

Straight Talk #20 On Jehovah's Witnesses by William J. Schnobelen, © 2011

The Watchtower Society, commonly known as Jehovah's Witnesses, is one of the larger and more successful cults flourishing today. Like two of its cousins, the Seventh Day Adventists and Christadelphians, it came out of the chaos that followed the "Great Disappointment" (1844).

For those not acquainted with US history, this "Great Disappointment" occurred at the failure of prophecies by a Bible teacher named Miller. His movement, the "Millerites," had been promoting an interpretation of the book of Daniel and the imminent coming of the Lord Yah'shua (the Hebrew name of Jesus) the Christ.

Miller had predicted that Yah'shua would return to catch away His church on October 22, 1844. Thousands of serious Christians believed him. Many sold property or made "ascension robes" for themselves and stood on their roofs on the BIG DAY, earnestly waiting to be taken to heaven. Obviously, it didn't happen and many were very disillusioned.

This was in spite of the fact that the Bible makes it very clear that no one knows the day or the hour of Messiah's return. Miller and his followers, however sincere they were, ignored the plain counsel of YHWH, and so got into trouble. Miller's movement withered on the vine, but it did serve to re-awaken interest in the Second Coming of Messiah.

Out of the struggling followers of Miller, two prominent churches were born - one heterodox and the other heretical. The heterodox church is Ellen G. White's Seventh Day Adventist church (SDA). While not a cult, the SDA church has a few bizarre doctrines that push it outside the pale of historic Christianity. However, most SDA members are sincere and born again.

The heretical group is the Watchtower Society, started by a Freemason named Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916). Though Russell had not been alive in 1844, he picked up on the excitement of the scattered followers of the Millerite group.

Interestingly enough, both the SDA church and the Watchtower Society picked up some of Miller's ideas and carried them with them into their own ecclesiastical organizations. These beliefs were:

- 1) Date setting — the (unbiblical) attempt to firmly fix Yah'shua's return.
- 2) Soul sleep. This is the doctrine that when people die they basically lose consciousness. They lie comatose in their graves until the Judgment Day, at

which time they will be resurrected, the just to glory and the unjust to perdition.

3) Annihilation of the wicked — this teaches that there is no eternal hell. Rather, the teaching is that the wicked will not be tormented forever in fiery hell. Rather, they will just be judged and then somehow vaporized. Their punishment will not be pain, but simply obliteration.

Now, while all of these beliefs are **odd**, they are not really heretical because they do not assault the fundamental beliefs of the Christian faith. The most bothersome of the three is probably the date setting, because this is so clearly regarded as fruitless in the Bible. Just for a quick refresher, the fundamental, nonnegotiable doctrines of Biblical Christianity are:

- 1) Belief in one, eternal and living Creator Who is three Persons in one Deity.
- 2) Belief that Yah'shua Christ is Almighty YHWH and that He died on the cross for our sins and rose from the dead to bring us eternal life.
- 3) Belief that all people are sinners and need to be saved by faith in the sacrifice Yah'shua made on the cross 2000 years ago.
- 4) Salvation is based on repentance and faith in Yah'shua without works.
- 5) Belief that the Bible is the inerrant and miraculously preserved Word of YHWH and that the Bible is the final authority for all doctrinal matters.

Those are the essential doctrines of the faith, and have been for 2000 years. If those three beliefs above were the only problems with the Watchtower Society (WS), we would not be writing this booklet. However, they are only the milder beliefs of the WS. Some of their other key doctrines are damnable heresies, and to believe them is to cost yourself your very soul!

History of a Heresy

However, before we get into the doctrinal problems, let us have a brief historical overview. As mentioned before, "the organization" (See note 1) was founded by Charles Taze Russell. It began humbly enough, as a Bible study he started in Pittsburg. Before long, it grew to a point where it had become a church and he was elected pastor in 1870.

From 1876 — 1878 he edited a monthly theological magazine, but he was forced to resign because he was teaching heretical doctrines about the atonement of Messiah. However, it didn't stop him for long. In 1879, he started his own organization, THE HERALD OF THE MORNING. He produced his own periodical, THE WATCHTOWER ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM, the distant ancestor of today's ubiquitous Jehovah's Witness magazines which show up on everyone's doorstep. Its first issue was printed in 6,000 copies.

Today, the Watchtower Society produces 18 million copies of its magazines a month in 106 languages. (See note 2) He finally incorporated his group as "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" in Pittsburg in 1884.

Starting in 1886, he began publishing a series of six books called THE MILLENNIAL DAWN. In 1906, the organization purchased land in Brooklyn, NY and established its headquarters there, where they remain to this day.

The seventh volume of Russell's work was published after his death (1917) and was called THE FINISHED MYSTERY. This book was so controversial that it caused a split in the group. The smaller part of the split, wandered off into obscurity, but the larger branch was organized by "Judge" (See note 3) J.F. Rutherford.

Rutherford is the one who really turned the Watchtower Society into a large, world-class organization. He also gave it the informal title of "Jehovah's Witnesses." He began disseminating literature at an unprecedented rate: over 100 books and pamphlets.

Rutherford, like many cult leaders, also cultivated an opulent life-style. In the midst of the depression, he drove around in huge, expensive cars while his followers lived sacrificially so they could "publish" (See note 4) the gospel of Jehovah's Witnesses. He also built a huge mansion called "Beth Sarim" (Hebrew for "House of the Princes") where Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were supposed to live when they returned with Yah'shua in 1925. However, this failed to come to pass, so Rutherford graciously consented to live in the mansion until his death in 1942.

Nathan Knorr succeeded Rutherford in 1942. He was to be the first in a series of unremarkable leaders of the organization all from the Knorr family. It was Nathan Knorr in 1945 who began teaching the controversial doctrine that the Bible supposedly forbids blood transfusions. This was contrary to previous teachings of the Watchtower Society. However, from that time onward, JWs are forbidden to receive blood transfusions.

In 1950-61, the most ambitious publishing project of the organization began. Finally, after years of work, they published THE NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES (the official "bible" of the JW'S (See note 5)). Among orthodox Christian apologists, it is known as "the Green Phantom" because it originally was published with a bright, Kelly-green cover and because no one would

ever admit to translating it. This bible version draws heavily upon the spiritist writings of a de-frocked Catholic priest named Johannes Gruber (a major early 20th century spiritist (See note 6) movement). It also leans very heavily upon the corrupt Alexandrian manuscripts, Codex Vaticanus and Codex Sinaiticus. (See note 7)

Some of the other peculiar teachings of the Watchtower Society are:

- 1) They are the only true organization of Jehovah God on earth today.
- 2) They refuse to swear allegiance to any nation (thus they will not salute the flag in America) nor will they serve in any neither armed forces nor vote.
- 3) They believe only 144,000 (called the "anointed class") will be actually Born Again and go to heaven, and most of this number are already dead. Thus, only a handful of faithful Jehovah's Witnesses are ever allowed to receive communion. The rest of the congregation must decline.
- 4) Of the remaining Jehovah's Witnesses (called the "slave class") they believe that if they are faithful in all that "God's organization" asks of them, they will never go to heaven, never see Yah'shua, but will reign on earth forever in a paradisiacal state.
- 5) As mentioned earlier, they believe in soul-sleep and the ultimate annihilation of all the wicked.
- 6) They also practice "shunning." This is a practice shared by a few other separatist sects (like Old Order Amish) wherein they will totally have nothing to do with you if you apostasize or leave the organization.

However odd these doctrines might seem, only a couple of them really effect the fundamental beliefs of Christianity. Let us examine how the Watchtower Society stacks up against the Bible in six major areas: theology of God, Yah'shua, The Holy Spirit, Resurrection, Salvation, and the Holy Bible.

THE NATURE OF THE CREATOR

The Jehovah's Witnesses are monotheistic, but they deny the Trinity (See note 8) (this means they also deny the deity of the Holy Spirit and Yah'shua). In this sense, they are very much a revival of the 3-4th century heresy called **Arianism**. Arians believed that Yah'shua was a lesser god-like being than the Father. It was in response to the Arian heresy that the Council of Nicea was convened and the famous Nicene Creed formulated, complete with the statement that Yah'shua was "one in substance" with the Father. It has been truthfully said that "you can't teach an old snake new tricks." Satan has just recycled the error of Arius from 1600 years ago as

a key doctrine of the Watchtower Society. The Witnesses claim that the Trinity is not found in the Bible and that it is a pagan concept stolen from Greeks and Hindus.

YAH'SHUA the CHRIST

Yah'shua is NOT God Almighty come in the flesh. He is NOT "Jehovah" to the Jehovah's Witnesses. He is just "a god" and a lesser god than the Father. The fact that this violates their monotheism does not seem to bother them. Jehovah's Witnesses also identify Yah'shua with the archangel Michael. (See note 9) They are taught that before Yah'shua came to earth, he was the archangel Michael, and that once he went back to heaven after his death (we will talk about the resurrection later), he is now Michael again. They offer no convincing scriptural support for this Yah'shua = Michael concept. The bottom line is that for the Watchtower Society, Yah'shua is a created being. He is not eternal. However, the Bible has something to say about this:

1) **John 20:28** — *"And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."* Here, in Thomas' famous confession of faith (NOT disputed by Yah'shua, but rather blessed) the apostle uses the word "God" (THEOS in Greek) which is only used in the New Testament of YHWH Almighty.

2) **Jude 9** — *"To the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen."* Note here that Yah'shua is the undisputed Saviour. (See note 10) Note also that He is called God!

3) **Revelations 1:11-18; 22:13-16** - We will discuss more about the Revelations passages in our third segment, which will discuss how to witness to the "Witnesses."

THE HOLY SPIRIT

To the Watchtower Society, it is impossible for the Spirit to be YHWH, since that would necessitate accepting the "pagan" doctrine of the Trinity. Thus, they deny that the Spirit is a Person or Deity, but rather that He is an "impersonal force." This makes the Spirit rather like the "force" of STAR WARS or else electricity or nuclear power. However, the Bible makes it clear that the Holy Spirit has all the qualities of a Person:

1) **John 14:26** — *"But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you."* Here we see the Spirit as a teacher. Can electricity be your teacher and bring things to your memory? Only in the most limited sense. It certainly cannot teach us "all things."

2) **Acts 10:19** — *"While Peter thought on the vision, the Spirit said unto him, Behold, three men seek thee."* Here we have the Spirit speaking to Peter, obviously a personal quality.

3) **Acts 13:2** — *"As they ministered to the Lord, and fasted, the Holy Ghost said, Separate me Barnabas and Saul for the work whereunto I have called them."* Here we have the Holy Spirit CALLING someone into a ministry — something only a person could do. Also, the Spirit is speaking to them as well, another personal quality.

4) **Romans 8.26-27** — *"Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what is the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to the will of God"* Here we see the Holy Spirit helping, making intercession, searching our hearts and knowing what is in our minds. Surely, all of these are qualities ONLY of a Personal Being.

5) **Ephesians 4:30** — *"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."* How can you grieve electricity or nuclear energy?? Only a person can be grieved.

THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Probably there no doctrine so distinctive to the Christian faith as the literal, bodily resurrection of the Lord Yah'shua the Messiah (see especially **1 Corinthians 15!**). There have been other "great teachers", other "prophets," other "anointed kings," even other great "wonder-workers." However, Yah'shua is unique among all the great religious leaders of the world in that His tomb is manifestly **empty**. Eyewitness accounts of many state that he had been slain horribly on a cross (See note 11) and then that he arose from the dead and appeared to hundreds over a period of forty days. It is a key point of the Christian kerygma that Yah'shua rose BODILY. He wasn't just a spook or a phantom. However, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Yah'shua only rose from the dead spiritually, and then drifted up to heaven to become the archangel Michael. We will later illustrate how to deal with this teaching in the witnessing section.

SALVATION (what must I do to be saved?)

Certainly, this is the most important question facing any believer other than the nature of the Creator. The Watchtower Society teaches that only 144,000 people (the anointed class) are saved or Born Again as most Christians would think of the term. That number includes all the patriarchs and saints of old like David, Abraham, Moses, Paul, James, etc. It also includes a lot of the early hierarchy of the Watchtower Society. There are a few thousand anointed class members alive now

and all the other spots are filled by departed Witnesses. Thus, **no one else** can be saved in the Watchtower Society.

However, as a kind of "consolation prize," faithful Watchtower slaves (that is what they call themselves) who keep all the commandments of the organization and are faithful in their door-to-door publishing work will be spared when Jehovah comes to earth to blow it to bits. When the earth is restored as the "new earth," they will get to be immortal and live on the earth as a paradise, rather like Adam and Eve, and they will live forever. They will never see Yah'shua and they will never see "Jehovah God" or heaven. Sounds rather dismal, does it not?

This means that only anointed class people can take communion. Of course, this means that in most "Kingdom Halls" (the term for Jehovah's Witness meeting houses) on Maundy Thursday (See note 12) the communion cup is passed from person to person with no one, not even the elders, taking a sip. An eerie silence fills the hall as no one partakes. How strange a religion to be a part of! Of course, the deeper issue here is that this is all salvation by works not grace, contrary to scriptures too numerous to mention, including most notably:

- 1) **Ephesians 2:8-9** — *"For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast."* The Watchtower Society is one of the most works-oriented of religions. There is little or no evidence of grace anywhere in it.
- 2) **Romans 10:9-13** — *"That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation... For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved "* See, this is how simple the gospel message is. It says nothing about belonging to some special group, or being baptized in water, or doing door to door work. It certainly says nothing about only 144,000 being let in the door! It says "whosoever shall call!" That is pretty inclusive, and totally contrary to the Witness "gospel", which is a false gospel (Gal. 1:8-9)
- 3) **Galatians 2:16** — *"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified"* What more could be said?

THE BIBLE

In common with virtually all cults, the Watchtower Society distrusts the Bible. They deny that it has been translated correctly or miraculously preserved down through the centuries for us. They will grudgingly use the King James Bible, because it was

the Bible used by Russell for most of their writings and they are stuck with it. But they PREFER to use their NEW WORLD TRANSLATION (NWT), which is flawed, both doctrinally and linguistically. As mentioned earlier, no one knows who translated it.

Contrary to this, the Bible says of itself that it is perfect, that it will endure until the end of time, and that God has promised to preserve every word of it:

1) **2 Timothy 3:15 - 17** - *"And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."* This tells us that all scripture is inspired (Holy Spirit breathed) and our major tool in achieving righteousness and good works.

2) **Matthew 5:18** — *"For verily I say unto you, Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled."* Here Jesus makes it clear that not the tiniest stroke (jot or Yud) (See note 13) of the Word of God ("the law") will be removed or changed until the end of time.

3) **1 Peter 1:24 - 25** — *"For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you."* This again illustrates that the Word of God is going to last forever.

4) **Psalms 12:6-7** — *"The words of the LORD are pure words: as silver tried in a furnace of earth, purified seven times. Thou shalt keep them, O LORD, thou shalt preserve them from this generation for ever"* This proves that God's words have not been tampered with and that He has promised to preserve them forever.

However, there is also a corollary to this doctrine about the Bible being flawed. If the Bible is not the final source of truth because it has errors in it, then what or who is the final authority. For the Jehovah's Witnesses, the only answer can be the "governing body" of the Watchtower Society, which functions collectively as a "living prophet."

Like the pope or the Mormon prophet, the "governing body" of the WS is the only true interpreter of the scripture. Without their guidance, the individual Witness is taught that the Bible (even the NWT) is dangerous to read alone. That is why whenever Witnesses do a "Bible study," they always use official commentaries provided by the WS. That is why they always get a little nervous if you try and lead them off the path of the commentary into uncharted (for them) waters. In this fashion, the WS further denies the all-sufficiency of scripture and interposes a kind

of "priesthood" between the individual Witness and God (even though the word "priest" would never be used). No JW can ever simply go to God or His Word for answers. This would be a grave error.

A final, but important point to make about this situation is this issue of the Governing Body functioning as a prophet. There are two ways to judge a prophet according to the Word of YHWH.

1) Their prophetic teachings must conform to the already revealed Word (**Deuteronomy 13:1-5**).

2) Their prophecies must be 100% correct. (**Deuteronomy 18:20-22**)

Now, obviously we have already shown that most of the teachings of the Watchtower Society are contrary to the already existing Word of God. They flunk on that score miserably. But what about the second criterion?

Well, actually the Governing Body has made quite a few prophecies in its time, and their track record is utterly abysmal! While a thorough study of their history of false prophecies, complete with full documentation is beyond the scope of this booklet, (See note 14) let us just look at a brief survey:

1) Russell predicted the return of Christ to the earth to judge it in 1875. Obviously nothing happened.

2) This was predicted by the Watchtower Society in 1914. While World War I did happen, there was no evidence of the coming of Yah'shua or of the kind of apocalyptic wholesale destruction predicted. (See note 15)

3) In 1925, it was again predicted that He would return, this time with the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. This also failed.

4) Never one to learn a lesson, once again 35 years ago in 1975, they made a big splash about the world ending and it failed.

This last event, being so recent, deserves a closer look. The Governing Body really played this up BIG. They used it to recruit thousands of members. They encouraged zealous Witnesses to quit their jobs, sell their homes, cash in their retirement and use the money to go into full-time pioneering new Kingdom Halls to prepare for THE END. Many devout members did just that. Many more stopped their college education, trashing hard-won scholarships, etc.

In a tragic replay of the Great Disappointment 131 years earlier, 1975 came and went with no sign of the end of the world. There were a LOT of disappointed, angry, Witnesses and the membership took a sharp nosedive. They lost almost 25% of their membership in less than a year. The organization smarted from that boner for

a good 15 years. However, people's memories are short and now the WS is denying it ever even made that prediction.

The problem remains that, from a Biblical perspective, this cavalcade of false prophecies shoots down any possible claim for legitimacy that the Governing Body might wish to claim. The Governing Body thus fails both tests of being a true prophetic voice. Of course, the Watchtower Society does its best to keep Witnesses from hearing about any of these failed prophecies.

WITNESSING TO THE WITNESSES

This can be a challenge, but these people *need to hear the gospel*. They are certainly zealous to spread their own material around, and need to find the real Yah'shua as a source of their salvation, not some theocratic organization. As with any other group, it is important to remember that these people are not the enemy! For the most part, Jehovah's Witnesses are exemplary people who try to be good and follow a Christian morality. They are often sincere, but have been deceived by Satan.

For this reason, any witnessing encounter is primarily a spiritual battle. It is not an intellectual struggle or debate, and if viewed as such, it will probably end in anger and the loss of a soul. Thus, you need to really pray for the souls of these people. Often JWs show up at our doors without warning and at inopportune times. That precludes a lot of intense advance prayer. However, as you answer the door, you can still pray quickly for the Holy Spirit to bind any false spirits and to loose the Spirit of Truth into the encounter you are about to have.

You should also quickly pray for the love of Yah'shua to be able to be fully manifested in you and through you. Realize that Jehovah's Witnesses have come to expect to be treated like dirt by the people they visit. In fact, many carry as a badge of honor the fact that people have set dogs on them or turned the garden hose on them and given them a good soak. Thus, when you treat them with love and respect you do two important things:

- 1) You show them what true agape love is and show them the nature of the real Yah'shua;
- 2) You throw them off balance.

My dear friend and brother, Jim Spencer, has said that witnessing to cultists is like trying to nail Jell-o to the wall. This is because the typical Witness will (only naturally) want to talk about things that he or she feels comfortable with. Thus, the Witness will often slide from one subject to another as soon as you get close to pressing home a point. It is almost like reeling in a marlin! Remember, Yah'shua DID call us to be fishermen.

The other thing you must be prepared for that seems unique to the Jehovah's Witnesses is that they do not seem to mind "cutting and running." I have had many encounters with them where we will be really getting into some important stuff and you can see the weaker of the two beginning to see the light. All of a sudden, the senior Witness will stand up and say something like, "Well, we must go. We have another appointment." Then they will literally drag the junior member out the door. This is something you really just have to live with. Just be nice about it and tell them you will be praying for them, and then DO pray for them. You have planted some important seeds.

To get back to the issue of moving from subject to subject, you really need to try and prayerfully control the encounter and isolate some key issues. They will want to promote their "gloom and doom" scenario (the world is going to hell) and then offer "Jehovah-God" as the only hope. You can agree with that and quickly move on to three areas where they may not be so sure of themselves.

Remember, the Jehovah's Witnesses are astute proponents of the scripture, but their knowledge is limited in scope. They know 100% of 10% of the Bible and 10% of the other 90%! They know enough to promote and defend their key doctrines and can even trash a well-informed Christian if the believer is not aware of the pitfalls. Witnessing to a Witness is not for the novice believer. We have seen them even tie pastors in knots. But if you know the Book as you should and you pray for the leading and anointing of the Holy Spirit, you should do fine. But remember, do not expect to have them kneeling and praying the sinner's prayer the first evening. JWs are probably among the hardest cultists to win to Yah'shua. It may take your effort and the next person's effort and the next person's effort. You can just say with Paul: **1 Corinthians 3.6** *"I have planted, Apollos watered; but God gave the increase."*

So here are the three areas I would recommend trying to pursue:

- 1) The bodily resurrection of Yah'shua
- 2) The Trinity
- 3) What ex-Jehovah's Witness Lori Macgregor calls the "First and the Last" discussion.

HOW TO TALK ABOUT THE RESURRECTION

The point we wish to press is that you can show clearly from the Bible that Yah'shua went out of His way to illustrate His bodily, literal resurrection from the dead to his apostles on several occasions. Now, unless Yah'shua was a fraud and a liar (something no Witness would wish to consider), then the following passages pretty well illustrate that he rose from the tomb as a real, solid man (albeit a glorified one):

1) **John 20:27** — *"Then saith he to Thomas, Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing."* Please note here that Yah'shua is inviting Thomas to stick his hand into physical wounds in hands and side. If Yah'shua was a ghost, he would not do this, because it would be deceitful. Also, the commonly held belief about ghosts is that they do not bear the wounds they received in mortal life and they cannot be touched. Yah'shua obviously makes a big issue of this, because he wanted to emphasize that he was not just a spirit.

2) **Luke 24:39, 43** — *"Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have...And he took it [fish and honeycomb], and did eat before them."* Again, we have Yah'shua going out of his way to demonstrate how real and physical His new body is, right down to being able to be touched and eat food. This is no phantom! He even made a distinction in very clear terms between what He was and a "spirit" or ghost. Again, the choice that the Witness is confronted with is that either their organization is wrong or Yah'shua is deliberately deceiving the apostles.

3) **John 21:9-14** — *"As soon then as they were come to land, they saw a fire of coals there, and fish laid thereon, and bread Jesus saith unto them, Bring of the fish which ye have now caught. Simon Peter went up, and drew the net to land full of great fishes, an hundred and fifty and three: and for all there were so many, yet was not the net broken. Jesus saith unto them, Come and dine. And none of the disciples durst ask him, Who art thou? knowing that it was the Lord. Jesus then cometh, and taketh bread, and giveth them, and fish likewise. This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead."* Here again is a similar account to the one in Luke, with the added addition of a miracle concerning the catch of fish. Would a ghost build a fire and roast fish and bread on it? Would a ghost eat with the disciples?

The second component of working on this issue is to point out that other New Testament writers are affirming that Jesus' bodily resurrection is central to the gospel.

1) **John 2:19-21** — *"Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Then said the Jews, Forty and six years was this temple in building, and wilt thou rear it up in three days? But he spake of the temple of his body."* Note that key point which the evangelist makes. Jesus was talking of his body! The word in the Greek there is very clear — derived from the word SOMA, which in those days meant the physical body as a whole, the complete instrument of life, the complete human being. (See note 16) It is also used as a distinctive from PNEUMA, meaning spirit. Thus, John is making clear that Jesus' entire bodily substance rose.

2) **Acts 17:3** — *"Opening and alleging, that Christ must needs have suffered, and risen again from the dead; and that this Jesus, whom I preach unto you, is Christ."* Here is Paul preaching the resurrection. Would Paul preach a lie? Again, please recall that

ghosts were nothing new to the pagan world in which Paul ministered. He would not have encountered all the scoffing and opposition he did if he was just saying that Jesus was a phantom. It was because of the literal raising of Jesus' body that Paul preached that he was mocked by the Greeks and Jews.

3) **1 Corinthians 15:19 — 21**— *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable. But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the firstfruits of them that slept. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead"* Here Paul makes Christ's bodily resurrection the very lynchpin of the Christian faith. It is interesting to read the first verse here, because it is almost prophetic. The unfortunate Jehovah's Witnesses who deny Jesus' resurrection do indeed seem to be among the most miserable people on earth who claim to be Christians. It is so sad.

DISCUSSING THE "TRINITY"

While it is true that the word "trinity" does not appear in any Bible text, the concept does — on numerous occasions. You should not let that fact throw you. You could point out that the term "theocratic organization" is not in the Bible either, and yet the WS uses it all the time. Let us look at the verses from the Old Testament:

1) **Isaiah 48:12-16** — *"Hearken unto me, O Jacob and Israel, my called; I am he; I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens: when I call unto them, they stand up together... Come ye near unto me, hear ye this; I have not spoken in secret from the beginning; from the time that it was, there am I: and now the Lord GOD, and his Spirit, hath sent me."* Note in this remarkable passage that this is prophetic utterance with "Jehovah" speaking: "I am the first, I also am the last..." Note that in verse 16, there are three speakers: "there am I: [first speaker — Yah'shua] and now the Lord GOD [the Father], and his Spirit [the Holy Spirit], hath sent me." This is the clearest explication of the Trinity in the Old Testament!

2) **Isaiah 9:6** — *"For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace."* This is probably one of the best-known "Christmas passages" in the entire Tenakh. This MAY be the reason the Jehovah's Witnesses will not celebrate Christmas. We see here the verse is plainly a Messianic prophecy. It is talking about a child being born. That child is given the title, "the mighty God." Who could that be, but Jehovah? Now, believe it or not, the Witnesses will try and tell you that there is a difference between the "mighty" God and "almighty" God and that this proves that Yah'shua was a lesser deity. All you need to do to shoot that theory down is to point out that you end up with two gods, — the mighty one and the almighty one. This destroys the WS's much vaunted insistence on absolute monotheism.

3) **Proverbs 30:4** — *"Who hath ascended up into heaven, or descended? who hath gathered the wind in his fists? who hath bound the waters in a garment? who hath established all the ends of the earth? what is his name, and what is his son's name, if thou canst tell?"* Now, obviously the first part of the verse refers to Jehovah God. This verse clearly mentions a "son" Who could only be Yah'shua! This brings us to...

The New Testament passages which teach the Trinity:

1) **Matthew 28:19** — *"Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:"* While well known, this passage bears a closer look. You will note that while there are three titles given, the text clearly says "name" (singular). While not a direct teaching of the Trinity, it certainly lends itself to a question: How can three Persons have one name, unless ALL three Persons are YHWH?

2) **Ac 5:3-4** — *"But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? Why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."* The important point here is that within a sentence of each other, Ananias is said to have lied unto the Holy Ghost and then to God. This is a clear identification of the Spirit with God Himself.

3) **Colossians 2:9** — *"For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily."* This is a short verse, but it packs quite a wallop! The context is clearly referring to Yah'shua Christ. (see preceding verse). This states that in Yah'shua dwells ALL the fullness of the Godhead. Now think about this If ALL the fullness of the Godhead dwells in Yah'shua, how much of it is somewhere else? Clear arithmetic tells us NONE. Thus, Yah'shua IS GOD — no ifs ands or buts about it.

4) **1 Timothy 3:16** - *"And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into glory."* This is another clear identification of Yah'shua as God. (See note 17) It plainly says "GOD was manifest in the flesh." Ask the Witness, when did Jehovah-God ever manifest in the flesh? He would have to admit that according to their doctrine, he never did. So we have the New Testament stating that the Spirit is God, and that Yah'shua is God. This builds a strong foundation for the final verse:

5) **1 John 5:7** (See note 18) — *"For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghost: and these three are one."* What could be clearer? The Trinity of Father, Word and Spirit is One! However, The Jehovah's Witnesses will actually try and use higher Biblical criticism (See note 19) to explain away 1 John 5:7 as being not a real part of that epistle, but a later addition. Actually, this verse, which CLEARLY teaches the Trinity, is found in all the old manuscripts except for two Roman Catholic ones, Sinaiticus and Vaticanus. Point that fact out to

the Jehovah's Witnesses you are dealing with, as they have no respect at all for the Roman Catholic Church. It will definitely rattle them. Thus, there is no good historical reason to believe that the verse is not a genuine part of the original epistle. (See note 20) Thus, there are at least five verses that speak pretty clearly of the Trinity.

In all of this, you must continue to insist on the sound, Biblical hermeneutic principle that you need at least two or three Bible verses ("witnesses") to prove a point (**Matthew 18:16**). A single, isolated verse is a dangerous thing to build a doctrine upon. The great thing to remember is that "a verse without a context is a pretext."

THE FIRST AND THE LAST DISCUSSION

Though this is actually part of the Trinity/Yah'shua is God discussion, we are giving it a separate heading here because it is such a powerful *coup de grace* in dealing with the Witness who is not willing to acknowledge that Yah'shua IS "Jehovah-God". Here is how it works. (See note 21) The concept is easy to remember because it leans on the Old Testament title of YHWH as the "first and the last" and you mainly use the first and last chapters of the last book in the Bible, Revelation. Here is how it works, step by step.

1) Just to reinforce in the Witnesses' mind that "Jehovah-God" is the first and the last, take them to **Isaiah 44:6**: *"Thus saith the LORD the King of Israel, and his redeemer the LORD of hosts; I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God "* If necessary, let them read it out of their NWT Bible. It will be the same except that "Jehovah" will be used instead of "LORD." Get them to acknowledge that Jehovah-God IS indeed the first and the last. That should be no problem.

2) Then take them to **Rev. 1:10-11a** - *"I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet, Saying, I am Alpha and Omega, the first and the last: and, What thou seest, write in a book..."* Ask them, "is that Jehovah-God speaking?" They will almost certainly say it is. They HAVE to, their own NWT says it this way: "vs. 8: I am the Alpha and Omega" says Jehovah-God, "the one who is and who was and who is coming, the Almighty. (See note 22)

3) Then move them ahead six verses to verse 17-18: *"And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last: I am he that liveth, and was dead; and, behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen; and have the keys of hell and of death."* Point out to them gently that here the "first and the last" is speaking and identifying Himself as one who lived and was dead and is now alive forevermore. Again, their own NWT confirms this: "(17b) Do not be fearful. I am the first and the last, (18) and the living one; and I became dead, but look! I am living forever and ever. (See note 23)

4) Finally, take them to **Rev. 22:12-16**: *"And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Let's skip down to vs. 16 (same speaker obviously): "I Yah'shua have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches. I am the root and the offspring of David, and the bright and morning star"* Note this final nail in the coffin of Watchtower doctrine! Yah'shua plainly identifies Himself as the first and the last!

Endnotes:

- 1) The Watchtower Society members NEVER call their group a church. It is usually called "the organization."
- 2) These are 1995 figures.
- 3) There is actually no evidence that Rutherford ever was any kind of judge.
- 4) It used to be that the door to door tracting that so many Jehovah's Witnesses do was called "publishing."
- 5) The NWT is remarkably similar in many ways to the New American Standard version of the Bible. Both promote Arian heresy.
- 6) Spiritism (also called "spiritualism") is the heretical religion which teaches that human beings can and should communicate with departed loved ones through séances and mediumship. It also teaches reincarnation.
- 7) For more on the issue of Bible manuscripts, see our STRAIGHT TALK ON BIBLE MANUSCRIPTS #60 from With One Accord ministries available for free download on our website.
- 8) For a fuller discussion of the Trinity, see our STRAIGHT TALK ON THE TRINITY from With One Accord ministries available for free download on our website.
- 9) Although the Seventh Day Adventists do affirm the Trinity, they also teach that Yah'shua, in his pre-incarnate state as the LOGOS was (in fact) the archangel Michael.
- 10) See Luke 2:11, John 4:42, Acts 5:31, Philippians 3:20, etc.
- 11) Interestingly enough, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that he was not crucified on a cross-shaped cross or even on a Tau (T) shaped cross. Rather they claim he was nailed to a stake (??) even though there is no historical evidence that Roman authorities executed people in this way. Like other cults, the Watchtower Society does/not like to deal with the reality of the cross.
- 12) Also known as "Holy Thursday," this is the day before "Good Friday," commonly (but incorrectly) believed to be the evening of the Last Supper. This is the one day out of the year that the Jehovah's Witnesses celebrate the Lord's Supper. Actually, since Christ died on a Wednesday, it would have been a Tuesday.
- 13) "Yud" is the tiniest letter in the Hebrew alphabet, and could easily be mistaken for an ink smudge.
- 14) See Robert Morey's book, WITNESS AT YOUR DOOR or Dr. Walter Martin's JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES.

15) Because of this particular failed prophecy, the Watchtower Society claimed that Yah'shua came "invisibly" (sort of snuck into town) and cleansed the temple in 1918 and that we will never see him again unless we are part of the anointed class.

16) VINE'S EXPOSITORY DICTIONARY OF NEW TESTAMENT WORDS, MacDonald Publishing, McLean, VA. Pp. 138-139.

17) A warning is needed here. In many modern bible translations like the NIV or the NAS, this verse has been watered down to the point that it is useless in witnessing to Witnesses. Instead of saying "God was manifest in the flesh..." many of these say "he was manifest in the flesh..." which proves utterly nothing to a Witness. They all agree that Yah'shua was manifest in the flesh, but they deny that he was or is God. Stick to the King James Bible if you are going to cross swords with ANY cultist.

18) Beware! This verse is actually been **deleted** from many modern bible versions, for no good reason. Stick to the King James Bible!

19) Higher Biblical criticism is a school of thought a little over a hundred years old that basically treats the Bible like any other text and assumes it can be critiqued. It is widely used by liberal and apostate Christians and is the mainstay behind most all modern theology and Bible versions.

20) See "Why We Retain 1 John 5:7 in the Authorized Version" by Dr. Peter Ruckman, Bible Believers Press, PO Box 7135, Pensacola, FL 32534

21) Again, we wish to give credit for this excellent teaching to former Jehovah's Witness Lori Macgregor, who is now a mighty servant of God helping to equip the Body of Christ to work with Watchtower people. If you want to see it (and her) in action, get your hands on the excellent video, "Witness at Your Door," from Jeremiah films. It may even be available at your local Christian bookstore.

22) NEW WORLD TRANSLATION OF THE HOLY SCRIPTURES, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1981, p. 1323.

23) Ibid.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the author through:

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