

Memoirs of a Witness

A discussion with missionaries

A commentary on “What Does The Bible Really Teach?”

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Memoirs of a Witness
By Tony Poldrugovac

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Unless otherwise indicated, Bible quotations are taken from the New World Translation (1984).

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Introduction

Hello.

My name is Tony. I attend a Christian church in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario, Canada.

I recently attended a Jehovah's Witnesses Convention in Kitchener (July 2011), about an hour away from my home. I went there in the hope of obtaining a teaching guide called, "What Does The Bible Really Teach?" I figured this is the best way to learn about this group. Two Jehovah's Witnesses came to my door a few weeks back and left a pamphlet indicating the 3-day meeting in Kitchener, with a picture of the book that they were offering.

Due to previous commitments I was only able to attend part of the Saturday session. Upon entering the arena, I was warmly greeted by a mother and daughter. She introduced me to several people and then helped me to find a place to sit. I felt a little embarrassed because they all dressed very nicely, whereas I was dressed casually – I had mis-interpreted what type of meeting this would be.

During the session break we exchanged phone numbers for a potential follow-up down the road.

Over the next few weeks, I hope to call them and set up a meeting to discuss some of the teachings in this booklet.

I don't pretend to know all the truth so I hope we can share what we believe and see how it compares. Asking many questions is the way I take in knowledge. I hope it's the same for you too.

Chapter 1 – What Is The Truth About God?

Page 13 – If your Bible translation does not contain that name, you may want to consult the Appendix on pages 195-7 of this book to learn why that is so.

Page 195 – How important is God’s name? Consider the model prayer that Jesus Christ gave. It begins this way: “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified.” Matthew 6:9) Later, Jesus prayed to God: “Father, glorify your name.”

Page 195 – Clearly, God’s name is of the utmost importance.

Page 196 – “In replacing God’s name with titles, Bible translators make a serious mistake. They make God seem remote and impersonal, whereas the Bible urges humans to cultivate intimacy with Jehovah (Psalm 25:14).”

Why do you use the New World Translation – as it contains the work of Bible translators who make thousands of serious mistakes? (that is, they replace His name with titles – see <http://www.jw.org/index.html?option=QrYQCsVrGlVIYR>. The title “God” appears 4324 times and the name “Jehovah” appears about 7146 times).

The name “Jehovah” appears only 4 times in the King James Version for example.

How many times should a translation of the Bible use the name “Jehovah” before people know His name? 1 time? 4 times? 10 times? 1000 times?

Why do you think Jesus did not use the name of “Jehovah” in one of his prayers?

Acts 1:24 says, “And they prayed and said: You, O Jehovah, who know the hearts of all, designate which one of these two men you have chosen.”

My Hebrew-Greek-English version does not have the name Jehovah inserted. Does yours?

Acts 2:21 says, “And everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.”

Again, my Hebrew-Greek-English version does not have the name Jehovah inserted. Does yours?

Are there other verses in the Greek-English where Jehovah is missing but has been inserted into the New World Translation? If yes, why was this done?

Page 15 – Jehovah alone is referred to as “the Almighty.” Revelation 15:3 says: “Great and wonderful are your works, Jehovah God, the Almighty. Righteous and true are your ways, King of eternity.”

I use the King James and English Standard versions of the Bible.

When I look at several verses, they seem to strongly infer that Jesus is also the Almighty.

Rev 1:8, 17-18 – “I am the Alpha and the Omega,” says the Lord God, “who is and who was and who is to come, the Almighty.”

Rev 4:8 – “And the four living creatures, each of them with six wings, are full of eyes all around and within, and day and night they never cease to say, “Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord God Almighty, who was and is and is to come!”

Rev 11:17 – “We give thanks to you, Lord God Almighty, who is and who was, for you have taken your great power and begun to reign.”

What are your thoughts about this?

The term “Alpha and Omega” is used 3 times in scriptures (Revelation 1:8 – already quoted above, 21:6 and 22:13).

“And he said to me: They have come to pass! I am the Alpha and the Omega, the beginning and the end.”

“I am the Alpha and the Omega, the first and the last, the beginning and the end.”

The phrase “the first and the last” is used several times.

“And he laid his right hand upon me and said: Do not be fearful. I am the First and the Last, and the living one; and I became dead, but, look! I am living forever and ever, and I have the keys of death and of Hades” (Rev. 1:17-18).

“And to the angel of the congregation in Smyrna write: These are the things that he says, the First and the Last, who became dead and came to life again” (Rev. 4:8).

My church teaches that the phrase “Alpha and Omega” and “the First and the Last” are equal. Alpha is the first letter in the Greek alphabet and Omega is the last. I checked this for myself at http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Greek_alphabet.

That is why we believe Jesus is the Alpha and Omega, the First and the Last, who became dead, then resurrected, and the one who is coming.

What are your thoughts about this?

Page 15 – The Bible even urges us: “Draw close to God, and he will draw close to you.”— James 4:8.

Why didn't the NWT translators fix this serious mistake and change it to Jehovah?

Page 16 – This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ.” (John 17:3).

Since this says Jehovah is the only true God, would this make Isaiah 9:6 a reference to Jesus as a false “mighty God?”

Page 16 – He is loyal. (Revelation 15:4).

I see this in the King James Version → “Who will not fear, O Lord, and glorify your name? For you alone are holy. All nations will come and worship you, for your righteous acts have been revealed.”

Page 16 – True, you cannot see God because he is an invisible spirit. (John 1:18; 4:24; 1 Timothy 1:17).

Do the angels see God?

Chapter 2 – The Bible – A Book From God

Page 20 – The last book shows that the whole earth will become a paradise, or garden.

Can you show me where it says this about the *whole earth*?

Rev 2:7 – “He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who conquers I will grant to eat of the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God.”

If you conquer, then you are in the paradise of God. If you are conquered, where do you end up?

Rev 22:1-2 – “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.”

From this, it looks like the paradise of God (containing the tree of life) encompasses the sides of the river flowing through the New Jerusalem, not the whole earth.

Would you also agree?

Page 22-23 – Consider Jesus’ speech called the Sermon on the Mount, recorded in Matthew chapters 5 to 7. In this masterpiece of teaching, Jesus spoke on a number of topics, including the way to find true happiness, how to settle disputes, how to pray, and how to have the proper view of material things. Jesus’ words are just as powerful and practical today as they were when he spoke them.

Why do you consider this a masterpiece of teaching when Jesus did not mention God’s name and the Watch Tower says this is of utmost importance?

Page 23 – The Bible’s principles apply to all people.

Are all considered faithful/discreet slaves or evil slaves (Matthew 24:45-47)?

Are all considered wise virgins or foolish virgins (Matthew 25:1-12)?

Page 23 – Some 200 years later—on the night of October 5/6, 539 B.C.E.—an army encamped near Babylon. Who was its commander? A Persian king named Cyrus.

How did you get this date of October 5/6?

Chapter 3 – What Is God’s Purpose For The Earth?

Page 27 – After God created the first man and woman, Adam and Eve, He put them in that lovely home.

Genesis 2:8 says, “And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and there he put the man whom he had formed.”

Where does it say that Eve was placed in the garden?

Page 28 – This powerful angel, or invisible spirit creature, used a serpent to speak to Eve, even as a skilled person can make it seem that his voice is coming from a nearby doll or dummy. That spirit person had no doubt been present when God prepared the earth for humans—Job 38:4, 7.

Is Satan invisible to other angels? Are other angels invisible too?

How did Mary and Zacharias see the angel that visited them? How were the angels seen at the tomb of Jesus? How did Abraham and Gideon see the angels that visited them? How did Abraham see Jehovah when He visited him (Genesis 18:1)?

Do the good angels need to take on bodies of flesh and bones to be visible? If yes, does this mean they are invisible in heaven?

Page 28 – Put simply, one of the powerful spirit sons of God turned himself into the Devil.

Page 41 – Jehovah is called a Father because he is the Creator. (Isaiah 64:8). Since Jesus was created by God, he is called God’s Son. For similar reasons, other spirit creatures and even the man Adam are called sons of God.—Job 1:6; Luke 3:38.

Since Lucifer was created by God, was he also God’s Son (uppercase)? Why do refer to the other spirit creatures as “sons” instead of “Sons?”

Page 29 – By using lies and trickery, Satan the Devil caused Adam and Eve to disobey God. (Genesis 2:17; 3:6).

Which lies (plural) and trickery (plural/singular)? I am only aware of one lie but no tricks.

Page 29 – Since Adam became imperfect when he sinned, all his offspring inherited sin from him. (Romans 5:12).

Why through him (Adam) and not them (Adam/Eve)?

Page 31 – Were Adam and Eve right to believe Satan, who had never done anything good for them?

No, since it did not agree with what God told them.

But were Adam and Eve wrong to believe Satan, who had never done anything bad for them?

Yes, since it did not agree with what God told them?

Page 32 – The Bible even refers to Satan the Devil as the god of this system of things (2 Corinthians 4:3, 4).

What does the term “god” mean in this passage?

What does the term “god” mean in John 1:1?

Pages 32-33 – Long ago, the Bible foretold: Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder: and his name shall be called . . . Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end (Isaiah 9:6, 7, King James Version).

The New Translation says, “For there has been a child born to us, there has been a son given to us; and the princely rule will come to be upon his shoulder. And his name will be called Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Eternal Father, Prince of Peace.”

What does Mighty God mean?

Page 36 – What a marvelous future awaits those who choose to learn about our Grand Creator, Jehovah God, and to serve him.

How are both Jesus and Jehovah considered God when an earlier passage says Jehovah is the only true God?

Page 36 – It was to the coming Paradise on earth that Jesus pointed when he promised the evildoer who died alongside him: You will be with me in Paradise (Luke 23:43).

According to this verse, how long would the thief live in Paradise? How long would Jesus live in Paradise?

Chapter 4 – Who Is Jesus Christ?

Page 40 – Further proof that Jesus was the Messiah became clear near the end of 29 C.E. That is the year when Jesus went to John the Baptizer to be baptized in the Jordan River.

How do you know it was near the end of 29 C.E.?

Page 41 – Jesus is Jehovah’s most precious Son—and for good reason. He is called “the firstborn of all creation,” for he was God’s first creation (Colossians 1:15).

I wondered about this for a moment – why doesn’t it say “firstborn of God” if it meant to convey the meaning of first born or created by God?

Isn’t Jehovah also the beginning of the creation by God because he is the creator? Being called the beginning of the creation of God does not necessarily mean being the first created thing or person of God.

Wouldn’t Cain be the firstborn of creation since he was the first-born child of Adam and Eve?

Exodus 4:22 says, “And you must say to Pharaoh, “This is what Jehovah has said: “Israel is my son, my firstborn.”

How is Israel God’s firstborn?

Jeremiah 31:9 says, “For I have become to Israel a Father; and as for Ephraim, he is my firstborn.”

How is Ephraim God’s firstborn?

Hebrews 12:22-23 says, “But you have approached a Mount Zion and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels, in general assembly, and the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens, and God the Judge of all, and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect.”

My Hebrew-Greek-English version uses the word “firstborn ones” and “spirits.”

How can you have plural firstborn? Who are these spirits in the heavenly Jerusalem?

What does your Hebrew-Greek-English version say?

Sometimes in their discussion about Jesus being the firstborn of all creation they will make a reference to Proverbs 8:30 and infer that the *master worker* is Jesus.

But when we examine the context of the scriptures (the discourse between Solomon and his son in Proverbs chapters 1-9), the Bible identifies who the master worker really is – *a woman personified as wisdom*.

I'll use the KJV in the following quotes and outline how the New World Translation differs.

Proverbs 1:20-21 – “Wisdom crieth without; she uttereth her voice in the streets: she crieth in the chief place of concourse, in the openings of the gates: in the city she uttereth her words.” [*the NWT uses “it” instead of “she”*]

Wisdom has called out to those around her:

Proverbs 1:24 – “Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded.”

The benefits of those who listen to wisdom:

Proverbs 1:33 – “But whoso hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quiet from fear of evil.”

Solomon advises his son to include his ear to several women, personified by wisdom and understanding:

Proverbs 2:2 – “So that thou incline thine ear unto wisdom, and apply thine heart to understanding.”

Solomon advises his son to seek her:

Proverbs 2:4-5 – “If thou seekest her as silver, and searchest for her as for hid treasures; Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God.” [*the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”*]

Solomon now changes to a description and warning of another woman:

Proverbs 2:16 – “To deliver thee from the strange woman, even from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” [*the NWT uses “her”*]

A description of this strange woman:

Proverbs 2:17 – “Which forsaketh the guide of her youth, and forgetteth the covenant of her God.” [*the NWT uses “her”*]

The strange woman has a house and her paths lead to death:

Proverbs 2:18 – “For her house inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

The consequences of following this “strange” woman:

Proverbs 2:19 – “None that go unto her return again, neither take they hold of the paths of life.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

The benefits of finding wisdom and getting understanding:

Proverbs 3:13 – “Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding.”

Wisdom and understanding personified as women:

Proverbs 3:15 – “She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her.” *[the NWT uses “it” instead of “she”]*

The benefits of following the “women” of wisdom and understanding:

Proverbs 3:16-18 – “Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.” *[the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”]*

Notice how the paths of the woman wisdom/understanding is contrasted to the paths of death of the “strange” woman see Proverbs 2:18.

Solomon advises his son to seek this woman wisdom/understanding:

Proverbs 4:5-6 – “Get wisdom, get understanding: forget it not; neither decline from the words of my mouth. Forsake her not, and she shall preserve thee: love her, and she shall keep thee.” *[the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”]*

Solomon warns his son of the subtlety of the “strange” woman:

Proverbs 5:3 – “For the lips of a strange woman drop as an honeycomb, and her mouth is smoother than oil.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

The consequences of paying heed to this “strange” woman:

Proverbs 5:4-5 – “But her end is bitter as wormwood, sharp as a two-edged sword. Her feet go down to death; her steps take hold on hell.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

Solomon warns his son not to go near the door of the strange woman’s house:

Proverbs 5:8 – “Remove thy way far from her, and come not nigh the door of her house.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

The ant is personified as a woman:

Proverbs 6:6-8 – “Go to the ant, thou sluggard; consider her ways, and be wise: Which having no guide, overseer, or ruler, Provideth her meat in the summer, and gathereth her food in the harvest.” *[the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”]*

Solomon advises his son to beware the evil/strange woman:

Proverbs 6:24 – “To keep thee from the evil woman, from the flattery of the tongue of a strange woman.”

Actions of the evil woman:

Proverbs 6:25 – “Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

Wisdom and understanding again are personified as women:

Proverbs 7:4 – “Say unto wisdom, Thou art my sister; and call understanding thy kinswoman.”

Solomon advises his son to follow these women wisdom and understanding so that they will keep him away from the evil/strange woman:

Proverbs 7:5 – “That they may keep thee from the strange woman, from the stranger which flattereth with her words.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

Solomon now describes a scenario whereby a young man passes nearby the house of the strange woman, unaware of the danger:

Proverbs 7:8 – “Passing through the street near her corner; and he went the way to her house.” *[the NWT uses “her”]*

Proverbs 7:10-27 describes the calling, actions, and enticement of the evil/strange woman.

After this, Solomon turns to the call and actions of the other woman wisdom:

Proverbs 8:1-3 – “Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice? She standeth in the top of high places, by the way in the places of the paths. She crieth at the gates, at the entry of the city, at the coming in at the doors.” *[the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”]*

Notice how the both the women strange/evil and wisdom call to those around them to listen to them. They both call from various locations.

The words of the woman [wisdom] is contrasted with the words of the strange woman:

Proverbs 8:1-3 – “For my mouth shall speak truth; and wickedness is an abomination to my lips.”

See the preciousness of wisdom:

Proverbs 8:11 – “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.”

Wisdom (personified as a woman) speaks further:

Proverbs 8:15-16 – “By me kings themselves keep reigning, and high officials themselves keep decreeing righteousness. By me princes themselves keep ruling as princes, and nobles are all judging in righteousness.”

Proverbs 8:29-30, 34 – “When he set for the sea his decree that the waters themselves should not pass beyond his order, when he decreed the foundations of the earth, then I came to be beside him as a master worker ... Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates, waiting at the posts of my doors.”

The *master worker* is the *woman* ... who has gates and doorposts.

Notice that the woman of wisdom and the strange woman are symbolized as calling from various locations.

The woman of wisdom also has a house like the strange woman:

Proverbs 9:1 – “Wisdom hath builded her house, she hath hewn out her seven pillars.” [*the NWT uses “it” instead of “her”*]

Notice the actions of the woman of wisdom.

Proverbs 9:2-5 – “She hath killed her beasts; she hath mingled her wine; she hath also furnished her table. She hath sent forth her maidens: she crieth upon the highest places of the city, Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Come, eat of my bread, and drink of the wine which I have mingled.” [*the NWT uses “it” most of the time and “her” in one case*]

Notice from the above verses that the woman of wisdom also has her own maidens.

Also notice from the above that the calling of the woman of wisdom is similar to the calling of the strange woman.

The benefits of listening to the woman of wisdom is contrasted to negative affects of listening to the strange woman.

Proverbs 9:11 – “For by me thy days shall be multiplied, and the years of thy life shall be increased.”

Another woman is now introduced. This could be the personification of the strange/evil woman.

Proverbs 9:13-18 – “A foolish woman is clamorous: she is simple, and knoweth nothing. For she sitteth at the door of her house, on a seat in the high places of the city, To call passengers who go right on their ways: Whoso is simple, let him turn in hither: and as for him that wanteth understanding, she saith to him, Stolen waters are sweet, and bread eaten in secret is pleasant. But he knoweth not that the dead are there; and that her guests are in the depths of hell.” *[the NWT uses “she”]*

There are similarities and differences between the actions and locations of this foolish woman and the woman of wisdom:

- The foolish woman knows nothing.
- She also has a house.
- She is in the high places of the city.
- She calls passerbys to listen to her.
- The passerbys do not know the danger that lurks closeby.
- Listening to her leads to death and hell.

This is the symbolism of the women in Proverbs chapters 1-9 as I read it.

This makes sense to me. How about you?

I see another key difference when I read Proverbs 9:2-5 (NWT):

“It has organized its meat slaughtering; it has mixed its wine; more than that, it has set in order its table. It has sent forth its lady attendants, that it may call out on top of the heights of the town: Whoever is inexperienced, let him turn aside here. Whoever is in want of heart—she has said to him: Come, feed yourselves with my bread and share in drinking the wine that I have mixed.” *[the NWT uses “it” most of the time and “her” in one case]*

I was wondering why the personification of wisdom alternates between a woman, a man, and a thing throughout the NWT when it is the same parable of Solomon to his son?

Biblically speaking, wisdom is personified as a woman throughout this conversation between Solomon and his son. Putting Jesus into any of these chapters in Proverbs breaks the context.

Page 41 – There is something else that makes this Son special. He is the “only-begotten Son.” (John 3:16) This means that Jesus is the only one directly created by God. Jesus is also the only one whom God used when He created all other things. (Colossians 1:16).

This means that Satan and the other angels are begotten sons of Jesus because Jesus directly created them. But Lucifer is not Christ’s only-begotten. Do you agree?

John 1:18 says, “No man has seen God at any time; the only-begotten god who is in the bosom position with the Father is the one that has explained him.”

What does god mean in this verse?

How is a god begotten? Is Jesus both a begotten-god and an angel?

Acts 13:32-33 says, “And so we are declaring to you the good news about the promise made to the forefathers, that God has entirely fulfilled it to us their children in that he resurrected Jesus; even as it is written in the second psalm, ‘You are my son, I have become your Father this day.’”

“Let me refer to the decree of Jehovah; He has said to me: “You are my son; I, today, I have become your father” (Psalms 2:7).

Why does Paul refer to this begotten day as the resurrection day?

Page 41 – Jehovah is called a Father because he is the Creator (Isaiah 64:8). Since Jesus was created by God, he is called God’s Son. For similar reasons, other spirit creatures and even the man Adam are called sons of God.—Job 1:6; Luke 3:38.

How could this be similar when Jesus, and not God, created the other spirit creatures? This would make them sons of Jesus.

Page 42 – To accomplish this, Jehovah performed a miracle. He transferred the life of his firstborn Son from heaven to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary.

The spirit of Jesus was transferred into the womb?

Page 46 – However, on the third day after Jesus died, his heavenly Father resurrected him back to spirit life (1 Peter 3:18).

What happened to the life of Jesus (which was transferred to Mary’s womb) when Jesus died?

What does resurrection mean? Is resurrection the same creating a new body?

Did Jesus resurrect Lazarus and Tabitha?

Page 46 – There he “sat down at the right hand of God” and waited to receive kingly power.—Hebrews 10:12, 13.

Hebrews 10:12-13 says, “But this man offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God, from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet.”

Where does it say that Jesus waited to receive kingly power?

When do you believe Jesus received kingly power?

Page 46 – Jesus’ death actually opens to us the opportunity for eternal life on a paradise earth, in harmony with Jehovah’s original purpose.

Was it God’s original purpose that human beings (Adam, Eve, and their descendants) would not live with God in heaven?

Chapter 5 – The Ransom – God’s Greatest Gift

Page 47 – Jehovah has given us many things, but his greatest gift to us is the ransom sacrifice of his Son, Jesus Christ (Matthew 20:28).

I can agree with this.

Did you do anything to receive this gift?

But page 33 says:

Jesus promised that in the coming new world, those approved by God would receive the gift of “everlasting life.” (Mark 10:30) Please open your Bible to John 3:16 and 17:3, and read what Jesus said we must do to receive everlasting life. Now consider from the Bible the blessings that will be enjoyed by those who qualify for that wonderful gift from God in the coming earthly Paradise.

Here it says you must do something to receive this gift.

How is the unmerited gift (first example) different from the earned gift (second example)?

Have you ever received a gift in your life that you did not deserve nor do anything for?

Page 48 – The Bible says that Adam was a “son of God.” (Luke 3:38) So Adam enjoyed a close relationship with Jehovah God, like that of a son with a loving father.

Could Adam and Eve enjoy a close relationship with God when, as a previous teaching said, God is invisible?

Page 48 – As we learned in Chapter 1 of this book, Jehovah is an invisible spirit. (John 4:24) So Jehovah does not have a body of flesh and blood.

Who is Jehovah invisible to?

Does Jehovah have a spirit body?

Page 49 – If he had chosen to obey God, he [Adam] would have lived forever in Paradise on earth.

Wouldn't Adam and Eve be miserable forever if they never had a close enough relationship with Jehovah by living with Him in heaven?

Page 49 – Through one man [Adam] sin entered into the world and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men because they had all sinned.” (Romans 5:12)

I can agree with this relationship of “one” to “many.”

Page 49 – What is a ransom? ... Second, a ransom is the price that covers, or pays, the cost of something. It is similar to the price paid to cover the damages caused by an injury. For example, if a person causes an accident, he would have to pay an amount that fully corresponds to, or equals, the value of what was damaged.

If a person causes an accident and 5 people die, would that person losing his life through the order of capital punishment by a judge be equal to the life of the 5 that were killed?

Page 50 – “Since a perfect human life was lost, no imperfect human life could ever buy it back. (Psalm 49:7, 8) What was needed was a ransom equal in value to what was lost.

I would disagree here. One human life was not lost. Two perfect human lives were lost. Plus, add all the other human lives that were lost because of Adam's sin (which earlier was said that sin and death passed unto all mankind). So, over 6 billion humans lives were lost.

So during Christ's atonement, one perfect life was not in equal value to what was lost. It had to be greater in order to return man to God.

Do you agree?

Ezekiel 16:62-63 says, “And I, I myself, will establish my covenant with you; and you will have to know that I am Jehovah, in order that you may remember and actually be ashamed and you may no more come to have any reason to open your mouth because of your humiliation, when I make an atonement for you for all that you have done, is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.”

How did Jehovah make an atonement? Was this Jesus speaking in the Old Testament?

Page 50 – This is in harmony with the principle of perfect justice found in God’s Word, which says: “Soul will be for soul.” (Deuteronomy 19:21) So, what would cover the value of the perfect human soul, or life, that Adam lost? Another perfect human life was the “corresponding ransom” that was required.—1 Timothy 2:6.

I would have to disagree here.

Adam did not only lose his soul or life. Eve’s soul or life as also lost. Thus, Jesus (one soul) atoned for those two souls.

When you really think of it, it was one soul for billions of souls.

Do you agree?

In the beginning, Jesus had to pay for two perfect human souls that were lost. So to me, it was not a one for one ratio, therefore not equal.

Do you agree?

Page 50 – How did Jehovah provide the ransom? He sent one of his perfect spirit sons to the earth.

Who are the other perfect spirit sons of Jehovah? Why are considered perfect spirit sons and not Sons?

Page 51 – In a sense, Jesus stepped into Adam’s place in order to save us.

This kind of seems to imply that Adam was able to save us as long as he remained perfect. Is this true?

Page 51 – By sacrificing, or giving up, his perfect life in flawless obedience to God, Jesus paid the price for Adam’s sin.

Do you believe Jesus paid the price for your sin too?

Page 51 – The Bible describes in detail the suffering that Jesus endured before his death. He experienced harsh whipping, cruel impalement, and an agonizing death on a torture stake ... Why was it necessary for Jesus to suffer so much?

Do you believe the atonement would have been nullified if Jesus did not endure the harsh whipping by the Roman soldiers?

Page 51 – On the third day after Jesus died, Jehovah raised him back to spirit life.

Did his spirit or body die and what did Jehovah raise back?

Page 52 – Picture of Christ on the stake.

Why is there no spear wound in Christ's side?

Why is Jesus depicted as being crucified with his robe on? Wasn't he naked to add insult to injury?

Page 53 – Jehovah accepted the value of Jesus' sacrifice as the ransom needed to deliver mankind from slavery to sin and death.—Romans 3:23, 24.

Christ's ransom delivered mankind from slavery to sin and death to eternal life too.

Page 53 – In Chapter 3 of this book, we discussed the blessings of the coming earthly Paradise. (Revelation 21:3, 4) All those future blessings, including life everlasting in perfect health, are made possible because Jesus died for us.

Why is mention of the resurrection excluded?

If there is no resurrection, there can be no ransom. Do you agree?

Page 55 – How, then, can you demonstrate that you appreciate God’s gift of the ransom? ... Attend the annual observance of the Lord’s Evening Meal ... This observance is also called the Memorial of Christ’s death. Jesus instituted it to help his apostles and all true Christians after them to bear in mind that by means of his death as a perfect human, he gave his soul, or life, as a ransom.

Do you believe the memorial of Christ’s death was only a year occurrence in the Bible?

Also, why is the resurrection of Christ excluded again?

Page 56 – We can show our appreciation for the ransom by being present at the yearly observance of the Memorial of Jesus’ death.

Did Jesus ever tell someone to be present at the meal but not participate in the meal?

Also, why is the resurrection of Christ excluded again? After all, the gospel is the death, burial, and resurrection.

Chapter 6 – Where Are The Dead?

Page 58 – Our senses, along with our thoughts, are all linked to the workings of our brain. At death, the brain stops working. Our memories, feelings, and senses do not continue to function independently in some mysterious way. They do not survive the destruction of our brain.

I have always been taught what the Bible teaches – that the dead can suffer pain, see, hear, and think. What comes to mind is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16.

“Now in course of time the beggar died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom [position] of Abraham. “Also, the rich man died and was buried. And in Ha´des he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments, and he saw Abraham afar off and Laz´a-rus in the bosom [position] with him. So he called and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Laz´a-rus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this blazing fire.’”

“But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you received in full your good things in your lifetime, but Laz´a-rus correspondingly the injurious things. Now, however, he is having comfort here but you are in anguish. And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you people, so that those wanting to go over from here to you people cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.’”

“Then he said, ‘In that event I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father, for I have five brothers, in order that he may give them a thorough witness, that they also should not get into this place of torment.’ But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these.’ Then he said, ‘No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent.’

“But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’” (NWT)

As we can see from the above passages, the dead rich man could hear, talk and feel pain. He was aware that he had five brothers and he had concern for their future well-being. Even Abraham was talking and he was aware of his environment. He even had memory of Moses and the prophets of God.

I believe these are real people because they are referred to by name.

Do you agree?

How would Abraham and the rich man able to have knowledge, pain, concern, and awareness after they had died?

I have seen the passage in Ecclesiastes 9:5 – “The dead do not see or hear or think.”

The church that I go to teaches that Ecclesiastes contrasts the views of God versus the view of man. It is the dramatic autobiography of Solomon’s life when he was away from God. As Dr. Vernon McGee said, “This [Ecclesiastes] is human philosophy apart from God, which must always reach the conclusions that this book reaches. We need to understand this about Ecclesiastes, because there are many statements, which contradict certain other statements of Scripture. Solomon tried every field of endeavor and pleasure that was known to man and his conclusion was that all is vanity.”

Can we take a look at a few biblical verses?

Ecclesiastes 1:14 says, “I saw all the works that were done under the sun, and, look! everything was vanity and a striving afterwind.”

Is all the work you do for God worthless, or is this the viewpoint of an atheist?

Ecclesiastes 2:24 says, “With a man there is nothing better than that he should eat and indeed drink and cause his soul to see good because of his hard work.”

Is there nothing better than eating and drinking?

Ecclesiastes 3:19 says, “For there is an eventuality as respects the sons of mankind and an eventuality as respects the beast, and they have the same eventuality. As the one dies, so the other dies; and they all have but one spirit, so that there is no superiority of the man over the beast, for everything is vanity.”

Is the beast on the same level as man?

Could Ecclesiastes 9:5 be the viewpoint of an atheist?

Page 58 – Not even one part of us survives the death of the body. We do not possess an immortal soul or spirit.

When Jesus died, did the spirit and body of Jesus both die? What was resurrected? A new spirit, new body, or both?

What happened to the body of Jesus? Acts 2:31 says, “He seeing this before spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption.

When Lazarus died, what came out of the burial tomb?

Can we examine some biblical verses?

Revelation 6:9-10 says, “And when he opened the fifth seal, I saw underneath the altar the souls of those slaughtered because of the word of God and because of the witness work that they used to have. And they cried with a loud voice, saying: “Until when, Sovereign Lord holy and true, are you refraining from judging and avenging our blood upon those who dwell on the earth?”

How are these dead souls able to cry out? How are they aware of their circumstances?

It seems Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t believe Jesus appeared in the same crucified body and resurrected body to his disciples. I seemed to hear that Jesus’ spirit and physical body were destroyed and a new spirit body was recreated for Jesus. When he appeared to the disciples in a physical body – which could eat and be felt – this body was not a resurrected body but a newly created body – without the actual crucifixion wounds – the wounds were not real representations but they were fakes – much like an artist makes a fake portrait of an original painting.

But did Jesus appear to his disciples with fake wounds in his hands, feet, and side?

Did anyone really believe Jesus would rise from the dead?

When I spoke to a certain Jehovah’s Witness he mentioned that the resurrected Jesus did not look like the same Jesus before he was crucified.

To support his claim he made several references to people not recognizing Jesus after his re-creation.

I’ll quote them.

1] Jesus appears to Mary but she did not recognize him at first.

“After saying these things, she turned back and viewed Jesus standing, but she did not discern it was Jesus. Jesus said to her: Woman, why are you weeping? Whom are you looking for? She, imagining it was the gardener, said to him: Sir, if you have carried him off, tell me where you have laid him, and I will take him away. Jesus said to her: Mary! Upon turning around, she said to him, in Hebrew: Rabboni! (which means Teacher)” (John 20:14-16).

Why didn’t Mary recognize Jesus?

- a] She did not believe in the resurrection.
- b] She assumed it was the gardener.
- c] She believe Christ’s body was moved to another place.
- d] Maybe she really didn’t look at Jesus in her depressed condition. She turned several times.

Then Jesus said to her: Mary!

What changed? Did Mary change or did the face of Jesus change to something Mary could recognize.

I would say that Mary's perception had changed.

2] Jesus appears to two disciples on the road to Emmaus but they don't recognize him initially.

"... And as he was reclining with them at the meal he took the loaf, blessed it, broke it and began to hand it to them. At that their eyes were fully opened and they recognized him; and he disappeared from them" (Luke 24:13-32).

Why didn't they recognize Jesus?

a] Their eyes were kept from recognizing him (verse 16).

Why were their eyes kept from recognizing Jesus?

If Jesus did not look like Jesus then there is no need to keep their eyes from recognizing Jesus.

b] The two did not really believe in the resurrection either, even after hearing the report.

"But we were hoping that this man was the one destined to deliver Israel; yes, and besides all these things, this makes the third day since these things occurred. Moreover, certain women from among us also astonished us, because they had been early to the memorial tomb but did not find his body and they came saying they had also seen a supernatural sight of angels, who said he is alive. Further, some of those with us went off to the memorial tomb; and they found it so, just as the women had said, but they did not see him." (verses 21-24).

Had these disciples believe in the resurrection they would not have left Jerusalem.

Jesus rebuked them for their unbelief.

"So he said to them: O senseless ones and slow in heart to believe on all the things the prophets spoke! Was it not necessary for the Christ to suffer these things and to enter into his glory?" (verse 25-26).

Then Jesus opens their eyes.

"And as he was reclining with them at the meal he took the loaf, blessed it, broke it and began to hand it to them. At that their eyes were fully opened and they recognized him; and he disappeared from them."

Did Jesus change faces? No. Their eyes were opened.

3] Jesus appeared to the apostles and then again with Thomas present. They did not initially believe.

“While they were speaking of these things he himself stood in their midst and said to them: May you have peace. But because they were terrified, and had become frightened, they were imagining they beheld a spirit” (Luke 24:36-37)

How could the disciples believe they were looking at a visible spirit? If a spirit is invisible how did they see it?

Why didn't the disciples say “Who are you?” I would say because he looked like Jesus. What would you say?

Do you recall when Jesus walked on water to his disciples while yet in his mortal body? – *“When they caught sight of him walking on the sea, the disciples were troubled, saying: It is an apparition! (d) And they cried out in their fear”* (Matthew 14:26). The word “apparition” is linked back to “spirit” of Luke 24:37). Why does the scripture teach an apparition (a spirit) is visible in both of these instances?

After this little detour I return to the resurrection.

“So he said to them: Why are you troubled, and why is it doubts come up in your hearts?” (verse 38).

The disciples did not believe in the resurrection of Christ.

“See my hands and my feet, that it is I myself; feel me and see, because a spirit does not have flesh and bones just as you behold that I have” (verse 39).

The booklet “What Does The Bible Really Teach?” said Jesus was raised [re-created?] a spirit creature after his death (page 73).

When Jesus said a spirit does not have a body of flesh and bones like he had then, what happened to the spirit Jesus when he took on a physical body? Was the spirit body destroyed? Or did the spirit Jesus become part of the physical/glorified Jesus?

“And as he said this he showed them his hands and his feet” (verse 40).

Jesus did this because the disciples did not believe.

“But while they were still not believing for sheer joy and were wondering, he said to them: Do you have something there to eat? And they handed him a piece of broiled fish; and he took it and ate it before their eyes” (verses 41-43).

The disciples still did not believe so he had to give them a demonstration of eating because they thought he was a visible spirit?

“He now said to them: These are my words which I spoke to you while I was yet with you that all the things written in the law of Moses and in the Prophets and Psalms about me must be fulfilled. Then he opened up their minds fully to grasp the meaning of the Scriptures, and he said to them: In this way it is written that the Christ would suffer and rise from among the dead on the third day and on the basis of his name repentance for forgiveness of sins would be preached in all the nations starting out from Jerusalem” (Luke 24:36-47).

Just like the disbelieving disciples on the road to Emmaus, Jesus had to explain things again to his disbelieving disciples.

Did the face of Jesus change so they could recognize who he was? No. He opened their minds so they could understand the scriptures (and his resurrection).

Jehovah’s Witnesses may ask, “Do you believe Peter, James, and John (who had witnessed the resurrection of a girl by Jesus in Luke 8:50-56) did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus?”

I would say “Peter, James, and John did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus”

They may say, “it is absurd to say they believed in the resurrection of the young girl but they did not believe in the resurrection of Christ.”

I would not say “absurd” but “unbelievable.”

A few other things lead one to conclude the disciples did not believe in the resurrection.

- a) When Jesus was arrested they fled. If they believed in the resurrection of Christ they would not fear their own death.
- b) Why were they in Jerusalem? Jesus told them that he would go to Galilee after the resurrection (Matthew 26:32).
- c) Why didn’t the disciples stay around the tomb in a vigil to await his resurrection? Because they did not believe.

After spending all that time with Jesus they still did not believe in the resurrection (before he died and for a moment after he appeared to them). It’s amazing that they did not have faith in Christ before his resurrection.

4] Jesus appears to the fishing disciples.

“Simon Peter said to them: I am going fishing. They said to him: We also are coming with you. Out they went and got aboard the boat, but during that night they caught nothing. However, just as it was getting to be morning, Jesus stood on the beach, but the disciples did not, of course, discern that it was Jesus. Then Jesus said to them: “Young children, you do not have anything to eat, do you? They answered “No!” to him. He said to them: Cast the net on the right side of the boat and you will find some. Then they cast it, but they were no longer able to draw it in because

of the multitude of the fishes. Therefore that disciple whom Jesus used to love said to Peter: It is the Lord!” (John 21:3-7).

Why couldn't the disciples discern it was Jesus?

I believe it was not because Jesus did not look like Jesus but rather because the disciples were not fishing near the shore – they were further out – and the outlook was changing from night to morning – so the visibility was not good. To be honest with you, I doubt I could recognize my father if he was 50 or 100 yards away from me in this type of condition – and it didn't seem like they had an appointment with Jesus so they were not expecting him to come at that time.

So how did [only] one of the disciples recognize Jesus and tell Peter? Did the face of Jesus change? No. Did his eyesight improve dramatically? No. The disciple had remembered the earlier miracle of Jesus.

Are spirits visible?

Matthew 14:25-26 says, “But in the fourth watch period of the night he came to them, walking over the sea. When they caught sight of him walking on the sea, the disciples were troubled, saying: “It is an apparition!” And they cried out in their fear.”

When I look at the King James Version and the English Standard Version, it uses the word “ghost” and “spirit.” My Hebrew-Greek-English version uses the word “phantom.”

Why did these frightened disciples believe spirits were visible?

Page 59 – Jehovah made man to live forever on earth.

How could earth be a paradise with the knowledge that you would never live with God?

Page 59 – God placed the first human couple in a delightful paradise.

I know that God placed Adam in paradise, but where does the Bible say that Eve was placed in paradise? From my knowledge, she was already in paradise at her creation.

Page 65 – Can a lifeless person who is sleeping in death be brought back to life?

When Lazarus was sleeping in death, what was brought back to life?

When he was resurrected, did he still have a memory of who he was? If so, where did these memories come from?

Chapter 7 – Real Hope for Your Loved Ones Who Have Died

Page 67 – The dead will live again. (Isaiah 26:19) They will be brought back to life. That is the hope of the resurrection.

What about them will be brought back to life? What died? Their spirit, their body, or both?

Page 70 – The Bible teaches that the dead are conscious of nothing at all. They are not alive and have no conscious existence anywhere.

Matthew 22:32 says, “I am the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.”

How is God the God of Abraham if he is dead and not living?

Page 71 – Is it unrealistic to accept the resurrection as a fact? No, for Jesus taught that someday “all those in the memorial tombs” will be resurrected. (John 5:28).

This is interesting. I use both the KJV and the ESV and they don't refer to the term “memorial tombs”.

I see that the NWT does.

Mat 27:52 says, “And the memorial tombs were opened and many bodies of the holy ones that had fallen asleep were raised up, (and persons, coming out from among the memorial tombs after his being raised up, entered into the holy city,) and they became visible to many people.

What kind of bodies did these resurrected people have?

How can those who had fallen asleep (who had died) rise up and enter the holy city when pages 63 and 103 of the booklet says they cease to exist at death? Suppose a silver dollar drops to the floor (dies and ceases to exist). Are you able to raise it?

What do you mean they became visible? Where they invisible at their resurrection?

What is a memorial tomb and what is meant by all in the memorial tombs will be resurrected? (Page 73 below says not all will be resurrected).

Page 72 – There is going to be a resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous (Acts 24:15).

But the booklet excludes the resurrection of those in Gehenna (page 73, point 20).

The booklet only counts the “unrighteous” as those “who did not serve or obey Jehovah because they never knew about him.”

Why does the booklet exclude those people who served and obeyed Jehovah once but then turned their backs on Him? These people are wicked people right?

Page 73 point 20 says, “*He will never resurrect those whom he judges to be wicked and unwilling to change.*”

But doesn’t this include the unrighteous ones on page 72 point 17 that God knew would be unwilling to change? These “unrighteous ones” are “wicked ones.”

The booklet and New World Translation make several references to the words “re-create” and “re-creation.”

In Jehovah’s Witnesses theology is re-creation the same as resurrection? In a re-creation what is being raised up?

Page 72 point 17 says, “*all those in the memorial tombs will hear his [Jesus’] voice and come out.*”

If in Jehovah’s Witnesses theology the body and spirit cease to exist at death, then how can they be in the memorial tombs and hear his voice when they don’t exist?

Page 211 says, “*How comforting it is to know that this is exactly what God will do for all of those resting in “the memorial tombs”! (John 5:28, 29) At the time of the resurrection, Jehovah will form a new body for a person sleeping in death and bring it to life by putting spirit, or life-force, in it.*”

How are they considered resting when they ceased to exist at death? How will they hear his voice if they don’t exist?

How is the person sleeping in death when the body and spirit do not exist?

Is this a re-creation or a resurrection? Will God re-create the person’s DNA (cells, etc) or will he resurrection the person from the originally decomposed cells?

Is Ezekiel 38 a picture of recreation or resurrection?

There are also references to “memorial tombs” in the New World Translation.

Are memorial tombs actual graves (where the body has decomposed) in specific locations or are memorial tombs “memory banks” in God’s memory? Can you provide a scriptural passage that shows memorial tombs are places in God’s memory in heaven and not physical places on earth?

Page 72 point 17 says, *“The sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them.”*

How can the sea, death, and Hades give up the dead when they have ceased to exist as believed in your theology?

In regards to the condition of the dead, the booklet teaches:

“When a person dies, he ceases to exist” (page 58 point 5).

“The dead do not suffer pain or heartache” (page 64 point 15).

“For the living know that they shall die; but the dead know not any thing, neither have they any more a reward; for the memory of them is forgotten” (page 175 point 2 – Ecclesiastes 9:5).

I think this is the only scripture to support their position.

“For the living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all, neither do they anymore have wages, because the remembrance of them has been forgotten. Also, their love and their hate and their jealousy have already perished, and they have no portion anymore to time indefinite in anything that has to be done under the sun.”

If I am sleeping, I am also conscious of nothing at all – but I have not ceased to exist.

My church teaches a little differently on this passage in Ecclesiastes.

What do you think about the following quote by Pastor Vernon McGee?

“This [Ecclesiastes] is human philosophy apart from God, which must always reach the conclusions that this book reaches. We need to understand this about Ecclesiastes, because there are many statements which contradict certain other statements of Scripture. Solomon tried every field of endeavor and pleasure that was known to man and his conclusion was that all is vanity. In Proverbs we saw the wisdom of Solomon; in Ecclesiastes we see the foolishness of Solomon.”

Ecclesiastes 9:5 is often used to prove that the dead are unconscious but take notice of the next verse – *“under the sun.”* This passage has reference solely to what the dead can know or do *“under the sun,”* that is, in the world which they once lived in. After death one’s activity ceases on earth – therefore he knows nothing about what is happening on earth.

What do you think *“under the sun”* means? It is used several times in Ecclesiastes.

I can find other scriptures which show a person exists in some form after death.

What easily comes to mind is the parable of the rich man and Lazarus in Luke 16.

The dead rich man could hear, talk and feel pain. He was aware that he had five brothers and he had concern for their future well-being. Even Abraham was talking and he was aware of his environment.

Paul said, *“But we are of good courage and are well pleased rather to become absent from the body and to make our home with the Lord.”*

He did not believe he would cease to exist at death.

“Then the dust returns to the earth just as it happened to be and the spirit itself returns to the true God who gave it” (Ecclesiastes 12:7).

The spirit does not cease to exist.

The spirit of man may exist with or without a physical body. David did not consider his dead child non-existent for he said, *“I am going to him, but, as for him, he will not return to me”* (2 Samuel 12:23).

That the dead continue to live is further emphasized by Christ when he said to the thief, *“Truly I tell you today, You will be with me in Paradise”* (Luke 23:43).

The thief’s spirit did not cease to exist.

When the ruler’s daughter was raised by Jesus in Luke 8:55 it is said *“her spirit returned, and she rose instantly.”*

Her spirit did not cease to exist and needed to be re-created.

Isaiah 38:19 says, *“For it is not Sheol that can laud you; death itself cannot praise you. Those going down into the pit cannot look hopefully to your trueness.”* This is footnoted by point N, which links to verse 11. Let me quote verses 10-12 – *“I myself said: In the midst of my days I will go into the gates of Sheol. I must be deprived of the remainder of my years. I have said: I shall not see Jah, even Jah, in the land of the living ones. I shall no more look on mankind – with the inhabitants of the land of cessation. My own habitation has been pulled out and removed from me like the tent of shepherds. I have rolled up my life just like a loom worker.”*

Why did Hezekiah say those going into the pit cannot look hopefully to God’s trueness when at the same time he said he would be deprived the remainder of his years?

It seems like he was losing hope in God.

Psalms 6:5 says, *“For in death there is no mention of you; In Sheol who will laud you?”*

Aren't these opinions of a man who has lost faith in God?

Job 14:10-12 says, *“But man dieth, and wasteth away: yea, man giveth up the ghost, and where is he? As the waters fail from the sea, and the flood decayeth and drieth up: So man lieth down, and riseth not: till the heavens be no more, they shall not awake, nor be raised out of their sleep.”*

Isn't this a clear sign that Job was losing his faith in God? – for we know from other scriptures that the dead shall awake and be raised from their sleep.

Isn't this similar to the lack-of-faith statement by Solomon in Ecclesiastes 9:5? – for we see from other scriptures that the spirit survives the death of the body.

Page 73 – Does this mean that every human who ever lived will be resurrected? No.

I did not agree with this.

From the Bible, Jesus teaches that all will come forth in the resurrection.

John 5:28-29 says, *“Do not marvel at this, because the hour is coming in which all those in the memorial tombs will hear his voice and come out, those who did good things to a resurrection of life, those who practiced vile things to a resurrection of judgment”*(NWT).

How can those in the memorial tombs (who are dead and have ceased to exist) hear his voice and come out?

Suppose a silver dollar drops to the floor (dies and ceases to exist). Is it able to come off the floor?

Page 73 – The Bible also refers to another kind of resurrection, one to life as a spirit creature in heaven. Only one example of this type of resurrection is recorded in the Bible, that of Jesus Christ.

The word “another kind” implies this is the second type of resurrection, but I could not see the first type of resurrection mentioned.

The church I go to believes it was a physical resurrection based on John 2:19-22.

“In answer Jesus said to them: Break down this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. Therefore the Jews said: This temple was built in forty six years, and will you raise it up in three

days? But he was talking about the temple of his body. When, though, he was raised up from the dead, his disciples called to mind that he used to say this; and they believed the Scripture and the saying that Jesus said.”

What temple did Jesus tell the Jews to break down? His spirit or physical body?

Does the first type = a physical human creature living on earth and the second type = a spiritual creature living in heaven?

Can you provide some scriptural references that talk about 2 types of resurrection, one to human life and one to spiritual life on Judgment Day?

Can I ask you some questions about Christ’s resurrection day?

Why was the stone rolled away? Why did the soldiers leave their guard of the tomb?

Why were the bandages left in the tomb (Luke 24:12)?

John 20:6-9 says, “Then Simon Peter also came following him, and he entered into the memorial tomb. And he viewed the bandages lying, also the cloth that had been upon his head not lying with the bandages but separately rolled up in one place. At that time, therefore, the other disciple who had reached the memorial tomb first also went in, and he saw and believed. For they did not yet discern the scripture that he must rise from the dead.”

Was it the missing body or the way the bandages and cloth were left in the tomb that caused this other disciple to see and believe?

Why was the cloth that was on Jesus’ head not lying with the bandages but separately rolled up?

Page 73 – After Jesus was put to death as a human, Jehovah did not allow His faithful Son to remain in the grave.

Why does the booklet need to refer to Jesus as a human?

Page 74 – Jesus was alive again as a mighty spirit person (1 Corinthians 15:3-6) Jesus was the first ever to receive this glorious type of resurrection. (John 3:13).

What does resurrection mean?

There are several passages in the booklet about being “raised up”:

Page 51 – On the third day after Jesus died, Jehovah raised him back to spirit life.

Page 70 – Jesus raised a young girl from the dead.

Page 70 – Jesus raised Lazarus in front of a crowd of eyewitnesses.

Page 78 – After being raised out of death to heavenly life, “they are to rule as kings over the earth” along with Jesus.

What exactly is being raised up if something ceases to exist?

Can we look at a passage in the Old Testament?

Ezekiel 37:12-14 says, “Therefore prophesy, and you must say to them, ‘This is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said: “Here I am opening your burial places, and I will bring you up out of your burial places, O my people, and bring you in upon the soil of Israel. And you will have to know that I am Jehovah when I open your burial places and when I bring you up out of your burial places, O my people.” ‘And I will put my spirit in you, and you must come to life, and I will settle you upon your soil; and you will have to know that I myself, Jehovah, have spoken and I have done it,’ is the utterance of Jehovah.”

What is God actually bringing up from the grave?

Maybe I can use another example.

Suppose a silver dollar drops to the floor. Are you able to raise it?

Page 58 of the booklet says, “When a person dies, he ceases to exist.”

So, if that silver dollar drops to the floor and ceases to exist, what is being raised?

Page 74 – Jesus referred to those going to heaven as his “little flock.” (Luke 12:32). How many are to be in this relatively small group of faithful Christians? According to Revelation 14:1, the apostle John says: “I saw, and, look! the Lamb [Jesus Christ] standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads.”

I couldn't make the connection with this teaching and what the Bible says.

Luke 12:32 says, “Have no fear, little flock, because your Father has approved of giving you the kingdom.”

I don't see that Jesus is addressing 144,000 people here. Also, God's kingdom is where he is ruling—on earth, heaven, everywhere.

Page 74 – These 144,000 Christians, including Jesus' faithful apostles, are raised to life in heaven. When does their resurrection take place? The apostle Paul wrote that it would occur during the time of Christ's presence. (1 Corinthians 15:23) As you will learn in Chapter 9, we are now living in that time. So those few remaining ones of the 144,000 who die in our day are instantly resurrected to life in heaven. (1 Corinthians 15:51-55)

How are they raised to life when a previous teaching says they cease to exist when they die?

How do you identify a person in this group of 144,000?

When the person is changed from mortal to immortal, there is no mention of that person moving from earth to heaven or to some other planet.

I did not agree with this timing for the resurrection. All we need to do is look at verses 51-52 – *“Look! I tell you a sacred secret: We shall not all fall asleep in death, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed.”*

We are not living in the times of the last trumpet. And it doesn't say that those living would die and then be changed.

I only see one trumpet sound. I don't see a trumpet sound every time one of the 144,000 dies. Nor do I see the sound of the trumpet lasting for over 2,000 years.

See also 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17 – *“The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel's voice and with God's trumpet, and those who are dead in union with Christ will rise first. Afterward we the living who are surviving will, together with them, be caught away in clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and thus we shall always be with the Lord.”*

Paul says these particular living people don't die. But page 74 says, *“So those few remaining ones of the 144,000 who die in our day are instantly resurrected to life in heaven.”*

Do you see why this teaching is incorrect?

Another point where I believe some people make a mistake is that they view the passage in Corinthians as only referring to 144,000 people. But this passage symbolically applies, I believe, to all Christians.

Paul is primarily addressing the church members in Corinth. The Corinthians were engaged in various sins and he had to write to them in order to get them back to truth and fellowship. To be honest with you, this does not fit the description of the 144,000 (*“These are the ones that did not*

defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish”).

Let's look at the comparison of earthly body (mortal) versus the heavenly body (immortal) and the change resurrection brings:

- Sown in corruption. Raised in incorruption.
- Sown in dishonor. Raised in glory.
- Sown in weakness. Raised in power.
- Sown a physical body. Raised a spiritual body.
- Bore the image of Adam (made of dust). Will bear the image of the heavenly (verse 47-48).
- All those who had corruptible bodies will have incorruptible ones (verse 52).
- All those who were mortal will become immortal (verses 53-54).

Since all believers bore the image of Adam (the man of dust), so will all believers bear the image of Christ (the heavenly). There is not a third option. Paul is comparing only 2 things, not 3. Even those living on earth will bear the image of the heavenly (see also 2 Corinthians 5:1-4).

What are your thoughts?

Chapter 8 – What Is God’s Kingdom?

Page 76 – Millions of people worldwide are familiar with the prayer that many call the Our Father, or the Lord’s Prayer. Both expressions refer to a famous prayer given as a model by Jesus Christ himself.

The booklet said before that knowing God’s name was of utmost importance.

Why didn’t Jesus call God Jehovah?

Page 77 – You will remember learning that he was put to death on a torture stake, and then he was resurrected. Shortly thereafter, he ascended to heaven (Acts 2:33). Hence, that is where God’s Kingdom is—in heaven.

Part of this prayer says, “Our Father in the heavens, let your name be sanctified. Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth.

I see this to mean that God’s kingdom will be both in heaven and on earth—both places in which God’s will is taking place.

I don’t see God’s kingdom as only being in heaven. Do you?

Mark 4:26-32 also mentions that God’s kingdom can also exist on the earth.

Would you agree?

Luke 17:20 says, “But on being asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God was coming, he answered them and said: “The kingdom of God is not coming with striking observableness, neither will people be saying, ‘See here!’ or, ‘There!’ For, look! the kingdom of God is in your midst.”

The kingdom of God is in your midst. Where is your midst?

Page 77 – That is why the Bible calls it a “heavenly kingdom.” (2 Timothy 4:18) Although God’s Kingdom is in heaven, it will rule over the earth—Revelation 11:15.

Revelation 11:15 says, “And the seventh angel blew his trumpet. And loud voices occurred in heaven, saying: “The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever.”

Since the kingdom of the world becomes the kingdom of Jehovah, the kingdom of God is on the earth too.

Would you agree?

Page 77 – What makes Jesus an outstanding King? For one thing, he will never die. Comparing Jesus with human kings, the Bible calls him “the one alone having immortality, who dwells in unapproachable light.” (1 Timothy 6:16).

I’m confused by this part. Didn’t Jesus die? Aren’t there others besides Jesus who have immortality?

Since Jesus dwells in unapproachable light, how would the thief on the cross be with Jesus in Paradise?

Pages 78-79 – Since the days of the apostles, God has been selecting faithful Christians in order to complete the number 144,000.

But according to Luke 13:28-29, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets would be in the kingdom of God. These people were not Christians.

What do you think?

Page 79 – Satan and the angelic spirit creatures who chose to follow him—called demons—were allowed to stay in heaven for a while. Hence, not all in heaven were then doing God’s will. That was to change when God’s Kingdom would begin to rule. The newly enthroned King, Jesus Christ, was to wage war on Satan—Revelation 12:7-9.

What were the demons doing in heaven while they were allowed to stay there? Was there open rebellion and chaos/sin/etc while some were not doing God’s will?

When did God Kingdom’s begin to rule in heaven?

When was Jesus enthroned?

Revelation 12:7-9 says, “And war broke out in heaven: Michael and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him.”

Is Jesus Michael the Archangel?

Psalm 24:7-9 says, “Raise your heads, O you gates, And raise yourselves up, O you long-lasting entrances, That the glorious King may come in! Who, then, is this glorious King? Jehovah strong and mighty, Jehovah mighty in battle. Raise your heads, O you gates; yes, raise them up, O you long-lasting entrances, that the glorious King may come in!”

Is Jehovah dethroned so that Jesus is enthroned? Who is the King?

Page 80 – First, God’s Kingdom under Jesus Christ begins to rule. Second, Satan is cast out of heaven down to the earth.

When did Jesus begin to rule?

When was Satan cast down to earth?

Page 80-81 – In Eden, God showed that his will is for this earth to be a paradise filled with an undying, righteous human race. Satan caused Adam and Eve to sin, and that affected the fulfillment of God’s will for the earth but did not change it.

But according to Luke 13:28-29, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob and all the prophets would be in the kingdom of God. These people were not Christians.

And earlier, the booklet taught that 144,000 Christians would live in heaven and not in Paradise—thus someone changed the fulfillment of God’s will.

Page 82 – Yet another reason why God’s will is not being done on earth is that governments do not encourage people to do it.

This sounds like the Watch Tower Bible Society is suggesting that God’s will is not being done on earth despite the fact that you have over 12 million Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Is that what you believe?

As a Jehovah's Witness yourself, how does the government prevent you from doing God's will?

Also, why does the booklet think that governments should encourage people to do God's will on earth when you believe governments are controlled by the Devil—since he is the god of this world?

Page 83 – Picture and caption: The casting of Satan and his demons out of heaven brought woe to the earth.

When did this happen?

Was there no woe on the earth before this date?

Page 85 - God's Kingdom is a heavenly government with Jesus Christ as King, and from among mankind, 144,000 are taken to rule with him—Revelation 14:1, 4.

Would this mean that Christ's Kingdom was not complete in 1914 because not all the 144,000 have died and been resurrected yet?

I think the closest thing I could find about "ruling over earth" was in Revelation 5:10.

But this is not referring to the 144,000 – it refers to the 24 elders.

Can we look at verses 8 through 10?

“And when he took the scroll, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb, having each one a harp and golden bowls that were full of incense, and the incense means the prayers of the holy ones. And they sing a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.”

Can we then look at Revelation 14:1-3?

“And I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. And I heard a sound out of heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder; and the sound that I heard was as of singers who accompany themselves on the harp playing on their harps. And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living

creatures and the elders; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth.”

When I compare the two sections, the 24 elders and the 144,000 are mentioned, but it does not say that they are ruling specifically from heaven, so can you help me to understand why your booklet teaches what it does? After all, won't the government on earth also be God's kingdom when he is ruling?

When I look at some Bible translations, it says that these people are ruling on earth and ruling over the earth. When I look at a Hebrew-Greek-English translation, some also say the same things.

What Hebrew-Greek-English translation does your church use and what does it say?

My own personal feeling is that “ruling on earth” is the same thing as “ruling over the earth.”

Let me give you an example: suppose you have a king on earth. He is ruling in his kingdom, on his kingdom, and over his kingdom. The principle is the same no matter where the king is.

Does this make sense?

How does your church view the 144,000 as only being Jehovah's Witnesses? Why does your church take a literal meaning of 12,000 from each of the 12 tribes, but does not take a literal meaning of the 12 tribes? Why are the tribes of Dan and Ephraim excluded from the list in Revelation 7:4-8?

Page 85 – The Kingdom started to rule in 1914, and since then Satan has been cast out of heaven down to earth.—Revelation 12:9.

When in 1914?

Earlier in the booklet, page 23 says that an army encamped near Babylon on the night of October 5/6. How can you calculate this date of October 5/6 but you cannot calculate the month and the day when something more dramatic like Satan being cast down to earth happened?

Did your church pick 1914 because that is when World War I started? If yes, then what event in heaven caused World War II?

Can we take a more personal example? How do you know what year you were born? How do you know what year you were born if you don't know what month you were born? How do you know what month you were born if you don't know what day you were born? How do you know what day you were born if you don't know what hour you were born?

Page 85 – God’s Kingdom will soon destroy human governments, and the earth will become a paradise.—Revelation 16:14, 16.

I see a biblical reference for God destroying human government in Daniel’s vision.

Daniel 2:34-35 says, “You kept on looking until a stone was cut out not by hands, and it struck the image on its feet of iron and of molded clay and crushed them. At that time the iron, the molded clay, the copper, the silver and the gold were, all together, crushed and became like the chaff from the summer threshing floor, and the wind carried them away so that no trace at all was found of them. And as for the stone that struck the image, it became a large mountain and filled the whole earth.”

When I read this passage, it says to me that the stone is God’s Kingdom that God’s kingdom will fill the whole earth. To me, this therefore says that God’s Kingdom will exist on earth.

This also fits in with what Jesus prayed about – “Let your kingdom come. Let your will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth” (Matthew 6:10). Jesus is praying that both God’s kingdom will come and that God’s will will be done on earth.

What are your thoughts?

When I looked at another passage, it also reveals God’s kingdom will be both on earth and in heaven.

Can we take a look at this?

Matthew 25:31-34 says, “When the Son of man arrives in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit down on his glorious throne. And all the nations will be gathered before him, and he will separate people one from another, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. And he will put the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on his left. Then the king will say to those on his right, ‘Come, you who have been blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the founding of the world.’”

Are you a sheep or a goat? Where is Christ’s glorious throne?

I see only 2 groups of people here – the sheep and the goats. Do you agree?

Can we look at some verses in 1 Corinthians 15?

42 – “So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised up in incorruption.”

43 – “It is sown in dishonor, it is raised up in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised up in power.”

44 – “It is sown a physical body, it is raised up a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one.”

50 – “However, this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God’s kingdom, neither does corruption inherit incorruption.”

When you believe Christ materialized in a physical body to his disciples, was it a corruptible body or an incorruptible one?

If Jesus had a body of flesh and no blood, would he be able to inherit God’s kingdom?

What is the difference between a human body and body that the booklet says Jesus was raised with?

“While they were speaking of these things he himself stood in their midst and said to them: May you have peace. But because they were terrified, and had become frightened, they were imagining they beheld a spirit” (Luke 24:36-37)

Why did these disciples believe in visible spirits? The booklet says spirits are invisible.

51 – “Look! I tell you a sacred secret: We shall not all fall asleep in death, but we shall all be changed.”

53 – “For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality.”

This seems to say to me that only a spiritual body can inherit the kingdom of God.

People (I’m assuming Paul is addressing only Christian believers) will obtain a spiritual (incorruptible) body in their resurrection.

Do you agree? Does verse 51 apply to all Christians?

Can we look at a few more passages in the Bible?

Luke 13:27-30 says, “Get away from me, all you workers of unrighteousness!’ There is where your weeping and the gnashing of your teeth will be, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God, but yourselves thrown outside. Furthermore, people will come from eastern parts and western, and from north and south, and will recline at the table *in the kingdom of God*. And, look! there are those last who will be first, and there are those first who will be last.”

This is very similar to a passage in Matthew.

Matthew 8:11-13 says, “But I tell you that many from eastern parts and western (j) parts will come and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob *in the kingdom (k) of the*

heavens; (l) whereas the sons of the kingdom (m) will be thrown into the darkness outside. There is where their weeping and the gnashing of their teeth will be.” (n)

According to the New World Translation point j links to Isaiah 49:12, point k links to Luke 13:29, point l links to Matthew 11:12, point m links to Matthew 25:30, point n links to Matthew 22:13, 24:51, and Luke 13:28.

Can we examine these links?

For point j, Isaiah 49:12 says, “Look! These will come even from far away, and, look! these from the north and from the west, and these from the land of Sinim.”

Point k we already saw before.

For point l, Matthew 11:12 says, “But from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of the heavens is the goal toward which men press, and those pressing forward are seizing it.”

Is the kingdom of the heavens your goal?

For point m, Matthew 25:30 says, “And throw the good-for-nothing slave out into the darkness outside. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.”

For point n, Matthew 22:13 says, “Then the king said to his servants, 'Bind him hand and foot and throw him out into the darkness outside. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.’” Matthew 24:50-51 says, “The master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know, and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.”

When I look at all these verses, the contrast is between the kingdom of heaven (the residence of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and many others – the goal towards which men press – i.e. all the saints of God) and the kingdom of darkness (where the unrighteous will suffer).

Which kingdom will you be entering?

Matthew 5:20 says, “For I say to you that if your righteousness does not abound more than that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter into the kingdom of the heavens.”

Who is Jesus talking to?

Page 85 – We can also say with certainty that soon God’s Kingdom will act to cause God’s will to be done on earth.

Can you help me understand this?

How can God's Kingdom exist in heaven in 1913 and before when not all of heaven is doing God's will (because of the devil and his angels) and then you say God's will will be done on earth but God's kingdom will not exist on earth but only in heaven?

Chapter 9 – Are We Living In The Last Days?

Page 87 – The preceding chapter in this book explained that Jesus Christ became King in heaven in the year 1914 (Daniel 7:13, 14). Soon after he received Kingdom power, Jesus took action. “War broke out in heaven,” says the Bible. “Michael [another name for Jesus] and his angels battled with the dragon [Satan the Devil], and the dragon and its angels battled.” Satan and his wicked angels, the demons, lost that war and were cast out of heaven to the earth.

Are Michael (Jesus) and Lucifer the only angels that the Bible considers gods? Are there other angels who are gods?

Did the war in heaven start on the same day that World War I started?

Page 92 – Millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses zealously preach the Kingdom good news. They come from “all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues.” (Revelation 7:9)

Revelation 7:9-10 says, “After these things I saw, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: “Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

Is the ‘great crowd’ only Jehovah’s Witnesses?

How does this great crowd of people know God is seated on throne when supposedly they only see the throne and not God, because a previous teaching says God is invisible? Is the great crowd able to see Jesus, or is he also invisible?

Page 92 – The Witnesses conduct free home Bible studies with millions of people who want to know what the Bible really teaches. What an impressive fulfillment of prophecy, especially since Jesus foretold that true Christians would be “objects of hatred by all people”!—Luke 21:17.

To be honest with you, I don’t think all people hate Jehovah’s Witnesses. All Christians (who are evangelicals, catholics, protestants, others) don’t hate Jehovah’s Witnesses. All Muslims don’t hate Jehovah’s Witnesses. All Hindus don’t hate Jehovah’s Witnesses. All Buddhists don’t

hate Jehovah's Witnesses. All these billions of people don't agree with some of the teachings of the Jehovah's Witnesses, but disagreement does not mean hate.

So, who is the "all" that this booklet is referring to?

I know some Mormons that conduct free home Bible studies and some people hate them. According to the booklet's teaching, this is evidence that they are also "true Christians."

Do you agree?

Chapter 10 – Spirit Creatures – How They Affect Us?

Page 96 – The Bible calls the angels “sons of God.” (Job 38:7)

Are Jesus (Michael) and Lucifer the only “sons of God” who are gods?

Page 96 – By means of him [Jesus Christ] all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth. Hence, all the spirit creatures called angels were individually created by Jehovah God through his firstborn Son.

The booklet says Jesus is Jehovah’s firstborn son because he was the first angel who was created by Jehovah.

So who was Christ’s firstborn son (the first angel created by Jesus)?

Page 97 – Since angels have such deep concern for the welfare of those who serve God, it is no wonder that Jehovah has repeatedly used angels to strengthen and protect his faithful servants on earth.

Matthew 24:45 says, “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so! Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings. “But if ever that evil slave should say in his heart, ‘My master is delaying,’ and should start to beat his fellow slaves and should eat and drink with the confirmed drunkards, the master of that slave will come on a day that he does not expect and in an hour that he does not know, and will punish him with the greatest severity and will assign him his part with the hypocrites. There is where his weeping and the gnashing of his teeth will be.”

Do you regard yourself as the *faithful and discreet slave* or the *evil slave*?

What does it mean that slaves have slaves themselves?

Leviticus 25:55 says, “For to me the sons of Israel are slaves. They are my slaves whom I brought out of the land of Egypt. I am Jehovah your God.”

How many slaves are there?

Page 98 – Today, angels no longer appear visibly to God’s people on earth.

Can you give me a few examples where angels appeared visibly to God’s people in the New Testament?

Page 98 – In Noah’s day, other angels rebelled against Jehovah.

Did some other good angels become bad angels? Or was this the second time that the bad angels rebelled against Jehovah (first being at the creation when they joined Satan)?

Page 99-100 – Thus, the rebellious angels, or demons, were forced to abandon their fleshly bodies and return to heaven as spirit creatures. They put themselves on the side of the Devil, who became “the ruler of the demons.”—Matthew 9:34.

Who forced them to return to heaven? Did this person force them back to heaven in order to make Satan’s army more powerful?

Why were they forced to return to heaven when they would later be cast down to earth?

Page 100 – When the disobedient angels returned to heaven, they were treated as outcasts, like their ruler, Satan. (2 Peter 2:4).

This is confusing. Can you help to explain it to me?

How were they treated as outcasts?

How were these angels considered outcasts like Satan when they were not cast out yet? One can only be an outcast when they were cast out of heaven, but these angels (with Satan) are still in heaven.

Page 100 – Although they are now unable to take on human bodies, they still exercise a very bad influence over humans.

Page 99 mentioned that the angels (as spirit creatures) took on human “fleshy bodies.”

Can you explain who created these bodies?

Page 103 – Wicked spirits not only mislead people but also frighten them.

Would you describe a situation where a wicked spirit frightened someone in Canada or the United States?

Page 104 – Since we too live in a world full of demonism, earnestly praying to Jehovah for his protection is essential in resisting wicked spirits. Of course, we need to use Jehovah's name in our prayers. (Proverbs 18:10).

Earlier on page 100, the booklet said that the evil creatures couldn't take on human bodies.

Would you explain what demonism is?

Why didn't Jesus use the name of Jehovah in his model prayer?

Chapter 11 – Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Page 108 – The real ruler of this world is Satan the Devil.

Is there an indication when he started ruling?

Page 109 – It is comforting for us to know that God does not cause suffering. He is not responsible for the wars, the crimes, the oppression, or even the natural disasters that cause people to suffer.

Do you believe God told the Jews to fight to conquer Canaan and that He personally was responsible for their victory?

Who withheld the rain for 3 years in the days of Ezekiel?

Who was responsible for the plagues against the people of Egypt?

Page 109 – But Jehovah had stated his purpose to fill the earth with the offspring of Adam and Eve, and he wanted them to live in an earthly paradise. (Genesis 1:28) Jehovah always fulfills his purposes.

Do you believe that humans will also live on other planets in other galaxies?

Page 111 – Similarly, Jehovah knows that all honesthearted humans and angels will benefit from seeing that Satan and his fellow rebels have failed and that humans cannot govern themselves.

Do angels have hearts like humans?

Page 114 – You can join the millions who have taken a stand on Jehovah’s side. They make God rejoice because they take an active part in proving Satan a liar and a miserable failure as a ruler. (Proverbs 27:11)

This verse says, “Be wise, my son, and make my heart rejoice, that I may make a reply to him that is taunting me.”

Why is this verse used when it doesn’t say anything about proving Satan a failure?

By the way, why do you think Satan is a miserable failure as a ruler? Who ever said he took his position as ruler to make the world a nice place?

Chapter 12 – Living in a Way That Pleases God

Pages 119-120 – When we live in a way that pleases Jehovah, we actually help to give an answer to Satan’s false charges, and in that way we make God’s heart rejoice.

In what way does God have a heart?

Page 120 – He [Satan] can also use discouragement, perhaps causing you to feel that you are not good enough to please God. (Proverbs 24:10)

This verse says, “Have you shown yourself discouraged in the day of distress? Your power will be scanty.”

Why is this verse used when it doesn’t say anything about not being good enough to please God?

Page 121 – The Bible answers: “You must love Jehovah your God with all your heart and all your soul and all your vital force.” (Deuteronomy 6:5)

In the New World Translation, the term “vital force” (item 1) is linked to Mark 12:30 and Luke 10:27.

These verses says:

“You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind and with your whole strength.’

“You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole strength and with your whole mind.”

In the 3 verses provided, I see heart + soul + strength + mind + vital force.

What is your vital force?

Chapter 13 – A Godly View of Life

Page 127 – Part of the Mosaic Law said: “You must not murder.”

Was it allowed when the Jews went into Canaan and killed their enemies?

Page 129 – Before the Flood, humans ate only fruits, vegetables, grains, and nuts.

What did the animals eat before the flood?

Page 130 – They came to this conclusion: “The holy spirit and we ourselves have favored adding no further burden to you, except these necessary things, to keep abstaining from things sacrificed to idols and from blood and from things strangled [leaving the blood in the meat] and from fornication.”

Why do you attribute a human expression (of favor) to the holy spirit?

Page 130 – Does the command to abstain from blood include blood transfusions? Yes. To illustrate: Suppose a doctor were to tell you to abstain from alcoholic beverages. Would that simply mean that you should not drink alcohol but that you could have it injected into your veins? Of course not! Likewise, abstaining from blood means not taking it into our bodies at all. So the command to abstain from blood means that we would not allow anyone to transfuse blood into our veins.

I have seen Jehovah’s Witnesses eating at Wendy’s. How do they ensure 100% that they do not drink tiny traces of blood in the cooked or uncooked hamburger meat?

Page 131 – But if we tried to save our present life by breaking God’s law, we would be in danger of losing everlasting life.

In what case can you break God’s law and lose everlasting life?

Page 132 – True Christians are not under the Mosaic Law and therefore do not offer animal sacrifices and put the blood of animals on an altar. (Hebrews 10:1)

Do you tithe in your church? How much? Do you have a scriptural reference for the amount or percentage?

Page 133 – Only by means of faith in the merit of Jesus' shed blood can we gain salvation.

I did a search in your booklet for the phrase "born-again" and "born again" but I didn't find anything. Why was this teaching not mentioned?

Jesus said to Nicodemus, "Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God ... Most truly I say to you, Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God ... Do not marvel because I told you, you people must be born again" (John 3:3,5,7)

How can you see the kingdom of heaven but not enter the kingdom of heaven?

Why does Jesus say we must be born again?

What does born again mean to you?

Chapter 14 – How to Make Your Family Life Happy

Page 135 – The Bible says that husbands should treat their wives in the same way that Jesus treats his disciples. Consider this Bible direction: “Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it . . . In this way husbands ought to be loving their wives as their own bodies.

Do you mean “church” by the use of congregation?

Page 136 – Wives too deserve thoughtful consideration. The Bible describes them as “a weaker vessel” to whom husbands are commanded to assign “honor.” Why? Because both husbands and wives share equally in “the undeserved favor of life.” (1 Peter 3:7)

What do you mean by the undeserved favor of life?

Chapter 15 – Worship That God Approves

Page 145 – (4) Jehovah gives everyone on earth the opportunity to gain everlasting life. To have eternal life in Paradise, however, we must worship God properly and live now in a way that is acceptable to him ... True religion leads to everlasting life.

This is linked to question 4 at the bottom:

What do Jesus' words concerning the two roads mean, and where does each road lead?

When I read these passages, it strongly suggests that Jehovah's Witnesses view everlasting life and eternal life as two different roads to two different places.

Do you agree?

Previous passages in the booklet have other references:

Page 33 – Jesus promised that in the coming new world, those approved by God would receive the gift of “everlasting life.” (Mark 10:30)

Page 37 – Knowing the truth about Jehovah God and about Jesus Christ can lead to everlasting life on a paradise earth. (John 14:6). [See also pages 53 and 65].

Since true religion leads to everlasting life, does false religion lead to eternal life – since the booklet says they are not the same road?

If those *approved* by God receive everlasting life, then this means those *not approved* by God receive eternal life.

Would you comment on this?

Page 145 – Those who practice the true religion worship only Jehovah and make his name known. Jesus declared: “It is Jehovah your God you must worship, and it is to him alone you must render sacred service.” (Matthew 4:10). Thus, God’s servants worship no one other than Jehovah.

I was wondering why your booklet never uses the word “obeisance?”

2 Chronicles 20:18 says, “At once Jehoshaphat bowed low with his face to the earth, and all Judah and the inhabitants of Jerusalem themselves fell down before Jehovah to do obeisance to Jehovah.”

Matthew 2:11 says, “And when they went into the house they saw the young child with Mary its mother, and, falling down, they did obeisance to it.”

Matthew 8:2 says, “And, look! a leprous man came up and began doing obeisance to him, saying: 'Lord, if you just want to, you can make me clean.'”

Matthew 28:9-10 says, “And, look! Jesus met them and said: 'Good day!' They approached and caught him by his feet and did obeisance to him. Then Jesus said to them: 'Have no fear! Go, report to my brothers, that they may go off into Galilee; and there they will see me.'”

Acts 10:25-26 says, “As Peter entered, Cornelius met him, fell down at his feet and did obeisance to him. But Peter lifted him up, saying: 'Rise; I myself am also a man.'”

Hebrews 1:6 says, “But when he again brings his Firstborn into the inhabited earth, he says: 'And let all God’s angels do obeisance to him.'”

Both the ESV and KJV use the word “worship” for the above passages.

Revelation 22:8-10 says, “Well, I John was the one hearing and seeing these things. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship [d] before the feet of the angel that had been showing me these things. But he tells me: 'Be careful! Do not do that! All I am is a fellow slave of you and of your brothers who are prophets and of those who are observing the words of this scroll. Worship God.’”

Interestingly enough, I see that the New World Translation footnotes this passage as [d] – where [d] points to Acts 10:25, where the word “obeisance” is used.

So it appears that the NWT equates worship with obeisance also.

Can you explain this?

The first commandment, as recorded in the NWT says, “I am Jehovah your God, who have brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves. You must not have any other gods against my face.”

The English Standard Version words this a little differently:

“You shall have no other gods before me.” (Exo. 20:3).

Deuteronomy 11:16 says, “Watch out for yourselves for fear your heart may be enticed, and you do turn aside and worship other gods and bow down to them, and Jehovah’s anger does blaze.”

Exodus 34:14 says, “For you shall worship no other god, for the Lord, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God” (ESV).

In the NWT, it is worded “For you must not prostrate yourself to another god, because Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God.”

When I compare the Greek for the words “obeisance” and “worship” in the above passages (especially Revelation 22:8-10), they appear to be exactly the same.

So I was wondering why Jesus never rebuked the people for worshipping him but Peter and the angel did?

And why didn’t the New World Translation use the same English word (worship) as in the Greek?

Page 148 – The early Christians had such love for one another. Godly love overcomes racial, social, and national barriers and draws people together in an unbreakable bond of true brotherhood. (Colossians 3:14) Members of false religions do not have such a loving brotherhood.

Christians, who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses, do have a loving brotherhood, even though we don’t agree on all points of doctrine – as Jehovah’s Witnesses don’t agree with all of our doctrines.

This would also make us members of the true religion.

Page 149 – True Christians accept Jesus Christ as God’s means of salvation. The Bible says: “There is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved.”

I accept Jesus Christ as God’s means of salvation. That would make me a true Christian?

Page 149 – True worshipers are no part of the world. When on trial before the Roman ruler Pilate, Jesus said: “My kingdom is no part of this world.” (John 18:36) No matter what country they live in, Jesus’ true followers are subjects of his heavenly Kingdom and thus maintain strict neutrality in the world’s political affairs.

Are those people who will live in the Paradise Earth considered subjects of a heavenly kingdom when the booklet says they won’t live there?

What do you mean by maintain strict neutrality in politics? Would you vote for a politician who opposed or was in favor of abortion? Can you maintain neutrality in the battle between good and evil?

I did a search on the Internet and found a reference to The Watchtower, November 1999, in the section “Questions from Readers.” The question was “How do Jehovah's Witnesses view voting?” The answer said, “There are clear principles set out in the Bible that enable servants of God to take a proper view of this matter. However, there appears to be no principle against the practice of voting itself.”

Would you comment on this teaching?

Page 151 – True followers of Jesus Christ proclaim God’s heavenly Kingdom as the only hope for mankind. (Psalm 146:3).

That would classify my church as Jesus’ true followers. We also believe that God’s kingdom will exist on this earth too some day.

Page 152 – For example, the Babylonians worshiped trinities, or triads, of gods. Today, the central doctrine of many religions is the Trinity. But the Bible clearly teaches that there is only one true God, Jehovah, and that Jesus Christ is his Son. (John 17:3)

In the NWT (John 1:1), Jesus is referred to as a god. Is he a true or false god?

In the NWT (Isaiah 9:6), Jesus is referred to as a God. Is he a true or false God?

I did a search for the term “mighty God” in the NWT and 2 were found. (Isaiah 9:6, seen above and Isaiah 10:21).

As we have seen, Isaiah 9:6 refers to Jesus as the mighty God.

Isaiah 10:21 says, “A mere remnant will return, the remnant of Jacob, to the Mighty God” (NWT). This is linked to Isaiah 65:9, Hosea 1:10, 6:1, and Romans 9:29.

Isaiah 65:8-9 says, “This is what Jehovah has said: “In the same way that the new wine is found in the cluster and someone has to say, ‘Do not ruin it, because there is a blessing in it,’ so I shall do for the sake of my servants in order not to bring everybody to ruin. And I will bring forth out of Jacob an offspring and out of Judah the hereditary possessor of my mountains and my chosen ones must take possession of it, and my own servants will reside there.”

Jeremiah 32:18 says, “the One exercising loving-kindness toward thousands, and repaying the error of the fathers into the bosom of their sons after them, the true God, the great One, the mighty One, Jehovah of armies being his name.”

Hosea 1:10 says, “So He [Jehovah] said: “Call his name Loammi, because you men are not my people and I myself shall prove to be not yours.”

Hosea 6:1 says, “Come, you people, and do let us return to Jehovah, for he himself has torn in pieces but he will heal us. He kept striking, but he will bind us up.”

Romans 9:29 says, “Also, just as Isaiah had said aforetime: “Unless Jehovah of armies had left a seed to us, we should have become just like Sodom, and we should have been made just like Go-mor-rah.”

These passages from the New World Translation show that Jehovah is the mighty God.

How is both Jesus and Jehovah the mighty God?

Page 152 – The Babylonians also believed that humans have an immortal soul that survives the body after death and can suffer in a place of torment. Today, belief in the immortal soul or spirit that can suffer in hellfire is taught by most religions

In your theology, is soul = spirit?

What happens to you when you die and are resurrected? Has your spirit been resurrected, or did you get a newly created one?

Can we look at Luke 16:22-31 again?

22 – “Now in course of time the beggar died and he was carried off by the angels to the bosom [position] of Abraham. “Also, the rich man died and was buried. 23 – And in Ha´des he lifted up his eyes, he existing in torments, and he saw Abraham afar off and Laz´a-rus in the bosom [position] with him. 24 – So he called and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Laz´a-rus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because I am in anguish in this blazing fire.’”

25 – “But Abraham said, ‘Child, remember that you received in full your good things in your lifetime, but Laz´a-rus correspondingly the injurious things. Now, however, he is having comfort

here but you are in anguish. 26 – And besides all these things, a great chasm has been fixed between us and you people, so that those wanting to go over from here to you people cannot, neither may people cross over from there to us.’”

27 – “Then he said, ‘In that event I ask you, father, to send him to the house of my father, 28 – for I have five brothers, in order that he may give them a thorough witness, that they also should not get into this place of torment.’ 29 – But Abraham said, ‘They have Moses and the Prophets; let them listen to these.’ 30 – Then he said, ‘No, indeed, father Abraham, but if someone from the dead goes to them they will repent.’ 31 – But he said to him, ‘If they do not listen to Moses and the Prophets, neither will they be persuaded if someone rises from the dead.’”

What happened to the spirit/soul of these 3 people (rich man, Lazarus, and Abraham) when they died?

How was this rich man able to hear, talk and feel pain after he had died on earth?

How was he aware that he had five brothers? Why was he concerned for their future well-being?

How was Abraham able to talk and also be aware of his environment?

Page 153 – Like Jesus’ early disciples who left other things to follow him, you will come to have many spiritual brothers and sisters. You will become part of a large worldwide family of millions of true Christians, who show you genuine love.

Are non-Jehovah’s Witnesses who show genuine love to Jehovah’s Witnesses also considered “true Christians?”

I would say yes. What would you say?

Chapter 16 – Take Your Stand for True Worship

Page 156 – But as you learned in Chapter 6 of this book, the dead have no conscious existence anywhere.

But to be honest with you, Luke has shown as that they do.

I have seen the passage in Ecclesiastes 9:5 – “The dead do not see or hear or think.”

But Ecclesiastes is the dramatic autobiography of Solomon’s life when he was away from God. As Dr. Vernon McGee said, “This [Ecclesiastes] is human philosophy apart from God, which must always reach the conclusions that this book reaches. We need to understand this about Ecclesiastes, because there are many statements, which contradict certain other statements of Scripture. Solomon tried every field of endeavor and pleasure that was known to man and his conclusion was that all is vanity.”

Page 156 – Christmas supposedly commemorates the birth of Jesus Christ, and nearly every religion that claims to be Christian celebrates it. Yet, there is no evidence that the first-century disciples of Jesus observed such a holiday.

I agree. Jesus did not tell us to celebrate his birth date.

Page 157-158 – It was not until several hundred years after Jesus lived on the earth that people began to commemorate his birth on December 25. But that was not the date of Jesus’ birth, for it evidently took place in October*.

The * says to refer to pages 221-222 in the Appendix, but when I went there, it did not explain how October was chosen.

It says, “God’s Word tells us precisely when Jesus died, but it gives little direct indication as to when he was born.”

So how did the teaching manual say with confidence that it evidently took place in October?

Page 157-158 – Maybe you feel that the origins of holidays have little to do with how they are celebrated today. Do origins really matter? Yes! To illustrate: Suppose you saw a piece of candy lying in the gutter. Would you pick up that candy and eat it? Of course not! That candy is unclean. Like that candy, holidays may seem sweet, but they have been picked up from unclean places.

These are some of the major holidays in Canada on a yearly basis:

New Year's Day
Family Day
Valentine's Day
St. Patrick's Day
Good Friday
Easter Monday
Mother's Day
Victoria Day
Father's Day
St. Jean Baptiste Day
Canada Day
Civic Holiday
Labour Day
Thanksgiving
Halloween
Remembrance Day
Christmas Day
Boxing Day

Can you explain what is evil (unclean) about each one of them? You can ignore Valentine's Day, Christmas Day and Halloween for the obvious reasons.

Page 157-158 – To take a stand for true worship, we need to have a viewpoint like that of the prophet Isaiah, who told true worshipers: “Touch nothing unclean.”—Isaiah 52:11.

What do you mean by unclean? Does this include drinking harmful things like coke or pepsi? What about drinking coffee, which is addictive in some way?

Would you become unclean if you touched someone who has celebrated a holiday?

Page 160 – What if someone wants to give you a gift? Much depends upon the circumstances. The giver might say: “I know that you do not celebrate the holiday. Still, I want you to have this.” You may decide that accepting the gift under those circumstances is not the same as taking part in the holiday. Of course, if the giver is not familiar with your beliefs, you could mention that you do not observe the holiday. This would help to explain why you accept a gift but do not give one on that occasion.

To be honest with you, accepting a gift on a holiday is participating in the holiday. Likewise, when someone gives but does not receive, he too participates in the holiday.

Much like the Jehovah’s Witnesses re-enactment of the Last Supper – most do not partake of the bread and wine but they participate.

Chapter 17 – Draw Close to God in Prayer

Page 167 – Our prayers, then, must be directed only to Jehovah God. However, Jehovah requires that we acknowledge the position of his only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ.

How is Jesus the only begotten?

Page 167 – Jesus was sent to the earth to serve as a ransom to redeem us from sin and death. (John 3:16; Romans 5:12) He is the appointed High Priest and Judge. (John 5:22; Hebrews 6:20)

Is Jesus a Judge or the Judge?

Page 168 – It is proper for us to ask for holy spirit, for it will help us to do what is right. (Luke 11:13)

How do you make a request for help from the holy spirit?

How does the holy spirit know the difference between right and wrong?

From the booklet, Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the holy spirit is an active force (page 182) – in essence you believe some things in the Bible as personified as people, like wisdom (Luke 7:35).

The church I go to believes the Holy Spirit is a person because he feels pain (Isaiah 63:10), says what he hears (John 16:13), bears witness (John 15:26) and speaks (Acts 13:2), and has a name like the Father and the Son (even though we don't know his name).

Why does the Holy Spirit have a name?

Did Jesus speak to his inner disciples in a parable when he spoke about the Holy Spirit? Is there anything in the scriptures which say the Holy Spirit cannot be a person?

Romans 8:26-27 says, "In like manner the spirit also joins in with help for our weakness; for the [problem of] what we should pray for as we need to we do not know, but the spirit itself pleads for us with groanings unuttered. Yet he who searches the hearts knows what the meaning of the spirit is, because it is pleading in accord with God for holy ones."

How does the holy spirit plead?

In another part, the New World Translation describes the holy spirit as a person (as a “he”).

“However, when that one arrives, the spirit of the truth, he will guide you into all the truth, for he will not speak of his own impulse, but what things he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things coming. That one will glorify me, because he will receive from what is mine and will declare it to you” (John 16:13-14).

This “he” is the holy spirit.

Would you explain this?

Chapter 18 – Baptism and Your Relationship With God

Page 175 – By now you have learned about the Bible’s promise of everlasting life in Paradise. (Luke 23:43; Revelation 21:3, 4)

Let me recap some earlier teachings:

Page 145 – Jehovah gives everyone on earth the opportunity to gain everlasting life. To have eternal life in Paradise, however, we must worship God properly and live now in a way that is acceptable to him ... True religion leads to everlasting life.

Page 33 – Jesus promised that in the coming new world, those approved by God would receive the gift of “everlasting life.” (Mark 10:30)

Page 37 – Knowing the truth about Jehovah God and about Jesus Christ can lead to everlasting life on a paradise earth. (John 14:6).

Is eternal life = everlasting life?

Page 175 – Before you can be baptized, however, you need to know and accept at least the basic Bible teachings. (Hebrews 5:12). Such teachings include the truth about the condition of the dead and the importance of God’s name and his Kingdom.

Why is knowing the condition of the dead a pre-condition to baptism?

Page 175 – If these elders see that you understand and believe basic Bible teachings, are living in harmony with God’s principles, and truly want to be one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, they will let you know that you qualify to share in the public ministry as an unbaptized publisher of the good news.

Can you give me a scriptural reference to indicate what an unbaptized publisher of the good news is?

Page 175 – Before you can be baptized, then, doing Jehovah God’s will must be your main purpose in life.—1 Peter 4:2.

But when I read the scriptures, Philip baptized the Ethiopian eunuch (whose main purpose in life was not doing God’s will). He was new convert.

Page 175 – Some hold back from making a dedication ... Being afraid that they may fail and disappoint Jehovah, they think that it is best not to make a dedication to him ... As you learn to love Jehovah, you will be moved to make a dedication to him ... After making a dedication, surely you will want to “walk worthily of Jehovah to the end of fully pleasing him ... SYMBOLIZING YOUR DEDICATION BY GETTING BAPTIZED.

How did the Ethiopian eunuch make a dedication before he was baptized?

How did Saul make a dedication before he was baptized?

How did Cornelius and his household make a dedication before they were baptized?

How did the jailer (of Paul and Silas) and his household make a dedication before they were baptized?

Page 182 – Let the coordinator of the body of elders of your congregation know that you want to get baptized. He will arrange for some elders to review with you a number of questions that cover the Bible’s basic teachings. If these elders agree that you qualify, they will tell you that you can be baptized at the next opportunity.

Was this Peter’s experience on the Day of Pentecost?

Page 182 – Jesus said that his disciples would be baptized “in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit.” (Matthew 28:19)

Why doesn’t the scripture reveal the name of the holy spirit?

Page 182 – To make a dedication to Jehovah, you must disown yourself, even as people disowned themselves to follow Jesus. —Mark 8:34.

How did the Ethiopian eunuch make a dedication (disown himself) before he was baptized?

How did Saul make a dedication (disown himself) before he was baptized?

How did Cornelius and his household make a dedication (disown themselves) before they were baptized?

How did the jailer (of Paul and Silas) and his household make a dedication (disown themselves) before they were baptized?

Chapter 19 – Remain in God’s Love

Page 182 – Our hope for the future also depends on something else that God has done. Jehovah has established a heavenly government, the Messianic Kingdom. It will soon bring an end to all suffering and will make the earth a paradise. Just think! We can live there in peace and happiness forever. (Psalm 37:29)

Since a previous teaching says that Jesus became the Messiah at his baptism, does this mean that Jehovah’s Messianic Kingdom did not exist before?

Do you believe humans will live in other galaxies too?

Page 189-191 – The apostle Paul viewed his ministry as something precious, calling it a treasure ... Talking to people about Jehovah God and his purposes is the best work you could do ... Staying busy in such work helps you to remain in God’s love.—1 Corinthians 15:58.

Is quantity of service more important than quality of service as implied by your use of the imperative to “stay busy?”

Page 191 – Jehovah wants us to worship him publicly in association with true Christians.

When Jehovah’s Witnesses worship Jehovah in their church, how is this considered “public?”

Page 192 – When we are living on a paradise earth in complete health, peace, and happiness, we will at last enjoy “the real life”—everlasting life. (1 Timothy 6:12) Is that not a wonderful hope?

I asked this question before, but is there a difference between everlasting life and eternal life?

Appendix – The Divine Name

Page 195 – In the original Hebrew in which much of the Bible was written, a unique personal name appears here. It is spelled (YHWH) in Hebrew letters. In English, the common rendering of that name is “Jehovah.”

How is God’s name rendered in the Russian language?

Page 196 – Jehovah God even instructed his worshipers to call upon his name, and faithful ones obeyed. (Joel 2:32; Acts 2:21) Hence, Christians today do not hesitate to use God’s name respectfully, as Jesus surely did.—John 17:26.

John 17:26 says about Jesus, “And I have made your name known to them and will make it known, in order that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them.”

Do you have a reference where Jesus addressed the Father as Jehovah to his followers?

Page 197 – God himself explained the meaning of his name to his faithful servant Moses. When Moses asked about God’s name, Jehovah replied: “I shall prove to be what I shall prove to be.” (Exodus 3:14) Rotterdam’s translation renders those words: “I Will Become whatsoever I please.” So Jehovah can become whatever is needed in order to fulfill his purposes.

The English Standard version says, “God said to Moses, “I AM WHO I AM.” And he said, “Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’”

Rendered in your logic, Jehovah is (present tense) whatever is needed in order to fulfill his purposes.

Do you agree with this?

Why didn’t God say to Moses ‘Jehovah has sent me to you?’

Page 197 – Suppose that you could become whatever you wanted to become? What would you do for your friends? If one of them became seriously ill, you could become a skilled doctor and perform a cure. If another suffered a financial loss, you could become a wealthy benefactor and come to his rescue.

Evangelical Christians believe God became a man so he could take away our sins through the atonement. We believe this is His greatest manifestation of himself in the Bible?

Based on the literature I have read so far, I can see that Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe God became a man.

But what do you believe is God's greatest manifestation of himself?

I asked another Jehovah's Witnesses, "Hypothetically speaking, if you believed God were to become a man, what would he be like? Would he be just like Jesus?"

This person mentioned, "Yes – if God became a man, Jesus would be that man."

This person was getting closer to the biblical truth.

Page 197 – As you study the Bible, you will be amazed to see how Jehovah becomes whatever is needed in order to fulfill his promises. And it pleases him to use his power in behalf of those who love him. (2 Chronicles 16:9) These beautiful facets of Jehovah's personality are lost to those who do not know his name.

I believe that God is whatever is needed in order to fulfill his promises. Do you agree?

What about Jehovah becoming whomever as well as whatsoever? Do you agree?

Have you ever had a great conversation with someone whose name you never even knew? Were you facets of their personality lost since you didn't know their name?

Appendix – How Daniel’s Prophecy Foretells the Messiah’s Arrival

Page 198-199 – According to the Bible writer Nehemiah, the word went forth to rebuild the walls around Jerusalem “in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king.” (Nehemiah 2:1, 5-8) Historians confirm that the year 474 B.C.E. was Artaxerxes’ first full year as ruler. Therefore, the 20th year of his rule was 455 B.C.E. Now we have the starting point for Daniel’s Messianic prophecy, that is, 455 B.C.E. ... Now all we must do is count. If we count from 455 B.C.E., 483 years takes us to the year 29 C.E. That was exactly the year when Jesus was baptized and became the Messiah! (Luke 3:1, 2, 21, 22).

Are you basing this prophecy on fallible non-Jehovah’s Witnesses’ historians or infallible Jehovah’s Witnesses’ historians?

Where does Luke say that Jesus became the Messiah at his baptism?

Page 199 – From 455 B.C.E. to 1 B.C.E. is 454 years. From 1 B.C.E. to 1 C.E. is one year (there was no zero year). And from 1 C.E. to 29 C.E. is 28 years. Adding these three figures gives us the total of 483 years. Jesus was “cut off” in death in 33 C.E., during the 70th week of years. (Daniel 9:24, 26). See Pay Attention to Daniel’s Prophecy! chapter 11, and Insight on the Scriptures, Volume 2, pages 899-901. Both are published by Jehovah’s Witnesses.

According to the picture on page 198, the booklet mentions that the Messiah is cut off in the year 33 and the seventy weeks ends in year 36.

I did not agree with this part since the Bible does not say that the Messiah was cut off in the middle of the 70th week like your booklet teaches.

Daniel 9:26 says, “And after the sixty-two weeks Messiah will be cut off, with nothing for himself.”

It seems clear that the Messiah is cut off after the 69th week.

Verse 26-27 continues with, “And the city and the holy place (p) the people of a leader that is coming will bring to their ruin. (q) And the end of it will be by the flood. And until the end there will be war; what is decided upon is desolations. (r) And he must keep the covenants in force for the many for one week; (t) and at the half of the week he will cause sacrifice and gift offering to cease. (u) And upon the wing of disgusting things there will be the one causing desolation; (v) and until an extermination, the very thing decided upon will go pouring out also upon the one lying desolate.” (w)

I think this either refers to Titus and the Romans coming in year 70 or some future time, but most likely a future time.

“And until the end there will be war” does not describe the period between year 33 and 36 as your booklet shows.

Also, under the phrase “End of the seventy weeks” the booklet has a picture of what appears to be a Roman soldier. But nothing happened (not to my recollection) in the year 36 from a Roman Empire’s perspective in relation to Jerusalem.

When I look at the purpose of the need for 70 weeks, Daniel 9:24 says, “There are seventy weeks that have been determined upon your people and upon your holy city, in order to terminate the transgression, and to finish off sin, and to make atonement for error, and to bring in righteousness for times indefinite, and to imprint a seal upon vision and prophet, and to anoint the Holy of Holies.”

Given the state of the people and the city of Jerusalem in the year 36 or 70, I can't honestly say that the 70 weeks concluded in either of those two time periods.

What are your thoughts?

Appendix – The Truth About the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit

Page 202 – Instead, because of his high position among Jehovah’s creatures, the Word is referred to as “a god.” Here the term “god” means “mighty one.”

Is Satan a “god” in the same sense that Jesus is a “god?”

Since Satan is a god, and a god is mighty, why would Jehovah also be considered mighty in addition to almighty (see my commentary of page 152 in the booklet)?

Page 203 – Notice that Jesus is called, not God, but the Son of God. This additional information provided in the Gospel of John shows how John 1:1 should be understood. Jesus, the Word, is “a god” in the sense that he has a high position but is not the same as Almighty God.

Do you know that Isaiah 9:6 calls Jesus the Mighty God?

Why does the booklet consider everyone of a “high position” as being a “god?”

Appendix – The Lord’s Evening Meal

Page 206 – Jesus Christ instituted this observance on the night of the Jewish Passover in 33 C.E. ... Jesus celebrated the Passover with his apostles, dismissed Judas Iscariot, and then instituted the Lord’s Evening Meal ... This meal replaced the Jewish Passover and therefore should be observed only once a year.

Can you provide some scriptural passages that indicate the disciples came together to break bread only once a year?

Can you provide some scriptural passages that indicate that followers of Jesus should attend but not participate in taking the emblems?

Since we are not under the Old Testament, isn’t it okay to participate in the Lord’s Evening Meal every day, once a week, or once a month?

Page 207 – Humans can thus become clean in God’s eyes and can enter into the new covenant with Jehovah. (Hebrews 9:14; 10:16, 17) This covenant, or contract, makes it possible for 144,000 faithful Christians to go to heaven. There they will serve as kings and priests for the blessing of all mankind.—Genesis 22:18; Jeremiah 31:31-33; 1 Peter 2:9; Revelation 5:9, 10; 14:1-3.

Where do the scriptures say only 144,000 will go to heaven?

I looked at 1 Peter 2:9 and he seems to be addressing all Christians and not just a limited number. I also looked at Revelation 5:9-10 and 14:1-3 but don’t see that they people rule in heaven all the time.

What are your thoughts?

Jeremiah 31:31-33 seems to refer to the houses of Israel and Judah, not Christians.

Would you explain?

I believe that God will fulfill promises both the Church and to Israel.

What do you think?

1 Peter 2:9 says, “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies of the one that called you out

of darkness into his wonderful light. For you were once not a people, but are now God's people; You were those who had not been shown mercy, but are now those who have been shown mercy."

This is similar to Exodus 19:5-8 – “Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto me above all people: for all the earth is mine: And ye shall be unto me a kingdom of priests, and an holy nation. These are the words which thou shalt speak unto the children of Israel. And Moses came and called for the elders of the people, and laid before their faces all these words which the Lord commanded him. And all the people answered together, and said, All that the Lord hath spoken we will do. And Moses returned the words of the people unto the Lord.”

The church I go to says that this holy nation was not restricted to 144,000 Israelites in the Old Testament and it is not restricted to only 144,000 saints in the New Testament. This holy nation includes all true believers of God – the priesthood of believers (both of the Old and New Testaments).

What are your thoughts about this?

According to Revelation 4, the Apostle John is somehow caught up into heaven, where he records what he sees. While in heaven, he sees angels before the throne (7:11), the 24 elders before the throne (4:10), the 4 living creatures before the throne (5:8), the 144,000 before the throne (14:3), and the great crowd before the throne (7:9).

If the phrase “before the throne” actually puts the great crowd of people on Earth (as it appears your booklet teaches), then why doesn't it put the angels on another planet like Jupiter?

I'm just curious as to how you use the phrase to designate the location of one group of people to one place but not the same place for another group of people.

Page 207 – Who should partake of these Memorial emblems? Logically, only those in the new covenant—that is, those who have the hope of going to heaven—should partake of the bread and the wine.

Where do the scriptures logically say this? Are you out of Christ's New Covenant?

Page 207-208 – God's holy spirit convinces such ones that they have been selected to be heavenly kings. (Romans 8:16) They are also in the Kingdom covenant with Jesus.—Luke 22:29.

How does the holy spirit do this?

How has the holy spirit convinced you that you are or are not part of this Kingdom covenant?

Page 208 – What about those who have the hope of living forever in Paradise on earth? They obey Jesus' command and attend the Lord's Evening Meal, but they come as respectful observers, not partakers.

Can you help me understand this? Where, according to the Bible, did Jesus command some to come as partakers while others come as observers only?

Appendix – Soul and Spirit

Page 211 – Speaking about man’s death, Ecclesiastes 12:7 states: “The dust [of his body] returns to the earth just as it happened to be and the spirit itself returns to the true God who gave it.” When the spirit, or life-force, leaves the body, the body dies and returns to where it came from—the earth. Comparably, the life-force returns to where it came from—God. (Job 34:14, 15; Psalm 36:9) This does not mean that the life-force actually travels to heaven. Rather, it means that for someone who dies, any hope of future life rests with Jehovah God. His life is in God’s hands, so to speak. Only by God’s power can the spirit, or life-force, be given back so that a person may live again.

Can you help me understand this? How does the life-force return to God but not actually travel to heaven, where God is?

What is a life-force, or spirit? Is it the person’s memory, personality, characteristics?

Can a spirit, or life-force, be alive but not have a physical body?

Does a spirit have a spirit body?

Is Jesus a resurrected spirit who is alive?

Page 211 – At the time of the resurrection, Jehovah will form a new body for a person sleeping in death and bring it to life by putting spirit, or life-force, in it.

If Jehovah forms a new body instead of raising up your dead body, how is this considered a resurrection?

Where does the life-force come from before it is inserted into the newly-created body?

Will you start a new life with a blank memory or does the life-force contain everything from your past life?

Appendix – Judgment Day

Page 214 – The book of Revelation shows that Judgment Day begins after the war of Armageddon, when Satan’s system on earth will be destroyed.

Page 82 – The kings of the earth will be gathered together to “the place that is called in Hebrew Har–Magedon.” (Revelation 16:14, 16) Because of what is said in those two verses, the final conflict between human governments and God’s Kingdom is called the battle of Har–Magedon, or Armageddon.

Where is this place?

Page 214 – Judgment Day is not some hurried event lasting a mere 24 hours. It lasts a thousand years ... According to the apostle John’s vision, “scrolls were opened,” and “the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds.” Are these scrolls the record of people’s past deeds? No, the judgment will not focus on what people did before they died. How do we know that? The Bible says: “He who has died has been acquitted from his sin.” (Romans 6:7) Those resurrected thus come to life with a clean slate, so to speak.

Will Hitler, Pol Pot, Stalin (and other mass-murderers) be raised to life with a clean slate?

How were these individuals acquitted from their sins when they rejected the atonement of Christ?

Page 214 – By the end of Judgment Day, surviving humans will have “come to life” fully as perfect humans.

When do they get a glorified body?

Appendix – 1914 – A Significant Year

Page 216-217 – Jerusalem was thus a symbol of Jehovah’s rulership ... So the ‘trampling’ would end when Jesus became King ... Jesus showed that the Gentiles would rule for a fixed period of time. The account in Daniel chapter 4 holds the key to knowing how long that period would last. It relates a prophetic dream experienced by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. He saw an immense tree that was chopped down.

In the Bible, trees are sometimes used to represent rulership (Ezekiel 17:22-24; 31:2-5). The vision served notice that this ‘trampling of Jerusalem’ would be temporary—a period of “seven times.” ... “Seven times” would therefore last twice as long, or 2,520 days ... On the basis of Numbers 14:34 and Ezekiel 4:6, which speak of “a day for a year,” the “seven times” would cover 2,520 years.

The 2,520 years began in October 607 B.C.E., when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians and the Davidic king was taken off his throne. The period ended in October 1914. At that time, “the appointed times of the nations” ended, and Jesus Christ was installed as God’s heavenly King.

What day in October?

There are several reasons why I believe this interpretation is incorrect.

1] While I can agree with the booklet’s statement that the Bible uses trees to sometimes symbolize rulership (of individual nations), it changes the *tree* [singular] of Daniel’s vision with *trees* [plural] – Babylon, Media/Persia, Greece, Rome, and other controlling nations throughout time – thus equating the “*tree*” with “*trees*” (which is not correct in this case).

The Bible teaches the tree is King Nebuchadnezzar; he did not rule from Jerusalem, but from Babylon.

Daniel (named Beltshazzar by the king) begins the interpretation of the vision in chapter 4 verse 20 – “*The tree that you beheld, that grew great and became strong and the height of which finally reached the heavens and which was visible to all the earth.*”

22 – “*It is you, O king, because you have grown great and become strong, and your grandeur has grown great and reached to the heavens, and your rulership to the extremity of the earth.*”

From the Bible the tree is Nebuchadnezzar, not the city of Jerusalem. His rulership was from Babylon.

23 – *“And because the king beheld a watcher, even a holy one, coming down from the heavens, who was also saying: Chop the tree down, and ruin it. However, leave its rootstock itself in the earth, but with a banding of iron and of copper.”*

“Let it become wet, and with the beasts of the field let its portion be until seven times themselves pass over it.”

The judgment of the seven times is pronounced over King Nebuchadnezzar.

“This is the interpretation, O king, and the decree of the Most High is that which must befall my lord the king. And you they will be driving away from men, and with the beasts of the field your dwelling will come to be, and the vegetation is what they will give even to you to eat just like bulls; and with the dew of the heavens you yourself will be getting wet, and seven times themselves will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and that to the one whom he wants to he gives it” (vv. 24-25).

26 – *“And because they said to leave the rootstock of the tree, your kingdom will be sure to you after you know that the heavens are ruling.”*

28 – *“All this befell Nebuchadnezzar the king.”*

The tree is King Nebuchadnezzar.

Judgment befalls the king:

“While the word was yet in the king’s mouth, there was a voice that fell from the heavens: To you it is being said, O Nebuchadnezzar the king, The kingdom itself has gone away from you, and from mankind they are driving even you away, and with the beasts of the field your dwelling will be. Vegetation they will give even to you to eat just like bulls, and seven times themselves will pass over you, until you know that the Most High is Ruler in the kingdom of mankind, and that to the one whom he wants to he gives it” (vv. 31-32).

Seven times (not 2,520 years) pass over King Nebuchadnezzar.

33 – *“At that moment the word itself was fulfilled upon Nebuchadnezzar, and from mankind he was being driven away, and vegetation he began to eat just like bulls, and with the dew of the heavens his own body got to be wet, until his very hair grew long just like eagles’ [feathers] and his nails like birds’ [claws].”*

After the seven times of judgment (not 2,520 years of judgment) on the king is complete he returns to his senses and receives his kingdom again as verse 26 said.

34 – *“And at the end of the days I, Nebuchadnezzar, lifted up to the heavens my eyes, and my own understanding began to return to me; and I blessed the Most High himself, and the One living to time indefinite I praised and glorified, because his rulership is a rulership to time indefinite and his kingdom is for generation after generation.”*

36 – *“At the same time my understanding itself began to return to me, and for the dignity of my kingdom my majesty and my brightness themselves began to return to me; and for me even my high royal officers and my grandees began eagerly searching, and I was reestablished upon my own kingdom, and greatness extraordinary was added to me.”*

When I examine these biblical verses, it is clear to me that the tree is a person and not a city. The length of judgment on the tree is not 2,520 years. I don't believe it is proper interpretation to change the identity of the tree and length of time for its judgment when the Bible already explains it.

Another thing to note is the booklet's use of the word *“trampling.”* King Nebuchadnezzar was not trampled on by another nation during his judgment.

What are your thoughts?

2] According to pages 216 and 217 of the booklet, the earthly city of Jerusalem was a symbol of Jehovah's rulership – the earthly Jewish kings sitting on the throne in earthly Jerusalem is a symbol of Jehovah's rulership on his throne in heaven,

Jehovah's throne became vacant when the earthly Jerusalem was conquered and trampled in 607 B.C.E. The booklet says this trampling (or the control over the city of Jerusalem by Gentile nations would last 2,520 years).

So far the context here is the earthly city of Jerusalem in Israel.

According to the booklet this trampling ended in the year 1914 – Jehovah's throne was no longer vacant (i.e. Jesus began to rule).

But the booklet does not use the same criteria for explaining the start and end point. In 608 B.C.E the Jews are in their homeland and a Jewish king is reigning in Jerusalem. In 607 B.C.E, the Jews are taken to Babylon and a foreign king rules in Jerusalem. In 1914 there was no state of Israel – the Jews are not in their homeland and there is no Jewish king on the throne in the earthly Jerusalem to signify Jehovah's rulership. In fact, Jerusalem is still being trampled on by a Gentile nation (Turkish-Ottoman). The Jews would come back into their homeland in 1948 and they would eventually capture the rest of Jerusalem in 1967.

What are your thoughts?

Since the Jehovah's Witnesses do some date calculation based on these days (years), can we look at another passage?

Daniel 12:11 says, *“And from the time that the constant feature has been removed and there has been a placing of the disgusting thing that is causing desolation, there will be one thousand two hundred and ninety days.”*

This confused me. I looked at various reference for “constant feature” and found this in the back of the New World Translation – “Constant Feature, Daniel 8:11; 11:31; 12:11.” I kept looking back at all the references and it eventually lead all the way back to Exodus 29:38 – “And this is what you will offer upon the altar: young rams each a year old, two a day constantly.”

The English Standard Version, in Daniel 12:11, says “And from the time that the regular burnt offering is taken away and the abomination that makes desolate is set up, there shall be 1,290 days.”

The King James Version says, “And from the time that the daily sacrifice shall be taken away, and the abomination that maketh desolate set up, there shall be a thousand two hundred and ninety days.”

When did these 1,290 days (i.e. 1,290 years) end?

Page 218 – Just as Jesus predicted, his “presence” as heavenly King has been marked by dramatic world developments—war, famine, earthquakes, pestilences. (Matthew 24:3-8; Luke 21:11) Such developments bear powerful testimony to the fact that 1914 indeed marked the birth of God’s heavenly Kingdom and the beginning of “the last days” of this present wicked system of things.

But page 216 says:

Jerusalem had been the capital city of the Jewish nation—the seat of rulership of the line of kings from the house of King David. (Psalm 48:1, 2) However, these kings were unique among national leaders. They sat on “Jehovah’s throne” as representatives of God himself. (1 Chronicles 29: 23) Jerusalem was thus a symbol of Jehovah’s rulership.

If we apply the same standard of interpretation, the booklet is saying likewise about the city of Jerusalem in the Old Testament during the days of the Jewish kings – Jerusalem, as a symbol of Jehovah’s rulership in heaven, also marked a long time of war, famine, earthquakes, and pestilences.

Would you help me to understand this?

Appendix – Who Is Michael the Archangel?

Page 218 – Archangel. God’s Word refers to Michael “the archangel.” (Jude 9) This term means “chief angel.” Notice that Michael is called the archangel. This suggests that there is only one such angel. Moreover, Jesus is linked with the office of archangel.

Page 218-219 – The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel’s voice.” Thus the voice of Jesus is described as being that of an archangel. This scripture therefore suggests that Jesus himself is the archangel Michael.

Daniel 10:13 says, *“The prince of the royal realm of Persia was standing in opposition to me for twenty-one days, and, look! Michael, one of the foremost princes, came to help me; and I, for my part, remained there beside the kings of Persia.”*

In my line of thinking – if Michael is one of the foremost princes and Michael is an archangel, then a prince is an archangel. Thoughts?

Is Jesus linked to the office or is he also an archangel?

It says Michael is one of the foremost, not the foremost. If Michael is Jesus Christ then Michael is not the mightiest of all these princes.

Here is another scripture to infer that Jesus is Michael:

“The Lord himself will descend from heaven with a commanding call, with an archangel’s voice and with God’s trumpet” (1 Thessalonians 4:16).

Does the Lord coming with the archangel’s voice necessarily make him an archangel?

If descending with an archangel’s voice makes Christ an archangel, then doesn’t descending “with God’s trumpet” make Jesus a trumpet?

Ezekiel 10:5 says, *“And the very sound of the wings of the cherubs made itself heard to the outer courtyard, like the sound of God Almighty when he speaks.”*

By using the same interpretation that is applied to 1 Thessalonians, would Ezekiel make the angels “God Almighty” because their wings sound like His voice?

Appendix – Identifying “Babylon the Great”

Page 220 – In fact, Babylon the Great has such deep hatred for true religion that she violently persecutes and even murders “the witnesses of Jesus.” (Revelation 17:6) Hence, this woman named Babylon the Great clearly represents the world empire of false religion, which includes all religions that stand in opposition to Jehovah God.

Is this a typographical error? Shouldn't it be “witnesses of Jehovah?”

Can you help explain this persecution and murdering part?

Which protestant and catholic sects within Christianity murder Jehovah's Witnesses?

Do Buddhists and Hindus also kill Jehovah's Witnesses?

Appendix – Was Jesus Born in December?

Page 221 – The Bible does not tell us when Jesus was born. However, it does give us sound reason to conclude that his birth did not take place in December.

Earlier the booklet said:

It was not until several hundred years after Jesus lived on the earth that people began to commemorate his birth on December 25. But that was not the date of Jesus' birth, for it evidently took place in October (page 157-158).

How did you calculate the month of October?

Conclusion

Thank you for taking the time to read this material and helping me to understand what Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach through our study together.

I must admit that I have asked many questions. But if we don't ask, how can we learn?

There is one admonition that was mentioned at the beginning of the Jehovah's Witnesses' booklet: "God's servants base their teachings on the Bible."

I like that.

May we grow in the grace of God's truth and allow the Holy Spirit to teach us.