

Bible Special 06-07-11b

Let's resume our study now. We are talking about the Jehovah's Witnesses. You will, sooner or later, run into Jehovah's Witnesses.

They will probably initiate that contact. They may knock on your door. They may flag you down in the street as they're walking by in their black pants and their white shirts and their backpacks and their bicycles.

And you say, this must be the bicycle religion. This is the chariots of bicycles. Or bicycles of fire or something.

That's how we're going to get to heaven. Bicycles of fire. I mentioned last time, just toward the end, we talked about, mostly last week, the Unitarians.

Do you remember the Unitarians and the things that they believe? Humanism. Secularism. Better life through knowledge.

Better life through science. Well, guess what? The Jehovah's Witnesses are basically Unitarians. It's just a sort of slightly more Christianized version of Unitarianism.

It began with Charles Taze Russell back in the 1800s. In 1874, he had been teaching a Bible class for a while. And he began this cult.

And in 1879, he began to publish this magazine called Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence. Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence. Now, remember, he had initially calculated that Jesus was going to come back in 1874.

But, of course, Jesus didn't come back in 1874. He kind of messed up his whole budding religion and cult there. So, then he said, oh, I was off by 40 years.

It's going to happen in 1914. Well, there's a real interesting calculation by which they got to 1914. And I'm going to share it with you because many of you were in our Ezekiel study.

Remember Ezekiel? And you remember Daniel and all of that prophecy? Well, Daniel, in particular, talked about there being seven times. There would be 77's or 770's. So, anyway, Charles Taze Russell got this idea and he said, well, there are seven times that are spoken of by Daniel in Daniel chapter 4. And this is where Nebuchadnezzar turns into the beast with the claws and so on.

And he got this obscure idea that God had seven times in human history and there are 360 days in a year. And each day stood for a year. So, this would be seven times 360 years.

Well, if you multiply this out, seven times 360 gives you, I believe, 2520. 2520. So, then Charles Taze Russell said, well, the temple in Jerusalem, and Jerusalem itself fell to the Babylonians and

the Jews went into captivity in 607 B.C. 607 B.C. Now, when have we learned that Jerusalem fell to Nebuchadnezzar? It's 586 B.C., right? There are two dates that you ought to burn into your brain.

The first one is 721 B.C. That's when the northern kingdom, the ten northern tribes, were conquered by the Assyrians and ceased to be a nation. The ten northern tribes disappeared. You know how I always talk about the lost tribes of Israel? That's them.

721, the Assyrians conquered northern Israel and all of those tribes, Dan and Naphtali and all those guys, they went away. 721 B.C. The second date you should burn into your brain is 586 B.C. This is the conquest of the southern kingdom of Judah. Judah and Benjamin, the remaining two tribes down there, 586 B.C. Now, the Assyrians are already long gone.

Nebuchadnezzar whipped them and the Babylonians, actually Nebuchadnezzar and his father whipped them, and so the Babylonians are the big boys on the block now. They're the big empire that's rising and gaining strength. And so they come down and they attack Jerusalem in 603 and take away Daniel and some of his friends and they come back two more times.

And the third time they say, that's it, we've had enough, we're sick of you all. And in 586, they knock the temple over, destroy it, they burn Jerusalem, they slay all kinds of people and they carry a bunch more of them into captivity. So, what are our two dates? When did the northern kingdom go out? 721 B.C. When did the southern kingdom go out? 586 B.C. Now, Jeremiah predicted that the southern kingdom would be in captivity for 70 years, because if you calculate back to the time that Joshua took the people into the land, every seven years they were supposed to give the land a rest.

It was a Sabbath rest. Then every 50 years, there was a year of Jubilee. Well, they didn't do that.

They didn't do what God told them to do, and they had stacked up 70 of these years. It had been 490 years since the last time they celebrated a Jubilee year. And if you go back to the time of the kingdom coming into existence, where there was a king and there was a monarchy and there was a way to enforce this national policy, they had missed 70 of these Sabbaths.

Seven times 70, 490. Over the course of 490 years, they had missed them. So God said, I'm going to give the land its rest, and it's going to rest for 70 years.

It's going to get all of those Sabbaths back. So if they went out in 586, all of you mathematical geniuses, when would you expect them to be back in Israel and back starting to rebuild Jerusalem and so on? Be like 516, right? And that's when some of the first settlers started to return. Ezra and Nehemiah are going to be somewhat after that.

But the first wave of returnees comes in the latter part of that 6th century B.C., in 5-something, 516 or so. And that's when the land, they start plowing it and planting crops again. Well, Charles Taze Russell said 2,520 years from Daniel chapter 4, and you start at 607 B.C., and you get 1914.

And he published it in books, and he wrote a six-volume work, and he published all of this stuff about 1914. And he borrowed some of this from another guy that he'd been reading, and he thought his eschatology was really good. But long story short, 607 is the wrong year.

You all know that, because you know when the Southern Kingdom went out. When did the Southern Kingdom go out? 586? See, everybody knows this. 586 B.C. Of course, you could have told Charles Taze Russell how messed up he was because he started from 607.

Where he got that, I have no earthly idea, but it's a big mistake in his writings. And it's published in article after article in the Watchtower magazine, and they still cling to the 1914 date based on 2,520 years, based on 607 B.C., and it is just as wrong as it can be. And you know better.

So anytime some Jehovah's Witness starts pestering you, you can say, well, did Jesus come back in 1914? And if he says yes, ask him how he figured that. And how come every history book in the world says that Jerusalem was sacked and destroyed in 586 or 587, depending on how you count the years, not 607? And there's this big mistake. Well, they don't have an answer for that, because it is a big goof, and it's a big mistake.

Well, not only that, but there were several other mistakes that kept cropping up because they kept predicting things. They kept predicting that Jesus was going to come back and the saints were going to be raised. They had a prediction that the world was going to come to an end and all the Old Testament saints were going to be raised.

The last time they tried this was after Charles Taze Russell died, and his successor, Rutherford, came on the scene, Joseph Rutherford in 1917. He was elected the second president of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. So he wrote a seventh volume of prophecy to go with the six volumes that Charles Taze Russell had written.

And he said, oh, there's going to be all kinds of things going on in the year 1918. God is going to destroy the church. All of the church is going to be destroyed in 1918.

Millions of people are going to be wiped out, and anybody that's left over is going to buy Charles Taze Russell's books and try to figure out what happened. Well, if you consult history, you'll find that the church wasn't destroyed and people didn't flock to Charles Taze Russell's books in 1918 because they were busy trying to finish up the First World War. This was in a book called The Finished Mystery.

They made a prediction for 1917 and then later in 1920. And they said, well, in 1920, all the republics of the earth are going to disappear. There won't be any mountains left.

Every mountain is going to be brought low. Every kingdom of the earth is going to pass away in 1920. It's going to be swallowed up in anarchy.

Well, that didn't happen either, as you may have noticed. So then they made another prophecy

for 1925. And in 1925, there was an article in the Watchtower called Millions Now Living Will Never Die.

And at the end of this thing, and you have to go way down to like page 90, it says, and I'm reading from this thing, As we have heretofore stated, the great jubilee cycle is due to begin in 1925. At that time, the earthly phase of the kingdom shall be recognized. The Apostle Paul names a long list of faithful men who died before the crucifixion of the Lord.

These are going to be resurrected as perfect men. They will be princes and rulers of the earth. Therefore, we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named in Hebrews chapter 11, to the condition of human perfection.

So I guess when nobody was looking in 1925, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob came back, and they were perfect, and they ruled the earth. We just missed it some kind of way. Well, this is a little bit of the nonsense that is at the beginning of the Jehovah's Witness, or the Watchtower Tract Society.

They have in this same publication, there's a chapter called How to Live Forever. Well, how does the Jehovah's Witness view eternity? There are two different kinds of resurrection. There's a heavenly resurrection, and there is an earthly resurrection.

Most people, the most you can hope for, you and me, all we can get close to is the earthly resurrection. You get this by riding your bicycle and trying to convert people. The heavenly one is reserved for 144,000.

So what all do they teach? They are afraid of God. They don't believe in hell, but they believe in sort of a permanent death. And so if you don't want to permanently die, you've got to get busy and proselytize and evangelize.

There are two groups in the Jehovah's Witnesses, 144,000. They get this from Revelation. And these are special heavenly companions of God in the eternal future, but that's people like Noah and Paul and Charles Taze Russell and Rutherford and people like that.

We're not able to ascend to that mighty number. Instead, we can be the sheep, the other sheep that are not of that fold. So the great personalities of the Bible like Abraham and Isaac and all these other 144,000 that were supposed to come back in 1925, but they missed the plane or they didn't set their alarm clock or something.

They didn't seem to come back. But the Battle of Armageddon is going to result in all the nations of the world fighting on one side and the 144,000 and the other sheep on the other side, whoever's left of them. And they're going to duke it out.

Over 2 billion people will die in the Battle of Armageddon, according to the JWs. All of the enemies will be slain. And then for a thousand years, the remnant of the 144,000 will go to

heaven and be with Jesus.

The other sheep will stay down here and clean up, sweep up all the remnants and remains of the battle and get ready for judgment. Then all of the Old Testament saints are going to be brought back to life. There's a little chart here I have in my book that talks about the system of salvation in Jehovah's Witnesses.

If you're in the anointed class of 144,000, you'll float up to heaven and be with Jesus. Otherwise, you're going to be down on earth and you're just kind of a lackey. Now, you can detect elements of truth in this because after all it does claim or purport to be based on the Bible.

And it is true that there are many in the kingdom who will be last and there are some who will be first. And there are those who are going to enjoy overcomer blessings and there are others who will not. But this is a distorted and twisted thing because now it is not a matter of judgment on the life of a believer.

This is your salvation. You're either saved to be a lackey or you're saved to be a heavenly anointed guy which hardly anybody can aspire to. So, the idea of judgment, the Jehovah's Witnesses say that there is only one single God like Allah, not a trinity.

And so they deny vehemently the doctrine of the trinity. Therefore, what do they believe about Jesus? Is Jesus God? Can't be because they only believe in one God. They don't believe that man has an immortal soul.

The soul is not separate from the body. God has to resurrect you body and soul if you're going to be one of those earthly number. Jesus Christ is not God but just the first thing that God created.

Christ's death on the cross gives us the opportunity to work for our salvation. You've got to work to be saved. And if you do good enough work, you can be one of the sheep and clean up the nuclear debris after the battle of Armageddon.

Otherwise, you will die and never wake up. There is no such thing as eternal punishment. If you don't measure up to Jehovah's standards, you just get annihilated and you're gone.

That's how they teach it. And once again, there are elements of truth and there are elements of error. Satan is famous for taking truth and mixing it with error.

As of 2005, there are more than 6.5 million Jehovah's Witnesses in the United States. In 1965, there was about 1 million. So in the last 40 years, they have gained a six-fold increase in numbers.

Those are active members. To be counted as an active Jehovah's Witness, you have to be approved as a minister and you have to show that you've done some activity in ministry. You have to have ridden so many miles on your bicycle or whatever.

If you have a debilitating illness or you're in a wheelchair or something, then you can just do like 15 minutes and you're okay. Otherwise, you have to do a whole bunch more. Last year, 2005, the total... because they keep track.

Everybody logs their hours and turns in their hours just as though they were getting paid. The reports that were turned in by the 6.6 million Jehovah's Witnesses indicated that they had ministered for 1.3 billion hours. That's a lot of time spent on nothing.

There are Jehovah's Witnesses in most countries of the world, but most of them are in the United States. There are quite a number also in Brazil and Mexico. The main thing you need to know about them is they are deceptive.

They will now try to act like they are Christians. They don't identify themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses when they come to your door. They only talk about the Bible and they talk about Jesus.

Their literature very carefully hides the name of their organization. They're very crafty. They want to suck you in and say, wouldn't you like to be in a group and learn about Jesus and study the Bible? Well, of course you would.

If you're a healthy believer, of course you want to be in a group. You should. If you don't, think about it.

There's something the matter with you. You are a new creation in Christ, and if the thought of Bible study, if the thought of learning about the eternal future turns you off, you better do some checking, because all there is is the eternal future. This life is going to be over in a heartbeat and a half, and then you're going to be in the eternal future, and if you're not interested in it, you're a very short-sighted individual.

Well, so they come to your door and they say, oh, wouldn't you like to learn about Jesus and be in a fun group that has lots of activities? They have pictures. Last time some of them came to my door and showed me the brochure. They had a little pamphlet.

They give you the thing until they find out that you're really not interested in being a Jehovah's Witness, and then they start grabbing for it to get it back. And so I kept holding on to it. They kept kind of, well, you know, if you don't think you're going to bite, why, we want the bait back.

And they were trying to get it back, and I eventually let them have it back, because I have no use for it. But I found a little bit of perverse amusement, because they give it to you like, oh, well, we'd like you to have this gift. And I said, oh, well, thank you very much.

And then I said, oh, you should probably know that I'm a graduate of Dallas Seminary, and I'm a pastor, and I believe that the Bible is the Word of God, and I think Charles Taze Russell was full of old tennis shoes. Well, so then they start kind of reaching for their little book, and they want it back. Probably should be more kind.

They consider that the Bible is the inspired Word of God, but it's their Bible. It's the New World Translation, which is full of translational distortions. They're not mistakes.

They are not errors. They are conscious, willful distortions. John 1.1 being a classic example.

In the beginning, it was the Word. The Word was with God. And the Word was... And God... How do they do that? And God was the Word.

They mess it all up. I don't even have a New World Translation, because you can't trust the thing. They use God's name, and they call Him Jehovah, which is a mistake.

Do you know where the word Jehovah comes from? In the Hebrew, God's name... Of course, Hebrew is consonants only. You have to fill in the vowels. So Yahweh, which is God's personal name, is Y-H-W-H.

And notice I'm going right to left, because Hebrew goes right to left. Y-H-W-H. The name of God is considered so holy by the Hebrew scribes that they never speak it.

If you go to a website for many Jewish people, even when they write the word God in English, the O will be missing, and there will be a dash in its place, because they don't want to profane or commonize the name of God. So it will be G, and then a dash, and then a D. And it's understood to be God. But they reverence the name of God, and they reverence it in the original.

So it's Y-H-W-H. But the scribes who stand up and read the scrolls in synagogue never say Yahweh. It's too holy of a name.

They will substitute the Hebrew word for Lord, which is Adonai. Now, think about the consonants and the vowels in the word Adonai. A-O-A.

A-O-A. To remind the scribe that he's supposed to say Adonai and not Yahweh, when they put the vowel points in the Hebrew, the consonants are for Yahweh, but the vowels are for Adonai. So there's an A, and an O, and an A. A-A-D-O-NA-I And so it's a nonsense word in Hebrew.

When you look at the Tetragrammaton, when you look at the name Yahweh in Hebrew, it doesn't make any sense, because the vowels don't go with the letters. Well, some of the early scholars who were translating Hebrew and transliterating into English and German didn't know this scribal habit, this scribal procedure. And so they tried to make the best sense out of the word they could, and they came out with Yahoah or Jehovah.

It should rightly be Yahoah, but think about the Germans. Can Germans say a Y? Can the Germans say a W? Do they say Volkswagen? They say Volkswagen, right? Why are you here? Joe disgust me. That's actually more of a Jewish, Yiddish kind of a thing.

Just trust me, I can't do a German. But Germans can't say Y's and they can't say W's, so it comes out Jehovah instead of Yahoah. Jehovah is a nonsense word.

It's a weird hybrid of two completely different words, the consonants from one word and the vowels from another. So the Jehovah's Witnesses tell you in their name that they're just goofed up. Hello there, I'm a goofed up witness.

If they were Yahweh's Witnesses, if they were the Lord's Witnesses, they would at least have their title right, but they've got a nonsense word in their title, and it just speaks to their ignorance of the Scripture, their ignorance of the Word of God. So they have a strange understanding of the last days. They think the last days started in 1914.

Still to this day, well, 607 plus 2520, 1914. Now we're in the thousand years. They believe this, and they believe that all religions, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, are going to be attacked and Armageddon is going to come and all religion is going to be banned, and after religion is destroyed, governments will be destroyed.

Any who are not faithful to God will be destroyed. There's going to be mass destruction everywhere, and then only the sheep, the Jonah Dabs, the little faithful bicycle riders, and the 144,000 are going to survive. So the result of this is many of them are pacifists.

They don't believe in going to war. They don't believe in giving blood. In fact, a bunch of them got in trouble, and their leadership got thrown in jail at World War I because they wouldn't respond to the draft.

They are politically neutral. They think that saluting the flag or singing the national anthem or saying the Pledge of Allegiance is a form of idolatry. So although they obey the law and they pay their taxes, they won't pledge allegiance, they won't salute the flag, they have a real hard time in the military.

Although, you will occasionally find sort of a middle of the road Jehovah's Witness, but it's very rare. Most of them are pacifists. Most of them are politically neutral, militarily neutral.

They tend to not vote in the election at all because even voting is considered to be a form of idolatry. They don't run for political office. You'll never find a senator saying, Hi there, I'm a Jehovah's Witness.

They don't believe in it. Blood transfusions are rejected. They won't accept a transfusion or give a transfusion and so on.

But it is a cult. It is salvation by works. You have to rack up enough good hours of time in being a witness for Jehovah to break into the flock of sheep and if you don't work hard enough, if you don't put in enough hours, you will die and never live again.

Jesus was not the Redeemer. He was the Creator. God used Jesus like a trowel to sling the mud and make creation.

But Jesus is not the Redeemer. He's not divine. So they are not Orthodox.

They are not Christian. When a Jehovah's Witness comes to your door or talks to you in conversation, don't let them tell you they're Christian. They're not.

Ask them, do you believe that Jesus is the Son of God? Do you believe that Jesus is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father? Do you believe that Jesus is undiminished deity and true humanity in one person forever? And they will say no. And you can say, well, I'm sorry, but you are not a Christian. You do not believe the Bible and our conversation is over.

Unless you have any questions for me, I certainly have no questions for you. If you don't believe in Jesus, why am I talking to you? That would be my response. They don't tend to linger at your doorway.

And if they try to trot out their scriptures, you can say, name a single man on the translation committee of the New World Translation. Tell me anyone who is involved in the translation. They can't.

You know why? Because it's anonymous. It's an anonymous work. Nobody will take credit because nobody wants to be branded a bad scholar for mistranslating the scripture in so many places.

They mistranslate statements about Jesus. They mistranslate John 1.1. And so nobody wanted their name on it. So the New World Translation, you can flip all through the front of it.

Nobody says, oh, hello there. I was the editor. I was a translator for these books or this section.

It's all anonymous. That way you can't go back and say, why did you translate it this way? What is the matter with you that you can't read Greek? What's the matter with you that you can't read Hebrew? What is going on? I've got first-year students who can do a better job of translating this. It's all anonymous.

Just remember, any time a cult member comes up and starts talking to you about Christianity, remember Orthodox Christianity. Ask them about the person and work of Christ. Ask them about the lost and fallen condition of man.

Can man, by his own efforts, save himself and qualify in God's sight to be righteous and to live forever? Jehovah's Witnesses think he can. Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe in the person and work of Christ. And Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in the scriptures that you have.

They want their own version. That is not Orthodox Christianity. Jehovah's Witnesses are not Christians, and they are not saved.

If they believe everything their church teaches, they are not saved. They are lost. I don't care how many 144,000s, how many Jonadabs, how far they ride, how many billions of hours they put in.

They are lost, lost, lost. Neither is there salvation in any other. There is none other name given

among men, under heaven, whereby we must be saved.

Don't let anybody throw you off the track. Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. No man comes to the Father but by me.

He is the Son. Well, that's the Jehovah's Witnesses. We'll look at the Mormons next week.

Let's close in prayer. Father, thank you for the truth of your word. Thank you for the witness of your spirit.

Thank you that it is possible for us to know the truth and be set free in that truth, free to be transformed, free to reflect your glory, free to anticipate a bright and glorious future in the kingdom of the Son and in the kingdom that you will have after him. We pray that we can be prepared, that we will live our lives in a way that is pleasing in your sight, in the light of these truths. We ask it in Jesus' name.

Amen.