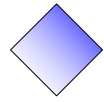


The Voice of Truth



September 1, 2013

Which One Will You Take Your Stand With? Part VII

By Jimmy Pettigrew

We have been looking at different faiths and their authority for guiding them in their worship. Let us examine the Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Jehovah's Witnesses had its beginning in 1872, in America, by Charles T. Russell. The Jehovah's Witnesses do not have a specific set of Articles of Faith. The anonymous books and booklets published since 1942 are now considered their doctrinal guide.

The Jehovah's Witnesses claim to urge upon people only the Word of God. For example, they write, "We shall let God be found true by turning our readers to his imperishable word." This sounds good; however, as we examine their theology, we shall see that this is not an honest statement of what they believe and practice at all. Actually, instead of accepting scripture only and imposing that on others, they impose their system upon the scripture and force it to comply with their teaching. Notice this quote concerning one of their booklets: "Not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see also, that if anyone lays the 'Scripture Studies' aside, even after he has read them for ten years - if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible for ten years, our experience shows that within two years he goes into darkness; on the other hand, if he had merely read the 'Scripture Studies' with their reference and had not read a page of the Bible as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the scriptures."

Can there be any doubt that they do not believe in the Bible only? It has become quite clear that despite the claim of this movement to stand on the Bible alone, the real source of authority is the interpretation handed down by Watch Tower headquarters.

The scriptures teach that God speaks to us in these last days through Christ (**Hebrews 1:1-2**). We will be judged by Him and His word (**John 12:48**). There is a curse

placed on anyone, including an angel that preaches any other gospel than that which was preached (**Galatians 1:8-9**). Jude tells us that in the first century the faith had "once for all" been delivered to the saints (**Jude 3**). **Revelation 22:18-19** pronounces a curse on those who add to or take from the word. God's word, The Bible, further teaches that it is a sufficient guide for men (**2 Timothy 3:16-17**; **1 Corinthians 4:6**; **2 Peter 1:3**). It is to be read and understood by everyone (**Ephesians 3:4**; **Acts 17:11**; **1 Peter 2:2**). Our only creed is Christ and the Bible (**Matthew 22:29**; **2 Peter 1:20-21**). We must give up all false ways (**2 Corinthians 6:17**). Any system that denies the Bible alone is opposed to God!

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that there are two classes of people being saved and the way of salvation is not the same for both. There is the "anointed class" and the "other sheep". "All who by reason of faith in Jehovah God and in Christ Jesus dedicate themselves to do God's will and then faithfully carry out their dedication will be rewarded with everlasting life (**Romans 6:23**). However, that life will not be the same for all. The Bible plainly shows that some of these, that is, the 144,000, will share in heavenly glory with Christ Jesus, while others will enjoy the blessings of life down on earth (**Revelation 14:1, 3**; **Micah 4:1-5**)." [**Let God Be True, p. 298**]. The problem with this Jehovah's Witnesses doctrine is in taking a highly figurative passage and making it literal and building a doctrine around it that is not found in the Bible. **Revelation 7** does not say that the 144,000 and the great multitude are different groups. John "heard" the 144,000 and upon looking he "saw" the great multitude. There is nothing in the text that would lead us to believe these are different groups. Further, **Revelation 7:15** indicates this group is "before the throne of God." This presents a great dilemma for the Jehovah's Witnesses. In order to attempt to get around this, they say the great multitude is truly before the throne, but down on the earth. However, the verse says they "serve him day and night in his temple." And, **Revela-**

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tion 11:19 and **4:2** tells us that the temple is in heaven. These verses show that the great multitude is the heavenly class and not just the 144,000. The fact of the matter is there are not two distinct groups.

In effort to justify these two classes that are to be saved, the Jehovah's Witnesses use **John 10:16**. "*Other sheep I have, which are not this fold ...*" They try to make the case that, therefore, Jesus has two folds. But **verse 16** says they shall become "one flock."

The so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses" refuse to believe in the existence of eternal punishment, described by Jesus as "hell fire" (**Matthew 18:9**). The so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses" affirm that, "The doctrine of hell where the wicked are tortured eternally after death cannot be true, mainly for four reasons: (1) Because it is wholly unscriptural; (2) Because it is unreasonable; (3) Because it is contrary to God's love; (4) Because it is repugnant to justice" (**Let God Be True, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 80**). God's standard of justice is not man's standard (**Jeremiah 10:23**). His thoughts are not man's thoughts, and His ways are not man's ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). The Bible clearly

teaches that God has reserved a place of punishment for the wicked, and the New World Translation (**JW Bible**) teaches it in (**Mark 9:43-48; Luke 16:22-24**).

The so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses do not like to speak of the visible return of Christ. In fact, they deny His visible return. According to their theology Jesus was enthroned as King in heaven in 1914, and this was His "second coming." Again, to refute such false teaching, all that is necessary is to cite the following passages from the New World Translation (**Revelation 1:7; Matthew 26:64**).

The so-called "Jehovah's Witnesses deny that there is a part of man which lives after the death of the body. They say, "The claims of religionists that man has an immortal soul, and therefore differs from the beast, is not scriptural (**Let God Be True, p. 59, 60**.) There are passages where the word "soul" and "spirit" refer to a part of man which differs from his body, and lives on after the body dies. The New World Translation teaches this (**Matthew 10:28; Eccl. 12:7**). Which one will you take your stand with?

(Part 8 printed in next week's bulletin) •

"The Statement Of An Honest Person"

By Jarrod Jacobs

Below is a statement made recently by a woman after she was invited to worship services. Pay careful attention to what she wrote. As we read her statement, it is evident that her words reflect not only her opinion, but the opinion of many in our world today. Sadly, she is honestly mistaken!

"...I went to an awesome church growing up and wish I could find another one just like it. I think my issue is that I just want to interpret the bible and the word of god the way I want to and not have someone tell me that I am wrong. that is a big thing that I have found in a lot of churches that we have been to. I am hoping to find a church that doesn't tell me I am wrong...just feels too judgemental to me...and I hope your church is the one that will make me feel comfortable in my beliefs..."

After reading this short paragraph, what can we learn from this quote?

Her Authority Is Self, Not The Lord

In her short statement, I counted no less than 16 personal references ("I", "me", "my")! What might this suggest? She has a problem that so much of the world has today. It is a problem of SELF! She has decided to judge

the Lord's church and spiritual matters from the standard of self and what she enjoys, rather than the true standard, the Bible (**I Pet. 4:11; Col. 3:17; Ps. 119:89; Jn. 17:17**).

In the long ago, Jeremiah wrote, "*O LORD, I know that the way of man is not in himself: it is not in man that walketh to direct his steps*" (**Jer. 10:23**). Yet, here is a lady intent on finding a church to fit her desires and wishes rather than accepting the Lord's choice (**Matt. 16:18**)!

Yes, this attitude is prevalent in the world today, and I am sorry to say it is prevalent among God's people! It is seen when we wish to deny or question plain statements of Scripture. It is seen when we take an attitude that says, "I know what the Bible says, but I am going to do my will anyway." When this occurs, how are Christians any different from this worldly woman?

Back in the prophet Elisha's day, he learned of a leper who wished to be healed. Upon sending word to the leper, telling him how to be cleansed, the leper became angry and wondered why he couldn't do things the way he wanted to do them. Yet, at the urging of an intelligent slave he had, he changed his mind. Upon obeying the

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words of Elisha, he was cleansed from his disease (**II Kings 5:8-14**). When we study this account, we understand that so long as the leper refused to obey; so long as he trusted in his worldly knowledge, his opinions, his judgment, and his wisdom, he remained a doomed leper. Only when he surrendered his will to the will of God was he cleansed. Why can't we learn that lesson today (**Rom. 15:4; I Cor. 10:11**)? So long as we remain stubborn, and devising ways to do it "ourselves", we will remain sad, without God, and lost. It is true for the lady who wrote the paragraph above, and it is true for anyone else on earth!

Friend, examine yourself (**II Cor. 13:5**) and see — what is your attitude toward the Lord? Who is Lord of your life? (**Lk. 6:46; Matt. 7:21**)

She Lives In The Past

The lady also reminisced about the past when she was a part of a certain church she dearly loved. Sadly, she claims she can't find one just like it anymore. The cold hard truth is that when she compares every church she visits to this church from her past, she is wasting precious time (**II Cor. 6:2**)!

Comparing churches today with a church from past memory is still not using the right standard of authority (**Ecc. 7:10**)! The standard for authority today is God's word, and not my (or anyone else's) faulty memory (**Jn. 17:17; Eph. 5:17; Col. 3:17**). Too, we can see that one comparing present-day reality with past memory is not wise (**II Cor. 10:12**).

By application, I ask again, are we as Christians guilty of the same thing? Are we guilty of comparing the Lord's people of the past with those living today, and concluding this generation is "not as good" as previous ones (**Ecc. 7:10**)? If so, how is this helping? Standing on the sidelines, and complaining about present-day matters does nothing to solve the problem (**Ps. 141:3**). Where are the workers (**I Tim. 4:16; II Tim. 2:15**)? Where are the teachers (**Heb. 5:12-14**)? Where are the ones willing to work toward a solution when a problem is seen (**Prov. 19:24, 26:15**)? Living in the past does not resolve matters, nor does it make the present generation better! Let us be careful we are not guilty of living in the past as this woman is (**Phil. 3:13-14**)!

Selfishness Is Evident in Her Words

What is refreshing in a sense is at least this woman is honest when expressing her selfish desires. Please read her words again: *"I think my issue is that I just want to*

interpret the bible and the word of god the way I want to and not have someone tell me that I am wrong.... I hope your church is the one that will make me feel comfortable in my beliefs...." If these words are not a reflection of the majority of this world today, I don't know what is.

In truth, the ability to interpret "the word of God the way I want to and not have someone tell me I am wrong" actually requires throwing the Bible away! Why do I say this? It is because the Bible itself condemns man for his sin. This is seen from **Genesis 3** to the end of the Bible! Sin, and those committing it, are consistently condemned throughout Scripture. For example, Noah "condemned the world" when he built the ark (**Heb. 11:7**). The condemnation came because a world of sinners refused to obey God. Therefore, those who did not get on the Ark before the Flood were drowned (**I Pet. 3:20**). God condemned Sodom and Gomorrah for their sin (**II Pet. 2:6**). In like manner, these folks were destroyed because of their sinful actions God had seen. Yes, folks were condemned for their sins consistently in the Scriptures!

Her point undoubtedly is that she wishes to be able to do things that she deems to be "righteous" or "religious", even "popular" without someone pointing to a Bible verse and saying she ought not do it. Herein lies the problem. She wants her "religion" without commitment or consequence. She wants God on her terms, rather than changing her will and submitting her life to the Lord's will. Thus, she wants to feel "comfortable" in her beliefs rather than being made to feel uncomfortable until she changes her ways (**Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; II Pet. 3:9**).

Once more, let us make the applications to self. I have met folks calling themselves Christians who expressed this same attitude. They did not use her words, but their lives exhibited the attitude she expressed (**Matt. 7:16-20**). Friends, the Bible makes it clear that we are blessed when we treat God's word as a mirror, and make the necessary changes when we find that our lives are not in harmony with it (**Jas. 1:22-25**). It is not for man to "interpret" or "reinterpret" God's word to suit self! Regardless of our level of "comfort," the authority of the Bible must be respected, and when we have men stand boldly and proclaim exactly and only what God's word says, let us respect this and obey the Lord! Let selfishness die! Let selflessness rule our hearts.

Conclusion

I am sure there are other points we can apply from her short paragraph above, but these are enough to instruct

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us and to allow us to reflect and make applications to self. The above statement from an honest person teaches us a lot, doesn't it? No, she is not saved, and yes, if she stays on this path, she will die in her sins. However, there is something refreshing about hearing someone who is honest for a change. What about you, dear one? Will you be honest? What things need to be changed in your life? Will you be honest and admit it? Will you be honest if you are intent on being rebellious before God?

Regardless of whether or not we are honest with men or with self, we cannot fool God! *"Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in his sight: but all things are naked and opened unto the eyes of him with whom we*

have to do" (Heb. 4:13). *"The eyes of the LORD are in every place, beholding the evil and the good"* (Prov. 15:3). *"For, lo, he that formeth the mountains, and createth the wind, and declareth unto man what is his thought, that maketh the morning darkness, and treadeth upon the high places of the earth, The LORD, The God of hosts, is his name"* (Amos 4:13).

Yes, God knows and sees all, and is aware of our standing before Him (II Tim. 2:19)! Since He knows and sees all, it is in our best interest to turn and obey Him in love and in faith (Heb. 5:9; Rev. 22:14). One day we will be judged (II Cor. 5:10). Will He find us ready, or unprepared? You must answer that question now while you still have the opportunity. *Credit: The Old Paths - 9/5/10 ♦*

Truth Unknown Author

One thing that is absolutely indispensable to the practice of pure religion is truth. *"Buy the truth, and sell it not; also wisdom, and instruction, and understanding"* (Proverbs 23:23). Whatever truth may cost (time, money, lands, houses, or physical suffering), it is worth the price; and once obtained, it must not be sold at any price.

It matters little what we think, feel, imagine, suppose, or would like to believe; the truth is what counts. Jesus said, *"If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed; and ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"* (John 8:31-32).

Apollos was an eloquent man, mighty in the Scriptures, fervent in spirit, bold, and convincing; but he lacked the one thing which all must have to be successful in preaching—the whole truth (Acts 18:24-28). Eloquence is not necessary if one has the truth; other things may be helpful, but are not essential.

To disregard, neglect, reject, or deny the truth is to dispense with the indispensable.

Credit: <http://www.moodychurchofchrist.com> ♦

What Must I Do To Be Saved?

Hear and Learn - Rom. 10:17 m. 10:9-10 ; 1 Pet. 3:21 ; John 6:45; 17:3

Believe - Heb. 11:6; John 6:29; 8:24

Repent - Luke 13:3; Acts 3:19; 17:30

Confess the Lord - Matt. 10:32-33; Romans 10:9-10; 1 Pet. 3:21

Be Baptized - Mark 16:16; Acts 22:16; Gal. 3:26-27

Continue in the Apostles' Teaching - Acts 2:42; 2 Tim. 3:14-17

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Worship Service: Sunday, 10:00am
Bible Study: Wednesday, 7:00pm*

*A song service is held on the last Wednesday of every month

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