

APOLOGIA

66 books Jehovah's Witnesses should **not** read

... if they wish to remain
Jehovah's Witnesses!



by David Aspinall

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... if they wish to remain Jehovah's
Witnesses!

IT WAS THE BIBLE that got me into the Watchtower, and the Bible that got me out. It is testimony to the power of the Book that reading it convinced me to join a cult, and reading the same book, without aid from Christians, persuaded me to leave. But how could I have been so deluded so as to remain a Witness for 15 years while reading the Bible? Well, those of you who have spent any time in scriptural discussion with Witnesses will be familiar with the way they use the Bible. Though they call such regular discussions with the public 'Bible studies' only those unfamiliar with the normal methods of Bible study will allow this description to stand unchallenged. What the Witness learns and passes on to his 'studies' is actually not Bible study, but *subject* study, and that a highly-controlled subject study. For example, a Witness who sets out to study, say, *preaching* in the New Testament (Christian Greek Scriptures, as they call them) will not normally get out his concordance - though he has one - and look up **every** use of the word and related terms, as a Bible commentator of 'Christendom' will do. The Witness, rather, will probably first get out his *Insight on the Scriptures* reference volumes and read the articles that relate to his subject. If he wants more information he will go to the multi-year indexes periodically published by the Watchtower Society. All references will lead him to articles which are inevitably highly selective in their use of Scripture citations. In no way is the Witness encouraged to engage in **exhaustive** Bible study, even when he is studying subject by subject, which is almost always the case.

The Watchtower's literature very seldom allows the Witness to get a taste of **real** Bible study. A responsible pastor or preacher is encouraged to go to his Bible and concordance **FIRST** when

preparing a message. For example, a Bible class teacher or pastor wanting to present 'the New Testament View of Preaching' would ideally consult his reference books - Greek aids, dictionaries, commentaries - only **after** working through *every* use of the word 'preach' (and derivatives) in the New Testament. That this often is NOT the practice of pastors, preachers and class leaders does not validate the 'shortcut' method, that is, going to your favourite Bible teachers - Spurgeon, Meyer, Ironside etc - to see what you can glean from them. That the church's teachers get by with this method is bad enough, but the Witness is in a much worse predicament.

One thing I have learned from collecting books on the Bible: the **best** commentators are *really* thorough in their preparation. Great Bible exegetes like J.B. Lightfoot, Alfred Plummer and F.F. Bruce not only have done all the above spade work, they also seem to have read virtually *everything* of scholarly merit that has been written on their chosen subject. Just so you get an idea of the size of this task, Bruce's 'select bibliography' for his Galatians commentary has over 10 pages of sources and references, in Latin, German, Dutch, French and Spanish, as well as English. So in addition to being a first-rate scholar of *koine* (i.e. New Testament) Greek, Bruce had to have more than a passing familiarity with all these living and dead tongues. In addition, Bruce wrote much on the Old Testament, which necessitates some work in Hebrew and Aramaic. Little wonder most of the great commentators (Bruce, by the way, is an exception) wrote only a handful of commentaries on individual Bible books. Lightfoot produced only 4 (Galatians, Philippians, Colossians with Philemon). However, they are all irreplaceable, and endlessly reprinted. J. Armitage Robinson completed only ONE commentary, on Ephesians, but it was a corker, and nearly a century later is still basic to the study of that epistle.

What I'm trying to get across is that Bible study is a serious business. The great preachers, such as Spurgeon, knew there was no shortcut to Bible knowledge. Somebody has to do the real work. The rest of us can only trust their judgment. Lay persons in the church don't have much to worry about -- unless their pastors haven't done their homework. But most do, and will have at least several classic commentaries in their libraries, in addition to basic tools like a variety

of translations, one or more concordances and language tools like Hebrew and Greek lexicons.

But Jehovah's Witnesses have none of these advantages. Not only because they have NO ONE like Lightfoot and Bruce, who has the credentials and the willingness to devote a *lifetime* to unfolding a few dozen pages of Scripture. Now, even with this type of dedication it is just possible that such men may NOT be infallible. In other words, even a lifetime of research is not going to answer every question and solve every problem relating to a given text. That is why Bible commentaries continue to be written; no one Bible teacher is infallible, and all of them conceivably have blind spots. But where does this leave Jehovah's Witnesses? Not only do they have NO Bible scholars. They don't have the protection the Christian has of a multitude of options. For instance, in my library I have over 30 commentaries on each of Genesis, Acts, Romans and Revelation. The Witness at any given time has only *one* 'official' exposition (we can't by any stretch of the imagination call them commentaries) of Revelation, and none at all of even basic Bible books such as Genesis, Acts and Romans. The Witness is not encouraged even to read older Watchtower publications on the same subject, let alone the commentaries of 'Christendom'. Indeed, if he read the Watchtower's former 'official' interpretations of Revelation, such as *The Finished Mystery* and *Light*, he would likely leave the Watchtower fold!

Now you can readily see why Witnesses are in a predicament. And why I was in that predicament 15 years. Having nothing with which to compare his 'Bible study', and having no proper Bible tools other than a concordance (which most never use), he has no way of knowing how bare the Watchtower table really is.

Back about 1972, in the first flush of my enthusiasm for Bible tools, I acquired a copy of Robertson and Plummer's great commentary on 1 Corinthians. It sat in my library virtually untouched for 15 years. Why would a JW study 1 Corinthians? Outside of his usual handful of prooftexts (1:10 on the need for unity; 3:11 to flatten the Pope's pretensions; chapter 5 on disfellowshipping etc) the Witness has NO need to know anything about the background, setting, or even the theme(s) of this or any other Bible book. There IS a token

recognition that a little more would be helpful, 4 or 5 pages on each book in their textbook *All Scripture is Inspired and Beneficial*, but most Witnesses would have fits telling you, say, what prompted the peculiar emphases in Paul's epistles, or why John's gospel only mentions the kingdom in 2 places, or how the various New Testament books fit into the chronology of Acts.

However, it wasn't a Bible commentary that got me out of the Watchtower's web. God used the Bible itself. I read it a lot, which most Witnesses don't. The book has *power* - yes, even the Watchtower's own New World Translation! Not only did I read it over and over by myself (mostly as a zealous 'pioneer' missionary, looking for more prooftexts), but after, toward the end of our Watchtower life, my wife Vivian and I went through Genesis, Exodus and Job chapter by chapter, attempting, by fumbling steps, to get our Scriptural legs under us while dealing with our increasing doubts about 'God's organization'. It was this once-a-week study, with a few Witness friends (all of whom eventually left the Society), that provided the positive input to offset the negative drag of our foundering faith in the Watchtower. It was in Genesis we learned grace, in Exodus we found a very visible Jehovah, and in Job we were comforted by the vivid tribulations of a fellow doubter.

By the time our little group had waded through these 3 Old Testament books, we had laid the foundation of our future faith. And that without talking to a single Christian! I suppose that experience has left at least one indelible conviction. We Christians should use the Bible *biblically* and not get tempted into the game of proof texting which is the stock-in-trade of the cultist. A Jehovah's Witness gets his convictions from the frequent repetition of a set of packaged proofs. That's normally the limit of his 'knowledge' of the Bible. But what he knows, he knows *really* well. However there's no real *understanding* going on, because the Witness can't put together what he DOES know into a picture that really does justice to the Bible. What is really frightening about this, we have found since becoming Christians, is that this situation has its analogy in the church. That is, we too are happy we our neatly packaged system of proof texts, and that doesn't help us, either in witnessing to fellow proof texters, or in applying true *understanding* to divisive church issues such as

inerrancy, creationism or eschatology.

The little contribution we CAN make ministering to the saints is to open up more options for using the Bible in witnessing to Witnesses. It is heartening to see Christians interested in demonstrating *real* Bible study to Witnesses, and to do this we must be able to move around Scripture comfortably. How do you keep the JW coming back for more, so that whatever seeds you can plant are certain to be watered? The trick is to lead the Witness around the Bible without his *realizing* that you are leading him. The advantage we start with is that the Witness wants to take *you* on a Bible tour, and he's willing to commit at least 6 months, 1 hour per week, to that task. While he's teaching you, or so he thinks, you can be introducing him to the *contextual understanding* of many key passages of Scripture, and while he's negotiating *his* way through the Bible, teaching you God's 'eternal purpose' week by week, you can be introducing him to the glorious gospel which, after all, is all over the New World Translation -- to one who has eyes to see it.

It is my hope that this book will help Christians to help Jehovah's Witnesses. Not by supplying iron clad arguments that will stop a Witness cold, not by encouraging a volley-by-volley exchange at all. Simply by allowing one to be entirely comfortable with the Witness agenda, to bide his time while sowing seed which, in God's good time, will bear fruit to eternal life. And to be *that* comfortable in discussion with a Witness, you need to be comfortable wherever the discussion takes you. All the books of the Bible contain truth that can help liberate a Jehovah's Witness from his delusions. Here are some great themes which the Sower has broadcast throughout the Word, there for the Spirit - and us - to water.

The seed is the word of God.

LUKE 8:11

Genesis	The Grace of God
Exodus	The Sovereignty of God
Leviticus	The Holiness of God

Numbers	The Wrath of God
Deuteronomy	The Love of God
Joshua	The Faithfulness of God
Judges	The Long-suffering of God
Ruth	The Beauty of God
1 Samuel	The Righteousness of God
2 Samuel	The Goodness and the Severity of God
1 Kings	The Wisdom of God
2 Kings	The Mercy of Yahweh
1 Chronicles	The

GENESIS no.1: Who is Jehovah?

Jehovah's Witnesses, to their credit, have always taken seriously the declaration of Genesis ch.1 that it was God, the ONE God, who created heaven and earth. They know that the nations all around ancient Israel worshipped many gods, and that each of these gods had local power or jurisdiction, or was the power of a limited area of the created universe. These pagan neighbours of Israel had one god for the moon, one for the sun, one for the sea and so on. But the God of Israel, Genesis tells us, created *all*, the heavens and the earth, which is the Hebrew way of saying all that is, the whole universe and all in it.

Therefore this one God, *elohim* in the Hebrew original, is spoken of 35 times in the creation account before we are introduced to another name for the same God, a name with which Jehovah's Witnesses are identified closely, at least that is their claim. This new name for God we meet for the first time in ch.2:4: in Hebrew it consists of 4 consonants YHWH. The most familiar English rendering of this name is Jehovah, but most Hebrew scholars favour Yahweh as a more accurate and acceptable pronunciation.

Why do we meet this name at this point in the Hebrew narrative?

Scholars who have spent their lives examining the fine points of the Hebrew Scriptures generally offer 3 explanations for the use of YHWH in chapter 2, in contrast to the exclusive use of ELOHIM (God) in ch.1. First, *elohim* is God beyond the universe, outside time and space, God *transcending* that which He creates. God revealed in nature and power. *Yahweh*, on the other hand, is God personally present *within* His creation, revealing Himself directly to man made in His image. So it is God/*elohim* who creates man in ch.1, but *Yahweh* who breathes into clay the breath of life, so that man becomes a living soul; too, it is God/*elohim* who speaks the heavens and earth into being in 1:3, but it is *Yahweh* who speaks personally to Adam in ch.2.

Even in ch.3, after Adam and Eve have turned away from their Creator, this same *Yahweh* seeks them out and personally pronounces judgment on them. They in guilt hide from Him -- *they heard the voice of Jehovah God walking in the garden* -- and in their fear fled *Yahweh*. But *Yahweh* seeks them out, and even while pronouncing the death sentence upon them, yet offers a hope for them. As a matter of fact, before expelling them from Eden, *Yahweh* clothes Adam and Eve, replacing their inadequate leaves with the skins of animals. Here, for the first time, we glimpse the cost of man's ultimate redemption -- the substitution of another life for the life of the sinner.

After the expulsion from Eden, *Yahweh* continues to care for the human family. In fact, now the name *Yahweh* appears for the first time alone. In chapters 2 and 3 the Hebrew names *Yahweh* and *Elohim* appear continually together, but now, as *Yahweh* encounters the murderer Cain, the name *Yahweh* appears alone. This phenomenon, like all distinctive uses of the names of God, has great significance to Hebrew scholars. Here, as in ch.2, it is *Yahweh*, not *Elohim*, who deals directly with Cain, pronouncing judgment but even in revealing His wrath protecting Cain with a sign. So we see a third characteristic of *Yahweh*, which extend our knowledge of God beyond *Elohim* the creator: *Yahweh* is the ***faithful*** God, as well as God ***personally present*** and God ***self-revealing***.

In this revelation to the murderer Cain we catch a glimpse of the ultimate significance of the name *Yahweh*. In all these aspects,

Yahweh personally present, Yahweh self-revealing and Yahweh the faithful God, Hebrew scholars see the revelation of the name as ***the covenant name*** of the God of Israel. For when in Gen.12 we read of God calling Abraham into a covenant relationship, we read that *Yahweh spoke* (v.1), and *Yahweh appeared to Abraham* (v.7). And we note that is Yahweh/Jehovah who chooses Abram, not Abram who chooses to enter covenant with Yahweh.

In the face of these Genesis facts, we ask Jehovah's Witnesses a serious question: Does the Watchtower allow you to believe in THIS Jehovah -- the God who deals directly with sinners as well as saints, who walks and talks with men personally, who *appears* to men as well as *speaks* to them. Jehovah's Witnesses, don't try to reason away the plain statements of Scripture. Abram did not refuse to believe that God could speak to him, that God could appear to him. We read rather, *Abram built an altar there to Jehovah who had appeared to him*. Abram worshipped Jehovah/Yahweh. That is the reverent response that Jehovah/Yahweh requires of all of us. Do not let men tell you that you Jehovah can only be known second hand, that Yahweh speaks only through them.

Next week: ***Is anything impossible for Jehovah?***

GENESIS no.2: Is anything impossible for Jehovah?

Last week we examined the difference between 2 of the names of God in the Hebrew -- *Elohim*, God revealed indirectly, as it were, through his power in creation; *Yahweh*, God revealing Himself ***in person***, whether through Word or by appearing. This God Yahweh was the God of Abram. And as the life of Abram proceeds through the decades, Yahweh continues to lead him. From Babylonia to Syria to Canaan to Egypt and back to Canaan. Despite Abram's unfaithfulness to Him, Yahweh continues faithful. Abram lies to Pharaoh, God guides him and protects him still. Abram and Sarah

conspire to bring about Yahweh's promises their own way, Yahweh corrects them and continues His covenant relationship nevertheless. For in the name *Yahweh* God is supremely revealed as the God of faithfulness. His covenant with Abram and his offspring depends not on Abram's faithfulness, but strictly on Yahweh's own unconditional promises of Genesis 12. *I will make of you a great nation ... I will bless you ... Through you all nations will be blessed*. Even sin and disloyalty cannot change this God's plan.

In Genesis 17:1 we read again *Jehovah appeared to Abram*. This AFTER Abram and Sarah's presumptuous sin in trying to bring about Yahweh's promise without consulting Yahweh. Nevertheless, not only does God reiterate His promises to Abram, He makes them even more specific: in changing Abram and Sarai's names to Abraham and Sarah, Yahweh makes it plain that it will be by means of a miracle that the long-postponed fulfilment of His promise will be realized. The barren Sarah will bear a child, and they will become parents of not one seed, but nations.

God seals the certainty of this coming miracle with another miracle. We read in Genesis 18:1 *Yahweh appeared to [Abraham] among the big trees of Mamre*. Abraham, recognizing immediately his visitor, invites Yahweh and his 2 companions, as yet unidentified, to enjoy his hospitality. Yet despite the intimacy of this self-revelation, Yahweh/Jehovah does not overcome completely -- yet -- the rationalizing resistance of Abraham and Sarah. The latter, upon overhearing Yahweh's promise that He will return next year and she will bear a son, laughs in doubt. But Yahweh hears her, and asks the immortal question, *Is anything too extraordinary for Jehovah?* Jehovah, who had by now proved Himself God to both of them from Babylon to Canaan to Egypt, has every justification in breaking off his relationship with them. Yet the God who called the pagan Abram, who forgave his self-serving lie to Pharaoh, who gave Abram victory even over invading armies, does not waver in His faithfulness now. We thank God that Jehovah's Witnesses have the faith to believe that the God who can create heaven and earth can also resurrect the womb of a barren woman. Why, listener, can you not believe that Yahweh can *appear* when your own Bible says so? Sarah whose womb is dead gives birth. Yahweh, who is also Elohim, the invisible God

beyond the universe, appears. *Is anything impossible for Jehovah?*

Next week: **Jehovah, God of grace**

GENESIS no.3: Jehovah, God of grace

Is anything impossible for Jehovah? We congratulate Jehovah's Witnesses for entitling one of their best-selling books *Things in which it is impossible for God to lie*. But we ask them, Do they believe the God who cannot lie when he inspired Moses to write *Yahweh appeared to Abram*? This God does not explain **how** He does things -- He simply does them. Though 2 of the 3 'men' who Abraham had entertained go on towards Sodom, *as for Jehovah, he was still standing before Abraham*. Do you believe what the New World Translation says? Abraham, who according to ch.18 had even washed the feet of Jehovah, is by now feeling familiar enough to haggle with His God. We read in verses 23-32 that Abraham felt sure enough of Yahweh's grace to know that if this God found even 10 righteous men there, He would spare the whole city. But there were not 10 righteous men there, not even one *truly* faithful, for even Lot and his family had become compromised by materialism and sensuality, to the point where Lot's daughters would not only marry Sodomites, but would later commit incest with their father. Nevertheless, *in the compassion of Jehovah upon him*, Lot and his daughters survived the overthrow of Sodom. Lot knew he hadn't earned God's grace. Indeed grace, by definition, **cannot** be earned. Grace is ALL of God, undeserved kindness, unmerited favour, or as Lot himself confessed in 19:19, *you are magnifying your loving-kindness*. God doesn't magnify his loving-kindness by saving people who deserve to be saved. That would be simply *justice*. Grace is God with no help from us.

And so it goes throughout the rest of Genesis. Abraham's heaven-given son Isaac has no extraordinary spiritual virtues. In fact one of the few deeds recorded of his long life is a deception parallel to Abram's in Egypt. And his children reflect poorly on their father. Not only Esau, who sold his birthright for a bowl of stew. But Jacob,

who cheated both brother and father to get the family blessing. Jacob, whose children carried on the family tradition of deceit, and didn't shrink back from murderous vendetta after deceit. The family hall of shame included Jacob's first 4 sons, one who slept with his father's concubine, two who revenged their sister's rape by murdering a whole town's male population, and another who frequented prostitutes. Not learning from the grace of God a better way, these 4 and the rest of their brothers even conspired to destroy their own younger brother out of jealousy. Yet Yahweh's covenant with their great-grandfather Abraham could not be cancelled by even their best efforts. Part of the chastisement for these sins took the entire family to Egypt again. Here, just as Jacob's sins came back to haunt him in his children, so the sins of those children were visited upon their offspring. Nevertheless, mercy triumphed over judgment again. Egypt, the place of their chastisement, became the cradle of the nation Israel. Jacob the liar became Israel, a Prince with God. In blessing his sons before he dies, Jacob now Israel can trace the hand of God's grace even during his family's worst times: *The God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked, the God who has shepherded me all my life until now, bless the boys*.

Next week: **Salvation or service -- which comes first?**

EXODUS: Salvation or service -- which comes first?

Last week we traced the grace of God in the descendants of Abraham. The lives of Isaac, Jacob and all but one of his sons showed little in the way of loyalty to the God of Abraham. But the God of Abraham knew all their defections in advance, for he had foretold they would be 400 years in Egypt before even Isaac was born (Gen.15). Would God therefore be surprised by their little faith while in Egypt? Yahweh had called Abram from among Babylon's idolaters, and Abram's family continued to be plagued by idolatry and puny faith.

But in their misery under a Pharaoh who knew not Joseph, they cried out to their ancestral God. Though they had apparently all but forgotten His covenant name, Yahweh, Yahweh had not forgotten them. But why should He save them? When had they, or their fathers, ever built a record of faithfulness to Him?

Nevertheless, Yahweh sends Moses with a command to Pharaoh -- *Let my people go!* What made Israel God's people? Nothing in them. Read what Yahweh says made them His people in Exodus 3. Yahweh tells Moses to tell them, *Jehovah the God of your forefathers, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you.* Notice it is the God of **Jacob**, not the God of Israel, that Moses is to represent. Jacob the deceiver, and the father of deceivers and murderers. Yahweh the God of Jacob, not the God of Prince Israel. Jacob who learned through his own suffering and the suffering of his family that God calls us to faithfulness. But also who had learned that our faithfulness cannot **add** to God's grace in calling us. Who had learned that while we can multiply our blessings by our faithfulness, we cannot multiply God's mercy.

I AM WHO I AM, Yahweh says to Moses. I SHALL BE WHAT I SHALL BE. Yahweh was now going to demonstrate on a vast scale what He had already demonstrated less dramatically in the lives of the patriarchs. He SHALL BE what he IS eternally, God to the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. In saving His people owing to nothing in them, but entirely due to his own promise, Yahweh would "prove himself God to them", even as He had promised back in Genesis 17:8.

And so it was. Despite Israel's continual quivering and quailing, Yahweh brings them not only out of Egypt, but into the wilderness where they are to meet their God. As He did to patriarchs, Yahweh appears. Exodus 19:18: *And Mount Sinai smoked all over, due to the fact that Jehovah came down upon it in fire.* Jehovah's Witnesses, can Jehovah come down upon a mountain in fire? Could Yahweh appear to Abram as a man. The same Yahweh who stood before Abraham in Genesis 18, and then went up from him as a man, the same Jehovah who, Exodus 14 tells us, went ahead of Israel in a pillar of cloud by day and a pillar of fire by night, the same God, we are

now told, came down on a mountain in fire. But how can this be possible? I SHALL PROVE TO BE WHAT I SHALL PROVE TO BE. Jehovah's Witness, don't let men tell you what God can and cannot do. Trust the Word, not the Watchtower.

Next week: **"You cannot serve Jehovah, for He is a holy God"**

LEVITICUS: "You cannot serve Jehovah, for He is a holy God"

When Yahweh first called Moses in Exodus 3, the first instruction Moses received was *do not come near. Draw your sandals off your feet, for the place where you are standing is holy ground.* Yahweh made the rules. Even Moses could only approach God in the way God dictated. Yahweh had approached men -- Adam, Cain, Abraham, Jacob -- in many ways that Yahweh Himself chose. But men can only approach God in the way He approves. Israel learned this through much tribulation. First, when Yahweh came down in fire on Sinai, Israel chose not to meet Him at all. They sent Moses into the fire to mediate for them. Thus, unwittingly, Israel acknowledged the need of a mediator, a go-between who would speak to them for God, and who would speak for them to God.

But within weeks of saying before the smoking Sinai, *all that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do*, they are returning in their hearts, if not their bodies, to Egypt. Thus, again unwittingly, Israel demonstrates for eternity that God can save a people who not only don't serve Him, but **can't serve** Him. For the power to obey the commandments of God is not something we can summon through our own efforts, no matter how "willing", we, like Israel, are when faced with the reality of Jehovah the devouring fire. Why did Israel fall into idolatry again as soon as their mediator Moses was out of sight? Unlike Christians in the new covenant, those under the old covenant had no power to obey. The Law of Moses, great lamp to their feet as it was, gave them no ability to walk. While they walked by its light, they did not stumble. But the commandment written on tablets of

stone only had the **power of fear** to enforce it. Unlike the new covenant, which is written on the hearts of those enjoying it, it has no **life-giving power**. The new covenant, according to Paul, gives us not only light, but the Lord Himself. *GOD is working in us BOTH TO WILL and TO WORK* (Phil.2:13). But Israel was not offered the Lord Himself, working within, but God on a mountain burning with fire. And they rejected him, choosing a man like themselves as mediator. Jehovah's Witnesses, have you been told you must accept the mediation of an earthly organization if you want to approach God? Have you been told that only 144,000 have the privilege of a personal relationship to God? Have you been told that those who live on the 'new earth' need **not** enter into the new covenant, God working within them, writing His laws on their hearts? If so, do not be surprised when you, like Israel, fall into sin when your 'mediator' the organization isn't watching. Don't be deceived. *He who has the Son has life; he that does not have the Son does not have this life* (I John 5:12). In God's kingdom, as Israel found out, there is no hope outside the covenant.

The terms of the Law were uncompromising. *You MUST prove yourselves holy, for I Jehovah your God am holy* (Lev.19:2). But how holy must we prove ourselves to be? If we're going to live by the law, make no mistake, God will hold us to our offer. As Israel saw from day one at Sinai, God won't be satisfied with half-measures, or semi-obedience: *ALL that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do* But after God had finished dictating the terms of THIS covenant, a contract with terms, in contrast to the unconditional covenant with the patriarchs, Israel fell yet again. In fact, every Israelite who lived under the law died a sinner, offering sacrifices day after day, year after year without being able to save himself from death. Jehovah's Witnesses, do not live under the delusion that God plays percentages, that a passing grade will do. When God says *You must be holy* there are no hostages -- if you choose to approach God through law, through obedience, through YOUR faithfulness, there can be only one outcome, **death ... whoever observes all the law but makes a false step in one point, he has become an offender against them all** (James 2:10). JW, don't let the Watchtower lay the weight of obedience on your shoulders. They say (on the last page of your

Live Forever book)"you must be part of Jehovah's organization, doing his will". If "doing his will" is the test, we're all doomed. We are not invited to climb a shaking mountain, or to dive into a devouring fire. Instead the Lord invites, *Come unto me, you who are heavy-burdened, and I will refresh you.*

Next week: