

## ***FOOD FOR THINKING JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES***

Jesus made a true statement in John 8:32 when he said, "You will know the truth, and the truth shall set you free." (NWT) Jesus said those words to the Jews who believed on him, but also in the hearing of the Scribes and Pharisees who wanted to kill him. The question then arises, how were those Jews who believed on him to be made free? Free from what? As they said, they were not in bondage to anyone. But we ask, were they really free?

It seems quite clear that Jesus was referring to the traditions and teachings of the Pharisees. As he pointed out in the 23rd chapter of Matthew, though they claimed to sit in Moses' seat, they did not follow the teachings of Moses, but bound up heavy loads on men. Claiming to sit in Moses' seat, and that Abraham was their father, they took the position that they were the successors of Moses and Abraham by Jehovah's arrangement. Therefore, whatever interpretation they put upon the law was to be accepted as though from God.

That position and attitude has prevailed these many years even to this day. It was shortly after the Apostles passed from the scene that the Catholic Church came into existence. They took that same position: that now they were the channel by which the great God Jehovah was dealing with his people. They claimed that Peter was the first Pope, that from that time all Popes were successors to Peter, and whatever the Catholic Church was to bind on earth was to be bound in heaven. If one were to sin against or disagree with them on spiritual matters, that one was considered sinning against God. Many Protestant churches have made similar claims. Today we have yet another organization making the same claim, i.e., that they are the channel by which Jehovah God is now dealing with his people. That channel is what this organization likes to call "the faithful and discreet slave class" who in turn use the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society to publish what it likes to call "the truth" or "newly revealed truth from Jehovah God."

That the Watchtower Society takes the position that it is used by Jehovah, by and through this "faithful and discreet slave class" is well documented in its publications. It says this class is in fulfillment of Matt. 24:45-47, and that Jehovah God is now using them to disseminate Bible truths by and through the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society and by the use of the Watchtower magazine. (See The Watchtower, May 1, 1993, pages 16, 17 par. 6-8.)

The Watchtower of September 1, 1991 on pages 18, 19, paragraph 15, under the heading "Jehovah and Christ-Foremost Communicators," endeavors to relate the "Society" with Jehovah's channel of communication. They claim that this line of communication started with Abel down through the Apostles and then to our day culminating with the "Society." (Watchtower December 1, 1991, page 10). Even stronger words are used in The Watchtower of October 15, 1985, pages 30, 31, "Questions From Readers", where it compares the Society to being Jehovah's wife, making the

organization the mother to all its adherents. Stronger yet, is a statement made in The Watchtower, 1965, page 351, in answer to a "Question from readers" which asks the question, "How can it be said that God's visible organization was made strictly Theocratic structure by 1938? In summary, their answer is that by 1932 'the Watchtower Society began to be controlled by God or was God ruled, and by 1938 was fully God ruled or fully Theocratic. By their own claim, all scriptural explanation comes from Jehovah God and is published in the Watchtower. Now if this be true, then there will be no contradiction or changing of explanation from one Watchtower to another. Stated another way, what was published as truth since 1938 must still be truth today. (Mal. 3:6) With this thought in mind, let us go on to see if the facts support their contention. Is the Watchtower Society (Channel) indeed as unchanging as the God it claims to represent?

In the book entitled "Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose," written in dialogue fashion, on page 14, mention is made that for the first time, in 1929, the Watchtower made known to their people the true meaning of Rom. 13:1-7; namely that Paul in this scripture was not referring to the governments of this world, but was referring to Jehovah God and Christ Jesus. This thought is reiterated in the June 15, 1955 Watchtower on pages 367-8, in an article entitled; "Part 12: An Era of Prophesied Happiness Begins." There it states; "Timely was the new light of truth on the subject of the "higher powers" published in The Watchtower for June 1 and June 15, 1929, showing clearly that Jehovah God and Christ Jesus are the true "superior authorities" that must be obeyed. (Rom. 13:1, NW)"

Again note what was written in The Watchtower, 1962, page 683, par. 7, discussing this same subject. "Paul is telling God's holy ones how to conduct themselves among men outside the Christian congregation, 'all men' including even an enemy who does evil to Christians, hence an individual found outside the congregation,' then, right afterwards, Paul not inpasses on to his discussion of the 'Superior Authorities' and thus has his sights focused on, not what is inside the congregation, but what is outside it. So the 'Superior Authorities' have their setting logically in the world outside the congregation ... \*"

Note the asterisk at the end of the quote, which refers to a footnote at the bottom of the page. That footnote refers to "The Divine Plan of the Ages", a book written in 1886 by the founder of the Watchtower Bible & Tract Society, Charles Taze Russell. The reference is to page 266 which gives in effect the same explanation now given by the Watchtower of 1962 on Rom. 13:1-7. If the "Channel" became cleansed in and after 1919, and was completely cleansed by 1938, and as stated in the Watchtower 1959, page 601, the elective Elders before that time were not mature or theocratic, why does that channel now go back to the explanation given in 1886? What happened to that "Channel" from 1919 or 1938 to 1962? Had it been tuned to the wrong station?

In the June 15th 1987 Watchtower on page 18 under the article entitled "Testing and Sifting in Modern Times", the Society list certain years and the important significance of those year, it states; "1962: The "superior authorities" of Romans 13:1 were properly identified as being the secular governmental authorities, to whom Christians are to be in relative subjection." And in the November 1, 1990 Watchtower on page 11, paragraph 4, in the article "The Christian's View of the Superior Authorities" notice what is written; "For some years, until 1962, Jehovah's Witnesses held that the superior authorities were Jehovah God and Christ Jesus. However, in line with Proverbs 4:18, light increased, and this view was adjusted, which may raise questions in the minds of some.

Are we now correct in saying that these authorities are the kings, presidents, prime ministers, mayors, magistrates, and others who wield secular, political power in the world and that we owe them subjection in a relative way?"

As you can see all reference to the book "The Divine Plan of the Ages" is omitted, in fact any reference to the beliefs prior to 1929 are omitted. While many examples could be given of their doubly changing explanation of scripture, one more should suffice. That is their explanation of the resurrection of the people of Sodom and Gomorrah. First, let it be pointed out that sincere Bible students, who were once associated with the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, including C. T. Russell, believed and taught that the people of Sodom and Gomorrah will be resurrected during the Millennium, and for that matter still do. Even J. F. Rutherford taught the same. (See the first Watchtower, July 1879, page 8, and "Studies in the Scriptures" by C. T. Russell, also the book Creation by J. F. Rutherford.)

Now then, reviewing the Watchtowers from 1952 to 1992, keep in mind that the "Faithful and discreet slave class" who publish "The Watchtower" is supposed to be the "Channel" used by Jehovah God.

". . . Our previous consideration of 2 Peter 2:5-9, has shown that those destroyed by God at Sodom and Gomorrah are eternally cut off . . ." (Watchtower, 1952, page 335, par. 8) ". . . So those who die at Armageddon will pay the same penalty as the people of Sodom did, that is, they will not have a "resurrection of 'judgement' during the 1,000 year judgment day, but they will stay dead forever (Watchtower, 1955, page 200, par. 2, top of page) "Since the supreme judge never makes a mistake, there is no need for him to take under review any judgments that he has passed. His Judgments are final. That means the people that perished in the flood of Noah's day will never be resurrected to stand trial again. "The same is true with the people of Sodom and Gomorrah as well as Adam and Eve ..." (Watchtower, 1960, page 53, par. 4)

Now note the complete reversal of that position as published in the Watchtower of 1965, in an article entitled "Who will be resurrected from the dead," page 137, quoting from par. 15, ". . . Were those Sodomites worse than the rest of the Canaanites? No; ... And Peter does not say that the Sodomites and Gomorreans were destroyed everlastingly . . ." Again, after quoting from Jesus' words at Matt. 10:15, it makes this statement, ". . . It would be necessary for former inhabitants of that land to be present on the judgment day (Watchtower, 1965, page 479).

Now let us go see another reversal of that position as published in the Watchtower of June 1, 1988 on page 30: "A reexamination of Matthew 11:20-24, though, has brought into question whether Jesus was there discussing eternal judgment and resurrection. His point was how unresponsive the people in Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum were and how unlikely it was that they would reform even in the Judgment Day. Saying that it would be "more endurable" for Tyre/Sidon and Sodom/Gomorrah "on Judgment Day" was a form of hyperbole (exaggeration to emphasize a point) that Jesus need not have intended to be taken literally, any more than other graphic hyperboles that he used. "

In all our research, we can find no admission that any misunderstanding or mistake was made in previous Watchtowers, or previous "Truths" which were claimed to come from Jehovah since 1938,

implying that any wrong understanding came from a time before 1938. Yet in regard to the above-mentioned examples (the Superior Authorities, and the Sodomites) The Watchtower again endorses the old truths, rather than the "New Light." We can only ask, was the God of the Watchtower Society confused before 1988 or is he confused now? If the Watchtower Society is now God ruled, is it the one described in 2 Cor. 11: 12-15?

In view of the foregoing, one cannot help but see a parallel between the Watchtower Society and the Catholic Church. Both claim succession to previous channels instituted by God. Both claim the exclusive right to interpret the Bible, both will disfellowship their own if the right to dictate to their members is questioned. Both rule by fear, in the case of the Catholic Church, it is fear of Hell fire or purgatory, in the case of the Watchtower Society it is an everlasting cutting off, or second death.

There is one notable difference however. While the Catholic Church held their people in bondage by ignorance of scripture, the "Society" holds their people in bondage by expedient misapplication of scripture. And if one wants to be in good standing "with Jehovah" then one dare not question this so called "Channel." The penalty is being disfellowshipped, or totally alienated from all other members. Is this the Christian way? We think not. Rev. 18:4

But where will you go? Jehovah knows when even the sparrow falls; God's arm is not shortened that it cannot save. The Bible assures us of that. If reasonable doubts have been raised in your mind, call now upon those true promises of Jehovah, and know that he is able to guide you and set you free of such human fears. Your Bible has the same truthful words and promises that other Bibles do. Let the Holy Spirit guide you in study and Christian works. 2 Tim. 1:7

There are many "Free" Bible student groups which do not bind and enslave members by regimentation and fear tactics. Some of these date back to the days of Pastor Russell and are not bound by creed fences, but are free to appreciate the truth. You will find these groups happy to include you in their fellowship and witness activities, and just as willing to allow you the freedom to go elsewhere if you choose. Why not look up one of them today? You will find they speak the same language you do. The address given below will bring all the information you will need.

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