

A History of the Watchtower and Bible Tract Society aka Jehovah's Witnesses Colossians 2:8-10

A message by Asst Pastor Frank G. Warburton
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Last time in our study of the Book Colossians we looked at Chapter 2 verse 8-15.

We are only going to review and look at [Colossians 2:8-10](#) tonight and use these verses to do a little side study.

Colossians 2:8-10 (NKJV)

“8 Beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ. 9 For in Him dwells all the fullness of the Godhead bodily; 10 and you are complete in Him, who is the head of all principality and power.”

Last time we looked at in verse 9 we read that in HIM (JESUS) dwells all the fullness of the GODHEAD bodily.

The word fullness means and refers to the filling of a ship with freight, merchandise, sailors, oarsmen and soldiers. It also means completeness. The cults will attack the Deity of JESUS Christ. As we read last time; the Mormon's believe JESUS is God, but the spirit brother of Lucifer.

Tonight we are going to look at another Cult that attacks the Deity of JESUS CHRIST, The Watchtower and Bible Tract Society; also known as Jehovah's Witnesses. here on out JW's

Why are we talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses? The JW'S are a group that has over 8.6 million members world wide. They are involved world wide . Their materials are translated into numerous languages around the world.

The events of the past two years have hindered them from doing their typical activity of going door to door. However, Starting September 1st. You and I may be getting visitors on Saturday mornings, again.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are also known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. Their translation of the Bible is known as the *The New World Translation*. The magazines that the JW's carry are the "*The Watchtower*;" and "*Awake*" magazines. We will look at some aspects of *The New World Translation*, a little later.

Before I get into the history of the JW's i want to talk about somethings that happened in the mid 1840's that would have a tie to the JW's.

From a website called Massmoments which is an almanac of the events that happened in Massachusetts described events tied to October 27, 1844.

“William Miller was a devout Baptist and careful student of the Bible. In 1818 he calculated a date for the end of the world by using a strictly literal reading of the first chapters of Genesis and other prophetic events in the Bible. He aligned these events with the prophetic numbering systems in the Books of Daniel, Ezekiel, and Revelations. He became convinced that he could use this system to determine the exact period of time between the birth of Jesus, the fall of Jerusalem, and the return of the Messiah. Jesus, Miller predicted, would

make his millennial return and the world would end on October 22, 1844. After publishing a book about his theory in 1831, he set off on a speaking tour of the Northeast.

As the year of the expected apocalypse neared, believers in the prophecy began to give away their belongings, abandon their crops, and sell their land. In the spring of 1844, a prophetic sign appeared: Miller's prediction that the end of the world was near gained new weight, and new adherents, when a great comet was seen moving across the Massachusetts sky at noontime.

On October 22nd, believers donned their robes. A large gathering lived in or around Groton. Believing that Christ would return on a mountaintop, they climbed up Mt. Wachusett to await the coming of the Lord.

The vast majority of Millerites were devastated, and some impoverished, by the failure of the prophecy. A remnant continued to believe. They reinterpreted the meaning of the prophecy and came to see October 22, 1844, as the day of Christ's cleansing of his heavenly, rather than earthly, sanctuary.

We will see why this is important shortly.

Charles Taze Russell was the man who founded the

International Bible Students which are the forerunners to the Jehovah's Witnesses. Charles Taze Russell was born in 1852 and died in 1916. By the time he was twenty he had left the Presbyterian and Congregationalist denominations because he could not reconcile the idea of an eternal hell with the mercy of God.

Around this time Russell came across the path of some Adventists tied to William Miller who taught Russell that the Bible could be used to predict God's plan of salvation and the end of the World.

Charles Taze Russell and the successors of the Watchtower predicted the end of the World numerous times. Initially 1874 was the year predicted that JESUS would return to the Earth. When this date came and went, the date changed to 1914.

"... 1874 as the date of our Lord's second presence, assuring us of the fact with mathematical precision..."; The Time of the Harvest, 1911 p. 125-129

"We see no reason for changing the figures- nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours. But bear in mind that the end of 1914 is not the date for the beginning, but for the end of the time of trouble. " (W.T. pg.226 July 15 1894)

When the year 1914 came and went the date changed again to 1915, due to a recalculation and removing the year zero.

"...an established truth that the final end... near the end of A. D. 1915. The Gentile times prove that the present governments must all be overturned about the close of 1915 A.D."; Studies in the Scriptures, The Time is at Hand, 1915 edition, p.99, 101, 242

Charles Taze Russell died in 1916. He was replaced by Judge Rutherford, and the prophecies continued.

When 1915 came and went, the next 1918 became the year.

"... The harvest began in 1878, there is ample convincing proof. The end of the harvest is due in the spring of 1918." Watchtower 5/1/1918, p.132

"...1918 when God destroys the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions." The Finished Mystery, p. 485 (Studies in the Scriptures)

Did this happen? No. Then an interesting one. It was predicted by Judge Rutherford that the Patriarchs of Old, Abraham, Joseph and David would return to the Earth after Armageddon in 1925.

"... we may expect 1925 to witness the return of these faithful men of Israel from the condition of death."; Millions Now Living Will Never Die, p.88

"Unrealized Hopes Are Not Unique to Our Day"

"We may confidently expect," stated the booklet Millions Now Living Will Never Die, back in 1920, "that 1925 will mark the return [from the dead] of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old . . . to the condition of human perfection." Not only was the resurrection of faithful men of old expected in 1925 but some hoped that anointed Christians might receive their heavenly reward in that year.*

The year 1925 came and went. Some abandoned their hope. But the vast majority of the Bible Students remained faithful." Advertise the King and the Kingdom (1919-1941) Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom pg 78

A house was built by Judge Rutherford in San Diego, CA; known as "Beth Sarim" or "House of Princes, in 1929. Judge Rutherford planned on living there until the Princes showed up after Armageddon to live in the home. He lived and worked there until his death in 1942. This house is still standing in San Diego to this day.

But there is one more. 1975.

Why Are You Looking Forward to 1975?

WHAT about all this talk concerning the year 1975? Lively discussions, some based on speculation, have burst into flame during recent months among serious students of the Bible. Their interest has been kindled by the belief that 1975 will mark the end of 6,000 years of human history since Adam's creation. The nearness of such an important date indeed fires the imagination and presents unlimited possibilities for discussion." Watchtower August 15, 1968 page 494

Some may ask, what is the big deal if the JW's have made mistakes about the end of the world. Well do they claim to speak for God? Yes

"Unlike any other Organization the Jehovah Witnesses say they alone represent God as his spokesman on earth. "The Watchtower is a magazine without equal on earth because God is the author." Watchtower April 15,1943 pg.127

Do they claim to be a prophet of God.

'They Shall Know that a Prophet Was Among Them'

"A third way of coming to know Jehovah God is through his representatives. In ancient times he sent prophets as his special messengers."

"So, does Jehovah have a prophet to help them, to warn them of dangers and to declare things to come?"

IDENTIFYING THE "PROPHET"

"These questions can be answered in the affirmative. Who is this prophet?"

"This "prophet" was not one man, but was a body of men and women. It was the small group of footstep followers of Jesus Christ, known at that time as International Bible Students. Today they are known as Jehovah's Christian witnesses." Watchtower April 1,1972 page 197

What if you make a mistake? Does that make you a false prophet?

According to the November 1, 1972 Watchtower page 644

“Does this admission of making mistakes stamp them as false prophets? Not at all, for false prophets do not admit to making mistakes.”

What does the Bible say in regards to someone who claims to be a prophet of GOD?

Turn to Deuteronomy 18 : 21-22

“21 And if you say in your heart, ‘How shall we know the word which the Lord has not spoken?’ — 22 when a prophet speaks in the name of the Lord, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the Lord has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him.”

What did JESUS say about false prophets? Turn to Matthew 7:15 “15 “Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep’s clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves.”

One thing the JW’s are against is spiritism and consulting of spirits to gain an understanding of God.

Where did the New World Translation come from?

The translation committee consulted a Bible translation by a man named Johannes Greber. He has a book titled, *“Communication with the Spirit World, Personal Experiences of a Catholic Priest.”*

His New Testament from 1937 can still be found on line and in the introduction we read:

“Whoever, then, seeks to know what is true and what is untrue in the Bible as we have it to-day, can find out only in the way in which all God-fearing people in the past have sought the truth, namely by communicating with God’s Spirit World.”

His translation translates John 1:1 the same way as the New World Translation . ***“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.”—John 1:1, New World Translation.***

In the April 1, 1983 Watchtower page 31 in a Questions from Readings heading: We read

■ ***Why, in recent years, has The Watchtower not made use of the translation by the former Catholic priest, Johannes Greber?***

This translation was used occasionally in support of renderings of Matthew 27:52, 53 and John 1:1, as given in the New World Translation and other authoritative Bible versions. But as indicated in a foreword to the 1980 edition of The New Testament by Johannes Greber, this translator relied on “God’s Spirit World” to clarify for him how he should translate difficult passages. It is stated: “His wife, a medium of God’s Spiritworld was often instrumental in conveying the correct answers from God’s Messengers to Pastor Greber.” The Watchtower has deemed it improper to make use of a translation that has such a close rapport with spiritism. (Deuteronomy 18:10-12) The scholarship that forms the basis for the rendering of the above-cited texts in the New World Translation is sound and for this reason does not depend at all on Greber’s translation for authority. Nothing is lost, therefore, by ceasing to use his New Testament.

The leadership of the Watchtower knew as early as 1956, in the February 15, edition, page 111

“Very plainly the spirits in which ex-priest Greber believes helped him in his translation.”

Deuteronomy 18:10-12 “10 There shall not be found among you anyone who makes his son or his daughter pass through the fire, or one who practices witchcraft, or a soothsayer, or one who interprets omens, or a sorcerer, 11 or one who conjures spells, or a medium, or a spiritist, or one who calls up the dead. 12 For all who do these things are an abomination to the Lord, and because of these abominations the Lord your God drives them out from before you.”

The Jehovah's Witnesses claim to be "true followers of God because HIS name is in their organization. The Jehovah's Witnesses claim that their is only one ALMIGHTY GOD. They deny the Trinity and have a publication titled; "Should you Believe in the Trinity?" In which through craftily and deceptively quotes, they lead the reader to the conclusion, that the Bible does not teach the doctrine of the Trinity.

Who is the JESUS of the WTBTS?

Before we look at this, let's look at a sample conversation the the JW's published in **The Watchtower April 2012 pages 20-22. Titled: A Conversation with a neighbor: Is Jesus, God?**

Is It True That You Do Not Believe in Jesus?

Samantha: My pastor says that Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Jesus. Is that true?

Karen: Let me assure you that we do believe in Jesus. In fact, we believe that exercising faith in Jesus is vital to salvation.

Samantha: I believe that too.

Karen: So this is something that you and I have in common. By the way, my name is Karen. May I ask your name?

As the script continues, it comes to one of the JW's favorite "Gotcha" verses. A "Gotcha" verse is a verse that they believe is a slam dunk denial of JESUS being God. Turn to John 14:28.

John 14:28 "28 You have heard Me say to you, 'I am going away and coming back to you.' If you loved Me, you would rejoice because I said, 'I am going to the Father,' for My Father is greater than I."

Karen: Consider, too, Jesus' words at John 14:28: Based on that verse, how would you say Jesus viewed himself in relation to the Father?

Samantha: Well, he said that the Father is greater than he is. So I guess he viewed God as his superior.

The Watchtower March 22, 1972 page 8 answers it this way:

But not only in heaven, while here on earth also Jesus showed his subordination and subjection to God. For example, Jesus acknowledged, "The Father is greater than I am," and declared, "I cannot do a single thing of my own initiative; . . . I seek, not my own will, but the will of him that sent me." Note that the will of Jesus is one will and that of God another! Obviously Jesus is not God, but is God's Son, subordinate to him.

How would you answer this question?

In the military a Colonel is in greater authority than a Lieutenant in terms of rank. But as humans they are both the same nature. That is true of JESUS and GOD the Father. They are the same essence and nature but distinct persons. JESUS took on the role of a servant.

Philippians 2:8 "8 And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross."

As the script continues Karen suggests that Samantha read Luke 3:21-22. Let's turn there

Luke 3:21-22 "21 When all the people were baptized, it came to pass that Jesus also was baptized; and while He prayed, the heaven was opened. 22 And the Holy Spirit descended in bodily form like a dove upon Him, and a voice came from heaven which said, "You are My beloved Son; in You I am well pleased.""

Karen: Did you notice what Jesus was doing as he was being baptized?

Samantha: He was praying.

Karen: Yes. Of course, we might wonder, 'If Jesus is God, to whom was he praying?'

Samantha: That's a good question. I'll have to ask my pastor.

How would you answer this question? Here is another "GOTCHA" question.

This is where the Triune Nature of God is on display. If God were only one person in nature this would be a valid question. But since we believe that GOD is one; existing as three persons, we can have an answer.

"Who Is the Archangel Michael?"

"JEHOVAH'S witnesses hold that the archangel Michael is Jesus Christ,." Watchtower September 15, 1958 pg 559

"Our Readers Ask . . .

Is Jesus the Archangel Michael?

"Put simply, the answer is yes."

"In view of the foregoing, what can we conclude? Jesus Christ is Michael the archangel."

"So Michael the archangel is Jesus in his prehuman existence. After his resurrection and return to heaven, Jesus resumed his service as Michael, the chief angel."

- **Watchtower April 2010 page 19**

Was Christ Hung on a Cross?

TO MANY millions of people the answer to this question seems as simple as the three-letter word "Yes". To serious students of both ancient history and the Bible the answer is even simpler, as simple as the two-letter word "No!" Watchtower 11/1/50 page 425

The JW's believe that JESUS was crucified on a torture stake. To support this in their "Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures, copyright 1985 on page 1150, there is a photo taken from a book titled "De Cruce libri tres" by Justus Lipsius of the 16th century, depicting a man being nailed to a torture stake.

However this is misleading as they fail to publish the the other two photos of a man nailed to a cross with a crossbar. Also Justus described the Cross of Christ as having four pieces of wood; the upright beam; the crossbar; the wood below the feet and the title inscription, above.

The cross is abhorrent to the JW's.

What is the cross to believing Christians?

1 Corinthians 1:18 "18 For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God."

What happens after we die and who are the 144,000?

In Revelation 7 there is a list of 12,000 being sealed from each of the tribes of Israel, except for Dan.

The JW'S take this and twist this to represent the number of people who enter heaven.

According to JWfacts.com "Most Jehovah's Witnesses are not considered part of the 144,000 and do not expect to go to heaven. Rather, they believe themselves part of the Great Crowd that will never die, but rather reside forever on earth.

Prior to 1935, all "true Christians" were said to be anointed and called to heaven. Therefore, everyone associating with the Watchtower Society prior to 1935 was automatically part of the heavenly class.

What makes this doctrine quite absurd is that it indicates God could only find 144,000 true Christians over a period of 2000 years, yet over 6 million true Witness Christians since 1935."

"Hence, especially after 1966 it was believed that the heavenly call ceased in 1935." Watchtower 2007 May 1 p.30

Only those of the 144,000 can partake of communion. So every year it is basically another denial that JESUS is GOD and that HE was who HE claimed to be. The JW's that are not in heaven will be resurrected to live in paradise on earth.

The JW religion is not based on grace through faith in JESUS as GOD and how the debt was paid. As stated earlier the number the WTBS uses for the number of JW's worldwide is not those who claim to be a JW, but only those who are actively witnessing.

(Show timecard). The JW religion is about works, how many tracts have you left? How many Bible studies have you held? How many people did you talk to? Etc.

As the mock conversation showed, the JW's are well trained and to those who do not know the Bible can be sucked in very easily.

These things that we have discussed tonight, do not try to argue a JW over these issues. These may be used to hopefully sow doubt in the mind of the JW.

When talking to a JW and you are hit with a question that you don't know the answer to, "I don't know, but will look into this and get back to you;" is a good answer. When you talk to them even tying them up for a little bit might be used by the LORD to prevent them from talking to someone else.

It is better to lose the argument and win the soul, than to win the argument and lose the soul. I want to encourage you to get the names of the JW's that come to your door and to pray for the JW. I know a lady in the Church who had a JW come to her door many years ago, the LORD gave her a reminder to pray for this lady. The reminder was on her way to church she passed a street with this lady's name.

Acts 26:18 "18 to open their eyes, in order to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, that they may receive forgiveness of sins and an inheritance among those who are sanctified by faith in Me."

<https://www.massmoments.org/moment-details/millerites-await-end-of-the-world.html>

Do you know what it means to be a follower of the TRUE, biblical Jesus? If you'd like to speak to someone, please reach out to us. It would be our privilege to speak with you!

Reach out to us [here](#).

Want to know more? Click [here](#).