισον τὰ λοιπὰ ἃ ἔμελλον ἀποθανεῖν· οὐ γὰρ εὕρηκά σου τὰ ἔργα πεπληρωμένα ἐνώπιον τοῦ θεοῦ μου. μνημόνευε οὖν πῶς εἴληφας καὶ ἤκουσας καὶ τήρει καὶ μετανόησον.

NIV: "To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have found your deeds unfinished in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent."

The analysis is organized as follows: a table of primary contradictions with New Testament texts; followed by consolidated themes integrating the words of Jesus and the apostles, and reflective thoughts. Jehovah's Witnesses argue their teachings restore pure Bible truth; critics prioritize the plain meaning of the New Testament as received and heard.

Contradictions: Jehovah's Witnesses Doctrine vs. New Testament

JW Doctrine	JW Teaching Summary	NT Contradiction	Original Greek Text and Translation (NIV)
Jesus as a created being (Michael the Archangel)	Only the Father is Almighty God. Jesus is the first created being, formerly Michael. NWT renders John 1:1 as "the Word was a god."	John 1:1; John 20:28; Colossians 2:9; Hebrews 1:8. Jesus is the Word who was God; Thomas addresses him as "My Lord and my God."	Ἐν ἀρχῇ ἦν ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὁ λόγος ἦν πρὸς τὸν θεόν, καὶ θεὸς ἦν ὁ λόγος. NIV (John 1:1): In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.
Governing Body as sole channel of truth	The Watchtower is the "faithful and discreet slave" (Matthew 24:45). Accurate understanding requires their publications.	2 Timothy 3:16–17; Acts 17:11. Scripture equips completely; the Bereans examined the Scriptures themselves.	πᾶσα γραφὴ θεόπνευστος καὶ ὠφέλιμος πρὸς διδασκαλίαν... ἵνα ἄρτιος ᾖ ὁ τοῦ θεοῦ ἄνθρωπος. NIV (2 Tim. 3:16–17): All Scripture is God-breathed... so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped.
Salvation by works and organizational loyalty; only 144,000 to heaven	Heaven limited to 144,000. Others receive earthly paradise through preaching and loyalty to the organization.	Ephesians 2:8–9; John 3:16; Revelation 7:9. By grace through faith, not works; whoever believes has eternal life; great multitude before the throne.	τῇ γὰρ χάριτί ἐστε σεσῳσμένοι διὰ πίστεως· καὶ τοῦτο οὐκ ἐξ ὑμῶν· θεοῦ τὸ δῶρον· οὐκ ἐξ ἔργων. NIV (Eph. 2:8–9): For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith... not by works.

JW Doctrine	JW Teaching Summary	NT Contradiction	Original Greek Text and Translation (NIV)
Annihilation; no eternal conscious punishment	The wicked cease to exist. Death is non-existence until resurrection. No eternal hell.	Matthew 25:46; Revelation 14:11; Luke 16:23–24. Eternal punishment parallel to eternal life; torment forever; rich man in anguish.	καὶ ἀπελεύσονται οὗτοι εἰς κόλασιν αἰώνιον, οἱ δὲ δίκαιοι εἰς ζωὴν αἰώνιον. NIV (Matt. 25:46): Then they will go away to eternal punishment, but the righteous to eternal life.
No bodily resurrection of Jesus	Jesus raised as an invisible spirit creature. Physical body dissolved.	Luke 24:39; John 20:27. Jesus invites touch, saying a spirit does not have flesh and bones.	ἴδετε τὰς χεῖράς μου καὶ τοὺς πόδας μου ὅτι ἐγώ εἰμι αὐτός· ψηλαφήσατέ με καὶ ἴδετε, ὅτι πνεῦμα σάρκα καὶ ὀστέα οὐκ ἔχει. NIV (Luke 24:39): Look at my hands and my feet... Touch me and see; a ghost does not have flesh and bones.
Holy Spirit as impersonal force	The Holy Spirit is Jehovah's active force, not a person. NWT often uses "it."	Acts 5:3–4; Ephesians 4:30; John 14:26. Lying to the Spirit is lying to God; the Spirit can be grieved and teaches.	διὰ τί ἐπλήρωσεν ὁ σατανᾶς τὴν καρδίαν σου ψεύσασθαί σε τὸ πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον... οὐκ ἐψεύσω ἀνθρώποις ἀλλὰ τῷ θεῷ. NIV (Acts 5:3–4): You have lied to the Holy Spirit... You have not lied just to human beings but to God.

Consolidated Themes and Thoughts

The Identity of Christ

Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus is a created being, the archangel Michael in pre-human form. The New Testament presents him as the Word who was with God and was God (John 1:1), the one in whom the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily (Colossians 2:9), and the one addressed as "My Lord and my God" (John 20:28). Jesus accepted worship and applied divine titles to himself (John 8:58). These texts leave the works of any system that reduces him to a creature unfinished before God.

Salvation and the Hope of Eternal Life

The New Testament declares that a person is saved by grace through faith, not by works (Ephesians 2:8–9), and that whoever believes has eternal life (John 3:16). Revelation 7:9 shows a great multitude that no one can number standing before the throne. Jehovah's Witnesses limit heaven to 144,000 and condition a favorable standing on organizational loyalty and preaching activity. This adds requirements beyond what Jesus and the apostles taught and leaves the works incomplete.

Judgment, Death, and Resurrection

Jesus spoke of eternal punishment parallel to eternal life (Matthew 25:46). The rich man is described as in torment (Luke 16:23–24). Jesus rose bodily and invited the disciples to touch him (Luke 24:39). Jehovah's Witnesses teach annihilation and a spiritual-only resurrection. These departures leave the deeds unfinished in the sight of God.

Authority of Scripture

The apostles taught that Scripture is God-breathed and thoroughly equips the servant of God (2 Timothy 3:16–17). The Bereans were commended for examining the Scriptures themselves (Acts 17:11). Jehovah's Witnesses place the Governing Body and Watchtower publications as necessary for accurate understanding. This inserts an authority between the believer and the Word that Jesus and the apostles did not teach.

What Jesus Would Say

"You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that bear witness about me, yet you refuse to come to me that you may have life." (John 5:39–40)

"Truly, truly, I say to you, whoever hears my word and believes him who sent me has eternal life. He does not come into judgment, but has passed from death to life." (John 5:24)

"I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me." (John 14:6)

What the Apostles Would Say

Paul: "For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Ephesians 2:8–9)

Paul: "All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work." (2 Timothy 3:16–17)

John: "Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life." (1 John 5:12)

Peter: "There is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved." (Acts 4:12)

Conclusion

Jesus' word to the church in Sardis was that they had a name of being alive, yet their works were unfinished. Jehovah's Witnesses display a reputation for biblical activity. When their teachings are placed beside the words of Jesus and the apostles, the unfinished works become clear. The call remains: "Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; hold it fast, and repent."

He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.