

No Other Gospel: Unmasking The Cults (Galatians 1:6-9) Message 2: Jehovah's Witnesses

Cult: a group that deviates doctrinally from a “parent” or “host” religion

- In this series we will deal with “Cults of Christianity” and that will be what we mean when we use the term cult

Cult of Christianity: *a group of people, which claiming to be Christian, embraces a particular doctrinal system taught by an individual leader, group of leaders, or organization, which denies one or more of the central doctrines of the Christian faith as taught in the sixty-six books of the Bible.* (Alan Gomes)

Heresy: in the New Testament it literally means “faction” or “division” (Acts 24:14; 1Corinthians 11:19; Galatians 5:19-20)

- “a denial of a defined doctrine of the Christian faith”

“The church without the gospel would look very much the way the evangelical church looks at this very moment. We cannot simply assume that we have the gospel. Unless we keep the gospel at the center of the church, we are always in danger of shoving it off to one side and letting something else take its place. Martin Luther rightly warned that ‘there is a clear and present danger that the devil may take away from us the pure doctrine of faith and may substitute for it the doctrines of works and of human traditions. It is very necessary, therefore, that this doctrine of faith be continually read and heard in public.’ The good news of the cross and the resurrection must be preached, believed, and lived. Otherwise, it will be lost.”¹

I. The Organization

It's Authority

- The Jehovah's Witnesses were founded through a man, centralized through an organization and ruled through a Governing Body
- The Witnesses believe that the Watchtower Society is the channel of God's revelation
 - One of their publications said, *“The Watchtower Society is God's sole collective channel for the flow of Biblical truth to men on earth.”*²
- The Governing Body claims to have divine guidance and new revelation
- Believers must submit to every new teaching from the Governing Body without question; even if it contradicts older doctrines or appears unbiblical³
- Incidentally early on, the WS made many prophecies concerning the date of the end of the world; and every time the day came and went they changed the date

¹ Philip Ryken, *Galatians: The Gospel of Free Grace*, Reformed Expository Commentary Series (Phillipsburg: P&R Publishing, 2005), 21.

² *The Watchtower*, July 15, 1960, quoted from John Ankerberg & John Weldon, *Encyclopedia of Cults and New Religions* (Eugene: Harvest House Publishers, 1999), 133.

³ *The Watchtower*, Feb. 1, 1952, 79-80, quoted from Robert M. Bowman, Jr., *Jehovah's Witnesses, Guide to Cults and Religious Movements* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1995), 18.

The Structure

- Jehovah God communicates His will and Biblical interpretation to Watchtower Governing Body
- They pass it on to other, lower members in the Society
- Reaches the printing press and is sent out to the masses
- The literature is sold in Watchtower churches called Kingdom Halls

II. The Bible

View of Inspiration

- The Bible is the inspired Word of God; but the Watchtower Society is the only one who can properly interpret the Scriptures
- Russell wrote, “Let us examine the character of the writings claimed as inspired, to see whether their teachings correspond with the character we have reasonably imputed to God.”⁴
 - As a result of this, the Trinity is unreasonable, the deity of Christ is unreasonable, eternal punishment is unreasonable (all of which we will deal with shortly)
 - This all led to the New World Translation (the JW’s official Bible)

The New World Translation

Authority

- This is the only Bible that is authoritative; the only Bible they will use or quote
 - If you engage a JW in conversation you must know that you are not on the same page when it comes to the Bible

Credibility

- The JW hold to a position that this translation is scholarly and accurate to the ancient Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek manuscripts
- Their purpose in the translation was to set right the mistranslations of Scripture that have been “influenced” by religious traditions which have their roots in paganism
- It has been proven that the original translators of this Bible were not studied in Hebrew or Greek

Accuracy

- One JW scholar says that readers should not assume that the NWT only has a small number of errors in its translation in relation to key doctrines; there are hundreds and thousands of distortions of the Bible
 - He writes, “The JWs systematically distort the Bible to make it fit their preconceived beliefs”⁵
- NWT is not to be a trusted translation of the Bible

⁴ C.T. Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 1 (1907), 41, quoted from Ankerberg and Weldon, 135.

⁵ Ankerberg and Weldon, 161.

Four Examples

| | English Standard Version | New World Translation |
|-------------------|---|--|
| John 8:58 | Jesus said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am. " | Most truly I say to you, before Abraham came into existence, I have been. |
| Titus 2:13 | waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ | While we wait for the happy hope and glorious manifestation of the great God and of the Savior of us , Christ Jesus |
| Acts 20:28 | Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood | Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own son. |
| John 1:1 | In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. | In the beginning the Word was, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god. |

III. Jesus Christ and the Trinity

The Deity of Jesus Christ

- Jesus was *a* god but not the Almighty God
- Before becoming a man he preexisted in heaven as the first creation of God
 - He was Michael the Archangel (also called "The Word")
- He then became Jesus of Nazareth
 - When this happened, Michael the archangel ceased to exist
- When Jesus died, he ceased to exist
- Deny the incarnation and the resurrection

The Trinity

- If Jesus is not God, then there is no Trinity
- There is only the Almighty God, Jehovah (a solitary person); there is no personal holy spirit
- Jehovah is not omnipresent; but he can project spirit anywhere to accomplish his purpose
- The WS teaches that the doctrine of the Trinity is Satanic

Why The Trinity Is Important

- Three statements that define for us the Trinity
 1. God is three persons
 2. Each person is fully God
 3. There is one God

Denial of Any Statement Creates the Following Problems:

1. The Atonement is at Stake

- If Jesus is merely a created being and not fully God then how could he bear the full wrath of God against all of our sins; could any created being truly save us?

2. Justification By Faith Alone is Compromised

- If Jesus were not fully God, then we could not fully trust him to save us completely
- Why would we put our faith in an imperfect creature, like an angel; we know what happened to the angels who rebelled against God
- JW deny the doctrine of Justification by Faith Alone

3. Worship and Prayer are Affected

- We are commanded to worship and pray to Jesus
- Who but God alone (the infinite, omnipresent and omniscient) can hear and respond to the prayers of God's people
- And since the Bible commands us to worship Christ (Phil. 2:9-11; Rev. 5:12-14), it would be idolatry to worship anything but the one, true God

4. Idolatry is Committed

- Christ cannot be a created being while at the same time the one who saves
- We would be attributing salvation to a creature rather than to God;
- It's worshipping the creature rather than the Creator (Rom. 1:24-25)

5. The Order of the Universe is Questioned

- The belief in the unity within the Trinity gives us a basis for thinking that there can be unity and order in the universe
- If there is not perfect unity in God, then we have no fundamental basis for thinking that the diverse elements of the universe have any unity either; everything is random

IV. Application

Witnessing

- Remember that they are people; sinners in need of salvation
- Ask a lot of questions, don't be accusative
- Challenge the "Organization"
 - False prophecies
 - Control
 - Deceit (Bible translation, credentials of leaders)
- Do not think that they are friendly toward the Christian Church
 - Christianity has been portrayed in their writings as:
 - Satanic, immoral, a wicked persecutor, Babylon the Great, hateful to God and His people, the way of death, worthy of death, and the anti-Christ