

CHAPTER XV

Jehovah's Witnesses

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

(As a soulwinner, you should be familiar with the history of the various religions and cults even though you would seldom use this information during your presentation of the gospel itself.)

CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL, born February 16, 1852, was the founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses although the group was not called by that name during his lifetime.

As a young teenager, Russell belonged to the Congregational Church. He believed in and had a great fear of hell, but when he was only seventeen, a skeptic persuaded him that hell was not real. From then on, Russell fought the doctrine with all his might.

He conducted a Bible class at the age of eighteen, and when he was twenty, was made "pastor" of the group. This was the beginning of the cult. Russell set the date for the Lord's return as 1874, and he published his first piece of literature that year, entitled *The Object and Manner of the Lord's Return*.

Russell had some trouble in court . . . He was sued for divorce in 1903 . . . His sale of "miracle wheat" which was supposed to be specially blessed was exposed in court . . . He committed perjury on the witness stand when a pastor, J. J. Ross, and he were in court over a pamphlet Ross wrote exposing Russell.

Russell died of cystitis in 1916.

"JUDGE" RUTHERFORD—Joseph Franklin Rutherford, born in 1869, was a lawyer member of the cult and defended Russell in his many legal suits. In January, 1917, he was chosen to succeed Russell.

During the twenty years he controlled the cult, he wrote approximately 100 books and pamphlets, which were translated into nearly 80 languages with a total distribution of over three hundred million copies.

Rutherford let Russell's books go out of print, so that today some members of the Jehovah's Witnesses do not even know of Russell and the facts regarding him.

After being called "Russellism," "Millennial Dawnism," and "International Bible Students," the cult took on its permanent name in 1931, "Jehovah's Witnesses." Rutherford claimed divine sanction of the name from Isaiah 43:10.

NATHAN H. KNORR was chosen as the new leader of the Jehovah's Witnesses at the death of Rutherford in 1942. Knorr was born in 1905 and had become a Witness at the age of sixteen.

Knorr has seen to it that all literature coming from the Watchtower Society (name of the cult's publishing headquarters) is anonymous. Rutherford's name, too, has faded, so that devotion in today's Jehovah's Witnesses movement is to the "Divine Organization" rather than to a personality.

At this writing Knorr continues as head of the cult.

The main issue in witnessing to the Jehovah's Witnesses is "grace and works." They do not believe that Jesus was God in the flesh, and they do not believe His death on the cross made a payment for all sin of those who would accept that payment by faith. They do not believe a person can KNOW he will go to heaven when he dies. They believe their life hereafter is determined by their actions on earth now.

Verses like Ephesians 2:8, 9 and Romans 4:5 are foreign to their system of theology. Making the plan of salvation understandable to them will be very difficult for you . . . not because you will not present it

properly, but because they are often willfully blind to the gospel of God's saving grace. You can show them a clear verse of Scripture, and if they don't want to believe what it is obviously saying, they can somehow just ignore it and turn to some other verse they like better.

Jehovah's Witnesses do possess a reputation for having a great knowledge of the Bible. They certainly appear to, to the average layman. They DO know the verses in the Bible they have been TAUGHT, but very few Jehovah's Witnesses actually know the Bible very well at all from the standpoint of context or literal interpretation of clear doctrine.

The test of any group that claims to be "Christian" is its doctrines and how its doctrines compare with the clear teaching of Scripture. On some points the Jehovah's Witnesses miserably fail. Below are some of their teachings (taken from their own writings) and Scriptures showing the difference between truth and error.

SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

"The ransom does not guarantee everlasting life to any man, but only a second chance" (Truth Shall Make You Free, pp. 176, 177).

Men will be given a second chance for salvation during the millennium (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, pp. 106, 107) .

"One forfeited life could redeem one forfeited life, but no more. The man Christ Jesus redeemed Adam" (ibid., p. 133).

"The second trial will decide whether we may, or may not have everlasting life" (The Watchtower, February 15, 1960, p. 143).

SALVATION ACCORDING TO THE BIBLE

"He that believeth on Him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18).

"He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him" (John 3:36).

"Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

"Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on Me hath everlasting life" (John 6:47). Christ's own guarantee to believers.

"And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9: 27) . There is no second chance after death.

"For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus; Who gave-Himself a ransom for all . . ." (I Tim. 2:5, 6). Christ was not just a ransom for Adam, but a ransom for ALL!

THE CHRIST OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

"He is a 'mighty God' but not the 'Almighty God who is Jehovah' " (Truth Shall Make You Free, p. 47).

"He was the first and direct creation of Jehovah God . . . He was the start of God's creative work" (The Kingdom Is at Hand, pp. 46-49).

JESUS CHRIST is JEHOVAH GOD

1. Isaiah 43:10, 11—The LORD, Jehovah, says, ". . . before Me there was no God formed, neither shall

there be after Me.” The LORD, Jehovah, says, “. . . beside Me there is no Saviour.” (See Isa. 44:6, 8; Deut. 4:39.)

Therefore, if Christ is God in any way, if Christ is the Saviour in any way, then according to the LORD God Jehovah, Christ is GOD.

Luke 2: 11 says, “For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.”

Since Christ is the Saviour, then Christ is GOD.

2. Isaiah 42:8—”I am the LORD: that is My Name: and My glory will I not give to another...”

Only Jehovah God is the LORD of glory. If Christ is the Lord of glory, then He must be Jehovah God.

I Cor. 2:8 says the crucified Christ is the “Lord of glory.” Since Christ is the Lord of glory, then Christ is GOD.

3. Zechariah 12:1-10—The LORD, Jehovah, says, “. . . and they shall look upon Me whom they have pierced....”

When was the Lord, Jehovah, pierced?

“But when they came to Jesus, and saw that He was dead already, they brake not His legs: But one of the soldiers with a spear pierced His side, and forthwith came there out blood and water. And he that saw it bare record, and his record is true: and he knoweth that he saith true, that ye might believe. For these things were done, that the Scripture should be fulfilled, A bone of Him shall not be broken, and again another Scripture saith, They shall look on Him whom they pierced” (John 19:33-37).

Since Christ was pierced, and Jehovah God said He would be pierced, then Christ is God.

4. Isaiah 7:14—”Therefore the Lord Himself shall give you a sign; Behold, a virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and shall call His Name Immanuel.”

Read Matt. 1:18-25. Notice in v. 18, the child was “OF the Holy Ghost . . .” and Mary was with child “BEFORE they (Mary and Joseph) came together.” Again, in v. 20 the angel of the Lord confirms the child is “OF the Holy Ghost.” In v. 21 the child shall be named JESUS because He shall save His people from their sins. The very name Jesus means “God who saves,” etc. And in vv. 22, 23, we learn that “all this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken OF THE LORD by the prophet, saying, Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call His Name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, GOD WITH US.”

So God Himself says the child Jesus is actually GOD HIMSELF dwelling with man. This is again clearly confirmed in John 1:1-14. “The Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh and dwelt among us....”

5. Mark 2:5 records that Jesus forgave people’s sins. The scribes heard Christ doing this and said (v. 7), “Why doth this man thus speak blasphemies? Who can forgive sins but GOD ONLY?” They failed to realize that Christ wasn’t doing anything blasphemous at all. HE WAS GOD!

6. Luke 1:68 records at the time of the birth of Christ, “Blessed be the LORD GOD of Israel; for He hath visited and redeemed His people.”

7. Luke 8: 39—Christ had just cast out demons and told the person, “Return to thine own house and shew how great things GOD hath done unto thee. And he went his way, and published throughout the whole city how great things JESUS had done unto him.”

This is not a contradiction. Christ did it and said God did it. Christ told the man to say God did it and the man said Christ did it. It is not a contradiction because Christ is GOD.

8. In John 9:33-38 is recorded Christ’s conversation with a man who wanted to know who Christ was. Christ said He was the Son of God and the man (v. 38) “worshiped Him.” Christ did not reprove this man for worshipping Him, and yet Christ knew the clear commands of the Old Testament not to worship any God but Jehovah God. Exodus 34: 14, “For thou shalt worship no other god; for the

LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God.”

If Christ were not truly God and accepted the worship from a man without even rebuking the man, then Christ would not even have been an honest man.

Christ did accept worship. For Christ is GOD. (See John 5:23.)

9. John 14: 7—Christ says, “If ye had known Me, ye should have known My Father also: and from henceforth ye know Him and have seen Him,” and vv. 8, 9, “Philip saith unto Him, Lord, shew us the Father, and it sufficeth us. Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known Me, Philip? He that hath seen ME HATH SEEN THE FATHER: and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (See John 12:45.)

In John 15:24 Christ again says people have “both seen and hated both Me and My Father.”

The reason Christ can say that when someone has seen Him he has also seen the Father is that Christ is GOD, one and the same as the Father.

10. John 10:30-33 tells us the same thing. Christ said in v. 30, “I and My Father are ONE.” And “Then the Jews took up stones again to stone Him” (v. 31). In answer to Christ’s questions of why they were stoning Him they replied in verse 33, “. . . for blasphemy; and because that thou, being a man, makest thyself God.”

The Jews KNEW Christ was claiming to be God. They were so sure of His claims that they wanted to stone Him for what they SUPPOSED to be blasphemy.

But Christ didn’t commit blasphemy. Even a good, godly human being would know better than to commit blasphemy, time after time, especially when he was constantly being accused of it.

Christ could say “I and My Father are One” because it is true. Christ is GOD.

11. Acts 20:28 says, “. . . to feed the church of God, which He hath purchased with His own blood.”

When did God shed His blood? God shed His blood when He took on flesh in the person of Jesus Christ and shed His blood for our sins. Christ said in Luke 22:20, “. . . This cup is the new testament in My blood, which is shed for you.” Revelation 1:5 says, “And from Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, and the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth. Unto Him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own blood.”

God shed His blood when Jesus shed His blood because Jesus is GOD.

12. Ezekiel 44:2—”Then said the LORD unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the LORD, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut.”

This is the gate that the LORD God, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, entered at His “triumphal entry” spoken of in John 12: 12-16 and each of the other Gospels. The Mohammedans closed the gate soon after the destruction of the Temple in 70 A.D., and it shall remain shut.

13. In John 12:26 Christ says, “. . . if any man serve Me (Christ), him will My Father honour.” And yet in Matt. 4:10 Christ affirms the Old Testament command, “Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God and HIM ONLY shalt thou serve.”

Christ, knowing and upholding the Old Testament teaching, would not tell people to serve Him, and would not tell people God the Father would honor their lives when they do serve Him . . . in direct contradiction to the command in the Old Testament to serve only the LORD THY GOD.

Man is honored by God the Father when man serves Christ because Christ is GOD.

14. Rev. 15:3, 4—”. . . Great and marvellous are Thy works, LORD GOD ALMIGHTY; just and true are Thy ways, Thou King of saints. Who shall not fear Thee, O Lord, and glorify Thy Name? For Thou ONLY art holy.”

But Luke 1:35 records the words of the angel Gabriel, who was sent from God, saying, “. . . that HOLY thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God.”

Only the Lord God Almighty is holy . . . but the Son of God is holy because He IS the Lord God Almighty.

15. Genesis 1:1 says, “God created the heaven and the earth.” Hebrews 1:2 and Colossians 1:15-17 say Christ created it.

16. Titus 3: 4 says “God our Saviour.” Titus 3: 6 says “Jesus Christ our Saviour.” Isaiah 43: 11 says the LORD (Jehovah) is the ONLY Saviour.

Do these three verses contradict? No! But they WOULD contradict if Jesus Christ and Jehovah God weren't one and the same.

17. I John 5: 20 calls Christ “the true God.” Hebrews 1: 8 refers to the Son of God as “O God.” In Rev. 1: 8 Christ is speaking (see v. 5) and says He is the “Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the ALMIGHTY.”

18. Colossians 2:9—”For in Him (Christ, v. 8) dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily.” Everything that is in the Godhead, everything that is God, was in Christ in a bodily form. “For it pleased the Father that IN HIM (Christ) should all fulness dwell” (Col. 1: 19) .

19. I Timothy 3:16—”And without controversy great is the mystery of godliness: God was manifest in the flesh, (GOD was) justified in the Spirit, (GOD was) seen of angels, (GOD was) preached unto the Gentiles, (GOD was) believed on in the world, (GOD was) received up into glory.”

When did this happen? When Jesus Christ was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, and received up into glory.

The Bible says, “God was manifest in the flesh,” etc., because Christ is GOD.

20. In Romans 10: 9 and 13 the Apostle Paul quoted from an Old Testament prophet saying, “For whosoever shall call upon the Name of the Lord shall be saved.” Of course, Paul was speaking of Jesus as Lord (Rom. 10:9) . But the verse he was quoting in the Old Testament is Joel 2:32 which says, “. . . whosoever shall call on the Name of the LORD (Jehovah) shall be delivered (saved) .”

Why did the Holy Spirit give the Apostle Paul the liberty to use an Old Testament verse which speaks of JEHOVAH and apply it to the LORD JESUS CHRIST? Because the Lord Jesus Christ is Jehovah.

21. Isaiah 9:6 prophesies of the Messiah to come, “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.”

Our Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, is the Everlasting Father.

22. Micah 5:2, also prophesying of the coming Messiah, says, “whose goings forth have been from of old, FROM EVERLASTING.”

But Psalm 90:2 says, “Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the earth and the world, even from EVERLASTING to everlasting, thou art GOD.”

Christ was from everlasting, was in existence and one with God before the world was formed (John 17:5) because Christ is GOD.

23. When Moses asked God, “Behold, when I come unto the children of Israel, and shall say unto them, The God of your fathers hath sent me unto you; and they shall say to me, What is His name? What shall I say unto them?” (Exod. 3:13) God answered unto Moses (v. 14), “I AM THAT I AM: and He said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, I AM hath sent me unto you.”

Christ, revealing Himself unto the Jewish people, made this life and death statement unto them in John 8: 24, “I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I AM (he), ye shall die in your sins.”

To be saved, a person must believe that the Lord Jesus Christ was truly God Himself, who gave His life to make a death and blood payment for his sin, which He did. “For the wages of sin is death; but the

gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ OUR LORD” (Romans 6:23). (Reprinted from booklet, Jesus Christ Is Jehovah God, distributed by Soul Winning Seminars, 6/67.)

THE TRINITY DISBELIEVED BY WITNESSES

“There is no authority in the Word of God for the doctrine of the Trinity of the Godhead” (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 5, pp. 54-60). “. . . Satan is the originator of the ‘trinity’ doctrine” (Let God Be True, 1946 ed., p. 82).

THE TRINITY TAUGHT IN SCRIPTURE

The Father is God: II Timothy 1:2; I Thessalonians 1:1.

The Holy Spirit is God: Acts 5:1-4; Isa. 48:16; Job 33:4; Isa. 63:7-10.

The Son, Jesus Christ, is God: See list on preceding pages.

Matthew 28:19 says, “Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the NAME (singular in the Greek) of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost.” If there were three gods, or if one were God, and one were a created being, and the other were just God’s “power” (as the J. W.’s say), then the verse would have to say to baptize in the “names” of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

God is very exact and lets us know in this verse that though there is only one God, He is a triune God.

Even in Deuteronomy 6:4, where it says that “Our God is one LORD (Jehovah),” the Trinity is proven. In Hebrew there are at least two words translated “one.” The word “one” in this verse is “echod” and means “a unity.” The Hebrew word “yachid” is the word meaning “an absolute one.” The word translated “God” in the Hebrew is “Elohim” and means three or more. God says precisely what He means.

MAN ACCORDING TO THE WITNESSES

Man is a soul, but does not have a soul (Let God Be True, p. 60).

“. . . the serpent (the Devil) is the one who originated the doctrine of the inherent immortality of the soul” (ibid., p. 66).

MAN ACCORDING TO GOD

“I pray God your whole spirit AND SOUL and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (I Thess. 5:23).

“Beloved, I wish above all things that thou mayest prosper and be in health, even as thy soul prospereth” (III John, v. 2).

Man was created in God’s image (Genesis 1:26), a triune being, having body, soul, and spirit. And the Bible says, “The Word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of SOUL, and SPIRIT, and of the JOINTS and MARROW (body) . . .” (Heb. 4:12).

DEATH AND HELL as taught by the WATCHTOWER SOCIETY

The penalty of the second chance for life will be the second death, which is annihilation (Studies in the Scriptures, Vol. 1, p. 151).

God is too good to sustain an everlasting hell (ibid., p. 127).

“The grave and physical death are the only hell” (Reconciliation, p. 289).

“The doctrine of eternal torment is as false as its author, the devil” (Creation, p. 341).

“It is so plain that the Bible hell is the tomb, the grave, that even an honest little child can understand it, but not the religious theologians” (Let God Be True, p. 72).

DEATH AND HELL as taught by the BIBLE

“And these shall go away into EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT (not annihilation): but the righteous into life eternal” (Matt. 25:46).

“Even as Sodom and Gomorrah, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of ETERNAL FIRE” (Jude, v. 7). Obviously, it is the PEOPLE in these cities that will suffer. (Cities do not “commit fornication,” but the people IN the cities.)

“And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up FOR EVER AND EVER; and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name” (Rev. 14:11).

Luke 16:24, “. . . for I am tormented in this flame.”

Luke 16:26, “. . . there is a great gulf fixed, so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot; neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.?”

Luke 16:28, “. . . lest they also come into this place of torment.”

Daniel 12:2, “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.”

SUGGESTIONS FOR YOUR WITNESSING

(1) Be courteous and patient. One of the things Jehovah’s Witnesses seem to delight in is being persecuted. It is supposed to be some kind of proof that they are God’s true servants. When you are rude or abrupt with them it confirms in their minds that they really must be the “true sheep” of the Lord. This makes it that much harder for the next Christian to witness to them. Don’t argue. Firmly point out the truth in the Scriptures.

(2) Somewhere in the beginning of your conversation get the Witness to agree to talk only about what is important . . . like salvation. You might say, “Being human, we are bound to disagree on some small points. So why don’t we confine our talk to really important subjects like how to be saved?” He will almost always agree to this.

This will help you tremendously. Every time he tries to go off on some side issue, you can politely remind him of the agreement and bring the conversation back to the gospel. In this way you will have a much greater chance of leading him to Christ.

(3) Be an attentive listener. The best soulwinners listen carefully to what the other person is saying so they can catch things they will want to utilize in their witnessing.

(4) Ask questions. It is important to ask the Witness what he means by certain phrases. For instance, what he means by “ransom sacrifice,” Christ being the “Son of God,” and “death,” etc., is often completely different from what you mean.

Often his words sound Biblical, but what he means is unscriptural. In order to combat the error you must know what the error is, and many times the error is not apparent on the surface.

(5) Perhaps even more than with other people, you need to USE THE BIBLE to win them. The Witnesses are under the impression that they are the only ones who really know the Bible. The truth is, they usually do not know the Bible very well . . . only certain “proof texts” which they can readily produce. However, most Protestants (and many born-again believers) don’t usually know as much of God’s Word as the Jehovah’s Witnesses do. Therefore, when they are speaking to someone they always

Speak as the teacher, assuming that the listener knows nothing of the Bible.

They are shocked to find someone who knows as much or more than they. However, although it is extremely important to use God's Word as you witness to them, be careful of trying to show them how much you know by using TOO MANY verses. It is almost always best to use as few verses as possible . . . clear ones . . . and stay with them.

(6) Keep in mind that the average Jehovah's Witness is like "quicksilver." When you show him a verse he doesn't like or doesn't have an answer for, he will want to jump over to some other passage. Often that passage will be off the subject of salvation. **DON'T LET HIM DO THIS.** Stay on the passage you are showing him until he either admits what the verse is saying, or he admits he does not believe the verse. This is almost impossible for you to do, but strive for it.

(7) If, after all your best efforts to get him to understand the plan of salvation, he still refuses to accept Christ as his Saviour, **DON'T LET HIM LEAVE FEELING COMFORTABLE.** This advice goes for any lost person you speak with but especially the Witness, who is so sure that there is no hell to worry about.

(8) A closing remark to an unbelieving Witness might be, "If what you believe is true, and I don't believe it, all I must face is being annihilated. But if what the Bible says about hell is true, and you don't believe it and accept Christ as your Saviour, you face an eternity in the lake of fire." Let him know that neither you nor God wants him to go to hell. Speak the truth in love.

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