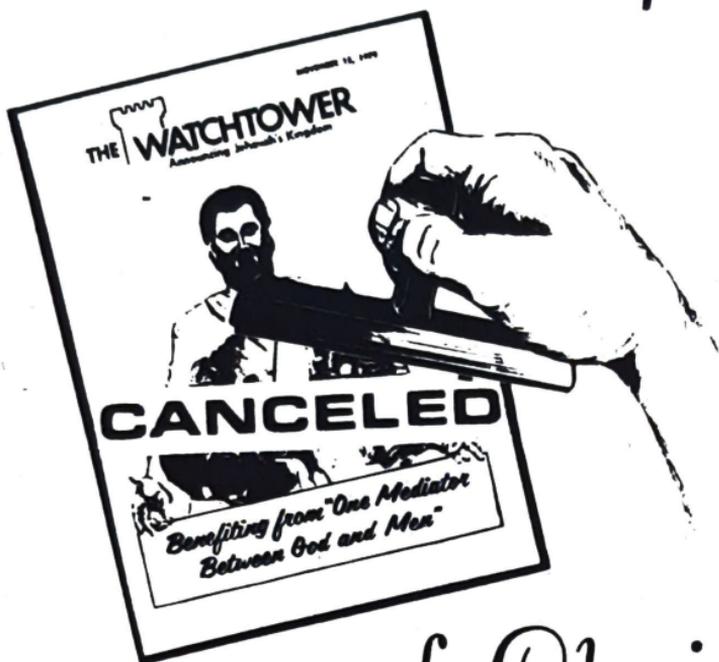


# Destroying the Mediatorship



## of Christ

The Watchtower Society always has tried to downgrade the person of Jesus Christ and the atoning work of His death. Jehovah's Witnesses proclaim their belief that Jesus is not God but "a god" who was Michael the Archangel and possessed only some of the divine attributes.<sup>1</sup>

Since Witnesses believe Jesus is not God, they consider Him unworthy of their worship. While every Witness is taught to view God the Son in this manner, many Watchtower followers are surprised to learn of what former Jehovah's Witness Duane Magnani calls a "secret doctrine of Jehovah's Witnesses": the teaching that Jesus Christ is not the savior and mediator for most Witnesses.<sup>2</sup>

Although hidden during earlier times, the Society's teaching on Christ's mediation now has become clearer.

First, the Watchtower claims that Jesus did not come to Earth as Christ the savior, but was given this role at age 30. The Watchtower book *Things In Which It Is Impossible For God To Lie* says on page 211: "As regards to Jesus, according to the angel's announcement at His birth in Bethlehem he was to become a 'Savior, who is Christ the Lord.' When did he become Christ or 'Anointed One?' ... Not at birth, but at thirty years of age Jesus became Christ or Anointed One." Watchtower writers have given a new meaning to the angel's announcement by adding to the biblical text the word "become." Luke 2:11 clearly states that the angel announced "for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior who is Christ the Lord." Scripture testifies that at his birth Jesus already was the Christ, not that he was to become the Christ.

However, the Nov. 15, 1979, *Watchtower* emphasizes on pages 24-27 that Jesus Christ acts as a mediator only for a select few: those the *Watchtower* regards as the 144,000 anointed Christians. Members of this group, who also are referred to as "spiritual Israelites," are those who, according to Witness teaching, will reign in the heavenly kingdom. The April 1, 1979, *Watchtower* stresses on page 31 that in a "strict Biblical sense Jesus is the 'mediator' only for anointed Christians."

As one would expect, the Society must twist God's Word to support this doctrine. Two distinct examples of how the organization has changed God's word are found in separate citations of 1 Timothy 2:5, 6. *Watchtower* writers said on page 26 of the Nov. 15, 1979, *Watchtower*: "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all (or, for all kinds of people, margin) - this is what is to be witnessed to at its own particular time." Again, in the same article, the passage is cited and made to state, "There is one God, and one mediator between God and men (not all men), a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (emphasis added).

As the Society becomes more outspoken and dogmatic in its claim to be the sole channel for biblical truth, it also seeks to keep from its followers the fact that its founder, Charles T. Russell, openly taught that all *Watchtower* adherents belonged to this "anointed" group. Russell asserted: "Here I first saw that the great privilege of becoming joint-heirs with Christ and partakers with him of the divine nature was confirmed exclusively to those who would share with him in self-sacrifice in the service of the truth."<sup>3</sup>

Hidden also from present-day Witnesses is Russell's teaching that *Watchtower* adherents would inherit the same divine nature possessed by Jesus. The October-November 1881 edition of *Zion's Watch Tower* says on page 297:

We see then, that the Divine nature comes to the church, as to Jesus, as a reward from the Father Jehovah for the race of faith well run, for the crucifixion - sacrifice, of human nature ... We conclude then that the titles, Mighty God and Everlasting Father, are titles which fully understood, are very appropriate to Our Lord Jesus Christ. And we might add that so perfectly is his bride - body - church, associated with him, both in filling up the measure of the sufferings - being joined in sacrifice and also in Glory that shall follow, that the same titles are applicable to the Church as his body - for 'He that hath freely given us Christ, shall he not with him also freely give us all things?' 'Therefore all things are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's (el - powerful one) to rule and bless the nations - and the body with the head, shall share in the work of restoring the life lost in Adam, and therefore be members of that company which as a whole will be the Everlasting Father to the restored race.

Russell, in the following issue of his publication, again elevated his followers to Godhood. Announcing, "Ye are Gods," he concluded that "When we claim on the scriptural warrant, that we are begotten of a divine nature and Jehovah is thus our father, it is claiming that we are divine beings - hence all such are Gods." Absent from Russell's assertion that we can become gods is any reminder of Satan's lie to Eve in the Garden, "You will become like God!" (Genesis 3:5). Lucifer's fall from glory for wishing to be as God (Isaiah 14:14ff) and words from Yahweh Himself, stating that "The gods that did not make the heavens and the earth shall perish from the earth and from under the heavens" (Jeremiah 10:11).

When membership began to increase during the late 1930s, the *Watchtower* Society began to stray from Russell's teaching of who belonged to the anointed. By the time the Aug. 15, 1945, issue of the *Watchtower* was published, Witnesses were told that they could not all currently be regarded as children of God. On page 253 of that issue, it was written: "he is not yet giving the 'other sheep' the standing of sons of his, sons of 'The everlasting Father' (Isaiah 9:6). But these faithful ones will become such during his thousand-year reign after Armageddon; and now, by virtue of the prospect of eventually becoming Jehovah's perfect sons, they address him prospectively as 'Our Father.'"

The *Watchtower* demonstrates its departure from biblical Christianity in its offering of little hope and no security of eternal life for the average Jehovah's Witness. With Christ Jesus' role as mediator greatly reduced and more than 2.5 million Jehovah's Witnesses in need of a Savior, the Society can conveniently maintain its teaching of a "Christ class," an entire group of mediators. This doctrine was clearly warned against by Jesus when he cautioned that false Christs would arise (Matthew 24:24).

In light of current *Watchtower* doctrine, the unanointed Jehovah's Witness must look elsewhere for his salvation and for someone to intercede for him. Unanointed Witnesses are taught they will get these blessings from the "Christ class" - the remnant of the 144,000 now living on the Earth today.<sup>4</sup>

The Nov. 15, 1979, *Watchtower* magazine says on page 27, "To keep in relationship with 'our Savior, God,' the 'great crowd' (made up of other Jehovah's Witnesses) needs to remain united with the remnant of spiritual Israelites." The Aug. 1, 1981, *Watchtower* then addresses and defines the conditions for eternal life. On page 26, it states, "Your attitude toward the 'wheatlike anointed brothers' of Christ and the treatment you accord them, will be the determining factor as to whether you go into 'everlasting cutting-off' or receive 'everlasting life.'"

Further, a false basis for this "Christ class" teaching has been smuggled into God's Word by the twisted rendering of Scripture in the Society's *New World Translation*. 2 Corinthians 5:20 has been distorted to

say: "We are therefore ambassadors **substituting** for Christ, as though God were making entreaty through us. As **substitutes** for Christ we beg: 'Become reconciled to God.'" (emphasis added). The in-house Watchtower publication *Organized To Accomplish Our Ministry* on page 6 quotes this twisted passage and seeks to establish in the minds of Jehovah's Witnesses that the anointed remnant substitutes for Christ Jesus. In this way, the present Watchtower leadership - called the "anointed brothers" - seeks to keep rank-and-file Jehovah's Witnesses enslaved to its wishes and direction. The Society's leaders again have demonstrated that they will stop at nothing to propagate their "doctrines of demons."

The Bible is clear in its message. One does not need an organization to interpret God's Word, nor does anyone need to add to it to clarify its meaning. The eternal God, creator of the universe, became man and dwelt among us. He freely offered his human life, shedding his blood in atonement for our sins. The Apostle Paul clearly proclaims the Gospel: that Christ was crucified, died, was buried and on the third day arose from the grave. The sacrifice that Jesus made and his present mediatorship is not limited to a small number, but is available to all, with the added security that these have eternal life (John 5:24, 10:27, 28). Scripture is clear that there is only one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:5, 6). The Watchtower claims the man Jesus is dead and the Society's leaders must substitute for him.<sup>5</sup> Jesus is not dead, but fully alive and able to save completely those who come to God through Him (Hebrews 7:25).

#### FOOTNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1984, pp. 26-29. *Let God Be True* (Second Edition), pp. 31-41.

<sup>2</sup> For photocopies of key Watchtower quotes concerning this doctrine, write: Duane Magnani, Witness, Inc., P.O. Box 597, Clayton, CA 94517. Please include \$2.50 for printing and postage costs.

<sup>3</sup> *The Watch Tower*, April 25, 1984 (special issue), pg. 111.

<sup>4</sup> Current statistics show 9,081 of the anointed still alive. This figure is based on the number of Memorial Partakers - those who partake of communion when it is served yearly to the local Watchtower congregations - during 1984 as recorded in the *1985 Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses*, pg. 31. See also *Watchtower*, January 1, 1985, page 25. For more information on the Watchtower's annual Memorial, see PFO Newsletter, Vol. 4, No. 2, pg. 4.

<sup>5</sup> Russell, Charles T., *Studies in the Scriptures*, Vol. 5, pg. 454.

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