Jehovah’s Witnesses – Lesson 5

**The “Anointed Class” and the “Other Sheep”**

The JWs believe in two classes of believers or “saved” people – The “Anointed Class” and the “Other Sheep”.

Only 144,000 JWs go to heaven – the Anointed Class (Rev 7:4 & 14:1-5)

* The 144,000 started with the Apostles (little flock – Luke 12:32) and all slots were filled by 1935 – a “revelation” that Judge Rutherford received
* The Old Testament prophets are not among these “Anointed” ones – they are part of the Other Sheep

All remaining JWs are the Other Sheep (John 10:16) and will live forever on a paradise earth

But only after the Millennium (1000 year “test”), and only if they remain obedient to the JW tenets both now and through the Millennium

Luke 12:32 is part of a unit starting at 12:22, which begins “And he said to his disciples….” The whole unit is Jesus talking directly to His disciples. The JWs are taking verse 32 out of context, trying to relate the “little flock” to the 144,000 mentioned in Rev 7:4 and 14:1-5.

In Rev 7:4, the JWs interpret the first half of the verse literally – exactly 144,000. But then they obviously don’t think the second half of the verse is literal (along with verses 5-8) since they believe these 144,000 started with the Apostles and continued with only JWs up until 1935. The fact that specific tribes are mentioned along with specific numbers for those tribes clearly removes any possibility that it should be taken figuratively. Further, JWs believe the 144,000 consist of men and women, but Rev 14:4 clearly indicates that this group consists of men only (in addition to what we read in the English version, the original Greek also used masculine pronouns).

JWs use John 10:16 to indicate that there is another group besides the “anointed” 144,000. They say that this group is comprised of all other JWs that didn’t make the cut, but otherwise keep the “faith”. They will inherit the new paradise earth and live there forever. But we know that the other sheep mentioned in John 10:16 refer to the Gentiles (as opposed to Jews – Matt 10:6). They also say that the Old Testament prophets are part of this group – not the anointed group that gets to heaven. But we have proof in both the New and Old Testaments that these prophets are with God in heaven.

My thoughts: Since they believe that after someone dies they can’t be resurrected bodily but only spiritually, then what about all the “Other Sheep” that die before the Millennium? The WS states that these will experience a “resurrection of life” to enjoy perfect human existence on earth under the rule of Christ. So how do these resurrected people have bodies?

**Salvation the Watchtower Way**

The JWs give “lip service” to the idea of salvation by grace through faith in Christ. But they really believe in salvation by works. JWs will only obtain everlasting life in the earthly paradise (the “other sheep”) if they continue in faithful obedience to the WS through the Millennium, including thorough participation in the various programs prescribed by the Society.

The Watchtower magazine urges readers to “come to Jehovah’s organization [WS] for salvation.” It also says, “unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using [WS], we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.” They are also told that “to receive everlasting life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization [WS] and serve God as part of it.”

Several bible verses show that belief in Christ alone is all that’s required for salvation.

**The Soul and Hell**

JWs believe that the soul is not a separate “entity” from the body. The soul is the life force, and ceases to function when the body dies. But it can begin functioning again if resurrected. Since the soul is “inactive” in death, then there is no hell for the JWs. Everyone is just dead unless later resurrected (for the righteous). If you’re not “saved”, then you will never be resurrected and thus just stop existing.

JWs purport that Satan is the inventor of the soul mythology, and has been promoting it ever since Adam and Eve as a way to lead us astray.

**Other Beliefs**

Blood transfusions – blood is part of the soul or life force. It was forbidden to eat it in Genesis, related to pagans, and is part of sacrifices. They equate a transfusion to eating blood. Recently they have relaxed their stance on this, first allowing components of blood but not whole blood transfusions, but now they basically have a “forgiveness” policy toward it.

JWs are not to celebrate birthdays. The only birthday celebrations mentioned in the bible are associated with evil or bad things – Genesis 40:20-22 and Matthew 14:6-10. Thus birthday celebrations must be evil.

Wearing crosses is forbidden – they view it as a pagan religious symbol and thus a form of idolatry. Today they maintain that Jesus was not crucified on a cross, but on a torture stake. But in the beginning, up to about 1931, they believed it was a cross, and had a symbol of a cross on their publications. They didn’t actually officially state that Jesus wasn’t crucified on a cross until the 1970s.