Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity

Announcing Biblical Truths of our Lord

Articles

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity
Jehovah's Witnesses and the Deity of Christ
Jehovah's Witnesses and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ



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Jehovah's Witnesses and the Trinity

A comparison of the historical Christian
Doctrine of the Trinity and the
theology of the Watchtower

The doctrine of the Holy Trinity has been consistently misunderstood, probably more than any other teaching of the Bible. Frequently investigation into the doctrine of the Trinity has been dismissed from serious discussion or study by invoking the time-worn assertions – "It's a great mystery" or "This is incomprehensible"- thus discouraging many from investigating the scriptural basis of the doctrine.

Due principally to this attitude as well as certain complex aspects of the Trinity doctrine itself, there has been a revival of anti-Trinitarian heresies during the past one hundred and fifty years, and they have gone largely unanswered. Prominent among those groups rejecting the historic doctrine of the Trinity are Mormonism, Christian Science, Unity, Spiritism, Herbert W. Armstrong and his Worldwide Radio Church of God and Jehovah's Witnesses--i.e., The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

According to Jehovah's Witnesses, the Trinity is a Satanic dogma of apostate Christianity that prevents people from knowing the true God, Jehovah. The Watchtower puts it this way:

> The doctrine in brief is that there are three gods in one: God the Father, God the son and God the Holy Ghost . . . the Holy Spirit is not a person and is therefore not one of the gods of the Trinity . . . the Trinity doctrine was not conceived by Jesus or the early Christians . . . the obvious conclusion therefore is that Satin is the originator of the Trinity doctrine.[1[1]]

Since the Watch Tower denies that the Trinity doctrine is Biblical; and since they complicate the issue by defining it incorrectly--the task of true Christians is two-fold: *First*, a definition in accord with historic Christianity must be given. Secondly, it must be shown that the doctrine of the Trinity is both Biblical and essential to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

THE HOLY TRINITY

Definition: Within the unity of the One God there are three Persons, the Father; the Son and the Holy Spirit; and these three share the same Nature and attributes. In effect, then, the three Persons ARE the one God.

From this concise statement, similarly set forth in many theological texts,[2[2]] it is clear that the Christian Church does *not* believe that "there are three gods in One." Quite to the contrary, we affirm that there is but one God, as Scripture repeatedly asserts (Deut.

1[1] *Let God Be True* (New York: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1948 edition; pp. 81, 82, 87). *Reconciliation* (by Judge Rutherford, New York: Watchtower, page 115).

2[2] *The Trinity* (Baker's Dictionary of Theology; Grand Rapids: page 531).

6:4, Isa. 43:10, 1 Tim. 2:5).

Having defined the Christian doctrine of the Trinity, it becomes necessary, *secondly*, to demonstrate inductively from the Bible that it is true.

To accomplish this, we begin with one basic premise: *If it can be shown from Scripture that there are three Persons, all of whom are called Jehovah (God), then since there is only one Jehovah (Isa. 44:6, 48:12), those three Persons are the one God. Things equal to the same thing are equal to each other.*

Just how it is possible for three to be One and for that One to be three, will also be explained. But first, the evidence:

1. THE FATHER IS JEHOVAH

Jehovah's Witnesses are quick to agree with the Apostle Peter that the Father is called Jehovah. Moreover, Peter and many other Biblical writers identify Him as a "person" (II Peter 1:17). It is therefore unnecessary to press this point, the Witnesses having already conceded it.

*However, we would point out that the word "person" is, by definition, descriptive of "ego" or "I." Without "ego," which distinguishes man from the beasts, personality as such would cease to exist. Any reputable lexicon or Greek dictionary will substantiate the fact that the Greek work, "ego," is the basis for our English term, "*I*" Jehovah designates His Being as The Great I AM (Ex. 3:14): So the Deity is Personal and possesses Ego, the hallmark of Personality.*

We see, then that one of the three "Persons" --the Father-- is designated "God."

1. THE SON OF JEHOVAH

A careful study of the first chapter of Revelation (vss. 11-18) will show that Jesus Christ, the son of Man, identifies Himself as "the first and the last" and "the one who became dead" and who now lives for all eternity.

It is of no small significance that in verse 13 of the last chapter of Revelation He confirms this title with great emphasis, identifying Himself in verse 16 as "I Jesus," and declaring that He is "the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." The context reveals that it is Jesus speaking (vs. 12), for He - *not* the Father - is coming "quickly" (Rev. 1:7, I Thess. 4:15, 16).

It must never be forgotten that these titles ("the first and the last," "the Alpha and the Omega," "the beginning and the end") belong *only* to Jehovah God (Isa. 44: 6,8: Rev. 1:8, 21:6). *But Jesus Christ claims them as His own, because He, the Son is also Jehovah!*

We see, then, that there are either *two* firsts and two lasts (a hopeless contradiction of terms), or the Son is Jehovah, the one who was pierced for our sins (Zech. 12;10; Rev. 1:7, 11, 13) and who is truly "the fullness of Jehovah in flesh" (Col 2.9).

The angel who showed John the wonder of Revelation forbade the Apostle to worship him, for he was but a created being, a "fellow servant." Quite properly, he declared, "worship Jehovah," (Rev. 22.9). Yet Jesus Christ, whom Jehovah's Witnesses

say is *also* a created being (i.e., Michael the Archangel), commended the worship of Himself as Jehovah (John 20:28, 28). This would have been a blasphemous act of presumption on His part and a direct violation of His Father's commandments (Ex 20:3, Deut. 6:17), *unless* He were in some mysterious sense one in Nature and Being with His Father. In such a case He would in truth be "equal with God" and entitled to receive worship as Jehovah (John 5:18,23).

Jehovah's Witnesses have always taught that Jesus Christ was no more than a perfect man, "Certainly not the supreme God Almighty in the flesh."[3][3] They state categorically that He was in no sense *both* God and man. "Some insist that Jesus while on earth was both God and man. This theory is *wrong*,"[4][4] Jehovah's Witnesses also maintain that our Lord was "the first and direct creation of Jehovah God," and that prior to His earthly life He was an angel.[5][5]

In contrast to this teaching, Scripture and the Christian Christ declare the full Deity of Jesus Christ, and His equality with God the Father.

In the first verse of John's Gospel, Christ is revealed as the eternal Word of God who became flesh (verse 14) --the "image of God" (2 Corinthians 4:4). Consider the emphasis. "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1).

Note that John 1:1 states that the Word *already was* in the beginning--it does not say the Word "became" or "was created" by God, as Jehovah's Witnesses teach. The Witnesses incorrectly translate this text to read "the Word was a god."[6][6] but their translation is by both context and grammar an impossibility according to all recognized authorities on Greek. No recognized translation bears out their error.

Moreover, the Scriptures proclaim that Christ made "himself equal with God" (John 5:18), and that "in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Deity bodily" (Colossians 2:9). The Bible further states that Christ claimed to be the great I AM (Jehovah) of the Old Testament (cf. Exodus 3:13-16 with John 8:58), and the Jews understood Him so clearly during His ministry that they sought to stone Him to death for blasphemy (John 8:59; cf. 10:28-33).

Jehovah's Witnesses pervert these texts and many others in their determined effort to demote our Lord from His position of God and Creator (Colossians 1; Hebrews 1); and they compound their error by translating the Greek of the New Testament, in many places, contrary to all grammatical authorities. It is certainly true that during His earthly life our Lord voluntarily limited Himself as a man (Philippians 2:6-8), and thus he never strove to usurp the prerogatives of Deity; *But one does not have to "rob" what is His by inheritance (Hebrews 1)*. He was true Deity--" the great God" (Titus 2:13).

We must not forget that Christ humbled Himself, even to the death of the cross, and therefore, as a man, could say, "My Father is greater than I" (John 14:28). However, let us remember that Christ never said, "My Father is *better* than I." "Better" is a term of comparison between *natures* (Heb. 1:4), while "greater," as in the context of John 14, is a term of comparison relative to *positions*.

3[3] *Let God Be True* (op. cit., p. 87).

4[4] *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (New York: Watch Tower, p. 49) The *Harp of God* (J. F. Rutherford; New York: Watch Tower, pp. 101, 123).

5[5] *The Kingdom is At Hand* (p. 46 - 49).

6[6] *Let God Be True* (op. cit., pp. 34-35).

The President of the United States, for instance, is *greater* in position than any of his fellow-Americans by virtue of his office, but he would be the first to insist that he is not better than other human beings. So Christ was admittedly inferior to His Father positionally while on earth as a man, but the Scriptures clearly and unmistakably state that he was at all times His Father's equal on the spiritual plane of Divine Being or Nature (Heb. 1:3; John 5:18). Note also that in I Corinthians 15:28 it is function that is dealt with--not Deity.

Jehovah's Witnesses always point to Christ's humanity in the Bible; they carefully omit mention of His claim to full Deity, and they thus "wrest . . . the . . . scriptures, unto their own destruction" (2 Peter 3:16). The second Person, the Son, is also called God, then, despite the efforts of the Watch Tower to prove the contrary.

3. THE HOLY SPIRIT IS JEHOVAH

It is peculiar, to say the least, that Jehovah's Witnesses can agree with the Apostle Peter when he declared that the Father is Jehovah--and then contradict his affirmation that the Holy Spirit is likewise Jehovah, as recorded in Acts 5:3 and 4.

No Christian theologian has ever denied either the person or Deity of the Holy Spirit, for the evidence to substantiate both is abundant in Scripture. For instance, a thorough study of the book of Acts, chapter thirteen, reveals that the Holy Spirit is a Person, because He possesses "ego." Luke records therein that the Holy Spirit as a Person has "ego" (13:2, 4) and, furthermore, that He (*not* "it") prophesies to His servants and commissions them, as well (21:11). See also such verses as John 14:26, 15:26, acts 8:29, 13:2, Romans 5:5.

The Scriptures are clear that the Holy Spirit has a "will" (1 Cor. 12:11, Heb. 2:4), and since "will" denotes "ego" or personality, as opposed to the neuter (animals), obviously the Spirit is a person. We have also seen from Peter's words that when Ananias lied to the Holy Spirit, he lied to Jehovah (Acts 5:4). Both the thirteenth chapter of Acts and Isaiah 48 add to the proof that the Holy Spirit is God, since He answers the prayers of the Apostles (Acts 13:1-4) and is designated Deity by the prophet Isaiah (48: 16). Even the Watch Tower admits that God alone answers prayer.

The Bible, then, does indeed teach that the Spirit is a Person and that He is called God. It is therefore apparent that there are three Persons mentioned in Scripture and that they are all identified as God: yet there is only *one* true God (Isa. 45:22).

"LORDS MANY AND GODS MANY"

There are two other important points that must be mentioned.

Jehovah's Witnesses claim that, because the Bible designates some beings and idols as "gods," it is proper for them to call Jesus "a god" and worship him as the angels did (Heb. 1:6). This is an important point and must be clarified.

Of course, it is true that God made Moses *appear* as a god in Pharaoh's eyes (Exodus 7:1). Moreover, Satan, certain of the judges of Israel, and pagan idols are described as "gods" in the Bible (John 14:30, Psalm 82:6, 1 Cor. 8:4, 10:19, 2 Cor. 4:4). Nevertheless, they are *not* deity by *nature*, as the Apostle Paul flatly states (Gal. 4:8).

They are "gods" by angelic or human acclamation, and God addresses them *in that context*. Worshipping a thing can make it *your* god; but it is *not* God by nature--for by nature there is only *one* God (1 Cor. 8:4-6, 1 Tim. 2:5).

When this cardinal distinction is made in Scripture, the Watch Tower's doctrine is refuted, and the problem of the usage of the term "gods" or "a god" disappears.

COMPOSITE UNITY AND THE TRIPLE POINT

The second important fact to be remembered is that of the meaning of the term "one."

"How is it possible," say the Jehovah's Witnesses, "for Jehovah to be *three* and *one* both at the same time? It is illogical, unreasonable and confusing; and God is not the author of confusion!"

To answer this all-too-common objection, it should be kept in mind that the word "one" can denote *composite* as well as solitary unity. For instance, in Genesis (chapter 2), Adam and Eve are called *one* flesh; and Numbers (chapter 13) speaks of "one" when the context indicates that it was in reality a cluster of grapes hanging from one stem. Here are bona fide instances of composite unity.

The same Hebrew word, "*echoed*" (one) is used in both cases, however, even as it is in Deuteronomy 6:4 where we are told that God is "One." The evident composite unity indicated here is confirmed in the New Testament. Our Lord spoke of composite unity where marriage is concerned (Mk. 10:8); so He, too, was aware of this important distinction. See also Joshua 9:2; Judges 10:1, 2 Chron. 30:12, Isaiah 65:25; Nehemiah 7:66 and Ezra 6:20 for further instances of composite unity.

Finally, let us illustrate--how it is both logically and rationally possible for three to be one and one to be three simultaneously, since Jehovah's Witnesses do NOT believe this is possible.

It is a well-known fact of chemistry that plain water, when placed in a vacuum under 230 millimeters of gas pressure and at a temperature of 0E Centigrade, solidifies into *ice* at the bottom of the container, remains *liquid* in the center and vaporizes at the top! At a given *instant* the same water is both *solid, liquid* and *gas*, yet all three are manifestations of the same basic substance or nature: H_2O--hydrogen: two parts; oxygen: one.

If one of the simplest of all created substances can be *three* in manifested form and yet remain *one* in nature, then the Creator of that substance can surely be Father, Son and Holy Spirit--three Persons and one Nature--without any violation of logic or reason whatever if He so wills.

God is not triplex (1 + 1 + 1)--He is triune (1 x 1 x 1), and He has revealed Himself fully in the Person of our Lord, Jesus Christ (Col. 2:9, John 14:9).

Jehovah's Witnesses are not confused by the doctrine of the Trinity they are confused by the Watch Tower Society, from whose power only the Son of God can liberate. It is our prayer that, in His own time, this will come to pass--"For ye shall know the truth and the truth shall set you free . . . and if the Son shall make you free, you shall be free indeed." (John 8:32, 36).

Once the foregoing data have been understood, the following texts from the Old and New Testament confirm the doctrine of the Trinity. A prayerful reading of these passages will help strengthen your faith in this great and truly divine revelation of the Nature of God. It will promote faith in Him "who is able to save to the uttermost all who come to Him by faith," since He alone is "the Way," (Heb. 7:25, John 14:6, Acts 16:31, 1 John 2:2, Romans 10:9-13).

Walter Martin, Ph.D.

TRINITY TEXTS:

1. Old Testament Hints - Genesis 1:26, 3:22, 11:7; Isaiah 6:8, 48:12; Zechariah 12:9-10. **2.** The Creation - Genesis 1:2; John 1:3. **3.** The Incarnation - Luke 1:35. **4.** The Baptism of Christ - Matthew 3:16-17. **5.** The Resurrection of Christ - Acts 3:26, 1 Thessalonians 1:10 (the Father) John 2:19-21 (the Son) Romans 8:11, 1 Peter 3:18 (the Holy Spirit) Acts 17:31 (God). **6.** The Great Commission - Matthew 28:19. **7.** The Divine Benediction - 2 Corinthians 13:14. See also, John 14:16, 26; 15:26.

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JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND THE DEITY OF CHRIST

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society *or* Jehovah's Witnesses, has always taught from its inception in 1896 that Jesus Christ was no more than a perfect man, "certainly not the supreme God Almighty in the flesh."[7[1]] Amplifying this, they state categorically that He was in no sense both God and man. "Some insist that Jesus while on earth was both God and man. This theory is wrong . . ."[8[2]]

By maintaining that our Lord was the "first and direct creation of Jehovah God," and that prior to His earthly life He was Michael the Archangel,[9[3]] the Witnesses deny the very foundation of the historic Christian faith.

In contrast to this teaching, the Bible and Christian Church declare the full Deity of Jesus Christ and His equality with God the Father.

In the first verse of John's Gospel, Christ is revealed as the eternal Word of God who became flesh (verse 14) - the "*image of God"* (2 Corinthians 4:4). Consider the emphasis. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God"* (John 1:1).

Note that John 1:1 states that the Word *was* in the beginning - it does not say the Word "became" or "was created" by God as Jehovah's Witnesses teach. The Witnesses also mistranslate this text to read "the Word was *a god"*[10[4]] but their translation is by both context and grammar an impossibility according to all recognized authorities on Greek grammar.

Moreover, the Scriptures proclaim that Christ made *"himself equal with God"* (John 5:18) and that *"in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily"* (Colossians 2:9). The Bible further states that Christ claimed to be the great I AM (Jehovah) of the Old Testament (see Exodus 3:13-16 with John 8:58), and the Jews during His ministry understood Him so clearly that they sought to stone Him to death for blasphemy (John 8:59; cf. 10:28, 33).

Jehovah's Witnesses pervert these texts and many others in their determined attempt to demote our Lord from His position of God and Creator (Colossians 1; Hebrews 1), and they compound their error by translating the Greek of the New Testament in many places contrary to all known grammatical authorities.[11[5]] It is certainly true that during His earthly life our Lord voluntarily limited Himself as a man (Philippians 2:6-8), and thus He never strove to usurp the prerogatives of Deity. But one does not have to "rob" what is His by inheritance (Hebrews 1). As we have already shown, He was true Deity - *"the great God"* (Titus 2:13).

We must not forget that Christ humbled Himself even to the death of the cross and therefore *as a man* could say, *"my Father is greater than I"* (John 14:28). However,

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7[1] *Let God be True*, Edition 1946, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. p. 87.

8[2] *The Harp of God*, J.F. Rutherford, pp. 101 and 128.

9[3] *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 49; also *The Kingdom is At Hand,* pp. 46, 47, 49.

10[4] *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures* - John 1:1, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

11[5] See *Jehovah of the Watchtower*, Moody Press, Chicago, Revised Edition, 1974 for a full-length study of Jehovah's Witnesses with full documentation on their errors.

let us not forget that Christ never said, "My Father is *better* than I"; "better" is a term of comparison between natures (Hebrews 1:4) while "greater," as in the context of John 14, is a term of comparison relative to positions.

Our President, for instance, is greater in position than any of his fellow Americans by virtue of his office as President of the United States; but he would be the first to insist that as a human being he is not necessarily *better*. So Christ was admittedly inferior to His Father *positionally* while on earth as a man but the Scriptures indicate He was His Father's equal on the spiritual plane at all times (Hebrews 1:3; John 5:18).

Jehovah's Witnesses always point to Christ's humanity in the Scriptures; they carefully omit mention of His claim to full Deity and they thus *"wrest . . . the . . . scriptures, unto their own destruction"* (2 Peter 3:16).

Our Lord taught His Full Deity (John 8:58, John 8:24) and the Bible calls Him the *"Alpha and Omega, the first and the last"* (Revelation 1:17, 18). Yet it is Jehovah alone who declares that He is *"the first, and . . . the last"* (Isaiah 44:6). Since there can be only one first and last, God fully manifested Himself in Jesus Christ, *"the first and the last"* (Revelation 1:17, 18) as the Scriptures and the Christian Church maintain.

Jehovah's Witnesses deny these and many other great doctrines of the Bible. They are therefore misguided followers of a fallible, human organization. Consequently, they too, desperately need the salvation that the God-man, Jesus Christ, alone offers to all men who will come to Him and accept Him as their Saviour and Lord (John 3:16, 5:24).

-Walter Martin

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JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES
AND THE
RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Jehovah's Witnesses and their official organization, the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, have historically denied the bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ and have maintained that His was a "spirit" or "spiritual" resurrection. To quote the Watchtower:

"The King, Christ Jesus, was put to death in the flesh and was resurrected an invisible spirit creature.[12][1]

Further developing their teaching, the Witnesses proclaim: "In His resurrection He was no more human. He was raised as a spirit creature."[13][2]

In addition to this, the Watchtower has even suggested that Christ's body was "dissolved into gases" or "preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love."[14][3]

In order to understand the true teaching of the resurrection, it is necessary to review briefly the Biblical position, which is at considerable odds with the Watchtower.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ is quite literally the historical bedrock upon which the Christian faith rests. The Apostle Paul indeed tells us that "*if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain"* (1 Corinthians 15:14). He also declares, "*If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins"* (verse 17).

From these two statements in the Word of God, we can see the resurrection of our Lord determines the validity of our faith and even our salvation, for without His resurrection our faith is "vain" and we are "yet in our sins."

In this connection, it must also be remembered that every verse in the Bible which deals with the resurrection of the dead, and of our Lord particularly, refers exclusively to the human body; i.e., a bodily resuscitation; never a spirit or spiritual resurrection. In fact, the word "resurrection" is never applied to the soul or spirit of man. This fact is born out in the original Hebrew and Greek. Beyond this, our Lord specifically prophesied that His resurrection would be bodily; that is, in a glorified form of the body He then possessed. When speaking to the unbelieving Jews, as recorded in the second chapter of John's Gospel, Christ stated:

"*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up"* (verse 19).

The Jews, however, thought he was referring to the temple in Jerusalem but the Apostle John clearly declares our Lord's meaning:

"But he spake of the temple of his body" (verse 21).

The Greek work *soma* is translated "body" throughout the New Testament, so it is an inescapable fact that Christ was referring to his own physical form - hence a bodily resurrection.

Two classic New Testament references which corroborate our Lord's prophecy of His bodily resurrection are in the 20th chapter of John and the 24th chapter of Luke. In

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12[1] *Let God Be True,* Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 122, Edition 1946.

13[2] *The Kingdom is at Hand,* Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 258.

14[3] *Studies in the Scripture,* Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, p. 129, Vol. 2.

John 20 when our Lord appeared to the doubting Thomas, the same body in which He died upon the cross is evidenced by His own words:

"Reach hither thy finger, and behold my hands; and reach hither thy hand, and thrust it into my side: and be not faithless, but believing" (verse 27).

In Luke 24, we again see how the words of Christ refute the spirit resurrection idea of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"And as they thus spake, Jesus himself stood in the midst of them, and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrightened, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have. And when he had thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet. And while they yet believed not for joy, and wondered, he said unto them, Have ye here any meat? And they gave him a piece of a broiled fish, and of an honeycomb. And he took it, and did eat before them" (verses 36-43).

Not only, then, did our Lord have "flesh and bones," but He showed them the same hands and feet which bore the wounds of Calvary (verses 39,40). The fact that He also ate broiled fish and a honeycomb (verses 42 and 43) proves that He was not a "spirit creature" as Jehovah's Witnesses contend. Moreover our Lord's words, *"it is I myself . . . a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"* (verse 39) was uttered according to verses 37 and 38 because the disciples thought He was a spirit. Jesus, however, absolutely disproved that by offering His body as tangible evidence (verses 39,40).

Sometimes Jehovah's Witnesses attempt to explain away these appearances of Christ by asserting that He had a "spiritual body" (1 Corinthians 15:44) or that He merely assumed different bodies to encourage His disciples which the Witnesses say accounts for the fact that those who knew Him the best in life did not recognize Him after His resurrection (John 20:11-16; Luke 24:15-30).

The Witnesses also argue that 1 Peter 3:18, which refers to Christ's resurrection and states that He was "Made alive in spirit" (literal Greek), establishes their theory, but they are in error.

While it is true that Paul speaks of "a spiritual body" he nevertheless calls it a "body" (Greek "soma") and we have already seen how Christ possessed "flesh and bones" (Luke 24:39). A spiritual body then is not "a spirit" as the Witnesses make out, but a glorified, immortal, physical form possessing certain spiritual characteristics or attributes (i.e., the ability to pass through locked doors or to vanish at will. John 20:19,26; Luke 24:31).

Again, Jehovah's Witnesses' idea that because Mary Magdalene and the disciples could not recognize Christ on three occasions "proves" that He had assumed "different bodies" other than the one in which He died upon the cross, is disposed of by Luke 24:16. Luke there tells us that when the disciples encountered Jesus their eyes were kept from recognizing Him as a direct act of Christ's will. When He finished His conversation, He allowed their sense of vision to perceive who He really was; thus *"their eyes were opened, and they knew him; and he vanished out of their sight"* (verse 31).

Finally, 1 Peter 3:18, far from "proving" that Jesus was raised a spirit as the Witnesses insist, only proves that He was raised in or by the Spirit of God as the Apostle Paul tells us in Romans 8:11. The main objections, then, that Jehovah's Witnesses raise

against the bodily resurrection of our Lord are all thoroughly answered by the Scriptures themselves and represent no real threat to the historic Christian doctrine of the resurrection.

The Bible, therefore, does have much to say about the resurrection of Christ as we have seen, and nowhere supports the spirit-resurrection theory of Jehovah's Witnesses. In fact, all of it contradicts their teaching.

To the sincere, zealous, yet misled members of Jehovah's Witnesses, the Christian church must repeat the statement of our Lord Himself: *"Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself: handle me, and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones, as ye see me have"* (Luke 24, 38-39).

The true teaching concerning the resurrection of Jesus Christ does indeed determine a person's eternal destiny (1 Corinthians 15:14, 17). For *"If you will confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from among the dead, you will be saved"* (Romans 10:9, Literal Greek).

-Walter Martin

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