

A
excellent flow of thought -
very good research of quotes - very good
refutation

THE JEHOVAH WITNESSES:
TIMES OF THE GENTILES & THE SABBATH

By

Geoff Robertson

Doctrines

Mr. Rod Meredith

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This paper discusses two fundamental doctrines of the Jehovah Witnesses. The doctrines are presented as published in their own literature, and examined for validity.

I. The Times of the Gentiles

Who were the ones that...pointed out to the whole world that the 'times of the Gentiles' would end in the latter half of 1914? It was the International Bible Students, using the columns of the Watch Tower magazine....Today they are known worldwide as the Jehovah Witnesses.... [In 1914] the antitypical spiritual Kingdom of God in the hands of His anointed Son, Jesus Christ, started there in the heavens. The fact that this is disputed by the religious leaders of Christendom and others makes it an issue of the highest importance. And we must face it! ¹

True, the issue of Christ's return and the establishment of His Kingdom is of major importance, so let's take the challenge of the Watch Tower and "face it".

The Jehovah Witnesses base 1914 as the end of the "times of the Gentiles" from a prophecy in Daniel 4:13-17. The prophecy describes the chopping down of a huge tree that was left rooted and alive, but restrained with a band of iron and copper, and given the heart of a wild beast until seven "times" had passed. An understanding of the tree of Daniel 4 is necessary if we are to know the proper application of the prophecy.

Who then, is this huge tree that is hewn down? Verse 22 explains it pictures Nebuchadnezzar, King of the Babylonian Empire. The interpretation, as revealed in verses 20-24, shows that Nebuchadnezzar himself would be "cut down" and restrained for seven times. He was. For seven years he was subdued as a beast of the field, after which he became even greater, and "excellent majesty was added" to him (Dan. 4:19-37).

As Nebuchadnezzar was the symbol of the Babylonian Empire the prophecy could also be applied to the Empire itself. After its fall, a period of seven times, or seven X 360 years (using the "day for a year" principle of Numbers 14:34; Ezekiel 4:6), would pass until it could again rise. This "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24) then lasts for 2520 years. It must be dated from the fall of the Babylonian Empire which occurred in 539 bc, thus its conclusion in the year 1982 ad.² The Jehovah Witnesses start their count in the year 607 bc, which is the approximate date of the fall of Judah, and arrive at 1914. Thus they have two fundamental errors: they apply this prophecy to Christ's Kingdom when it clearly refers to Babylon, and they begin their countdown sixty-eight years too early, from the fall of Judah, instead of using the fall of Babylon in 539 bc.

II. The Observance of the Sabbath

The Jehovah Witnesses state that Sabbath observance was given only to the Jews and ended with the Mosaic Law.³ The scriptures they use to defend this are Deut. 5:15; Ex. 31:13; Rom. 10:4; Gal. 4:9,10; and Col. 2:16,17.³ Using these very scriptures one by one, let's examine the validity of this belief.

In DEUT. 5:15 God is calling to remembrance for the entire

15 And remember that thou wast a servant in the land of Egypt, and that the LORD thy God brought thee out thence through a mighty hand and by a stretched out arm: therefore the LORD thy God commanded thee to keep the sabbath day.

nation of Israel, not just the Jews -- tribe of Judah --, of the command to observe the Sabbath. Israel, who had spent 400 years in slavery, had forgotten that their ancestors from Adam through Abraham and Jacob kept this weekly Sabbath holy (Gen.2:2,3). This scripture in no way indicates that Sabbath observance was to be a temporary command.

EX. 31:13 clearly states that the Sabbaths of God were to be a

13 Speak thou also unto the children of Is'ra-el, saying, Verily my sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.

sign between God and the children of Israel. It does not indicate a temporary observance, but rather, "throughout your generations". Today the physical descendants of Israel can be traced to include the general populous of the United States, the former British Commonwealth nations, the Jews, and much of the western societies.⁴ The spiritual descendants are true Christians (Gal.3:29). Therefore, physically or spiritually, it seems the Jehovah Witnesses should observe the Sabbath as they claim to know the God of the Old Testament. Perhaps now we wonder if they really do know YHVH.

ROM. 10:4 makes no reference to ending one of the most signif-

4 For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

icant observances of the Law. Instead, that Christ Himself is "the end of the Law", the end result and outcome, for it was He who lived in perfect obedience to the Laws of God and set an example that we are to follow. It is Christ who epitomized the Law and

magnified it so that we could more easily understand how to obey it. Why would God so obscurely declare an end to His Law when Jesus Christ Himself preached their observance? (Mat.5:17-19).

If GAL. 4:9,10 refers to the Laws of God, then calling them

⁹ But now, ¹after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, ²how turn ye ³again to the weak and beggarly ⁴elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

¹⁰ ^mYe observe days, and months, and times, and years.

"the weak and beggarly elements" is of total contradiction to Paul's own testimony that

"the Law is holy and the commandment holy, and just and good" (Rom.7:12)! If Paul was referring

to Jewish Laws, then he would not have mentioned the observance of "times" which Lev. 19:26 forbids. It is clear that Paul is speaking here to Gentiles who were again turning to their pre-conversion customs in which they were once in bondage, and not at all degrading or diminishing from the observance of the Sabbath day.

Finally then, does COL. 2:16,17 teach us not to continue observing

¹⁶ Let no man therefore ¹judge you ⁵in meat, or in drink, or ⁶in respect ^mof an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days:

¹⁷ ⁿWhich are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ.

the Sabbath as commanded elsewhere in the Bible? Paul instructs that "no man is to judge you...but the body of Christ". As

explained in Col.1:18, the body of Christ is the Church. Paul's admonition to the Church at Colossae was not to allow men to instruct you on obedience to God's Laws, but only the Church. How plain!

The truth of God is simple, clear and constant. The identifying sign of God's people does remain among those who continue to obey His Laws which will endure forever. The Jehovah Witnesses do not have that identifying sign.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ The Watch Tower, Jan.1, 1983, p.11
 - ² The Mainstream of Civilization, 4th ed., Joseph R. Strayer
(Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, San Diego), p.23
 - ³ JW: Who Are They?, 1979, (Watchtower Bible and Tract Society,
New York), p.13
 - ⁴ The United States and Britain in Prophecy, Herbert Armstrong,
(Worldwide Church of God), 1980, pp.141,142.
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