

I answered a knock at my door to see a man standing next to a young boy who handed me a pamphlet posing the question, "How do you view the Bible?...Would you say it is (1) a book of human wisdom? (2) a book of myths and legends? (3) the Word of God?"

The boy asked me which answer I would choose, and I said I would choose all three, and went on to explain. (1) Clearly, the Bible contains human wisdom. King Solomon recorded the results of his search for meaning in the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes. (2) The Bible says that Jesus never failed to employ the use of parables (myths or legends) when teaching his listeners an important lesson. (3) Anyone who recognizes the holy spirit accepts that the writers of the Bible were empowered by holy spirit, as are all living things. I added that Bob Dylan and the Beatles were empowered by the same spirit to write the songs they wrote.

I asked the boy which answer he would choose. He chose answer #3, opening the pamphlet to reveal the following quotation: "All scripture is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16, New World Translation) I commented that the scripture was compatible with my answer to all three of the questions posed on the face of the pamphlet, as my previous comments explained, and added, "I believe the real question is, who is the God mentioned in that scripture?"

The boy answered, "Jehovah." I asked, "Who is Jehovah?" The man spoke up and said, "That is God's name." I replied that it is certainly one of the names given God by men. But the same God is also called by other names, including Yahweh and Allah. I said I realized they preferred the pronunciation Jehovah as the name of God because that is what their movement had been named by Watchtower president, Joseph Rutherford, in 1931. "But, if you were to ask the New World Bible Translation Committee which pronunciation they felt was the more correct one, how do you suppose they would answer?" The man said they would choose Jehovah.

I then mentioned to them that my daughter was a Jehovah's Witness. They asked her name, and I explained that she was now inactive and they would not know her, but I went and got my copy of The Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures, a Watchtower publication, and turned to page 23 of the Foreword, pointing out the following statement, "While inclining to view the pronunciation Yahweh as [I paused to let the man read the next phrase aloud] the more correct way, [and I continued reading] we have retained the form Jehovah because of people's familiarity with it since the 14th century." I asked why people have known the form Jehovah only since the 14th century? They had no answer, so I explained that the form Jehovah was first invented by a Catholic monk named Raymundus Martini in 1270. Then I asked, "So, if Yahweh really is the more correct way, as your translation committee admitted, can Jehovah really be God's name?" The man did not answer my question but admitted he had never seen that Watchtower quote before.

Attempting to ease his discomfort somewhat, I switched directions slightly. "With reference to naming God, I would like to share my personal opinion just to give you something to ponder. I believe that any god who can be named by man is not the Eternal God." Both the man and the boy raised their eyebrows. I continued, "After all, how did Jesus address God in the model prayer?" The man answered, "He said Our Father." I looked at the boy and asked, "Do you call your father by his given name, or do you call him dad?" He answered, dad. "Yes! A man's friends call him by his name. But a man's son calls him father, or dad, signifying a closer, more intimate relationship. So, shouldn't God's sons address him as Father, like Jesus did?" They both agreed.

I said, "That brings up another issue I have with Watchtower teachings. Watchtower teaches two classes of Christians having separate hopes, one class, God's sons, a heavenly hope, and another class, God's friends, an earthly hope. However, the Bible teaches that all Christians are spirit anointed with the one hope of heavenly life in view. Did you realize that, prior to 1935, Watchtower also taught that all Christians are spirit anointed." To my surprise, the man said he was not aware of that fact.

Turning to Luke 1:9, I read aloud concerning Zechariah, who was to become the father of John the Baptist: "According to the solemn practice of the priestly office it became his turn to offer incense when he entered the sanctuary of Jehovah." I said, "You are familiar with Watchtower's book Insight On the Scriptures. If you look up the subject 'sanctuary,' you will see the definition: a divine habitation. What does that term signify to you?" The man thought carefully, then answered, where God lives. "Yes," I continued, "and who were the only ones who could enter the temple sanctuary in Zechariah's day? Only Levite priests, and only for the purpose of offering sacrifices for the people."

Then I directed their attention to the original Greek word rendered there as sanctuary, and let the man read the literal meaning, "divine habitation." I reminded them that the sanctuary was divided into two chambers, the Holy and the Most Holy. The Most Holy represented heaven itself. "So, what did the Holy represent?" I told them to look up the word 'temple' in the book Insight On the Scriptures, and they will find that Watchtower teaches that the Holy chamber signifies that those serving therein are spirit anointed with heavenly life in view.

Now I turned to Revelation 7:15, where the writer describes the worship of the symbolic great crowd in God's spiritual temple, which temple represents the modern-day Christian fellowship or brotherhood, a spiritual association of followers of Christ: "They are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple." Again, I let the man read aloud the literal meaning of the Greek word rendered there as temple, "divine habitation."

I summed up, "So, according to the Bible--and to Watchtower publications--the symbolic great crowd is a priestly class who are spirit anointed with heavenly life in view. But that is not what Jehovah's Witnesses teach, is it!" He admitted that it wasn't what they teach, but that he would research the matter further.