

The Discerner

the voice of... **Religion Analysis Service**

A QUARTERLY EXPOSING
UNBIBLICAL TEACHING & MOVEMENTS

Volume 36, Number 4

October • November • December 2016

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Hare Krishna
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*"Hereby know we the spirit of truth
and the spirit of error" 1 John 4:6*

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Religion Analysis Service

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WITH THIS ISSUE

We begin this issue with some recent news stories that we trust will be of interest to our readers.

Our featured article by our Canadian friend Bary Claud Gaudrealt focuses upon the cultic aspects of Seventh-day Adventism (SDA). A bit of history and context will be helpful in framing Gaudrealt's article. Anyone actively involved in Christian apologetics or counter-cult ministry will soon face the challenge of how to classify the Seventh-day Adventist Church. Indeed, there has been a debate among counter-cult ministries as to the SDA's proper designation.

Perhaps the greatest of the evangelical cult experts—Walter Martin—though highly critical of many Seventh-day Adventist teachings, nevertheless, refused to classify the SDA as a cult.

On the other hand, Religion Analysis Service has consistently regarded SDA as a cult since our ministry began in 1946. In fact, E. B. Jones, the founder of Religion Analysis Service, was a former Seventh-day Adventist turned Baptist minister who labored intensively to expose the many false teachings of SDA. We, therefore, offer Bary Gaudrealt's exposé on SDA in our continued effort to rescue the perishing and defending biblical truths.

We do not doubt that there are many born-again saved members of the SDA, but this would be despite the official teachings of the church. Therefore, our focus lies on the many SDA members deceived by its cultic teachings. It is our fervent desire that the SDA church would finally and completely break with its cultic past and embrace the historic Christian church built upon the foundation of Jesus Christ and His Word. “With God all things are possible” (Matthew 19:26).

Additionally, we have the fourth of five installments of my article on *Jehovah’s Witness, Neutrality, and War*.

Finally, please enjoy our latest quiz on Theisms!

Correction: We want to apologize for some typographical errors in our last issue (July–September 2016) of *The Discerner*.

In the quiz on pages 30–31, the correct answer to question three should have been just “John” rather than “Mark and John” as the last of the gospels written. Nor should question 10 have been written twice. “To err is human, to forgive divine!”

Thanks our due to our board member Doug Steiner for his commitment to assist with the work of editing *The Discerner*.

Also, I want to give a shout out to all those who recently gathered (October 7–9) for the 2016 Witness Now for Jesus Convention in New Ringold Pennsylvania, originally organized by Bill and Joan Cetnar. This is an annual convention dedicated to ministering to ex-Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also attending are many counter-cult ministries from across the country that specialize in critiquing the false teachings of the Watchtower and witnessing to Jehovah’s Witnesses with the truth of the gospel. How wonderful it is to meet so many that had been formerly trapped in the Watchtower cult, but who have now found freedom in Christ!

As always, we welcome your comments and questions. Our ministry of Biblical Truth could not be possible without your generous support!

Thank you and God bless,

Steve Lagoon

President of Religion Analysis Service

IN THE NEWS

Ancient Manuscript Confirms Accuracy of the Bible

Some of the most sophisticated new technology is being used to confirm the accuracy of some of our oldest biblical texts. In fact, a recent article has confirmed the accuracy of a 2000 year old copy of the Old Testament book of Leviticus as reported by Daniel Estrin, *Scanning Software Deciphers Ancient Biblical Scroll*, Associated Press, at this web address: (<https://goo.gl/VQtzYq>) . Estrin's article stated:

The charred lump of a 2,000-year-old scroll sat in an Israeli archaeologist's storeroom for decades, too brittle to open. Now, new imaging technology has revealed what was written inside: the earliest evidence of a biblical text in its standardized form . . . The discovery, announced in a *Science Advances Journal* article by researchers in Kentucky and Jerusalem on Wednesday, was made using "virtual unwrapping," a 3D digital analysis of an X-ray scan. Researchers say it is the first time they have been able to read the text of an ancient scroll without having to physically open it.

The article describes some of the implications of this work:

Scholars have believed the Hebrew Bible in its standard form first came about some 2,000 years ago, but never had physical proof, until now . . . The text discovered in the charred Ein Gedi scroll is "100 percent identical" to the version of the Book of Leviticus that has been in use for centuries, said Dead Sea Scroll scholar Emmanuel Tov from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, who participated in the study. "This is quite amazing for us," he said. "In 2,000 years, this text has not changed."

So despite the attacks on the Bible by liberals and skeptics, Christians can take great encouragement by this amazing confirmation regarding the reliability of the Bible we hold in our hands and the life-giving message it contains!

Old Sharks and Genesis

There was an interesting report in August about "the oldest living vertebrate" (Rachel Feltman, *Age-old Terror of the Deep: Shark Lives*

for *Centuries*, Washington Post, as published in the Minneapolis Star Tribune, August, 12, 2016, front page).

The article discusses a “local [Greenland] shark species—*Somniosus microcephalus* . . . nearly the same size as the Great White when fully grown.” What is noteworthy to Discerner readers are estimates of the age of this creature: “Bushnell and his colleagues report that the species actually has the longest life span of any vertebrate on the planet . . . They can say with 95 percent certainty that the oldest shark was between 272 and 512 years old, but they suspect it lived to be about 390.”

Bible believers are often ridiculed for accepting the very old ages ascribed to antediluvian men in the Bible (i.e. Genesis 5:1-32), with the prime example of Methuseleh who lived 969 years. If we have good evidence of a shark species that—even today—lives between 300–500 years, why is it so fantastic or difficult to believe that at the beginning (with more ideal conditions) men could live up to 900 years?

Tough Times for Prosperity Teachers in Africa

A recent article in *The Economist* magazine caught my attention (Religion in Zimbabwe, Tithing Troubles: Harare, Even the most popular preachers of prosperity are facing tougher times, *The Economist*, August 27, 2016, p. 35).

This article describes the challenges prosperity gospel preachers are having during difficult economic times in the African country. Undeterred, “Apostle Rodney Chipoyera, the pastor of Prosperity Ministries . . . tells his congregants, who sit in broken chairs wearing their Sunday best” that although “the country may be bust, but if you stop tithing . . . you will be cursed . . . You keep the tithe, the curse is initiated.”

Additionally, “One church has been accused of seizing property and equipment from members who have failed to pay their tithes.”

Mr. Chipoyera is not at all humble about his purposes: “Strutting across the stage, Mr. Chipoyera is at pains to defend his shiny car and fashionable clothes. Nobody wants their pastor to look poor, he declares with a laugh.”

The article further describes what this attitude leads to: “Some of the more enterprising priests sell miracles. Blessed ballpoint pens help you pass exams. Miracle bricks will help you acquire your own home.”

We are reminded of Jesus' cleansing of the temple: "It is written,' he said to them, 'My house will be called a house of prayer,' but you are making it a den of robbers"(Matthew 21:13). "Get these out of here! How dare you turn my Father's house into a market!"(John 2:16).

And finally the following news item by Don and Joy Veinot is reprinted from their *Midwest Christian Outreach* newsletter with permission.

Things that Make Me Go, "Duh"

A friend recently sent me a link to an article in the Daily Caller titled, America's Most Popular Pastor Doesn't Know The Bible. When I click the link, "pastor," it is none other than the infamous, "Joel Osteen." All I could say was, "Duh." Mega-church pastor Joel Osteen may lead the largest Protestant church in the United States, but a recent Facebook post shows he might need to go back to Sunday school.

A Monday post to his verified Facebook page, Joel Osteen Ministries, read: "God said in Numbers 11:23, 'Moses, is there any limit to My power?' He was saying, 'Moses, you saw Me part the Red Sea, stop the sun for Joshua, keep three Hebrew teenagers safe in a fiery furnace, don't you realize that I can bring water without rain?' There's no limit to God's power."

There's just one problem: According to the Bible, Moses was dead before Joshua asked God to stop the setting of the sun, and long before the three Hebrew youths were burned in the furnace.

Yes there is that one pesky little problem. It is fortunate that the Daily Caller is willing to expose this for what it is, spiritual fraud. Many of us in discernment ministries have known for a long time that Joel Osteen lacks theological training and adequate biblical knowledge. So, you may feel good listening to him, but it isn't likely to advance your biblical knowledge.

22 BIBLICAL REASON WHY I CANNOT ACCEPT SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISM AS A CHRISTIAN DENOMINATION

by Bary Claud Gaudrealt

The following documented information is given in order to expose the false teachings of the Seventh-day Adventists (hereafter SDA) in light of what the Scriptures clearly teach. The majority of SDA quotes are taken from their book entitled, *Seventh-day Adventist Believe*, 27. Hagerstown, Maryland: Review and Herald Publishing Association. 1988. Other SDA quotations are clearly noted in the text. All Biblical quotations are taken from the New King James Translation unless otherwise stated.

1. THE LAST DAY PROPHET?

SDA. Adventists declare that Ellen G. White is the last day's prophetess. "One of the gifts of the Holy Spirit is prophecy. This gift is an identifying mark of the remnant church and was manifested in the ministry of Ellen G. White. As the Lord's messenger." *SDA Believe*, p. 216.

BIBLE. The Bible reveals that Christ is the last day's prophet. "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He appointed heir of all things, through whom, also He made the worlds" (Heb 1:1-2).

2. INSPIRED WRITINGS?

SDA. Ellen White declared her writings to be the very words of God:

Yet now when I send to you a testimony of warning and reproof, many of you declare it to be merely the opinion of sister White, You have thereby insulted the Spirit of God. You know how the Lord has manifested himself through the Spirit of prophecy. ... I am presenting to you that which the Lord has presented to me. *I do not write one article in the paper, expressing merely my own ideas. They are what God has penned before me in vision-the precious rays of light shining from the throne.*" (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages*, Book One. Washington D. C.: Review and Herald Association, 1958, p. 27).

BIBLE. The Bible alone is the complete inspired word of God. “You shall not add to the word which I have commanded you, not take anything from it, that you may keep the commandments of the LORD your God which I commanded you” (Deut 4:2).” Every word of God is pure; who put their trust in Him. Do not add to His words, Lest He reprove you, and you be found a liar” (Prov 30:5–6). “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit” (2 Pet 1:20–21).

3. FALSE PROPHECY

SDA. This is one of several false prophecies that Ellen White had predicted. “At the conference a very solemn vision was given to me. I saw that some of those present would be food for worms, some subject for the seven last plagues, and some would be translated to heaven at the second coming of CHRIST, without seeing death.” Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts*, Vol 2. Nampa Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 2005. p. 208. (Of course, it is now more than 100 years since this prophetic utterance was made by Ellen White).

BIBLE. It takes only one false prophecy to make you a false prophet. “... when a prophet speaks in the name of the LORD, if the thing does not happen or come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD has not spoken; the prophet has spoken it presumptuously; you shall not be afraid of him” (Deut 18:22).

4. REGARDING THE NATURE OF GOD, DOES GOD THE FATHER HAVE A SPIRIT BODY?

SDA. Adventist’s endorse the teaching that God the Father has a spirit body. “Christ is described as ‘the image of the invisible God’ (Col. 1:15) and ‘the express image of His person’ (Heb.1:3). These passages seem to indicate that *God is a personal being and has personal form*. It should come to no surprise, for man was created in the image of God. ” (*SDA Believe*, p. 85).

BIBLE. God is an omnipresent Spirit, therefore He has no body or physical form. “Take careful heed to yourselves for you saw *no form* when the LORD spoke to you at Horeb out of the midst of the fire, lest you act corruptly and make for yourselves a carved image in the form of any figure: the likeness of male or female” (Deut 4:15–16). “Where can I go from Your Spirit? Or where can I flee from Your presence?”

(Ps 139:7). “But will God indeed dwell on earth? Behold, heaven and the heaven of heavens cannot contain You. How much less this temple which I have built?” (1 Kings 8:27).” Am I a God near at hand, says the LORD, And not a God a far off? Can anyone hide himself in secret places, so I cannot see him? Says the LORD; Do I not fill heaven and earth? Says the LORD” (Jeremiah 23:23–24).

5. CHRIST AS MICHAEL THE ARCHANGEL?

SDA. Adventist’s, without question, teach that Christ and Michael the archangel are one and the same being. “Other commentaries set forth three main arguments for holding that Michael is simply another name for Christ: (1) the statement in Jude 9,” (2) the voice of Christ is the voice of the archangel (1 Thess. 4:16), (3) Michael is called a prince (Dan. 12:1) even as Christ is (Isa. 9:6,7; Eze. 37:25, Dan. 8:25,9:25, Acts 5:30,31) (F.H. Berick, *The Lord soon to come* (1854), pp.137–38). Most Seventh-Day Adventists have held that Michael is Christ. On the basis of these and other passages of Scripture, Seventh-Day Adventists conclude that Michael is none other than Christ.” (*Seventh-Day Adventist Encyclopedia, Vol. 11*, Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association 1996, p.61).

BIBLE. If Christ is Michael the archangel then the following scriptures would make no sense. “But when He again brings the firstborn into the world, He says, ‘Let all the angels of God worship Him (Heb 1:6).’” Why would God say let all the angels worship Him (Christ) if Jesus was merely an angel rather than the divine Son of God? “Let no one defraud you of your reward, taking delight in false humility and worship of angels, intruding into the things which he has not seen , vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind” (Col 2:18). Christ was worshipped and accepted worship. “Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. And when they saw Him, they worshipped Him; but some doubted” (Matt 28:16-17). “Jesus had heard that they had cast him out; and when He had found Him, He said to him, “Do you believe in the Son of God?” He answered and said, “Who is He, Lord, that I may believe in Him?” And Jesus said to him “You have both seen Him and it is He who is talking with you.” Then he said, “Lord, I believe,” and he worshipped Him” (John 9:35–38).

6. CHRIST ‘S NATURE

SDA . Adventists clearly teach that Christ had a sinful or fallen nature: “He took the nature of man in its fallen state, bearing the consequences of sin, not its sinfulness.” (*SDA Believe*, p.49).

BIBLE. The Scriptures clearly teach that Christ was sinless and did not have a fallen sinful nature. “For such a High Priest was fitted for us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners, and has become higher than the heavens” (Heb 7:26). “But with the precious blood of Christ, as a lamb without blemish and without spot” (1 Peter 1:19).

7. WILL CHRIST EVER CEASE TO BE MEDIATOR?

SDA. White clearly taught that Christ will one day cease to be mediator. “Those who are living upon the earth when the intercession of Christ shall cease in the sanctuary above are to stand in sight of a holy God without a sprinkling. Through the grace of God and their own diligent effort they must become conquerors in the battle with evil.” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*. Nampa, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005, p. 425).

BIBLE. Scriptures teach that Christ never ceases to be mediator for His saints. “Therefore He is also able to save to the uttermost those who come to God through Him, since He ever lives to make intercession for them” (Heb 7:25). “For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Jesus Christ” (1 Tim 2:5).

8. RECORDING ANGELS

SDA. Like Muslims, Adventists believe in “recording angels” who record all men’s good and bad deeds by which they will be judged before God’s tribunal. “Every man’s work passes in review of God and is registered for faithfulness or unfaithfulness. Opposite each name in the books of heaven is entered with terrible exactness every wrong word, every selfish act, every unfulfilled duty, and every secret sin, with every artful dissembling. Heaven-sent warnings or reproofs neglected, wasted moments, unimproved opportunities, the influence exerted for good or for evil, with its far reaching results, all are chronicled by the recording angel.” (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Nampa Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 2005, p. 482)

BIBLE. God knows all things, and therefore, there is no need for a recording angel. “Search me, O GOD, know my heart; Try me, and know my anxieties” (Ps 139:23–24). “I the LORD search the heart, I test the mind, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of His doings” (Jeremiah 17:10).

9. SALVATION BY WORKS?

SDA. Adventists believe that salvation comes by being obedient to the Commandments. "He acknowledged: 'to become a seventh-day Sabbatarian is the only consistent course of action for anyone who holds that the whole Decalogue is binding as moral law.'" *SDA Believe*, p. 258. "Just so today, He intends to lead His people into His visible church, characterized by loyalty to God's commandments and possessing the faith of Jesus, so they may participate in finishing His mission on earth." (*SDA Believe* p. 142).

BIBLE. The Bible teaches that men are saved by grace, God's free gift of salvation. Keeping the commandments (good works) does not save the sinner. Rather, salvation is a free gift of God. "For the wages of sin is death but the gift of God is eternal life in Jesus Christ our Lord" (Rom 6:23). "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast" (Eph 2:8-9). "Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, through the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit" (Titus 3:5). "How much more shall the blood of Christ who through the eternal Spirit offer Himself without spot to God, purge your conscience from dead works to serve the living God" (Heb 9:14).

10. IS THE ATONEMENT COMPLETE?

SDA. Adventists teach that Christ's atonement is not yet complete. "*The blood of Christ*, while it was to release the repentant sinner from the condemnation of the law, *was not to cancel sin....*It will stand in the sanctuary until the final atonement." (Ellen G. White, *Patriarchs and Prophets*, p. 357, emphasis added). "Now while our great High Priest *is making the atonement for us*, we should seek to become perfect in Christ." (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, p. 623 emphasis added). "instead of coming to the earth at the termination of the 2300 days in 1844, Christ then entered the most holy place of the heavenly sanctuary to perform the closing work of atonement preparatory to His coming" (Ellen G. White, *The Great Controversy*, Nampa Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association, 2005, p. 422, emphasis added).

BIBLE. The Bible teaches that the atonement happened and was competed by Christ on the cross was and is applied to the repentant sinner. "But God demonstrates His love towards us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. Much more then *having now been justified by His blood* we shall be saved from wrath through Him" (Rom 5:9-10). "And not only so, but we also have joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom we now *have received the*

atonement" (Rom 5:11, KJV). "Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree, that we having died to sins might live for righteousness—by whose stripes you were healed" (1 Pet 2:24). When Christ said it is finished, the atonement was finished! "So when Jesus received the sour wine, He said, "It is finished!" And bowing His head He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30).

11. THE SABBATH

SDA. Adventists believe that the Sabbath is a sign of being born again.

"Moreover also I gave them my Sabbaths, to be a SIGN between ME and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them"(Ezek. 20:12). It is a sign that men and women have been converted—a sign that men and women have been recreated. When a man takes the Sabbath, he enters into rest. He has rest and peace in his soul. He has the spirit of heaven in his heart. Dear friend, God has given the Sabbath a sign that man is born again, that he is redeemed, that he is being sanctified , and that he has entered fully into Christ's rest, the EMBLEM OF LIBERTY, LOYALTY AND LOVE. (L.E. Tucker, *The Lord's Day- Saturday or Sunday? Search for Truth.* Redlands, California. pp. 14–15).

BIBLE. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it" (Rom 14:5-6). It should be noted that in the beginning, the early church met on the first day of the week, being Sunday. "Now on the first day of the week, when the disciples came together to break bread, Paul, ready to depart the next day, spoke to them and continued his message until midnight" (Acts 20:7). And again, "On the first day of the week let each one of you lay something aside, storing up as he may prosper, that there be no collection when I come" (1 Corinthian 16:2).

12. WERE THE SINS OF THE WORLD PLACED ON SATAN OR ON CHRIST?

SDA. Adventist's distinctly teach that the sins of the world were placed by Christ on Satan. "Similarly, Christ, in the heavenly sanctuary, has been ministering the benefits of His completed atonement to His people; at His return He will redeem them and give them eternal life. When he has completed this work of redemption and the cleansing of the heavenly sanctuary, He will place the sins

of His people upon Satan, the originator of evil.” (*SDA Believe* p. 365–66)

BIBLE. Christ alone bore the iniquities of the repentant sinner and carries their sins away. “He shall see the travail of His soul, and be satisfied. By His knowledge My righteous Servant shall justify many, for He shall bear their iniquities” (Isa 53:11). “The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, ‘Behold the lamb of God who takes away the sins of the world!’” (John 1:29). “Who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree ” (1 Peter 2:24).

13. NATURE OF MAN

SDA. “The Bible portrays a person as an organic unity. At times it uses the word soul to refer to the whole person, and at other times to the affections and emotions. But it does not teach that a man comprises two separate parts. Body and soul only exist together; they form an indivisible union.” (*SDA Believe*, p. 352)

BIBLE. Men and women are scripturally composed of both a physical and a spiritual nature (material and immaterial), and the soul of man survives the death of the body (Luke 16:19-31; 2 Corinthians 5:8). “Now may the God of peace sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23). “For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart” (Heb 4:12).

14. CAN BELIEVERS ACHIEVE SINLESSNESS WHILE ON EARTH?

SDA. Adventists believe that Christians can reach a state of sinlessness on earth by keeping the commandments of God. “Those only who through faith in Christ obey all of God’s commandments will reach the condition of sinlessness in which Adam lived before his transgression” (*Seventh-day Adventist Bible Commentary*, vol. 6, The Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1980, p. 1118)

BIBLE. Scripture teaches that men will not be perfect until the believer is changed at the rapture of the church. “Behold I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in a twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trump will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed. For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality” (1 Corinthians 15:51–53).

15. HELL AND THE COMMON GRAVE ARE THEY THE SAME?

SDA. Adventist's teach that the grave and sheol/hades are one and the same thing.

The Old Testament calls the place where people go at death sheol (Hebrew), and the New Testament hades (Greek). In the Scripture sheol most often simply means the grave. The meaning of hades is similar to that of sheol. All the dead go into this place (Ps 89:48), both the righteous and the wicked. Jacob said, "I shall go down into the grave [sheol]" (Gen 37:35). When the earth opened "its mouth" to swallow the wicked Korah and his company, they went "down alive into the pit (sheol)" . . . The grave is not a place of consciousness. Since death is a sleep, the dead will remain in a state of unconsciousness in the grave until the resurrection, when the grave (hades) gives up its dead. Rev 20:13." (*SDA Believe*, p. 353) .

BIBLE. The Bible makes a clear distinction between the grave and Sheol/Hades. "For You shall not leave my soul in Sheol [the spirit world], nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption [the grave]" (Psalm 16:10). "Then death [regarding the grave] and hades [regarding the spirit world, where unbelievers are held] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death" (Rev 20:14).

16. THE PRESENT STATE OF THE DEAD

SDA. Adventist's state that since body and soul are indivisibly united that when the body "dies" and appears to be in a state of unconsciousness sleep the soul also "dies" and goes into a state of sleep. "Death is not complete annihilation; it is only a state of temporary unconsciousness while the person awaits the resurrection. The Bible repeatedly calls this intermediate state sleep." (*SDA Believe*, p. 352).

BIBLE. The scriptures plainly teach that at the time of death the unbeliever's soul goes to a literal place called hell, and heaven for the believer. "So it was that the beggar [the believer] died and was carried by angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man [the non-believer] also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke 16:22-23). "We are confident, yes, well pleased rather to be absent from the body and to be present with the Lord" (2 Corinthians 5:8). "For I am hard pressed between the two, having a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is far better. Never-

the-less to remain in the flesh is more needful for you” (Philippians 1:23–24).

17. WAS THE TRUE CHURCH AND ITS BELIEFS RESTORED BY THE SEVENTH-DAY ADVENTISTS?

SDA.

Christ’s church today is a spiritual body made up of all who accept Him as Savior and Lord. Though many denominations exist, Adventist’s believe that Christ’s true followers-His body-may be found scattered among all these organizations. ... Although we Adventists do not see ourselves better than any other true Christians we do believe that—in fulfillment of Bible prophecy—God has called the Adventists into existence just before the second coming of Christ to help restore certain Bible truths that have been lost sight of. We believe that God has asked us to proclaim a special message to the world and other Christians which will produce a faithful remnant of the church to meet Christ when He comes. (Ken McFarland, *Let’s Get Acquainted*, Boise, Idaho: Pacific Press Publishing Association. 1987. pp. 15–16.)

Bible. On the essential doctrines of the faith all Christians are united. The doctrines from which the church taught from the times of the church’s conception are still taught today. There is no doctrine which has been lost and then restored by the Seventh-day Adventist Church. The Scriptures state, “And they continued steadfastly in the apostles doctrine and fellowship, in breaking of bread, and in prayers” (Acts 2:42). And again the Scriptures state, “There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all and in you all” (Eph 4:4–6). The Church and its teachings were never lost then restored to the earth through the Seventh-day Adventist Church. “And I also say unto you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build My church and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it” (Matt 16:18). “To Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus through all ages, world without end. Amen” (Eph 3:21).

18. THE MARK OF THE BEAST

SDA. “The final issue involves true and false worship, the true and false gospel. When this issue is clearly brought before the world, those who reject God’s memorial of creatorship—the Bible Sabbath—choosing to worship and honor Sunday in the full knowledge that

it is not God's appointed day of worship, will receive the 'mark of the beast.' This mark is a mark of rebellion; the beast claims its change of the day of worship shows its authority even over God's law." (*SDA Believe*, p. 167).

BIBLE. (Mark of the beast Unknown) The number of the beast is 666 (Rev 13:18).

19. THE JUDGMENT FOR SINS, WHEN?

SDA. "In 1844, our great High Priest entered the most holy place of the sanctuary, to begin the work of investigative judgment. The cases of the righteous dead have been passing in review before God. When that work shall be completed, judgment is to be pronounced upon the living. How precious, how important are these solemn moments! Each of us has a case pending in the court of heaven. We are individually to be judged according to the deeds done in the body." (Ellen G. White, *Selected Messages, Book One*. Washington D.C.: Review and Herald Publishing Association.1958. p. 125).

BIBLE. The judgment regarding the repentant sinner happened when Christ died upon the cross for the sins of the world. And you, being dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He has made alive together with Him, having forgiven you all your trespasses, having wiped out the hand written requirements that was against us, which was contrary to us. And having taken it out of the way, having nailed it to the cross. Having disarmed principalities and powers, He made a public spectacle out of them, triumphing over them in it" (Col 2:13-15).

20. FINAL STATE OF THE WICKED

SDA. The fate of the wicked is an unconscious cessation of life. "According to the Scriptures, God promises eternal life only to the righteous. The wages of sin is death, not eternal life in hell. The Scriptures teach that the wicked will be "cut off" (Ps 37:9, 34); that they will perish (Ps.37:9; 68:2) they will not live in a state of consciousness forever, but will be burned up." (*SDA Believe*, p. 370).

BIBLE. How can the unrepentant sinner, whose destiny is hell, be held in everlasting contempt if he ceases to exist at the time of one's physical/spiritual death like the Adventist's teach? "And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, some to shame, and everlasting contempt" (Daniel 12:2). How can one be eternally punished if one ceases to exist, like

the Adventist's teach? "And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matt 25:46).

21. STRANGE DOCTRINES (AMALGAMATION OF MAN AND BEAST)

SDA. "Every species of animal which 'God had created were preserved in the ark. The confused species which God did not create, which were the result of amalgamation, were destroyed by the flood. Since the flood we have seen amalgamation of man and beast, as may be seen in the almost endless varieties of animals, and in certain races of men." (Ellen G. White, *Spiritual Gifts* (Vol 3). Hagerstown: Review and Herald Publishing Association, 1945, p.75).

BIBLE. "Do not be carried about with various and strange doctrines" (Heb 13:9). "But even if we or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel to you than what we have preached to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone preaches any other gospel to you than what you have received, let him be accursed" (Gal 1:8-9).

22. VEGETARIAN LEGALISM

SDA. "Today's health problems tend to center on the degenerative type of diseases that are directly traceable to diet and lifestyle. The diet God planned, consisting of grains, fruits, nuts, and vegetables, offers the right nutritional ingredients to support optimum health . . . Furthermore, studies conducted in recent years indicated that increased meat consumption can cause an increase of atherosclerosis, cancer, kidney disorders, osteoporosis, and trichinosis, and can decrease the life expectancy." (*SDA Believe*, p. 284, 285).

BIBLE. "Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to dispute over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but one who is weak eats only vegetables" (Rom 14:1-2). "Therefore let no one judge you in food or in drink, or regarding a festival or a new moon or Sabbaths" (Col 2:16).

CONCLUSION

Based upon the previously documented information we can see a clear departure from what the Scriptures teach. Every point stated regarding the nature of the Godhead to the nature of humanity, sin, salvation, the church and last things have been distorted. Is Seventh-day Adventism the restored remnant Church of Christ in these last days? My answer in plainly no!

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, WAR, AND NEUTRALITY, PART 4

by Steve Lagoon

The Example of Daniel and His Hebrew Friends

On the first question regarding a believer's service to a secular government, let us note the response of Raymond Franz:

This is difficult to harmonize with the attitude of Daniel and his three companions during the political rule of the Babylonian and Medo-Persian empires. Not only did Daniel accept appointment to a high position in the Babylonian political structure, he actually requested administrative positions for his three friends [Daniel 2:48, 49; 5:29]. This was not some display of a lack of integrity, for they proved themselves willing to face death rather than to be disloyal to God. (Daniel 3:8-18).¹

The Watchtower's response to these biblical facts amounts to a verbal sleight of hand trick, in which it acknowledges the facts, but diverts attention to a secondary and irrelevant point, leaving the main point simply ignored:

During the Babylonian exile, Daniel and three other faithful Jews who were captives in slavery to Babylon submitted to State training and became high-ranking civil servants in Babylonia (Daniel 1:3-7, 2:48-49). However, even during the training, they took a firm position on dietary matters that could have led them to break the law that their God, Jehovah, had provided through Moses. For this they were blessed. (Daniel 1:8-17). When King Nebuchadnezzar set up a State image, Daniel's three Hebrew companions apparently were compelled to attend the ceremony with their fellow State administrators. Nevertheless, they refused to 'fall down and worship the State idol. Again, Jehovah rewarded their integrity. (Daniel 3:1-6, 13-28).

Similarly today, Jehovah's Witnesses respect the flag of the nation in which they live, but they will not perform an act of worship toward it. After the fall of the Neo-Babylonian dynasty, Daniel was given a high-ranking governmental post under the new Medo-Persian regime that replaced it in Babylon (Daniel 5:30, 31; 6:1-3). But he did not allow his high position to lead him into compromising his integrity. When a State law required

¹ Franz, *In Search of Christian Freedom*, 272-273.

that he worship King Darius rather than Jehovah, he refused. For this he was thrown to the lions, but Jehovah delivered him. (Daniel 6:4-24).²

The Watchtower concedes here that Daniel and his Hebrew friends held high ranking governmental positions in a secular government, but then diverts attention to other irrelevant issues like their refusal to eat the Babylonian diet, or praising them for not compromising. And yet, the very act of serving in a governmental position itself would be just such a compromise if the Watchtower view were the correct one.

The article then offers what can only be considered a weak argument in attempt to avoid the serious biblical evidence against their neutrality position:

Of course, this was in pre-Christian times. Once the Christian congregation was established, God's servants came 'under the law toward Christ. Many things that were permitted under the Jewish system were to be viewed differently, based on the way in which Jehovah was now dealing with his people.³

There are serious problems with this explanation. First, it would suggest that God approved of His people compromising during Old Testament times. After all, Daniel, Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego were all in the service of the very government that had destroyed the Jewish theocratic nation and taken all the Jews into captivity.

Nor can the irony be missed that Jehovah's Witnesses are expected to go to prison or die rather than compromise on the Watchtower neutrality stand, yet Daniel and his friends are essentially working for the enemy of Jehovah's people, and yet they are praised?

Further, we should remember the Watchtower claim that the New Testament Church under the apostles held to a complete position of neutrality. It is difficult to accept the Watchtower premise, therefore, that God accepted government service for Daniel and his friends in the Old Testament, but changed His expectation for the apostolic church period by requiring strict neutrality. But then from the founding of the Watchtower in 1879 until 1915, Christians were allowed to serve in non-combatant roles or alternative service. Finally, in 1915, Jehovah returned to His former expectation for his people requiring total neutrality.

² *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1996, p. 11.

³ *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1996, p. 11-12.

Either Jehovah's new light is blinking or this is a clear indication that the Watchtower is led by fallible men and not by Jehovah God.

Did Jesus and the Apostles Teach Neutrality?

Since the Watchtower argues that with the coming of Christ and His church, God now calls for complete neutrality, let us examine the New Testament Scriptures to see if that is really the case.

John the Baptist was preaching a message of repentance and a turning back to the Lord in preparation for His coming. People were responding and asking what they should do:

Even tax collectors came to be baptized. 'Teacher,' they asked, 'what should we do?' 'Don't collect any more than you are required to,' he told them. Then some soldiers asked him, 'And what should we do?' He replied, 'Don't extort money and don't accuse people falsely—be content with your pay' (Luke 3:12-14).

Now if the Watchtower's view of neutrality was biblical, John the Baptist would have called for the tax collectors to immediately quit their jobs since they were engaged in work for the Roman government. Likewise, he would have compelled the soldiers to resign from the military since that also was working for the government and a violation of neutrality.

The fact that both the tax collectors and the soldiers were advised to continue their jobs, but no longer extort the people and to be content with their pay respectively suggests that there was nothing intrinsically unethical about their government positions, at least, in the view of John the Baptist.

Other Roman soldiers came to Jesus and while commending them for their faith and righteousness, He never commanded them to leave their occupations, nor even hint that they should (Matthew 8:5-13).

Soldiers in the Church Age

This positive characterization of soldiers continues into the apostolic or Church age. Consider several examples in the Book of Acts:

At Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, a centurion in what was known as the Italian Regiment. He and all his family were devout and God-fearing; he gave generously to those in need and prayed to God regularly (Acts 10:1-2).

Rather than punishing Cornelius for violating a supposed neutrality, God is so pleased with this soldier that He sends an angel to him in answer to his prayers, and reveals to him that he must meet the apostle Peter. If that were not enough, along for the meeting with Peter, Cornelius was accompanied by another ‘devout soldier’ (Acts 10:7). And it is this group on which the Holy Spirit falls and who are baptized into the Christian Church (Acts 10:44-48).

Later in Acts, we arrive at the wonderful account of the conversion of the Philippian jailer. The jailer, of course working for the government, asked Paul specifically what he must do to be saved. There is no suggestion that he must leave his profession. Rather he is to believe in the Lord Jesus and be saved (Acts 16:24-34). Again, there is no suggestion of divine displeasure regarding his occupation nor any hint that he planned to leave his job. Indeed, it is most likely that this Jailer was part of the core group that made up the Philippian Church that Paul wrote to in his Epistle to the Philippians.

Romans 13 and the Sword

Romans 13:1-7 represents the apostle Paul’s teachings on the relationship of Christians to their government. Paul uses the imagery of the sword to represent the authority of government (verse 4). Governments are instituted by God to provide stability to society, punishing wrong doers and protecting law-abiding citizens.

Because governmental officials are acting in behalf of God, Paul actually calls them “God’s servants” (verse 4). It is difficult to understand how Jehovah’s Witnesses can condemn service to one’s government when God explicitly calls such ones His servants.

Further, the Watchtower teachings on Romans 13 are inconsistent since they obey one aspect of supporting the government by the paying of taxes (verses 6-7), while at the same time denigrating the service to the government that Paul so clearly and positively portrays.

Other Swords

While on the subject of swords, it is a good time to comment on a biblical passage that many who are opposed to war erroneously quote to condemn military action.

Following the last supper, at the time Judas was betraying Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane, Peter drew his sword to defend Jesus: “Put your sword back in its place,” Jesus said to him, ‘for all who draw

the sword will die by the sword”(Matthew 26:52). The Watchtower comment on this passage is:

Obedience to Jesus. The apostle Peter was told by Jesus: ‘Return your sword to its place, for all those who take the sword will perish by the sword.’ (Matthew 26:52) Jesus thus showed that his followers would not take up weapons of warfare.⁴

The Watchtower comment is clearly wrong. That this was not meant as a blanket condemnation of the use of the sword, either in self-defense or for military or police purposes is clear in that just a short time before this, Jesus actually instructed the disciples to keep a sword on hand: “He said to them, But now if you have a purse, take it, and also a bag; and if you don’t have a sword, sell your cloak and buy one . . . The disciples said, ‘See, Lord, here are two swords,’ ‘That is enough, he replied”(Luke 22:36).

Lorraine Boettner commented on Matthew 26:52 are interesting:

Jesus’ rebuke to Peter was not a command to destroy the sword, nor to throw it away, but simply, ‘Put up the sword into the sheath’(John 18:11), implying that while this was not the proper time or place to use it since He proposes to make a voluntary surrender, there would, nevertheless, be appropriate occasions for its future use. And the further admonition, ‘All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword,’ expresses a truth which has been proved over and over again in everyday life,- -those who rely on the sword above everything else, those who put their *trust* in the sword instead of putting it in God, inevitably perish. The gangster who puts his trust in the pistol perishes by the pistol.⁵

It seems fair to say that included in Jesus’ comment was the idea that vigilante justice was not appropriate. That rather than to take matters into our own hands through the use of force, we should instead turn to those who have legitimate authority since they bear the sword at God’s command.

Jesus and the Ethic of Love

In this section, we will consider some of the statements of Jesus that have been used by those who oppose Christian involvement in war. For instance, some wonder how the just war theory squares

⁴ JW.org, About Us. <https://www.jw.org/en/jehovahs-witnesses/faq/why-dont-you-go-to-war/>, 2015.

⁵ Lorraine Boettner, *The Christian Attitude Toward War*, Second Revised World War II Edition, Grand Rapids MI (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1942) 34.

with Jesus' command to "love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Matthew 5:44).

The great theologian and author Francis Schaeffer called love the *final apologetic*. It was a powerful reminder to Christians of the power of love, particularly the love of God flowing through the lives of believers. Early observers noted the love Christians had for each other and it was this Christian love that was the impetus for the amazing growth of the Christian Church in the first centuries following Christ, and throughout its history.

There is no question that the teachings of the New Testament call for Christians to conquer evil with good and hate with love. The apostle Paul echoed Jesus' teaching: "Do not repay anyone evil for evil . . . As far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my friends, but leave room for God's wrath . . . Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good"(Romans 12:17-19).

And so on an *individual* basis, Christians willingly die to themselves out of concern for the lost. We can set aside our rights and our pride and choose to love those that have not treated us well. In doing so, we are following the pattern of Christ who gave himself a ransom for many (Mark 10:45).

But these truths do not prevent us from the use of self-defense when our lives or the lives of our loved ones are threatened. Indeed, we shall see that the Watchtower strongly agrees in the right of self-defense, and such is not inconsistent with having a loving attitude for the lost.

Likewise, Christians seek to love all the world's people, sending missionaries to aid them with their physical needs, but more importantly helping them to hear the good news of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, if a foreign nation acts aggressively toward our own nation, there is nothing wrong with helping to defend one's nation in a time of war in keeping with the principles of the just war.

Matthew 5:39

Matthew 5:39 records Jesus' statement: "But I tell you, do not resist an evil person. If anyone slaps you on the right cheek, turn to them the other cheek also." William Barclay comments are helpful:

He [Jesus] says that if anyone smites us on the right cheek we must turn to him the other cheek also. There is far more here than meets the eye, far more than a mere matter of blows on

the face . . . Now according to Jewish Rabbinic law to hit a man with a the back of the hand was twice as insulting as to hit him with the flat of the hand. . . . So, then, what Jesus is saying is this: 'Even if a man should direct at you the most deadly and calculated insult, you must not no account resent it' . . . But time and time again life brings to us insults either great or small; and Jesus is saying that the true Christian has learned to resent no insult and to seek no retaliation.⁶

The Watchtower itself agrees with this interpretation:

But what if someone tries to pick a fight with you? He may try to get you angry by calling you names. He may laugh at you and say that you're scared. Maybe he calls you a sissy. What should you do? Should you let yourself be drawn into a fight?—Again, let's see what the Bible says. Turn to Matthew chapter five and verse thirty-nine. There Jesus says: 'Do not resist him that is wicked; but who ever slaps you on your right cheek, turn the other also to him.' What did Jesus mean by that? Did he mean that if someone hits you with his fist on one side of your face, you should let him hit you on the other side?—No, he did not meant that. A slap is not like a hit with the fist. It is more like a push or shove. A person does this to pick a fight . . . If trouble starts, the best thing is to walk away . . . It shows that you are strong for what is right.⁷

In other words, Jesus is talking about a situation in which someone is provoking us to a fight as individuals, and in that case the Christian is to endure the insult rather than to be drawn into a conflict. That the Watchtower is not against the use of force or pacifist is made clear by this comment on Matthew 5:39:

Here Jesus was not teaching pacifism or denying the right to self-defense from bodily harm, but he was teaching that a Christian does not need to pay back blow for blow, retaliating, taking vengeance . . . A slap on the cheek is not intended to injure physically but only to insult or to provoke into a fight. Jesus did not say that if someone strikes a Christian in the Jaw, he should get up off the floor and hold the other side of his face for a target.⁸

The Principle of Self-Defense

6 William Barclay, *The Gospel of Matthew*, Volume 1, Philadelphia PA (The Westminster Press, 1956) 164.

7 *Listening to the Great Teacher*, Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1971) 132-133.

8 *Insight On the Scriptures*, Volume 1, Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1988) 429.

So the Watchtower is not pacifist or opposed to the use of force, but only against the use of force in behalf of one nation against another which violates their belief on neutrality. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the same reasoning that is used to justify self-defense are essentially the same ones that justify a government defending its people in a time of war.

The September 8, 1975 *Watchtower* contains an article entitled “Should You Defend Yourself?” which contains a detailed presentation arguing for the right of self-defense. “It concludes: From the foregoing it is evident that the Scriptures give a person the right to defend himself or others against bodily harm.”⁹

Watchtower Self-Defense in Action

Since Jehovah’s Witnesses have faced opposition and persecution so much in their brief history, their teachings about self-defense are not just theory. In fact, the book *Religion* authored by Watchtower President Judge Rutherford, relates a most interesting account of the theory in action:

Do the Scriptures approve of a Christian’s defending himself against an unlawful assault and using force to repel such assault? Self-defense is the right of every man to ward off an attack and to use such force as to him appears to be necessary to safeguard himself from personal injury or injury to his property. The same right of self-defense may be exercised by him for the protection of his near relations or close friends, his brethren.¹⁰

After stating the position, the Watchtower book proceeds to illustrate it in a most interesting way:

Surely the Jews did not have those swords there merely as a bluff, but to be used when necessary to protect themselves and to prevent the enemy from interfering with the work which God had commanded them to do.¹¹

At this point, what stands out is that Rutherford is appealing to the example of the Jews living under the law as the basis of Christian action today. Earlier, we saw how the Watchtower specifically denied that the government posts held by Daniel and his three Hebrew friends in the secular governments of Babylon and Medo-Persia could not be used to justify Christian involvement in secular government today. And the Watchtower argument was that it was inappropriate

9 *Awake*, September 8, 1975, 27-28.

10 *Religion*, Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc, 1940) 291.

11 *Ibid*, 293.

to use the Old Testament to justify Christian actions today (see page 29). Here, the Watchtower argues just the opposite, justifying self-defense on the basis of Old Testament examples.

Let us return to Rutherford's telling of the events of 1939:

The watchfulness of Nehemiah and his brethren, who even slept with their clothes on in order to be ready, is a striking example for those to whom the Lord has committed the kingdom interests at the present time . . . On the 25th of June, 1939, approximately 20,000 people assembled peaceably and lawfully at Madison Square Garden, New York, to hear proclaimed the message of God's Word concerning his kingdom. Persons who oppose God's kingdom had repeatedly made threats that they would break up that assembly . . . On the day of the meeting several hundred of such wicked ones entered the Madison square Garden meeting after the program had begun, and made a violent attempt to 'break up' that meeting. Ushers, whose assigned duty was to keep order [armed with billy-clubs], commanded the disturbers to stop their disturbance or else leave the building. Instead of complying with that request the disturbers violently assaulted the ushers. Some of the ushers in the exercise of their God-given and lawful rights resisted such assaults and used reasonable and necessary force to repel such wrongful assaults.¹²

Reading the whole account is quite amusing and no one would deny the Jehovah's Witnesses this right of self-defense, not only as individuals, but also as a gathered group of 20,000. But it is simply inconsistent for the Watchtower to approve of this type of self-defense, and yet condemn the involvement of Jehovah's Witnesses when their own nation needs to exercise self-defense against an aggressive nation.

Romans 13:1-7 and Secular Government

Just as Christians as individuals should strive to avoid conflict, nevertheless, when their person is under threat they have the right to self-defense; so also does a nation-state have a right to defend itself when under attack by a evil aggressor after all other avenues of diplomacy have been exhausted.

National governments are given the sword to maintain order and protection for its citizens. Hence Paul stated: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is not authority

¹² *Religion*, Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc, 1940) 294-295.

except that which God has established . . . Consequently, he who rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has established”(Romans 13:1-7).

Watchtower’s Higher-Powers Fiasco

The Watchtower’s interpretation of the governing authorities in view in Romans 13: 1-7 has been an embarrassment to the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Under Russell and the first half of Judge Rutherford’s leadership, they held to the common-sense interpretation that the higher powers of Romans 13:1-7 were secular world governments.¹³

However, in an effort to justify the Watchtower’s growing desire to avoid any kind of military or government service, particularly during a time of war, the Watchtower claimed in 1929 to have new light from Jehovah that Paul was actually referring to the heavenly government of God the Father and Jesus Christ and not worldly governments at Romans 13:1-7.¹⁴

However, about 30 years later, more new light was said to have been given by Jehovah, which resulted in the return to the original view of the Watchtower that it actually is worldly governments in view in Romans 13: 1-7.¹⁵

Former member of the Governing Body of the Jehovah’s Witnesses, Raymond Franz sheds further light on this issue:

The initial understanding (in Pastor Russell’s time) was that this expression [higher powers of Romans 13:1-7] referred to the governmental authorities of earth . . . In Judge Rutherford’s time this was denied and the Watch Tower stated categorically (in 1929) that the ‘higher powers’ were instead God and Christ. It said that the ‘higher powers’ had no application whatsoever to secular authorities . . . This was acclaimed as evidence of the ‘advancing light’ or truth shining forth to God’s chosen people . . . Thirty years later, in 1962, that ‘advanced light’ was rejected and the view was reinstated that the term did in fact apply to the secular authorities. As can be seen, the claim is made [by the Watchtower] that there was actual progress made, that in 1962 Jehovah’s Witnesses—ostensibly for the first time!—came to understand the principle of ‘relative submission,’ and that while rendering submission to the secular authorities they

13 *Watchtower*, June 1882, 362. As cited by Edmond C. Gruss, *Jehovah’s Witnesses: Their Claims, Doctrinal Changes and Prophetic Speculation. What Does the Record Show?* Fairfax VA (Xulon Press, 2001) 285.

14 *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, Watchtower, 1943, 312; Also taught in *Let God Be True*, Watchtower, 1952, 246 and in *Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, Watchtower, 1959, 91. All cited in the *Index of Watchtower Errors: 1879-1989*, David A. Reed, Editor, Grand Rapids MI (Baker Book House, 1990) 84.

15 *Babylon the Great Has Fallen! God’s Kingdom Rules!* Brooklyn New York (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1963) 548.

could not render total subjections to them. If those ‘superior authorities’ asked them to do things in violation of God’s laws they could not obey . . . The fact is that the understanding just stated was not in the least new; in Russell’s time it was always understood that subjection to secular authorities’ was only a relative subjection . . . The claim, then, that in Russell’s time there was a deficiency of understanding as to the *relative* nature of subjection to secular authorities is patently false.¹⁶

The Watchtower of December 1, 1981 tried to justify such back and forth teachings:

At times explanations given by Jehovah’s visible organization have shown adjustments, seemingly to previous points of view. But this has not actually been the case. This might be compared to what is known in navigational circles as “tacking.” By maneuvering the sails the sailors can cause a ship to go from right to left, back and forth, but all the time making progress toward their destination in spite of contrary winds.

After a devastating expose and critique of this issue, Edmond Gruss reminds readers:

In conclusion, the following statement from the *Watchtower* is made concerning ‘opposers’—those who left the Witnesses. Would it be appropriate to apply to the Society the principle presented here? Let the reader decide.

It is a serious matter to represent God and Christ in one way, then find that our understanding of the major teachings and fundamental doctrines of the Scriptures was in error, and **then after that, to go back to the very doctrines that, by years of study, we had thoroughly determined to be in error.** Christians cannot be vacillating—‘wishy-washy’—about such fundamental teachings. **What confidence can one put in the sincerity or judgment of such persons?** [*Watchtower*, May 15, 1976].¹⁷

What is most important about this issue is that the lives of millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses are at least in part in the hands of leaders that have indeed proven to be, to borrow their phrase ‘wishy-washy.’ When we consider the history and recall all of the persecution Jehovah’s Witnesses have suffered, and the prison sentences they have had to endure, and realize that it was all unnecessary, it is a most troubling realization.

¹⁶ Franz, *In Search of Christian Freedom*, 483-485.

¹⁷ Edmond C. Gruss, *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, 288.

It is simply appalling that the Watchtower continues to micro-manage the lives of its members without any biblical justification to do so. The Watchtower speaks a lot about things being conscience matters, but such language is merely self-protective legalese to defend the organization from lawsuits. The reality, however, is that any Jehovah's Witness who disagrees with or disobeys Watchtower policies will face very painful punishment and/or face excommunication (disfellowshipping). This is precisely the kind of behavior indicative of a cult.

QUIZ: TYPES OF THEISM

1. Polytheism

- a. God worshipped in Polynesia
- b. God detectable by polygraph test
- c. The worship and/or belief in multiple gods
- d. The worship and or belief in one's self

2. Atheism:

- a. The belief in a god
- b. The denial of the existence of God
- c. A theism for mystics
- d. A denial of the existence of agnostics

3. Monotheism:

- a. A disease that makes you feel weak
- b. The belief and or worship of millions of gods
- c. The belief that Jesus Christ had only one will
- d. The belief and or worship of one God

4. Ditheism:

- a. The belief in or worship of two distinct gods
- b. Any belief one is willing to die for
- c. What deathbed conversions are called
- d. The belief that Jesus couldn't die

5. Deism

- a. The belief that enlightenment principles can take the place of a personal god
- b. The belief that God is merely a projection of the human mind
- c. The belief that God created the world, but takes no active part in it
- d. A religion focused on the spiritual energy of the letter "D"

6. Pantheism:

- a. The belief that God is equal to the universe (no personal god)
- b. The worship of the ancient God Pan
- c. The type of liturgy and worship that involves the use of pots and pans
- d. The worship of the Roman god of war Mars

7. Henotheism:

- a. The worship of hens
- b. The use of hens in sacrifices for sins
- c. The belief in and worship of one god while accepting the reality of other gods
- d. The belief that when we worship God, we should give it our all

8. Tri-theism:

- a. Agnostics who are *trying* to believe in God
- b. Belief in one God existing in three persons
- c. Belief and/or worship of the divine triangle
- d. Belief in/or worship of three different gods

9. Monism:

- a. ___ A type of worship practiced at monasteries
- b. ___ Belief that all of reality is of a singular and unified nature
- c. ___ The worship of one God
- d. ___ The denial of God's existence

10. Open Theism:

- a. ___ A new architectural church style with no closed doors
- b. ___ The belief that the arguments for God are an open and shut case
- c. ___ The belief that the future is not determined but open, even to God
- d. ___ An act of worship in which one completely opens themselves up to God

Answers:

1, c; 2, b; 3, d; 4, a; 5, c; 6, a; 7, c; 8, d; 9, b; 10, c

Personal Notes on the Articles:

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