

Watchtower Witnesses

We cannot teach others without knowing what they believe

- Ac.15 – Judaizers
- 1 Co.15 – human philosophy
- Gal. / Ro. – ‘cheap grace’
- Tit.1:9-10 – Dispensationalism

Some despise 'negative preaching'

- Churches that refuse to fight false doctrine in one generation embrace it in the next
 - Does not imply ungodly attitude. Ep.4:15
 - Does imply concern for truth, souls, purity.

I. History Of Watchtower Witnesses

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)

- Age 15: clothing store
- Age 16: became skeptic
- Age 18: searching...dropped into Adventist hall (remnant of Wm. Miller group) –
 - No hell
 - No conscious existence after death
 - Destiny of man: everlasting life on earth
 - End of world is nearly here
 - Jesus would judge world, resurrect...renovate
 - Second coming is soon

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)

- Sold business; magazine (1879): Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence
- 1886: first of seven volumes: *Millennial Dawn* – later, *Studies in the Scriptures*
 - Opposed eternal punishment, Trinity, soul
 - Taught physical return of Christ, second probation in millennial earth

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)

1893-1916, trials and scandals

- 1897: wife sued for separation
- 1912: sued J.J.Ross, Baptist preacher...
 - False claims exposed
 - Divorced wife charged him with cruelty, incest, and immorality...
 - Defraud sick and dying
- 1913: Miracle Wheat

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916)

Why was he successful?

- Knew human nature.
- Personal magnetism.
- Appeal to Scripture.
- Many wished to get rid of hell.
- Opposed evolution and higher criticism...

Joseph F. Rutherford (1869-1942)

- Lawyer
- Studied *Studies in the Scriptures*
- 1906: joined movement
- 1907: legal counselor to Watch Tower
 - Emphasized publishing / selling books...
 - 1929: book *Prophecy* – Elijah and Elisha
 - 1931: Columbus, OH convention: first time called JW's
- 1950: first volume of *New World Translation*

I. History Of Watchtower Witnesses

II. Fundamental Doctrines

Plan of salvation

- Their standard topics: deity of Christ, eternal punishment, premillennialism, nature of man, etc.
- They are prepared for responses from denominations
- Stock answers reinforce faith in Society
- We must make them think on their own

1. Plan of salvation

“What must I do to be saved?”

- They never try to convert people to Lord, but to their doctrines
- Some say baptism is necessary for salvation
- Question: what is necessary for salvation from past sins; what role does baptism play?
 1. If necessary for forgiveness of past sins, they contradict Society....
 2. If not necessary, reject Bible, as others

2. Organization of church

- Describe your organization
- Questions:
 1. Must we have scriptural authority for all we do?
 2. Do you have national headquarters?
 3. Where in Bible do you find authority for this organization?

2. Organization of church

Denominations can't make this argument

Roman Catholicism

Universal headquarters

Pope (elected for life)

Board of cardinals

Cardinal

Arch Bishop

Bishop

Priest

Elder

Deacon

Watchtower

Universal headquarters

President (elected...)

Board of directors

Zone Servant (Branch...)

District Servant

Circuit Servant

City Servant

Elder

Deacon

3. Standard

- *Scripture Studies*
- If Watchtower leaders are **inspired**, how do they account for errors they taught and changes they made?
- If **uninspired**, where do they get the right to bind error on others under threat of spiritual death?
- E.g.: Romans 13

3. Standard

- *Their only response:* apostles taught some error – Ga.2:11-14
 1. This illustrates their lack of inspiration
 2. Wide difference between Peter's teaching and his life. Ac.2:39; 10-11
 3. Paul – 1 Co.14:37 . . . Yet 9:27
 4. If no difference in inspired teaching and lives of writers, how to know writers made no errors? What to believe?

4. One more thing . . .

Their literature depicts Earthly paradise...

1. They believe dead cease to exist – ***destroyed*** (Mt.10:28) = annihilated
 2. They believe earth will last forever
 3. Hb.1:10-11 – *perish* [same as Mt.10:28]
- How can word mean annihilation when used of man, but renovation when used of earth?
 - If man is 'destroyed,' so is earth
 - If earth is not 'destroyed,' neither is man