

5. What is the reason for Christ's strong chiding in vs. 18?
6. Would your congregation like to hear this kind of preaching?
7. Note the marked contrast between Christ's rebuke and His sweet exhortation - vs. 20!

Special Study

The Christology of the Jehovah's Witnesses

We shall use the new translation of the New World Bible Translation Committee, which is the official work of the Jehovah's Witnesses, in our study of vital passages in the New Testament concerning Christ and the doctrine of Hell. This is an anonymous work and the J.W.s will not reveal names of those who did the translation. Our common ground in the discussion is the fact that they claim to believe that the Bible alone is their source of doctrine. Therefore whatever that Bible really says about the person of Christ and the reality of Hell is the divine standard for belief.

Many people (Unitarians, Jews, most contemporary Theologians) along with the J.W.'s deny the deity of Christ and the reality of Hell, but not for the same reason. Any competent scholar knows what the Hebrew and Greek Scriptures have to say about both of these doctrines, but they are denied on grounds other than the statements of the Bible.

It is vital that we point out one more factor before we begin our examination of specific statements of the Bible relating to the two doctrines under consideration—in the literature of the J.W.'s one sees the names of competent Christian lexicographers, grammarians and exegetes used in defense of their strange manipulations of the Word of God, but we must remember that men such as A.T. Robertson, (S. Bapt. Greek Scholar and often quoted by J.W.'s) believed the scripture taught both the deity of Christ and the reality of Hell. Our real concern is, what do the authors of the N.T. teach!

Doctrine of Christ

The J.W.'s affirm that Jesus is the spirit-creature named Michael the first of God's creation, and it was through him as secondary cause that God created all things. This view is clearly revealed in their New World Translation. This position

was originally set forth by the Arian Heresy. The New Testament Doctrine of Christ stands in irreconcilable conflict with this presentation of the person of Christ.

Before we examine several specific passages from their translation we must say a word about their use of the term Jehovah. In their appendix on "Jehovah" (from page 759f) they list over two hundred times in the N.T. where they have inserted the name Jehovah into the text when it is not based on the Greek text. In the foreword they make an effort to show how the Greek text has been altered and that originally the term "Jehovah" appeared in the text. The serious fallacy in both their technical understanding and logic becomes apparent when it is pointed out that the best manuscript evidence put forward is a 14th century A.D. Hebrew text of Matthew.

Technically, the pronunciation of the tetragrammation is unknown (no one knows if Yahweh, etc., is correct or not). The term which appears in English as Jehovah or Yahweh could have come from two Hebrew roots, one meaning become, the other to happen. Dr. W. F. Albright and Dr. T. W. Nakarai, *et al.*, illustrate the possible differences in translation by emending the Hebrew consonants with, for example, first simple active or fifth stem (causative) vowels. The vowels used in most popular translations of *Jehovah* or *Yahweh* (it is apparent that the vowels in these two words are different) are arbitrarily taken from the Hebrew word for lord - *Adonai*. After the exile the name of God became so sacred that they did not pronounce it. The Hebrews reason - if there is only one God then we do not need a name because names are for distinction. To this day the name Yhwh is unpronounced in the services of the Hebrew Synagogues, even when it appears in the Scripture text, or prayer book.

The Church has from the N.T. period to the 20th Century affirmed that Jesus Christ is God in human flesh and the final, complete revelation of the nature, purpose, and person and will of God of the O.T. The J.W.'s deny this affirmation - so let us turn to the Scriptures and hear their testimony.

One of the passages listed where "Jehovah" appears in the *New World Translation* is *Mk. 1:3*. At *Mk. 1:2* (1901 R.V.) which is a quotation from *Mal. 3:1*, we note a change in the pronouns from the Hebrew of *Mal.* to the Greek of *Mk.* In the Hebrew of *Mal. 3:1* God is speaking and says "to prepare *my* way (or the way before me) and the pronoun is changed to refer to Christ

(thy face) in *Mk. 1:2*. (1901 R.V.) Here we have a passage of scripture containing *Yahweh* and it is employed by an inspired author in referring to Jesus Christ.

The New World Translation of *Acts 2:21* which is a quotation from *Joel 2:32*—"anyone that calls upon the name of the Lord will be saved."

(For those who desire to study the passages critically the following data is essential. In the Hebrew text, chp. 2 runs to vs. 27 - vs. 28 begins chp. 3, which contains 5 verses and the Hebrew Text contains chp. 4:1-21. The English Translation (R.V. 1901) places the 5 verses of chp. 3 with chp. 2 - therefore in the English chp. 2 runs to vs. 32. Chp. 3 of the Hebrew becomes the last vs. of chp. 2 of E.T. and Chp. 4 of Hebrew is Chp. 3 in E.T.)

In the Acts passage the reference is to Christ, but another passage uses the same quotation and is also unmistakably applied to Christ - *Romans 10:9-13*. Here Christ is source of fulfilling the Joel passage. The total misunderstanding of the N.T. use of the term Lord is at the heart of the perversion in the N.W.T. The term *Lord* is unmistakably used for *Yahweh* and without hesitation the full import is applied to Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

In John 1:1 of the N.W.T. we learn that Jesus is merely a *god*. It reads:

"originally the Word was, and the Word was with God,
and the Word was a *god*."

We must take note of their erroneous translation of "a god" because there is no definite article before the noun. Before we analyze this point we must remind the reader that John was a Jew who had been reared on strict Jewish Monotheism (belief in one God) and to speak of "a god" would have been nonsense and repugnant or idolatry. It would not be difficult to sustain, by many examples, Dr. Ernest C. Colwell's rule of the definite article - "a definite predicate nominative has the article when it follows the verb". . . . The absence of the article before God (*theos*) of the last clause of John 1:1 in no way permits the translation found in the New World Translation "*a god*." Our standard English translation reads "and the Word was God," but the literal translation of the statement would be "and God was the Word." The appendix found in the N.W.T. in an effort to justify their distortion quotes thirty-five other passages in John where the predicate noun has the definite article in

Greek. These examples provide poor evidence for their translation of "*a god*," because all 35 examples show that the predicate noun stands after the verb. The examples quoted in N.W.T. from the Septuagint (the Greek Old Testament) merely sustain Colwell's rule of the use of the Greek article or the meaning of its absence.

Another passage which is distorted by the N.W.T. is Phil. 2:6-8 (vs. 6 - N.W.T.):

"Christ Jesus, who, although he was existing in God's form, gave no consideration to a seizure, namely, that he should be equal to God."

This is such a perversion of the Greek text that only an extended statement on each word would be an adequate reply - since space forbids this we shall comment upon two words from the context of vs. 6-8. The word translated "form" in verses 6 and 7 is (*morphē*). From Homer (classical literature) forward (*morphē*) is used in an outward sense or appearance. Plato uses (*eidōs*) in contrast to (*morphē*) or intrinsic reality. This meaning is also present in N.T. Greek and this specific passage. In vs. 7 we have a reflexive pronoun (*heauton*) which clearly states that He emptied - not His attribute (as God) out of Himself, but Himself out of one form (God) into another form (slave or servant). It is essential to note the impact of this reflexive pronoun. He was *not* emptied by *someone else*; rather He emptied Himself. Even the Unitarian Lexicographer, Joseph Henry Thayer, who denied the deity of Christ, admitted that the Greek of this section of Scripture speaks of Christ's deity. (See Thayer's Lexicon, pg. 418 concerning verse 6—

"yet did not think that this equality with God was to be eagerly clung to or retained."

This is one time the J.W.'s would not dare use the help of their Unitarian cohort, Thayer, as they do so often. Clearly the passage affirms the Deity of Christ as the Greek of Paul's Epistle stands in radical contrast to the English translation of this passage in the N.W.T., the official translation of the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Paul's statement in Col. 1:15-17 is another disconcerting passage to the deniers of Christ's Deity. The N.W.T. Col. 1:15-17 states—

"because by means of him all *other* things were created in the heavens and upon the earth - all *other* things have

been created through him and for him. Also he is *before* all *other* things and by means of him all *other* things were made to exist." (Italics mine)

We take note that the adjective "other" appeared four times and it does not occur even once in the Greek Text. The words "other" and "before" were inserted to emphasize that Jesus was also created. The J.W.'s are perpetrating the Colossian Gnostic heresy which Paul was seeking to destroy. This heresy affirmed that Jesus was a created being between God and Man. At no time does the New Testament apply the verb *to create* to the relationship of the Father and the Son. We do not find the Greek word (*prōtoktistos*) which means first-created, but the word (*prōtokos*) which means first-begotten, and is used in the N.T. in reference to Christ. The adjective "first" gives Christ priority of status and time. Christ has priority over all created things plus His sovereignty over the same. In *Col. 2:9* (R.V. 1901) - Paul affirms that—

"in Him dwells (present tense verb - continually dwells) all of the fulness (*plērōma*) of the Godheadbodily."

This is a direct affirmation of deity!

The translation found at *Rev. 3:14* is also warped to fit the Arianism of the J.W.'s (see N.W.T., vs. 14).

"the beginning of the creation *by* God." (Italics mine)

The Greek Text of the Revelation passage does not say "*by God*," but has the genitive case meaning "*of God*." The translation which appears in the N.W.T. would require a different grammatical structure with the preposition (*hupo*). As in *John 1:1*, the term (*archē*) appears here also. From the period of Homer forward it has the sense of beginning, first cause, government (as in *Eph. 6:12*.) The Greek scriptures declare that Christ is the *source* and *origin* of "all things"—not all "other" things as stated in the New World Translation.

The N.W.T. of *John 8:58* is the strangest misrepresentation of all of the texts we have mentioned so far. The translation says—

"Before Abraham came into existence, *I have been*."
(Italics mine)

The footnote calls this translation a perfect indefinite tense. No standard grammar or lexicon has ever heard of such a translation of a simple present tense verb (*eimi*). Jesus simply affirms His eternal existence before Abraham - He said, "Before Abraham was, I am."

The passages in the N.T. which speak of Christ's subordination (e.g. I Cor. 12:1-2) only speaks of his self-emptying incarnation and not as the N.W.T. suggests, that Christ is less than God the Father.

The favorite book (The Revelation) of the J.W.'s has a doctrine of Christ which stands in marked contrast to their anti-Christian view of Christ.

Old Testament passages which speak of Yahweh are without hesitation applied to Jesus Christ (*Deut. 10:17* see *Rev. 17:14*, *Dan. 7:9* see *Rev. 1:14*, *Zech. 4:10* see *Rev. 5:6*. Jesus Christ has co-sovereignty with the Father, see *Rev. 11:15*; He also shares one throne, see *Rev. 22:1,3*. The author of Revelation identifies Christ with God, yet he knows nothing of two Gods. Here we see a strict montheism (belief in one God only). Another point which does not adjust well to the thought of the J.W.'s is that the author identifies the glorified Christ with the Christ of the self-emptying incarnation.

These brief statements necessitate our agreement with Dr. Bruce Metzger (see his article listed in the bibliography) that in light of their doctrine of Christ the J.W.'s can in no manner be termed Christian! (See following Bibliography for further study material on Jehovah's Witnesses.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For Further Study See: Books and Booklets, etc., written by Jehovah's Witnesses, necessary for a primary understanding of their position. These are obtainable from *Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn 1, N.Y.*

New World Translation of N.T. in one volume. The O.T. is not yet complete, but four volumes containing Genesis to Lamentations are available. Their creedal position is easily determined in *Make Sure of All Things; What Do the Scriptures Say About Survival After Death?; The Trinity—Divine Mystery or Pagan Myth?; Hell Fire—Bible Truth or Pagan Myth?; Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*: This is an annual report on growth and progress. *Jehovah's Witnesses: The New World Society*. This is their official history.

Books and Articles, etc., written as criticism of this movement. See these accurate, but simple presentations.

Jan Karel Van Baalen, *The Chaos of Cults*, chp. 10, Jehovah's Witnesses Eerdman's Pub. Co., Grand Rapids, Michigan, revised edition.

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Martin and Klann, *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, Zondervan Publishing Co. Grand Rapids, Michigan. This is the best semi-popular statement covering history and doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses in existence.

Walter R. Martin, Editor, *Religious Research Digest* (deals only with the cults—*A Must!*) This is a new quarterly published by the Christian Research Institute Inc., 122 Beaufort Ave., Livingston, N.J. (Subscription price \$2.00 per year.)

Dr. Bruce M. Metzger, "*The Jehovah's Witnesses and Jesus.*" This is an article in *Theology Today*, April, 1953, P.O. Box 29, Princeton, N.J.

William J. Schnell, author of *Into the Light of Christianity*, which effectively debunks brainwashing and heals affected minds of this malady, has in his possession 7,591 letters from converted Jehovah's Witnesses. Price of author's second and more important book is \$2.95. He now publishes the bi-monthly *Converted Jehovah's Witness Expositor* which is sent a whole year as a Missionary into the homes of your Jehovah's Witness friends for *sixty-five cents*. A new booklet *How To Witness to Jehovah's Witnesses* may be had for *fifteen cents in single copies*, or *\$9.00 in 100 copy lots* and is a great help in effectively dealing with Jehovah's Witnesses at your doors and in use of book studies in their homes. Order directly from *William J. Schnell, 2889 Guss Ave., Youngstown 8, Ohio, USA.*

SECTION 11

Text 4:1-8

After these things I saw, and behold, a door opened in heaven, and the first voice that I heard, a voice as of a trumpet speaking with me, one saying, come up hither, and I will show thee the things which must come to pass hereafter. 2 Straightway I was in the Spirit: and behold, there was a throne set in heaven, and one sitting upon the throne; 3 and he that sat was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius: and there was a rainbow round about the throne, like an emerald to look upon. 4 And round about the throne were four and twenty thrones: and upon the thrones I saw four and twenty elders sitting, arrayed in white garments; and on their heads crowns of gold. 5 And out of the throne proceed lightnings and voices and thunders. And there were seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God; 6 and before the throne, as it were a sea of glass like unto crystal; and in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne four living creatures full of eyes before and behind. 7 And the first creature was like a lion, and the second creature like a calf, and the third creature had a face as of a man, and the fourth creature was like a flying

eagle. 8 And the four living creatures, having each one of them six wings, are full of eyes round about and within: and they have no rest day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God, the Almighty, who was and who is and who is to come.

Initial Questions 4:1-8

1. Has there been a transition from earth (considering the seven churches of Asia) to heaven - vs. 1?
2. What does it mean to be "in the Spirit" - vs. 2?
3. Do you know the Old Testament source of the imagery of vs. 4ff? (See Ezekial, chp. 1)
4. Wherein the Old Testament do we find the "thrice holy" praise of God - vs. 8? (See Isaiah chp. 6:3)

Second Vision: Process of World Judgment 4:1-16:21

The Vision of the Throne in Heaven

Chp. 4:1-11

(First Section 4:1-8)

Verse 1

"After these things (*meta tauga* - K.J. falsely translates "after this") I saw." What is John's point of reference when he says "after these things"? The immediate context would point to the vision concerning the seven churches in chapters two and three. The act of seeing (prophetic vision) provided John with the context of his vision.

It is very important to note the transition from earth, in the preceding two chapters, to heaven - H. E. Dana calls this the beginning of the "Drama of Redemption." (See his *The Epistles and Apocalypse of John*: Baptist Book Store, 1937, p. 112.) Chapter four sets the stage for the remainder of the book. Though we will not here enter into a technical discussion concerning the literary structure of the remaining sections of *The Revelation*, it is *highly probable* that the various scenes repeat the same things (i.e., from the general situation in John's Day to the second coming of Christ) from differing perspectives. Chapter five strengthens the foundation of Chapter 4 by revealing the sovereignty of God through the ultimate victory of Christ.