

STUDY PACK 5

MODERN CULTS The Jehovah's Witnesses

“Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive everlasting life in the earthly paradise we must _____.”

~ ~ *The Watchtower*, 2-15-1983, p. 12 ~ ~

I. INTRODUCTION

Jehovah's Witnesses. Almost everyone knows of their aggressive door-to-door proselytizing. The organization they represent, known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTB & TS), emphasizes end-time prophecy and has unsuccessfully predicted the end of the world many times. The WTB & TS exercises rigid control over Jehovah's Witnesses and forbids their participation in such common activities as _____, _____, celebrating _____ or _____ (including Christmas, Easter, and Mother's Day), _____, _____, and _____. Through these restrictions, the WTB & TS builds a wall of isolation between Jehovah's Witnesses and the rest of society.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society boldly claims to be the only organization God is using today to teach His truth and speak for Him. According to the WTB & TS, all non-Jehovah's Witnesses will be destroyed at Armageddon, an event of divine judgment it threatens is just around the corner. The Watchtower Society prints over 15 million copies of its magazines every week into 120 languages, and has over 5 million active Jehovah's Witnesses (“publishers”) spreading its doctrines in 230 countries.

II. HISTORY OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS

A. Charles Taze Russell.

Charles T. Russell (1829-1916) founded the Jehovah's Witnesses movement. As a teenager he rejected his Presbyterian roots, joined a more liberal Congregational Church, and then left this group as well. He denied _____ and the biblical teachings _____ and _____. Russell had no formal Bible training, but borrowed and built upon various teachings that were popular at the time. For example, Adventism influenced his denial of hell, and a splinter Adventist group led by N. H. Barbour aroused his interest in end-time prophecies. From Barbour he borrowed the belief that Christ returned *invisibly* to the world in 1874, and the _____ was the year the world would be destroyed and the Millennium would begin.

In 1879 Russell started his own magazine, *Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence* (now known as *The Watchtower*), to promote his doctrines.

People were drawn to Russell's sensational end-time predictions, and the organization grew.

In spite of his lack of formal training in theology or biblical languages, Russell claimed to be the only one with the truth, and he vigorously condemned all other Christian religions. As a result, ministers of various denominations began exposing Russell's false teachings and questionable character.

Russell continued to attract people with his fantastic prophetic interpretations and dramatic warnings that Armageddon would strike in 1914. When 1914 came and went, he changes the date to 1915. Russell died in 1916, leaving his followers doubting and disillusioned by his predictive failures. Joseph Franklin Rutherford then took control of the organization.

B. CHARLES T. RUSSELL'S SCANDALS.

The Miracle Wheat scandal brought adverse national publicity. A scientist had developed a new strain of wheat, and gave it to Russell to use as he desired. Russell began to advertise the wheat as a new "miracle" strain that would produce _____ more per acre than regular wheat. The "miracle" wheat could be purchased for only one dollar per pound, or about sixty dollars a bushel, which was _____.

The *Brooklyn Daily Eagle* published an editorial cartoon that Russell considered slanderous, and he sued the newspaper. During the trial, it was proven that the wheat was no better and no worse than other wheat, and the court rejected Russell's case against the newspaper.

In yet another suit for libel, Russell sued Rev. J. J. Ross, a Canadian pastor who had published a pamphlet titled, "*Some Facts About the Self-Styled 'Pastor' Charles T. Russell.*" Pastor Ross was a straight-talking man who accused Russell of being "neither a scholar nor a theologian," and his Society of being "anti-rational, anti-scientific, anti-Biblical, anti-Christian, and a deplorable perversion of the gospel..." Russell lost his libel suit when he perjured himself on the witness stand, _____.

In addition to all of these professional entanglements, Russell's wife Maria left him in 1897. She claimed that even a dog had more rights than she had. In 1903, she obtained a legal separation, and in 1906, the divorce trial was a national newsmaker. Mrs. Russell claimed that her husband had been immoral with many women, had been egotistical and dominating, and had tried to drive her to insanity. In 1908 she was granted a divorce, and a year later sued for an increase in alimony.

Russell's response was two-fold. First, he moved Society headquarters from Allegheny, Pennsylvania to Brooklyn, New York, far out of Pittsburgh's courts legal jurisdiction. Second, he transferred all of his assets to the Watchtower

Society so that he could legally claim to be penniless, and not have to pay any alimony at all.

C. Judge Rutherford.

Rutherford (1869-1942) also used the threat of Armageddon to intimidate Jehovah's Witnesses. He published *The Finished Mystery*, a book which predicted that in _____ God would destroy churches and millions of their members, and claimed that by 1920 every kingdom would be swallowed up in anarchy. Rutherford taught that the only way to escape the impending judgment and destruction was to join the Watchtower organization.

Fear of Armageddon motivated Witnesses to work hard selling Rutherford's books and other Watchtower Society literature. When the 1918 and 1920 predictions failed, Rutherford set a new date in his book titled, *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* (1920). It taught that the millennium would start in _____ and that the Old Testament saints like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and David would come back to life. The Watchtower Society even built a luxurious Spanish mansion called Beth-Sarim (House of Princes), supposedly to house these patriarchs. In the meantime, however, Rutherford conveniently moved into the mansion. He also drove an expensive new car throughout the Great Depression, while rank-and-file Witnesses sold Watchtower books and pamphlets door-to-door, and worked at Bethel headquarters for \$10-\$15 a month. Six years after Rutherford's death in 1942, the Old Testament saints still had not arrived, so the Society quietly sold "Beth-Sarim," thus closing an embarrassing chapter in their predictive history.

D. Nathan Knorr.

Under the leadership of Nathan H. Knorr (1905-1977) the Watchtower Society put away the date setting for the time and switched to a different strategy. Since many of their teachings are easily refuted by key verses in the King James bible, Knorr set out to publish a different bible for Jehovah's Witnesses to use. The Watchtower Society Bible, called the *New World Translation (NWT)*, _____ that show the errors of Watchtower teaching. The single-best example of this is John 1:1 which in the King James Version clearly declares Jesus' deity – "*the Word was God.*" The Watchtower Society denies the deity of Christ, so the NWT renders this phrase _____.

Another example is found in the Old Testament book of Zechariah, chapter 12 verse 10. Jehovah God is speaking and says, "*They shall look upon me whom they have pierced*" understood by Christians as a predictive reference to the crucifixion. Recognizing that Jesus' fulfillment of this prophecy would mean that he is Jehovah God, the Watchtower Society has changed this verse in the NWT to read "they will certainly look to *the One* whom they pierced through," thus eliminating another reference to the deity of Jesus Christ. The society made

similar changes to many other verses relating to the deity of Christ (Colossians 1:16-20; Titus 2:13; Hebrews 1:8). They have also altered verses that expose the Watchtower Society's false teaching on subjects like the reality of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), and the personality of the Holy Spirit (I Corinthians 14:14-16; I Timothy 4:1; Jude 19). In this way the Watchtower Society gives Jehovah's Witnesses and potential converts the illusion that the Bible supports is erroneous doctrines.

The translation committee responsible for the NWT _____, undoubtedly to cover up their complete lack of scholarly qualifications. None of the men who worked on this project had any formal training in the biblical languages, except for Frederick Franz. He was chairman of the committee and had studied Greek for two years at the University of Cincinnati without graduating, and was only self-taught in Hebrew. After Knorr's death, Franz became the Watchtower Society's new President.

E. Recent History.

From 1960 to 1966 the organization's growth rate slowed considerably. At this point the WTB & TS introduced a new book and a new date for the end of the world. *Life Everlasting in the Freedom of the Sons of God* (1966) by Vice President Franz (1894-1992) concluded that the _____ would mark the beginning of the seventh period of human history. The Society was careful to avoid printing an outright prediction, but the message was clear to Jehovah's Witnesses everywhere – Armageddon was coming soon. Some even sold their homes and property in 1974 and were praised by their leaders for doing so.

Membership grew by the thousands until 1975 came and went. Then many Witnesses realized God was not leading the Watchtower Society and left the organization. The leaders of the WTB & TS refused to admit they had been wrong about 1975, and instead told disillusioned members to “adjust their viewpoint.”

Exposure of the Watchtower Society's false predictions has created doubts and concerns about the organization. The Society has responded by publishing articles and books in which they admit they had made mistakes in their historical predictions and doctrinal teaching. They excuse these errors by attributing them to human fallibility and by saying the Watchtower Society has never claimed to be inspired by God. This is a bold deception, since past Watchtower magazines are referred to as “God's message,” and have carried instructions from Jehovah _____. A Watchtower magazine as recently as August 1, 1995 stated, “Jehovah particularly teaches his people by means of a weekly study of the Bible, using *The Watchtower* as a teaching aid.”

F. The Editor of *The Watchtower*.

In 1943, Watchtower Vice President Frederick Franz, and President Nathan H. Knorr provided the following testimony under oath in a court of law that the content of _____.
WTB & TS, 1943 Sections #2596-2597, p. 866.

Q. At any rate, Jehovah God is not the editor of the paper (*The Watchtower*), is that right?

A. He is today the editor of the paper.

Q. How long has He been editor of the paper?

A. Since its inception He has been guiding it.

Cross-examination of Nathan Homer Knorr in the case of *Olin Moyle v. WTB & TS*, 1943, Section #4421, p. 1474.

Q. In fact, it (*The Watchtower*) is set forth directly _____, isn't it?

A. Yes, _____.

Q. Without any qualification whatsoever?

A. That is right.

Many people remain unaware of these damaging facts, and the Witnesses continue to grow in number, distributing massive amounts of deception literature. In spite of its past failures and recent claims to not be inspired, the Watchtower Society still demands complete loyalty and continues to predict Armageddon is coming soon with sure annihilation for anyone who does not join the organization or leaves its ranks. Even with a history marred by manipulation and false prophecies, the Watchtower Society still claims to be the only one teaching the truth.

III. SOME DOCTRINAL POSITIONS OF THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

A. God and the Trinity.

“There is only one solitary being from all eternity, Jehovah God, the creator and preserver of the universe and all things visible and invisible.”

“The Word or Logos is a “god,” the “beginning of the creation” of Jehovah, and His active agent in the creation of all things. The Logos was made human as the

man Jesus and suffered death to produce the ransom or redemptive price _____
_____.”

“The doctrine is that there are three gods in one: God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, all three equal in power, substance and eternity” (*Let God Be True*, p. 100). The conclusion therefore is that _____
_____ doctrine, (ibid p. 101). “The plain truth is that this is another of Satan’s attempts to keep God-fearing persons from learning the truth of Jehovah, and His Son, Jesus Christ. No, *there is not a Trinity* (ibid, p. 111). Anyone trying to reason out the trinity teaching confuses the meaning of John 1:1,2; it does not simplify it or make it clear or easily understandable” (*The Word; Who Is It? According to John*, p. 7).

“The Holy Spirit is the invisible active force of almighty God that moves his servants to do His will” (*Let God Be True*, p. 108). “As for the Holy Spirit, the so-called Third person of the trinity, we have already seen _____
_____, but God’s active force” (*The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, p. 24).

B. Hell.

Hell, meaning, a place of “fiery torment” where sinners remain after death until the resurrection does not exist. This is a doctrine of the organized religion, not the Bible. Hell is the common grave of mankind, literally Sheol (Hebrew) “a place of rest in hope” _____
_____.

Eternal punishment is a punishment or penalty of which there is no end. It does not mean “*eternal torment*” of living souls. Annihilation, the second death, is the lot of all those who reject Jehovah God and it is eternal.

“Those who have been taught by Christendom to believe _____
_____ for torment conscious humans eternally” (*Let God Be True*, p. 88). “It is plain that the Bible hell is mankind’s common grave that even an honest little child can understand it, but not the religious theologians” (ibid. p.92), yet the clergyman attributes to God, who is love, the wicked crime of torturing human creatures merely because they had the misfortune to be born sinners.” “The doctrine of a burning hell where the wicked are tortured eternally after death cannot be true, mainly for four reasons: (1) because it is wholly unscriptural, (2) it is unreasonable, (3) it is contrary to God’s love, and (4) it is repugnant to justice” (ibid. p. 99).

C. Salvation.

The atonement is a ransom paid to Jehovah God by Christ Jesus and is applicable to all who accept its righteousness. In effect, the death of Jesus removed the

effects of Adam's sin on his offspring, and laid the foundation of the New World of righteousness including the Millennium of Christ's reign.

"Immortality is a reward for faithfulness. It does not come automatically to a human at birth" (*Let God Be True*, p. 74). "Those people of good will today who avail themselves of the provision and who steadfastly divide in the confidence will find Christ Jesus to be their 'everlasting' Father" (Isaiah 9:6, *ibid*, p. 121). We have learned that a _____ or at Armageddon, or during the thousand years of Christ's reign, or at the end of the final test...into everlasting destruction" (from *Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, p. 241).

D. The Resurrection of Christ.

"The firstborn from the dead was raised from the grave, not a human creature, _____ (*Let God Be True*, p. 276). "Jehovah God raided him from the dead, not as a human son, but as a mighty immortal spirit Son...for forty days after that, he materialized as angels before him had done to show himself alive to his disciples to be forever lower than the angels...Jesus did not take his human body back to Heaven to be forever a man in heaven. Had he done so, that would have left him forever lower than the angels...God did not purpose for Jesus to be humiliated thus forever by being a fleshly man forever. No, but after he had sacrificed his perfect manhood, God raised him to deathless life " _____ (*ibid*. p. 41). "Usually they could not at first tell it was Jesus, for he appeared in different bodies. He appeared and disappeared just as angels had done, because he was resurrected as a spirit creature. Only because Thomas would not believe did Jesus appear in a body like that in which he had come.

E. The Deity of Christ.

"The true scriptures speak of God's Son, the Word, as a god. He is a mighty god; _____, who is Jehovah." (*The Truth Shall Make You Free*, p. 47). "In other words, he was the first and direct creation of Jehovah God" (*The Kingdom Is At Hand*, p. 46-49). "Jesus was the Son of God, not God Himself." The very fact that He was sent proved he was not equal with God but less than God his Father.

"Mary was a virgin...when Joseph learned that Mary was going to have a child, he did not want her as his wife. But God's angel said 'that which has been begotten in her is by the Holy Spirit' he took Mary his wife home. But he had no relation with her until she gave birth to a son, Matthew 1:20-25. (from *Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained*, p. 122, 123). Jesus' birth on earth _____ . He emptied himself of all things heavenly and spiritual and God's almighty spirit transferred His Son's life down to the womb of the Jewish virgin of David's descent by this miracle he was born a man...he was not spirit-

human hybrid, a man and at the same time a spirit person...he was flesh" (*What Has Religion Done For Mankind?* p. 231).

F. The Return of Christ.

Jesus Christ has returned to earth in 1914, has expelled Satan and is proceeding to overthrow Satan's organization, establish the Theocratic Millennial Kingdom, and vindicate the name of Jehovah God. He did not return in physical form and is invisible as the Logos.

The Kingdom of Jehovah is supreme, as such cannot be compatible with present human government (*The Devil's Visible Organization*) and any allegiance to them in any way which violates the allegiance owed to Him, is a violation of the Scripture.

"Christ Jesus returns, not again as a human, _____"
_____ (Let God Be True, p. 96). It does not mean that he (Christ) is on the way, or has promised to come, but that he has already arrived and is here" (ibid, p. 198). "Any national flag is a symbol of a national power eagle, sun, lion, etc. are forbidden by Exodus 20:2-6 (the commandment of idolatry). Hence, no witness of Jehovah, who ascribes salvation only to Him, may salute any national emblem without violating Jehovah's commandments against idolatry as stated in His Word" (ibid, p. 242, 243).

IV. CONTROVERSY OVER THE DRAFT

The Watchtower Society's opposition to the draft during World War I resulted in legal action by the United States federal government. Judge Rutherford and the board of directors were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment for violating the *Espionage Act*. They were released on bail, and in March 1919, the judgment against them was reversed, and the charges dropped.

V. THE CHURCH FATHERS

The Jehovah's Witnesses often state that none of the church fathers ever claimed that Christ was God or acknowledged the Trinity. They use unsubstantiated quotes from several church fathers to support their point. The historical record is quite different.

Justin Martyr (110-165 A.D.)

"...nor to know that the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God" (*First Apology of Justin*, Ch. LXIII); "but now you will permit me first to recount the prophecies, which I wish to do in order to prove that Christ is called both _____ and _____" (*Dialogue With Trypho*, Ch. XXXVI); "Therefore these words testify explicitly that He is witnessed to by Him who established these things, as deserving to be worshipped, _____ and as Christ" (ibid, Ch. LXIII).

Irenaeus (120-202 A.D.)

“...and to raise up anew all flesh of the whole human race, in order that to Christ Jesus, _____, and Saviour, and King” (*Against Heresies*, Bk. 1, Ch. 10):
“But that He is in His own right, beyond all men who ever lived, _____, and King Eternal, and the Incarnate Word, proclaimed by all the prophets and apostles, and by the Spirit Himself, may be seen by all who have attained to even a small portion of the truth” (*Against Heresies*, Bk. 3, Ch. 19).

Clement of Alexandria (153-217 A.D.)

“For ‘before the morning star it was;’ and ‘in the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’ and “This Word, then, the Christ, the cause of both our being at first (for He was in God) and of our well being, this very Word has now appeared as man, He alone being both, both God and man...” and “The Word, who in the beginning bestowed on us life as Creator when He formed us, taught us to live well when He appeared as our Teacher; that as God He might afterwards conduct us to the life which never ends” (*Exhortation to the Heathen*, Ch. 1).

Tertullian (145-220 A.D.)

“Him we believe to have been sent by the Father into the virgin and to have been born or her – being _____, the Son of Man and the Son of God, and to have been called by the name of Jesus Christ.” And “...while the mystery of the dispensation is still guarded, which distributes the Unity into a Trinity, placing them in their order the three Persons – the Father, The Son, and the Holy Ghost” (*Against Praxeas*, Ch. 2); “With these did He then speak, in the Unity of the Trinity, as with His ministers and witnesses.” And “...I mean the Word of God, ‘through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made.’ Now if He too is God, according to John (who says) ‘_____’...” (*Against Praxeas*, Ch. 12).

Hippolytus (170-234 A.D.)

“For he speaks to this effect: ‘In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God’” and “‘Go ye and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.’ And by this He showed, that whosoever omitted any one of these, failed in glorifying God perfectly. For it is through this Trinity that the Father is glorified. For the Father willed, the Son did, the Spirit manifested. The whole Scriptures, then, proclaim this truth” (*Against the Heresy of One Noetus*, Ch. 14); “For Christ is the God above all, and He has arranged to wash away sin from human beings” (*The Refutation of All Heresies*, Bk. 10, Ch. 30).