

EXPOSING THE FALSE HISTORY OF THE WTBTs

by Joy A. Veinot

In the July 1, 1994 *WATCHTOWER*,* page 5, under the heading “Wheat and Weeds,” there appears this interesting statement: “Jesus Christ himself taught that true Christianity would temporarily disappear from view.” Did Jesus truly teach that in time true Christians would “*disappear from view?*” Frankly, there is no such teaching in the Bible. Jesus *did* say weeds would be sown *among* the wheat (Matt. 13:25), and these two groups would “grow together” until God’s angels are sent to harvest “the crop” at the end of the age (Matt. 13:30). The “wheat” (genuine Christians) would not *disappear*; they just would be mingled in the same field with the “weeds” (false or pseudo-Christians). This is the situation today, and it will continue until the “harvest” at the end of the age.

Why would the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WTBTS)** twist Jesus’ words in this fashion? It’s just another example of necessity proving to be their mother of invention. They *need* a “disappearance” teaching, because they must find a way to explain away the mysterious absence, down through history, of their brand of “Christianity” (the “wheat” of Jesus’ illustration) led by the so-called “Faithful and Discreet Slave.”

Who is the “Faithful and Discreet Slave?”

Anyone who reads the *WATCHTOWER* magazine on a regular basis is familiar with this character. The often-alluded-to “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (F&D slave) is a pseudonym for the leadership of the WTBTS (eisegesis: Matt. 24:45). Supposedly made up of all “anointed” Jehovah’s Witnesses (JWs)† on the earth at any given time,¹ in reality, the F&D slave only speaks the opinions and gives the orders of the governing body (a handful of very elderly men) of the WTBTS (a.k.a. “Jehovah’s Organization”). Ironically, though they refer to themselves as a *slave*, they wield the power of popes and kings over the lives

of the so-called “great crowd” JWs—their hapless “subjects” on the earth.² They are the ones who interpret the Bible for the general membership, and they protect their monopoly in this area by teaching that no person can understand the Bible without their “help.”³ While they portray themselves as the oh-so-humble leaders of “Jehovah’s Organization,” in reality, the “slave” *is* the organization to whom all JWs must pay dutiful homage!⁴



When did “Jehovah’s Organization” come into being?

An objective person, looking at the cold, hard facts, would rightly conclude the WTBTs came into existence in 1879 when the *WATCHTOWER* magazine began to be published by founder CT Russell. This founding is well documented in history. The Jehovah’s Witness organization (the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) began with Charles Taze Russell when he broke away (and took a following) from the Second Adventists in the 1870’s. Early on, these followers of Russell were known simply as Bible Students because of Russell’s aversion to organized religion.⁵

Who established the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society?

Although their 1993 history book *JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES: PROCLAIMERS OF GOD’S KINGDOM* traces the history of the WTBTs back to the 1870’s and no further; *at the same time*, it makes the claim there were “witnesses of Jehovah” in the first century. They even assert the first-century existence of the “governing body” and teach that the first-century Christian church was basically a mirror image of the modern-day WTBTS organization. They claim the organization was established, *not really* by Russell in the 1870’s, but by Jesus Christ in the first century! Russell, they claim, merely “restored” true Christianity after long, dark centu-

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ries of apostasy. Of course, any group can *claim* to be true Christianity "restored" and, in fact, many other groups—from the Mormons to Gwen Shamblin's Remnant Fellowship—make this *exact same claim*. The "great apostasy" teaching is very convenient indeed! But, it does create a very thorny problem—if there *was* a JW organization in the first century that apostatized and fell out of favor with God, how are JWs purer and superior (as they continually boast) to "Christendom?"

The "slave's" role in "Christendom"

The one thing you really need to understand about the Jehovah's Witness organization is that they hate the Christian Church with a passion! All Christian denominations and sects are together derogatorily labeled as "Christendom"—the "weeds" of Jesus illustration—an evil religious entity that apostatized early on in Christian history and continues to mislead the deluded masses today. Ironically though, if the WTBS story about the great apostasy is true, it was the *JW's own F&D slave* from the first century who "lost the faith" that needed to be restored by CT Russell in the 1870's. If the original F&D slave (commissioned by Jesus) had only remained FAITHFUL, no apostasy or Pagan teaching would ever have taken hold! But, no. As the original F&D slave apostatized and took on Pagan beliefs, "Christendom" was born. Therefore, the "F&D slave" was an integral part of Christendom for many centuries, shared in all her alleged errors in theology and practice, as well as her wars, crusades, and inquisitions. Somehow, this logical inference escapes the average JW. So, to make sure the issue remains sufficiently fuzzy to keep their adherents with the program, it became necessary for the current F&D slave to invent an alternate history for itself—one not so bedded with evil "Christendom."

This alternate story claims the F&D slave did not *really* apostatize (so, who did?). They allegedly existed down through history as a *group* receiving their instructions from God, remaining completely faithful and loyal to Him, and dispensing truth ("food at the proper time") to the people of every era from the first century to our present day. They have masterfully woven these two contradictory stories together. It will be our object, in this article, to separate and unmask them as the

lying cover-up that they are.

The two-story two-step

Keeping in mind Story #1—the "great apostasy," nineteenth-century-restoration theory, we move on to Story #2. Revisiting the parable of the "wheat and the weeds," the WTBS's aforementioned book *JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: PROCLAIMERS OF GOD'S KINGDOM* states on page 44 that "**True Christianity then, was never completely stamped out.**" The article goes on to name some "truth lovers" (Wycliffe, Tyndale, Second Adventist George Storrs, and others) who were on the scene at various points in church history. The implication is that some of them were of the "wheat class," (a.k.a. *true* Christians, a.k.a. JWs, a.k.a. the F&D slave organization) hoping the reader will come away believing good "wheat" did exist down through history and did not participate in Christendom's "sins" or her supposedly Pagan teachings. Yet, they weasel around actually labeling these men as "wheat" saying:

"Although we cannot positively identify any of such persons as the wheat of Jesus' illustration, certainly 'Jehovah knows those who belong to Him.'"

This is a smokescreen, like so much of the WTBS's verbiage. They cannot just identify these "truth lovers" as *Christians*, because some sharp person might just "notice" Tyndale, Wycliffe, and yes, even Russell's Adventist associate George Storrs, were NOT Jehovah's Witnesses—in either doctrine or practice—by any stretch of the imagination. And those of us familiar with WTBS teachings know if they were not JWs receiving their spiritual food *solely* from the F&D slave class organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, they were *not* true Christians. Remember, according to the WTBS, nobody can hope to understand the Bible without the F&D slave's provision of study guides, magazines, etc.

"... Besides individually possessing God's Word, we need a theocratic organization. Yes, besides having God's Spirit of illumination, a Christian needs Jehovah's theocratic organization in order to understand the Bible. He needs to attend the meetings arranged for by that organization and to study with fellow Christians ... Jehovah God is dealing with his organization, and does not deal with individuals who are outside of his organization or who defiantly try to act independently of it."⁶

“Jehovah God ... does not deal with individuals”—keep this in mind as we proceed. So, the vague intimations some of these men *might* have been true Christians or “wheat” is merely a rabbit trail. It is offered because the WTBTs cannot produce a single, solitary scrap of historical evidence that even *one* JW (or any person holding their doctrines but going by another name) existed before their *real* beginning in the 1870’s. Much less can they show an organized group (the F&D slave) has been on the scene—century after century, generation after generation since appointed by Christ in 33 AD (or CE, as the WTBTs would have it)—faithfully interpreting the Bible and providing spiritual food to “truth lovers” (JWs) of every age. Yet, we shall see that this is exactly what they teach as fact.

The phantom “slave”

Why is there no evidence for the F&D slave’s existence in the historical record? My dears, the answer to that is simple—the inconsistent and highly contradictory history of the “faithful and discreet slave” (as taught by the WTBTs) is a phantom—a lie—a preposterous fraud! They are dancing the two-story two-step, and *both* stories are bogus!

Getting the story straight

What are the two stories again? Let’s look at them together for the sake of comparison:

Story #1: True Christianity apostatized soon after the death of the Apostles. This apostasy did not take place all at once, but involved a syncretization process that came about like this: After Christ’s Apostles died, their followers or disciples began slowly to mix elements of the true faith with elements of Paganism. This resulted in a totally apostate church (a.k.a. the vile and evil “Christendom”) within a few centuries time. True Christians (a.k.a. “the wheat,” a.k.a. “truth lovers”) existed, but they were independent *individuals* scattered here and there among “Christendom’s” various denominations and movements, and no one can say for a certainty who they were.

Story #2: True Christianity never really apostatized at all. The true Christians (the “wheat,” the Christ-appointed F&D slave) remained LOYAL AND PURE down through the centuries, one generation of the F&D slave faithfully feeding the next. Being found faithful at Christ’s return, the F&D slave was rewarded by being appointed over all the Master’s belongings. Imitation Christians appeared on the scene after the death of the Apostles, but never gained dominance over the F&D slave, nor turned the F&D slave to disloyalty or to false teaching.

So, while the WTBTs asserts there was a “great apostasy” in the early centuries and most believers fell away into Pagan teaching, they teach (according to Story #2, anyway) a remnant of believers (JWs, naturally) resisted the urge to “Paganize” and remained ever true to Jehovah with their light getting ever brighter. This supposed remnant of anointed JWs is the “the faithful and discreet slave” of Matthew 24 whom Jesus allegedly found and rewarded when he “returned” invisibly in the year 1914.⁷ Only one problem: The two stories—the “great apostasy” and the “faithful remnant”—are completely incompatible and show the WTBTs’s history to be a fairy tale.

Let’s take a look at the confounding contradictions about the history of “Jehovah’s Organization” and its ever faithful “slave”

that are espoused by the WTBTs out of both sides of its mouth.

The “F&D slave” has been in continuous existence down through church history, though its identity may have been “unclear”

In the article entitled, “Do you appreciate the Faithful and Discreet Slave?” the March 1, 1981 *WATCHTOWER* states, on page 24:

“Beginning with Pentecost, 33 CE and continuing through the 19 centuries since then, this slavelike congregation has been feeding its members spiritually, doing so faithfully and discreetly ... Especially has the identity of this ‘slave’ become clear at the time of Christ’s return or presence.”

Note the slave has not only been in continuous existence, but it continued throughout the centuries faithfully feeding the flock of JWs.

The slave has *always* been a group, not individuals scattered here and there

Is it possible the slave *did* exist down through history but was only an individual here and there and so “disappeared” for that reason? NO. Not at all! For, as the WTBTs itself proclaims:

“Witnesses of Jehovah understand that the ‘slave’ is comprised of all anointed Christians as a group [emphasis theirs] on earth at any given time during the 19 centuries since Pentecost.”⁸

In addition, as we should all know by now, *Jehovah God never works through individuals*—He *only* works through His organization!

The slave would remain loyal, and the evil slave would never gain dominance over them

It is a most important point that the slave did not apostatize along with “Christendom”—“he” remained LOYAL to Jehovah since 33 CE.

“Shortly after Jesus’ resurrection and ascension to heaven he formed the Christian congregation, on Pentecost day of the year 33 CE. There the ‘faithful and discreet slave’ class, with Jesus’ apostles taking the lead, began to feed the individuals in God’s newly formed ‘household of faith’ with spiritual food. This slave class, the spirit-anointed Christian congregation, would remain loyal right down to the time of Christ’s coming to destroy the present wicked system of things.”⁹

The slave remained loyal, did it? Later we shall detail exactly what loyalty to Jehovah means, according to the WTBTs. But for now, we shall just comment that *if* the slave had remained *faithful and loyal*, the slave would never have gotten involved in any of the practices identified by the WTBTs as being Pagan, such as holiday celebration, use of the cross, Phrenology, Pyramidology, participation in war, etc. If at any time they had done any of these things, they would have gone into DARKNESS, and the light would have blinked out and they immediately would have become weeds just like everyone else. Yet, of course, according to Story #1, the slave was “soiled” by all of these things, but did *not* become weeds, just *weedy!* This seems to be most inconsistent.

Would the weeds ever gain dominance over the wheat? No. Christ would not allow that.

“Christ would not let any such disloyal ones have dominance over or break up his congregation and stop the

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work it is doing.”¹⁰**

This statement makes it hard to understand just how the slave could “disappear from view.” And, if the weeds could not break up the congregation or stop the work it was doing, why have we no record of their work down through history?

The “slave” fed not only itself but also each succeeding generation from Pentecost until now

The Jan. 15, 1975 *WATCHTOWER* says on page 46:

“Jesus had said: ‘Look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of this system of things.’ (Matt. 28:20) Jesus Christ is the Head of the congregation, his slave, and his words show that he would strengthen them to feed his “domestics” right down through the centuries. Apparently one generation of the “slave” class fed the succeeding generation thereof, as well as continuing to feed themselves ... no individual could have provided so well. But with family effort, all are well fed. As a family [emphasis theirs] they are one body, just as the ‘faithful and discreet slave’.”

The slave was *not* an individual or individuals, but it was a family, a body, an organization. Yes, the organization itself dates back to the first century, according to the WTBS.

“... if you were a true worshipper of Jehovah in the first century, you had to be a part of his Christian organization.”¹¹

And “God has always used an organization,” and eternal life is unattainable without it:

“A third requirement [for eternal life] is that we be associated with God’s channel, his organization. God has always used an organization.”¹²

Nor would Jehovah have used the slave to feed each succeeding generation if they were isolated, independent individuals scattered here and there across the globe.

“Jesus Christ himself called attention to this method of feeding his people—not as isolated individuals, but as a close-knit body of Christians having real love and care for each other.”¹³

Since the WTBS teaches the slave fed itself and all ensuing generations, “he” (the slave) had to be an organization to accomplish this. Scattered individuals could not feed even themselves, much less others. The JW’s apologetics manual, *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, on pages 282-3, makes it *very* clear that “**true Christians would be an organized people,**” and faithful servants of God *could not* be individuals who are scattered in the various churches of Christendom. In fact, the slave, either corporately or individually, could not possibly have been involved in Christendom in any way because:

“How clear it is that, as in times past, Jehovah God has a visible organization today! ... However, we cannot be part of God’s organization and, at the same time, be part of false religion ... for what fellowship do righteousness and lawlessness have? Or what sharing does light have with darkness? ... we could not be obeying that command by remaining a part of, or of giving support to, a religious organization other than the one Jehovah is using.”¹⁴

So much for the “truth lovers” the WTBS lauds in the *PROCLAIMERS* book—they were *not* the wheat, *not* the slave! They were WEEDS pure and simple, part of false religion—“Christendom.” Why would the WTBS praise these apostates, anyway?

The “slave’s” food is “progressive” and the light always gets “brighter and brighter”

Any person at all familiar with the WTBS knows they claim

to receive “new light” from Jehovah all the time. The slave faithfully feeds its subjects and the “spiritual feeding program” is *progressive*. The light keeps getting brighter and brighter as time goes on, which conveniently gives the WTBS cover for all of its now-discarded, former “truths.” ☺ So, since the light is progressive, the slave’s light, *if* he really existed down through the years, must have kept right on getting brighter and brighter over the centuries between Pentecost when they were first appointed until modern times. In other words, the slave’s understanding of scriptural truth *had* to continually build upon itself, which would necessarily mean the slave had *much greater light* in the sixth, tenth, or fifteenth centuries than did the Apostles in the first century CE. It would also mean the slave’s understanding of the truth could never have been even temporarily darker than in the apostolic period. The slave would enjoy the privilege of knowing everything Peter and Paul knew plus the rich *additional information* (light) they had received in the ensuing centuries. Are you with me so far?

About the progressive nature of the food dispensed, the July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER* states:

“Down through the years the slavelike congregation has been feeding its true members faithfully and discreetly. From Pentecost, AD 33, up to this very present hour this has been lovingly and carefully performed. Yes, and these ‘domestics’ have been fed on progressive spiritual food that keeps them abreast of the ‘bright light that is getting lighter and lighter until the day is firmly established.’ All this has been proved to be ‘food at the proper time’ as stated by Jesus.”

Wouldn’t you think, then, with all that faithful feeding going on, that the day would have been firmly established by 600-700 AD or so? But, no, not according to Story #1. The slave by 700 AD was in *very* deep weeds, if you’ll pardon the expression. ☺

The path of the unrighteous righteous

The teaching of “progressive light,” which is the WTBS’s justification for the shifting nature of the “truth” it expounds, is supposedly backed up in Scripture at Proverbs 4:18. I think it would be worthwhile to examine that Scripture before moving on. In looking at the passage, we see there are *two* paths spelled out there. There is the path of the RIGHTEOUS, which is the path that had been allegedly trod down through the centuries by the F&D slave (the “wheat”). Now, what about the other path? Oh, that is the path of the UNRIGHTEOUS (the “weeds”) of which Prov. 4:14-15 says:

“Into the path of the wicked ones do not enter, and do not walk straight on into the way of the bad ones. Shun it, do not pass along by it, turn aside from it, and pass along.”¹⁵

What would happen to any who would not listen to this advice? Verse 19 states:

“The way of the wicked ones is like gloom. They have not known at what they keep stumbling.”

Therefore, we must ask what would happen if, *at any time* over the centuries, the slave had chosen the path of the wicked. Well, the light would blink out, of course. That would be the end of the progressive feeding program right there, and they would now stumble along with the rest of the weeds in the gloom. According to Story #1, that is exactly what happened, but Story #2 denies that.

Now you see him, now you don’t, now you do again

The July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER* states on page 435:

“From the 1870’s onward the thin line of true Chris-

tians began to come to historic view again as in the days of the first century.”

This is important. The slave has now “come to ... view again.” If Story #2 has any truth in it at all, and the slave has indeed existed down through the centuries as “wheat,” one generation feeding the next, they will be *loyal*, they will be a *group*, and their teachings would have been progressively getting “brighter” down through history. Yet, amazingly, the WTBTS denies this, and informs us that:

The slave was not a group, but was made up of scattered individuals who were part of Christendom—the “weeds”

“A decided move was made by many of the wheat group to disassociate themselves from the many weedlike sects of Christendom.”¹⁶

Now this creates a real problem, doesn't it? Why would the “wheat” (the slave) need to *disassociate* itself from Christendom? When and how did they become *associated* with Christendom, the weeds? Hadn't they stayed LOYAL all through the centuries? Story #2 demands it!

“After speaking of the faithful and discreet slave that would be loyal till his coming ... We note that Jesus did not say that the ‘faithful and discreet slave’ would turn disloyal ... Jehovah God will have only loyal tested ones as inheritors of the Kingdom.”¹⁷

If the slave *had* at some point apostatized and disloyally gotten involved with evil Christendom, they, of course, would *no longer be* the faithful and discreet slave, right? They would be weeds just like everyone else who fell into apostasy. However, let's go on:

“This gathered group of Christians from many parts of the earth formed a new association that later came to be known as Jehovah's Witnesses.”¹⁸

Here is another major problem. Why would the slave class need to be *gathered*? When had it gotten scattered? Remember the WTBTS says the loyal slave was *always* a group—*never* individuals; and Jehovah God does not ever work with individuals or give them any light on the Scriptures. He always and only works through the organization! Logically then, if they were individuals, they were *not* the faithful and discreet slave. And if they were *any* part of Christendom, they also were eliminated as being the slave, of course, since one “cannot be a part of God's organization and at the same time, be part of false religion.”

Oops—The slave had not remained loyal, his light had to be “restored”

The July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER*, page 435, goes on to say:

“Yes, the ‘domestics,’ or individual anointed ones, were being spiritually revived with increasingly restored light of Bible truth by the collective ‘slave’ group.”

The “collective slave group” revived its members *with restored light*? Huh? What kind of double-talk is this? How did the collective slave, scattered as it was, get revived in order to revive individual members of itself? Where did the “restored light” come from? Who could revive the slave once he had fallen into apostasy and had become a weed, no different from the rest of Christendom? Could CT Russell have done it? Could he have read the Bible and “discovered” these lost truths and gathered together the “slave individuals” and taught them? No, because according to the WTBTS, NO INDIVIDUAL can understand the Bible without the faithful and discreet slave! Jehovah God *never* works with individuals—He *always* uses organization!

The wheat (slave) did survive and shone as brightly as the sun

The July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER* also asks the question, on the same page:

“Would Satan entirely succeed, with no wheat left after the master's absence of 1900 years? Jesus confidently answers that question in the above-referenced-to illustration of the sower by saying, ‘Just as the weeds are collected and burned with fire, so it will be in the consummation of this system of things. At that time, the righteous ones will shine as brightly as the sun in the kingdom of their Father.’ So it was indicated that many of the ‘wheat’ class of righteous ones, anointed ones, would survive here on earth up to and during the ‘time of the end.’”

This scenario is impossible for this reason: If the slave has indeed been scattered, has associated with the weedlike Christendom, and become an unfaithful, evil slave, why would it not be burned along with the rest of the weeds? Of course it would! Yet, according to the WTBTS, the slave is righteous and shining. However, Scripture tells us that if a person gets on the path of the wicked, he is *unrighteous*, and the light would not get brighter and brighter for him at all (Prov 4:19). How would such a one shine?

The slave was an awake spiritual watchman with unclean garments from long association with Christian apostasy

Just how bad was this apostasy? The July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER*, page 435:

“Under the direction of this religious corporation the great world-wide campaign to announce the 1914 end of the ‘times of the nations’ was undertaken, as mentioned earlier. The Watchtower Witnesses of Jehovah proved to be awake spiritual watchmen. But the scriptures describe them as having unclean garments because of their long association with Christian apostasy.”¹⁹

Long association? Just how long of an association did the slave have with weedy Christendom? How many generations ago had the slave lost his light? How did “he” get it back?

The slave's practices and beliefs were similar to weedlike Christendom

“They had many practices, characteristics and beliefs similar to the weedlike sects of Christendom. So from 1914 to 1918 a period of fiery testing came upon them, not unlike the ancient period of Babylonish captivity of the Jews back in 607-537 BC.”

Israel was sent off to Babylon for blatant apostasy. Is this what the slave was guilty of—blatant apostasy of the highest order? Of course! The WTBTS always teaches that apostates make up the EVIL SLAVE—but here they are telling us the loyal F&D slave was made up of apostates too.

The slave was worldly, unclean, polluted, and weedlike, so Jehovah god reproached the slave and sent the slave into Babylonish captivity for apostasy

“All this came to pass in connection with transgression on their part in having the fear of man, not conducting themselves in a strictly neutral way during the war years, and being tainted with many religiously unclean practices.”²⁰

Can this group of apostates be the same group who on the last page (page 435 of this same *WATCHTOWER*) was called “shining righteous ones?” Let's go on:

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“Jehovah and Jesus Christ permitted these witnesses to be reproached, persecuted, banned, and their officers imprisoned by the nations of this old world. Notice, however, that this watchman’s voice was not stilled until they had completed their pre-1914 phenomenal work of warning the peoples of the nations.”

Puuuleeeeeease! If their pre-1914 work *was* phenomenal, it was phenomenally foolish! The apostate slave was **“warning the peoples of the nations”** of something that *never came to pass*—they were prophesying Armageddon was to occur in 1914, and that the great battle had, in fact, already commenced (see *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol. 2, p101, 1907 edition)! Why would God wait until they had finished broadcasting this false prophecy all over the world before taking them off into captivity? Did He have to wait and see if they would turn out to be right? Oy vey! The *WATCHTOWER* goes on to say:

“As we now know, this watchman class of the ‘faithful and discreet slave’ was being cleansed for still greater watchman service in the turbulent years to follow their restoration in 1919.”

They have just told us that this group was world tainted, having the fear of man, garment polluted, religiously unclean, weedlike, and sent off to captivity for apostasy. By what logic do they then refer to the slave as **“faithful and discreet?”** The phrase **“to follow their restoration in 1919”** is interesting also, since we have seen that the slave had already been **“restored”** and **“revived”** in the 1870’s. How many times did they have to be restored? Why would they have to be restored anyway, since Story #2 claims the slave faithfully fed itself **“food at the proper time”** down through the centuries, which could *only* have resulted in brighter and brighter light?

How does this work out in practice? If someone in the slave class decided to teach or “feed” some Pagan theory (such as Pyramidology) to the flock as CT Russell DID, would this new pyramid teaching be “brighter” than the light they had prior to receiving it? I wouldn’t think so. Even the WTBTs today admits the Pyramidology they taught is a grossly Pagan teaching. So, if the slave’s light does not always get brighter but sometimes gets much darker, how can the WTBTs use Prov 4:18 to excuse their errors?

The slave was sent into captivity because they held many false doctrines

The book *Jehovah’s Witnesses in the Divine Purpose* on page 91 explains why they were sent into this Babylonish captivity in this way:

“There were many false doctrines and practices that had not been cleaned out of the organization ... With considerable misunderstanding they had accepted earthly political governments as the ‘superior authorities’ that God had ordained according to Romans 13:1.”

Yet, this supposed **“considerable misunderstanding”** that earthly political governments are the superior authorities is *exactly what they teach today!* What’s up with this? Can the light get darker and then lighter again? How are we supposed to know what is *really true for all time?*

The Bible speaks

How does this scenario fit the Bible anyway? The verse quoted by the WTBTs to back the all-important F&D slave teaching is Matthew 24:45:

“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.”²¹

Where in this passage does it even imply that if the master found the slave UNFAITHFUL upon his return that the faithless one would *still* be appointed over all of the master’s belongings? According to this passage, would the master (Jesus) return to find his slave in apostasy and send “him” into Babylonish captivity?

At what point should we imagine Jesus said to the Watchtower slave, “Well done?” Before he sent them into captivity? After? Whether before or after, WHY? What had they accomplished that was well done or good and faithful? Even punishment with captivity would not make them faithful and discreet; at best it would only make them penitent. But the passage does not mention a penitent *unfaithful* slave rewarded with **“new lofty service.”** It does go on to talk about an evil unfaithful slave, however, but for some reason the WTBTs thinks that title refers to some *other* unfaithful apostates! Matthew 24:48-51 states:

“But if ever that EVIL SLAVE [emphasis ours] 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.”²²

It is the evil slave who is punished when the master returns. JW’s need to really consider the implications of this. Note the evil slave thought he knew exactly when his master was supposed to arrive, and so believed the master was delaying. As far as the beating of fellow slaves is concerned, that sounds like a spiritually abusive situation to me. Maybe the evil slave told its fellow slaves they were really supposed to serve and obey him as God’s supposed representative on earth? Maybe he told them that, if they wanted to gain eternal life, they had to please him, follow his directives, and obey his rules?²³

The slave was brought back from captivity and rewarded with “new lofty service” even though they continued in the same Pagan practices long after 1919

“A faithful remnant of some thousands of the ‘domestics’ of the ‘faithful and discreet slave’ class survived this time of testing. From the spring of 1919 forward they began to rise from the dust of inactivity to their new lofty service as watchmen to the world.”²⁴

They say this even though they have already taught the slave class had *already* been employed as **“watchmen to the world,”** warning the nations erroneously about all they prophesied would happen in 1914, but that did not happen. Why did God grant them a **“new lofty service”** after they had just come out of apostasy? Then again, why say they came out of apostasy at all, considering they celebrated birthdays and holidays until the late 20’s, still displayed crosses for years, and taught the world was now going to end in 1925, and that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob were to be resurrected at that time? Worse, they erected a nine-foot pyramid at Charles Taze Russell’s gravesite in 1919 right after they were released from this so-called captivity. Reasonably then, why would the Lord have released and rewarded them?

The slave was “rich in its loyalty and integrity,” and “strong in its ancient faith,” and “obedient,” which is why it was rewarded with kingdom service, which Jehovah surely would not leave

“in the hands of a novice organization of spiritual babes”

The last paragraph of page 436 of the July 15, 1960 *WATCHTOWER* really caps it. It states:

“Now that the long-expected Kingdom had become an established reality in heaven, surely its growing interests in the earth after 1919 would not be left in the hands of a novice organization of spiritual babes. And that proved to be true. It was the 1900-year-old ‘faithful and discreet slave,’ the old Christian congregation, that was entrusted with this precious Kingdom service.”

This “faithful” 1900-year-old slave had apostatized some unspecified number of years prior to its “restoration,” although nowhere is it spelled out how any restoration was possible with no one UN-apostatized to teach the others. To reiterate, no one can understand the Bible without the slave, and the slave had lost his light on the Scriptures. Where did the light come from to restore the truth? The *WATCHTOWER* goes on extolling the slave:

“Rich in its loyalty and integrity, long in its patient suffering and of persecution, strong in its ancient faith in Jehovah’s precious promises, confident in the leadership of its invisible Lord, Jesus Christ, obedient in its centuries-old commission to be witnesses in the earth, finally cleansed by a fiery test by 1918, the matured ‘slave’ as represented by a remnant now stood ready for new assignments of service.”

How can this be the same group spoken of across the page?

What was it about the leadership’s jail time that made them loyal, obedient etc.? Another thing we could imply from this is that it is quite possible to be a faithful obedient slave, rich in loyalty and integrity and still celebrate birthdays, Christmas, Easter, display crosses, etc. If it were *not* possible, then neither would the slave have been doing any of those things.

What does it mean to be loyal?

Since the WTBTs maintains the 1900-year-old slave was “rich in loyalty,” the question begs to be asked—what does it mean to be loyal to Jehovah? Naturally, we don’t have to speculate—the WTBTs tells us in no uncertain terms what loyalty is, and what you have to do to remain loyal to Jehovah God. The March 15, 1996 *WATCHTOWER*, on page 15 states:

“Loyalty to Jehovah God will also keep us from doing anything that would bring reproach upon his name and kingdom ... loyalty to God also involves not yielding to the fear of man ... thus, we do not compromise when faced with persecution ... If we are loyal to Jehovah God, we will avoid making friends with his enemies ... loyalty to Jehovah’s organization means having nothing to do with apostates.”

So, *if* the slave existed at all down through the centuries, as taught in Story #2, he certainly was NOT loyal to Jehovah! The slave compromised the truth, brought reproach on his name and kingdom, made friends with God’s enemies, and as far as having nothing to do with apostates—they joined “Christendom!!!”

(Continued on next page)

THOSE OTHER MINISTRIES (whom we love!)

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Website: www.pfo.org

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Let's wrap it up

Look at this chart. According to the WTBT's conflicting claims:

The WTBT's Conflicting Claims of its History


The faithful and discreet slave organization was founded by Jesus in 33 CE	The slave organization was founded by CT Russell in the late 1870's
The slave has been in continuous existence down through the centuries feeding ever-brighter truth to itself for 1900+ years	The "great apostasy" washed over and overwhelmed the little faithful slave soon after the death of the Apostles, and "he" became associated with "Christendom"
The slave has always remained a cohesive group—not scattered individuals; true Christians would never take part in false religion	The slave was comprised of individuals scattered amongst weedy Christendom who took part in false religion
God always works only through organization—no interpretation or understanding of the Bible is given to individuals, no matter how much Bible reading they do	God worked through CT Russell—giving him the ability to understand and interpret Scripture and restore the "truth" which had been "lost" for centuries ... Russell immediately led the group into Pagan Pyramidology, Phrenology, and other late-nineteenth-century heretical movements and ideas so wacky that even evil "weedy" "Christendom" never adopted them
The slave remained loyal, and the evil slave did not gain dominance over them	The slave did not remain loyal, but was part of weedy Christendom, which thoroughly dominated them
The slave fed not only itself, but each succeeding generation fed the next—everyone was well-fed	The slave could feed no one, since "he" was scattered soon after the death of the Apostles, becoming part of false religion.
The light the faithful and discreet slave receives is <i>progressive</i> and it always gets brighter and brighter.	The slave's light blinked out and the slave was in total darkness—his light needed to be "restored"
The slave was revived and his light restored in the late nineteenth century	After the "great apostasy," there was no cohesive F&D slave organization to receive the light needed to "restore" the lost truth
The "wheatlike" slave remained righteous and shone as brightly as the sun	The slave's practices and beliefs were the same as weedy Christendom's
The slave was rich in loyalty and integrity and strong in its ancient faith, which is why "he" was rewarded by Christ upon His invisible return	The slave's garments were polluted and unclean from <i>long association</i> with Christian apostasy, which is why he was sent into Babylonish captivity
The slave was released from Babylonish captivity in 1919 and given even greater privileges now that they were cleansed	After the slave's release from captivity, "he" immediately (in 1919) built a huge Pagan stone pyramid near Russell's gravesite in a cemetery outside of Pittsburgh PA and continued to lead the flock into Pagan ideas and practices long after 1919
Jehovah God surely would not put kingdom interests in the hands of a novice organization of spiritual babes	Jehovah God placed all of his kingdom interests in the hands of a novice organization that had just recently emerged from, but still clung to, many of the beliefs and practices of weedy Christendom plus some strange Pagan teachings the slave found elsewhere

How can these claims be assessed? Logically, the slave cannot at the same time be: Faithful yet unfaithful; dispensing only ever-progressive light, yet gone into darkness; obedient, yet apostate; finally cleansed, yet still dirty; associated with "weed" Christendom, yet still "wheat" who would not be burned; a group dispensing spiritual food to its individual members, yet scattered in various religious organizations; righteous shining lights, who were sent into captivity for their Pagan practices and apostasy.

What difference does it make anyway? Should we care the

WTBT's teaching of its history does not match up to the facts? Yes, Gentle Reader, it makes all the difference in the world. The WTBT bases its authority on Matthew 24 and claims to be that slave who is the *only* God-approved religion who is responsible for providing spiritual food for all. People are actually asked to put their faith in the slave organization to attain salvation!²⁵ Pretty big claims for a late-nineteenth-century-arrival religious group! Nevertheless, they expect us to pay homage to them and actually worship God through them!²⁶ All their boasting about the slave re-

minds me of Dorothy and her group and their encounter with the Wizard of Oz. All that buildup of hopes and expectations, but what happened? They saw something the “wizard” did not intend them to see—the little man who really was the one running the show. What did “the wizard” say to them when he realized he was found out? “Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain!” Don’t look, don’t see, and don’t investigate. Just believe I am what I pretend I am.

If the “slave” has existed throughout the centuries dispensing food at the proper time, and, in fact, was approved for whatever reason by Jesus in 1919, and appointed as the one true channel of God’s truth, we should all be following him. However, if this history is bogus, then we could read the Bible for ourselves, could we not? We wouldn’t need to come to any manmade organization for salvation, but could come directly to Jesus, as He invites all to do. 

Love to all,

Joy

*The *WATCHTOWER* is one of two bi-monthly publications of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (also known as Jehovah’s Witnesses) which keeps the members abreast of the Organizations latest teachings.

**The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (also referred to as “Jehovah’s Organization”) is the government or clergy of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.

†Jehovah’s Witnesses are the members of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society.

ENDNOTES:

1. The religion of the WTBTs is a rather bizarre two-class system—the upper crust “anointed” JWs which number less than 10,000 people, and the lower class “great crowd” comprised of all the other millions of JWs. The upper class JWs are the only ones who are supposedly born again, who have Jesus as their mediator, and who will eventually rule over the earth (and the great crowd) with him. The great crowd or “other sheep” are their loyal subjects who *may* eventually earn eternal life on Paradise earth if they faithfully and unquestioningly obey the dictates of the “anointed,” now and forever.
2. The *WATCHTOWER*, June 15, 1957, p370: “It is vital that we appreciate this fact and respond to the directions of the “slave” as we would to the voice of God, because it is His provision.” The *WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1976, p124 : “Would not a failure to respond to direction from God through his organization really indicate a rejection of divine rulership?”
3. The *WATCHTOWER*, June 15, 1951, p375: “...Besides individually possessing God’s word, we need a theocratic organization. Yes, besides having God’s spirit of illumination, a Christian needs Jehovah’s theocratic organization in order to understand the Bible.”
4. The *WATCHTOWER*, February 1, 1952, p79-80: “God interprets and teaches, through Christ the Chief Servant, who in turn uses the discreet slave as the visible channel, the visible theocratic organization ... The truth we are to publish are the ones provided through the discreet-slave class organization, not some personal opinions contrary to what the slave has provided as timely food.

5. CT Russell, *ZION’S WATCH TOWER*, September 1, 1893, p266: “There is no *organization* today clothed with such divine authority to imperiously command mankind. There is no organization doing this today; though we are well aware that many of them in theory claim that they ought to be able to do so.”
6. The *WATCHTOWER*, June 15, 1951, p375 and the *WATCHTOWER*, October 1, 1967, p587 state: “The Bible is an organizational book and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, not to individuals, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible.”
7. *YOU CAN LIVE FOREVER IN PARADISE ON EARTH* (New York, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., 1982) p193: “On his return in Kingdom power in the year 1914, did Christ find a ‘faithful and discreet slave’ class providing spiritual ‘food’ or information? Yes, he found such a ‘slave’ made up of the remaining ones on earth of his 144,000 brothers.” Very inconveniently for the sake of this story, Russell and his followers believed in 1914 that Russell ALONE was the “slave.” Moreover, Russell emphatically taught that the “slave” could not have been a class of people but *must* be ONE individual only! So if Christ returned in 1914 and found a faithful slave GROUP, and rewarded them for their faithfulness, watchfulness, etc., *they never knew it!* Even after Russell died, his followers continued to look to him as the faithful servant, even believing that he gave them direction from heaven! The slave-as-class teaching came on the scene some years later.
8. The *WATCHTOWER*, March 1, 1981, p24.
9. The *WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1975, p109.
10. The *WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1975, p110.
11. *YOU CAN LIVE ...*, op. cit., p193.
12. The *WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1983, p12.
13. The *WATCHTOWER*, January 15, 1975, p47.
14. *YOU CAN LIVE ...*, op. cit., p202.
15. *The New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures*, (New York, NY: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.,1984) p812.
16. The *WATCHTOWER*, July 15, 1960, p435.
17. The *WATCHTOWER*, February 15, 1975, p110.
18. The *WATCHTOWER*, July 15, 1960, p435.
19. Ibid.
20. Ibid., p436.
21. *The New World Translation ...*, op. cit., p1207.
19. Ibid.
22. The *WATCHTOWER*, August 1, 1981, p26: “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.’ Prove yourself to be a loyal companion of the anointed ‘wheat’ class, the ‘faithful and discreet slave,’ whom Christ has appointed to provide spiritual ‘food at the proper time.’ ”
23. The *WATCHTOWER*, July 15, 1960, p436.
24. The *WATCHTOWER*, March 1, 1979, front cover states: “PUT FAITH in a VICTORIOUS ORGANIZATION;” and the *WATCHTOWER*, November 15, 1981, p21: “... now the witness yet includes the invitation to come to Jehovah’s Organization for salvation.”
25. The *WATCHTOWER*, December 15, 1961, p748: “Jesus Christ is the Foundation Cornerstone, and all true followers anointed with God’s spirit are this superstructure built upon him to form a living house in which God can dwell by His spirit ... It is through the agency of this living spiritual temple that all mankind must henceforth render acceptable worship to God.”

The foregoing is an excellent topic to discuss with JWs who come to your door. Please feel free to write or e-mail us to request a document pack that can be used to present this material to a JW. Joy Veinot; bjoyful@aol.com



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Ignorance of the Infinite: Pagans, Logic, and God

by Jonathan Miles

I have great hopes that we shall learn in due time how to emotionalize and mythologize their science to such an extent that what is, in effect, a belief in us (though not under that name) will creep in while the human mind remains closed to belief in the Enemy. The "Life Force," the worship of sex, and some aspects of Psychoanalysis may here prove useful. If once we can produce our perfect work—*The Materialist Magician, the man, not using, but veritably worshipping, what he vaguely calls "Forces" while denying the existence of "spirits"—then the end of the war will be in sight.*¹

C.S. Lewis wrote these words in 1942, while the now-thriving neo-Pagan movement was still in its infancy. Lewis put these words into the mouth of the sinister, but priggish, arch-devil Screwtape who is instructing his demon nephew Wormwood in the ways of winning the spiritual war. While Lewis would never consider the above quote as a prophecy, the frightening fact is that Screwtape's plan has become reality. Thousands of people in America are doing just as Screwtape envisioned. They are worshipping "forces" while denying the existence of the satanic spirits, and they are doing it cloaked in psychobabble and carrying the banner of sexual anarchy. Neo-Paganism and its worldview are facets of our culture Christian apologetics must deal with. It is a group of people to whom we must *"give an answer for the hope that is within us with gentleness and respect."*² Apologetics and counter-cult researcher Don Veinot contends that America's current spiritual climate is more like the first century than any other time in history.³ From what we know of the first century, the greatest obstacle to Christianity was not Atheism (as it was in the first half of the twentieth century), it was Paganism. Lack of belief in God was not the problem, devotion to a plethora of gods was. Paganism has come of age in this country. It is couched in the terms of Jungian psychology, wrapped in the shroud of Hindu pantheism and reincarnation, and fueled by a distaste for Christian patriarchy and morality. How are Christians to respond and communicate the Gospel to those who do not even believe in an objective reality? How are apologists to defend the cosmological argument with people who do not even acknowledge the supremacy of logic?

First we must understand why Pagans do not care about cosmology—why logical first causes are not an issue for them. Then we must find a way to convince them that logic and first principles are a reality with which they must cope. Then we should apply those principles to the inconsistencies within the Pagan cosmology. Confronted with this, most Pagans will admit there is no rational reason for their religion. However, they will continue to practice it because it "brings them peace" or it "gives a sense of power." One 16-year-old Pagan practitioner told me it was *"the rush of having control over energy."*⁴ This is not belief based on fact, but rather Hedonism based on preference. In other words, Pagans refuse to accept the logic of Christian theism not because they have

assurance their experience is reality, but rather out of rebellion to the implications of Christian morality. As Margot Adler explains, *"Many people said that they had become Pagans because they could be themselves and act as they chose, without what they felt were medieval notions of sin and guilt."*⁵ This is at the heart of the resurgence of Paganism in modernity. At this point, apologetics must give way to evangelism. The only thing in existence that can draw a human heart away from moral rebellion is the Holy Spirit through the Gospel. As noted Apologist Norman Geisler has said, *"Apologetics can lead the horse to water, but only the Holy Spirit can make him drink."*⁶

It should be noted that, as with all apologetics and evangelism, the entire exchange should be done with prayer and respect, for I contend much of the reason Pagans refuse to discourse with Christians is because of the ill-informed and belligerent responses they receive from them.

While this article will deal with all aspects of this apologetic, it will concentrate on the illogic of the Pagan⁷ cosmology and how this subsequently nullifies the Pagan worldview. Once the argument is made for the inadequacy of Paganism as a viable understanding of reality, then the Christian can bare witness of a God who is rational, knowable and moral.

A Willful Ignorance: Pagans, Logic, and Reality

Before any apologetic can be utilized, the barrier of relativism and irrationalism that pervades the Pagan mindset must be addressed. When anyone attempts to do apologetics with neo-Pagans, one thing continually blocks the process to arguing the validity of or invalid nature of *any* system of belief. Logic just isn't appreciated. Pagans object to any Christian apologetic with the criticism that the apologist is being too rational and dogmatic about his or her own particular perspective on reality. We are charged with using logic to destroy a beautiful experience. Since logic is just one aspect of reality, and reality itself is either relative or unknowable objectively (depending on which Pagan you talk to); then logic is not the only way of knowing truth and, therefore, not necessarily a valid way of determining what is right or believable. Wiccan author Starhawk explains that witchcraft or the "Craft" has always been a religion of poetry rather than theological belief.⁸ Experience is preferred over theological doctrine based on logic. Adler describes her own "conversion" to Wicca in terms of experience not belief:

*"Like most neo-Pagans, I never converted in the accepted sense—I never adopted any new beliefs. I simply accepted, reaffirmed, and extended a very old experience. I allowed certain kinds of feelings and ways of being back into my life ... belief has never seemed very relevant to the experiences and processes of the groups that call themselves collectively, the neo-Pagan movement."*⁹

Unlike Christianity, which grounds its experience in the nature

of a rational God, Paganism sees such rationality as unnecessary and even a straightjacket to experience:

“Anyone who believes in an orthodox truth—is like a great tree which will be toppled and destroyed by the hurricane of change that blows through this century, where the Witch is like the reed which bends with the wind and survives.”¹⁰

Indeed, the perceived superiority of the Pagan worldview is that one’s intellectualism does not have to be sacrificed, since the Craft is not anti-intellectual but rather above the intellect:

“... I became sure that the Craft could be religion for us skeptical middle class intellectuals: because it did not require us to violate our intellectual integrity because it operated *nonintellectually*, [sic] striking deep chords in our emotional roots, because it could alter our state of consciousness.”¹¹

The intellect is seen as only one way of truly knowing reality. Argument, the vehicle of logic, is seen as not just one in a myriad of ways of knowing reality. Logic (being by nature exclusive and absolute) is seen as a poor way of knowing reality and rather close-minded. One Pagan I know stated that one of the reasons Pagans won’t debate with Christians is that many of the Pagan religions had been “demonized” by the Church and driven underground. **“Wiccans refuse to be intolerant of other’s [sic] religions.”¹²** Argument and debate about objective truth is seen as ineffective, intolerant, and even an excuse to disparage.

Somehow the apologist must get beyond this philosophical barrier to discourse. Otherwise, any critique of cosmology and explanations of first causes is seen as just one more perspective, and therefore, there is no need to abandon the Pagan perspective in favor of a Christian one. But, this is exactly what Christianity demands! When Jesus says, **“No one comes to the Father except through me,”¹³** He is creating an impassable dilemma. The Gospel requires one to reject any other belief system and any other means of understanding ultimate reality. In order for someone to accept the Gospel, they must also reject any other perspective that is contradictory. Jesus’ statement is not just an egotistical demand; it is the epitome of rational thought. Logic dictates that if Christianity is true, then anything that is opposed to Christianity must be false and, therefore, rejected. This is precisely what the neo-Pagan will not accept, and it is what must be dealt with first in the apologetic process.

There are two questions an apologist must successfully answer and defend before any argument for cosmology can be attempted. 1) Is there an objective reality? 2) Can the objective reality be known objectively? One is a question of *metaphysics** and the other is a question of *epistemology*** When attempting to answer the metaphysical question, what the Christian must realize is that Pagans are staunch relativists. Everything is relative, so reality itself must be relative, and therefore, not objective.

Some Pagans, however, will concede there is an objective reality that is true—usually when they see the irrationality of being a staunch relativist. However, they then say while reality is objective, our perception of reality is not. It is totally subjective, and therefore, no one can make objective claims about reality—especially the incomprehensible idea of the infinite. This is Kantian† phenomenology run amuck. Since reality is known only in the categories the mind gives (and each mind is individual), then reality can never be known objectively. Druid Isacc Bonewits declares: **“Every sentient being lives in a unique universe.”¹⁴** As one Pagan explained it to me:

“While we may believe that there is an objective truth,

we believe that the objective truth has been filtered through many subjective paths. Your subjective path [Christianity] to the objective truth differs from mine, and that’s the way it is, and we accept that. We accept that your subjective truth differs from ours because of your perspective, and we don’t wish to quibble over the subjective. We find all subjective truths to be equally valid ways of reaching towards the objective truth.”¹⁵

We can never be certain our observation is objective, because the act of observing changes the thing observed. The same Pagan quoted above states as much: **“Is any observation truly objective? Observation, it has been stated, changes both the observer and the observed. Observation is never quite as objective, my dear, as we would like it to be.”¹⁶** To answer these two major objections, we must affirm the objective nature of logic as exemplified in first principles. If it can be proven everyone uses the same mode of thinking (regardless of experience, regardless of religion, and regardless of perspective), then we have a common ground to judge any system of thought. We can test Paganism and Christianity by the same objective reality. That common ground is the rules of logic and first principles.

First principles can be defined as **“principles of thought that cannot be denied without affirming them.”¹⁷** For instance, the *principle of existence* says something exists. This is a first principle because to deny something exists, something has to exist to deny it. Therefore, to deny existence one has to exist to do it. The *principle of non-contradiction* is a first principle. It says opposites cannot both be true. Like all first principles, it is true for all people no matter what their perspective. When a Wiccan exclaims “the law of non-contradiction doesn’t really apply to reality,” he is affirming it cannot both apply and not apply at the same time and in the same relation. First principles are inescapable and fundamental to all human thought. It is interesting that most neo-Pagans operate in the realm of first principles (like the law of non-contradiction), when it is convenient to their cause, all the while denying the principles exist.

One thing I have found helpful in getting Pagans to see the inevitability of first principles is to take one tenet of their belief system in which they are emotionally invested. One such idea I find useful is the concept of the threefold law.¹⁸ It is called the *Wiccan Rede of Three* and states, **“And harm none. Do as thou wilt.”** I ask if the threefold law is both real and not real at the same time. I once spent several hours with a Druidic Pagan who would not accept the law of non-contradiction until I asked, “Is the law of Karma real or unreal?”

She replied vehemently, “It is very real. Believe me I have experienced it.”

I said, “Ok, what if I said that the law of Karma doesn’t exist.”

She saw where the conversation was headed and replied, “Well that would be sad for you, but I would respect your right to believe it.”

I quickly confronted her with the *reality*—not the *morality*—of the issue: “I appreciate that. However, I am not talking about the preference of it. If I said that Karma does not exist, could I be correct?”¹⁹

She tried to avoid saying I was wrong, but she was caught on the horns of a dilemma. If she said I would be wrong, she sacrifices her relativism and must affirm the first principle of non-contradiction. If she says I would be right, then she sacrifices something that, deep down, she believes is a fundamental law of the universe.

(Continued on page 12)

“Ignorance” (Continued from page 11)

It seems to be effective. She admitted that if I said this, I would not only be sad, but I would be wrong about reality. She affirmed first principles. I could not be both wrong and right at the same time in the same relation—the principle of non-contradiction!

I like to use this analogy in explaining how we talk about first principles. There is some basic furniture of reality we all use and from which we cannot get away. All of us are in a room with the same set of chairs. What we must do is continue to place the same chair in front of our Pagan friends. If they bump their knees into it enough, eventually they will acknowledge it is there. Sometimes this takes many patient conversations, but once we settle this, we then can stop all subjective speculation and get down to the business of testing our views. Until this is done, nothing will be accomplished. Without some objective principles common to Christian and Pagan alike, we are just examining preferences of religion and not testing that which corresponds to what really is. However, once first principles are accepted, we have a test for all ideas. The law of non-contradiction states opposites cannot both be true. Any contradictory idea to known reality must be false. Likewise, any idea or system of thought that contradicts first principles must be rejected, since first principles themselves cannot be rejected because they are fundamental.

In fact, first principles lead to the answer to the metaphysical question. If there are first principles that are objective (not dependent on experience), then there must be an objective reality that is knowable because we can know the first principles which are undeniable and objective. The principle of causality is also a first principle. Every contingent event or being has a cause. It is undeniable that something can not be caused by nothing. Nothing cannot cause something, because nothing cannot exist and only existent things can cause things to exist.

Once first principles are accepted, including the principle of causality, then we have an objective way to test the claims of Pagan cosmology against the claims of Christian cosmology. But it is always necessary to begin with the first principles of logic. Our apologetic must affirm that there is an objective reality to which God corresponds and we can know this objective reality. Furthermore, we can test what is true by means of the objective logic common to all people, in all places, and for all times.

Defining Pagan Cosmology

I really think the soft spot in the armor of Paganism is in its concept of cosmology. This is where all the inconsistency and irrationality comes to the fore. When I have gotten Pagans to accept first principles, I then get them to examine their cosmology based on those principles. Any view of the world must correspond (and not contradict) with the first principles, or it is false according to the aforementioned principle of non-contradiction. When I ask Pagans about the nature of the god and the goddess (or “Lord and Lady” as they refer to them), I usually get the objection that one really doesn’t need to understand the nature of the goddess to worship her. This is true. Young Christians who have little understanding of the nature of God may worship Him. What is at stake, however, is not the mechanics of worship but rather the validity of belief about the object of worship. Does the Goddess correspond to reality? Does she line up with the first principles? These questions of metaphysics determine who or what is worthy to be worshipped. If the object of our worship is shown to be contradictory to first principles, then it must not correspond to reality. If this is

the case, we are worshipping a false deity that does not exist—one not worthy of worship.

Every worldview must have some sort of cosmology—some way of explaining how the world came into being or how it is eternal. There must be some way to explain the relationship between the divine and the human—the spiritual and the material. When I do apologetics with Pagans I always ask, “Are the Lord and Lady eternal or are they just manifestations of the eternal?” and “Are they separate entities or are they simply two sides of the same coin?” How they answer this question reveals their understanding of the nature of the divine and, subsequently, their cosmology.

Some are Pantheists. They believe the Lord and Lady are just manifestations of the eternal One reality. These gods are avatars of the divine much like Krishna in Hinduism. We are all part of the divine and the gods are ways of focusing our divinity. Others say the Lord and Lady are two sides of the same coin—yin and yang. Some (like Wiccan Starhawk) claim the female principle was eternal, and she divided herself into a male and female part. The physical world itself is only an extension of the *deus materia*. This is a form of Panentheism. The world is to the divine like a body is to a soul. The divine is constantly changing, because the world is constantly changing. A very few are Polytheists. They claim the Lord and Lady are actual entities who exist as finite beings. They must be finite since it is a logical impossibility to have two infinite beings.²⁰

When it comes to cosmology, Pagans will accept Pantheism,²¹ Polytheism, and even Panentheism. The one cosmology they will not accept is that of Christian theism which states that God is the eternal first cause, and that He created the world *ex nihilo*—out of nothing. I will undertake to define each of these cosmologies as Pagans understand them and then give a critique of each view from first principles.

Pantheism: The Ignorance of Separation

Pantheism is the most popular worldview among Pagans. According to Pantheism, all is God:

“God pervades all things, contains all things, subsumes all things and is found within all things. Nothing exists apart from God, and all things are in some way identified with God. The world is God, and God is the world ... All is God and God is all.”²²

Adler, once again, quotes one Pagan as echoing this idea: **“I believe that all so-called gods are thought-form emanations of human beings toward the One Consciousness of which we are all a part.”²³** In this sense, the god and goddess are manifestations of the one deity shared by all. Adler even cites a witch’s creed which says, **“Divinity is immanent in nature ... Thou art God Thou art Goddess”²⁴**

Pantheism has some inherent logical inconsistencies. The principle of non-contradiction says opposites cannot be true. Yet, Pantheism requires us to believe Man is God. The principle of causality says something cannot come from nothing. The principle of contingency follows from this. Ultimately, a contingent being cannot have caused itself. A contingent being must have a cause outside of itself by its nature. There must be a non-contingent (or necessary) something to cause all contingent beings. So then, whatever causes all finite/contingent beings to exist must itself be infinite/non-contingent. Therefore, Pantheism collapses because Man cannot be contingent and non-contingent at the same time. To put it in a simpler form, man who is finite cannot be infinite. Man cannot be the infinite divine, because he is finite. Pantheism teaches that without the divine, there would be no material functioning humanity; yet, humanity is said to be infinite. This is self-contradictory. According to the

inescapable first principle of non-contradiction, contradictions cannot be true. Therefore, Pantheism is to be rejected.

Furthermore, if the One by its nature is indivisible, then how is it possible for the world to be part of the divine? The indivisible cannot be divided, yet the world is divided into a myriad of separate things. This is the problem with separation. If reality is fundamentally one, then why does reality seem to be so separate? Why are there many diverse things rather than one? Now it may be objected that all of the separateness we see is merely an illusion, but this, in itself, is self-defeating. A mind would have to be separate from the illusion to make any claim about the illusion. How could we even talk of anything being an illusion without being separate from it?

A Chinese proverb brilliantly expresses the dilemma: “If you want to know about the water; don’t ask the fish.” The fish cannot know anything outside of the water for he is immersed in it. Likewise, we cannot know all separateness is an illusion without being separate from it to make the observation.

Other objective realities seem to crumble the Pantheistic worldview. If we are just modes of the one divine reality, then why is it that we must discover this truth or be reminded of it? This is what apologist H.P. Owen calls “metaphysical amnesia.”²⁵ Supposedly all non-Pantheists are deceived into believing the divine and human are separate. Yet, what can account for this deception? If reality is all God, then what is left to deceive us? If it is the divine, then we are deceiving ourselves since we are the Divine. In addition, all self-deception has some reason—some cause of belief outside of the self. For instance, if I deceive myself into thinking I am a banana, there must be an objective idea apart from myself to which I latch onto falsely—namely the idea of a banana. However, in Pantheism there is no separate cause. Everything is caused by the divine, and every effect is divine. This is contradictory.

This brings up another problem. If we are all emanations of the divine One, then what is the cause of evil? It is a common observation all people (including Pagans) recognize some form of evil. In fact, they often associate the evils of the Inquisition with Christian theology. This begs the question. If all people are ultimately divine, where does the impetus for this evil come from? It cannot be self-caused, since the One divine is perfect. It cannot be caused by another since this violates the all-is-one principle of Pantheism. The only other solution is to claim evil is an illusion, and there is neither right or wrong, good or evil; in which case, the claimed torture of nine-million witches by Christians is not really any big deal.

As Bill Honsberger notes, if neo-Paganism is true, and there is no moral absolute; then “**burn the witch, drown the witch, take the witch to lunch**”²⁶ are all equally ethical alternatives. This, of course, is existentially unacceptable for most witches and puts them once again on the horns of the dilemma. A solution to Pantheism’s problem of separation can then be offered in the theism of Christianity, which sees God related to the world like a painter to a painting. The painter is at once above the painting in that he causes it, but he is also in it—in the sense that it bares his image and his mind. Evil is caused by those persons who are separate from Him but still bare His image.

The Ignorance of Causality:

Starhawk’s Panentheism

One attempt to solve this dichotomy is found in the Panentheism of Wiccan author Starhawk and her concept of the “**spiral dance.**” Traditional Panentheism is associated with the

philosophy of A.N. Whitehead and Charles Hartshorne. Panentheism sees the relationship of the world and the divine as two poles of the same idea. God is bi-polar with an actual and a potential pole. The divine is to the world as a soul is to a body. The world needs the divine to give it life and causation, and God needs the world to reach his potential. The divine is constantly changing and growing. The world is created *ex materia*. As Geisler explains this view:

“The present universe is co-created by God and man out of the preexisting ‘stuff.’ God, of course, is the prime Transformer or Shaper of each world and of each world-state ... the world is God’s cosmic body and ... those creatures who make up the world are like cells in his body ... the creatures in the universe contribute value to God’s life. The inclusive aim or goal of all creatures is to enrich God’s happiness and thus help him fulfill what he lacks.”²⁷

Compare this with Starhawk²⁸ who says, “**In Witchcraft, however, what happens in the world is vitally important. The Goddess is immanent, but she needs human help to realize her fullest beauty.**”²⁹ She affirms the creation *ex materia* and *ex deo*. “**The world is born, not made, and not commanded into being.**”³⁰ The Goddess is eternal, but she creates all other existence within herself and gives birth to the world.³¹ Some part of her becomes masculine; and then, there is the endless interplay of the masculine and feminine, the swirling of opposite energies that fuel the universe: “**Existence is sustained by the on-off pulse, the alternating current of the two forces in perfect balance.**”³²

This spiral swirling of everything provides a solution to the apparent separateness of the observable reality:

“The mythology and cosmology of Witchcraft are rooted in that ‘Paleolithic shaman’s insight:’ [sic] that all things are swirls of energy, vortexes of moving forces, currents in an ever-changing sea. Underlying that appearance of separateness of fixed objects within a linear stream of time, reality is a field of energies that congeal, temporarily, into forms. In time, all ‘fixed’ things dissolve, only to coalesce again into new forms, new vehicles.”³³

The separateness of reality is only temporary then. All things are constantly changing in an endless dance. Starhawk’s modified form of Panentheism is actually more plausible than the Pantheism of other Pagans. It solves the problem of separateness while maintaining an essentially monistic view. However, it fails in two crucial areas. First of all, Starhawk’s cosmology has a self-caused being:

“Alone, awesome, complete within Herself, the Goddess ... floated in the abyss of the outer darkness, before the beginning of all things ... She saw her own light [sic] her radiant reflection, and fell in love with it. She drew forth by the power that was in Her and made love to Herself, and called her “Mira the Wonderful ... Their ecstasy burst forth in the single song of all that is, was, or ever shall be ... waves that poured outward and became all the spheres and circles of the worlds.”³⁴

We know Starhawk’s goddess is a self-caused being, because she is mutable. A mutable being cannot be infinite. If a being is mutable, it can change. To change means it goes from one state to another. But if it does this, then it is temporal—in time. A being who is in time cannot be eternal and is, therefore, limited. If a being is limited, it cannot be infinite by definition. If Starhawk’s goddess is finite, then she is contingent (since all finite things are contingent and need a cause according to the principle of contingency).

There are only two options for the cause of this goddess. One is that the goddess is caused by another non-contingent and

(Continued on page 14)

“Ignorance” (Continued from page 13)

uncaused being. However, if this is the case, then Starhawk’s goddess is not an ultimate being at all but only a finite creature. Once again, we are worshipping something not worthy of an ultimate devotion. The only other option is that the goddess is self-caused. However, this too is a violation of first principles. A self-caused being must have had a beginning, because you cannot have an infinite regress of finite causes. There must have been some moment in which the causing started; otherwise, there is no cause but an eternal state. But, if there was a moment when the goddess began to be caused, and she is the only being able to cause anything, then she would have to exist before she was caused to exist. An effect cannot be prior to its cause. The goddess would have to exist and not exist at the same time and in the same relation. This is a violation of the principle of non-contradiction. Therefore, this goddess cannot be self-caused. We have already shown Starhawk’s goddess cannot be eternal, since she is temporal. According to the principle of non-contradiction, something cannot both be temporal and eternal (its opposite) at the same time and in the same relation. Starhawk’s goddess fails the test of first principles because she is a self-caused being. Since first principles are our test of reality, Starhawk’s goddess cannot exist.

The Ignorance of Causality: Polytheism

A very few Pagans are true Polytheists—ones who believe the gods and goddesses to be separate beings. As it was pointed out, these beings must be finite, since it is impossible to have two infinities. Pagans differ as to the cause of these beings. Some believe they are caused by nature. They are primordial powers that give shape and meaning to existence. Adler cites David L. Miller’s *The New Polytheism: Rebirth of the Gods and Goddesses*: **“The gods for Miller, are informing powers, psychic realities that give shape to social, intellectual, and personal existence.”**³⁵ Others believe they are metaphysical extensions of the thoughts and beliefs of those who seek to worship them. Once again, Adler quotes Gwydion Pendderwen, **“The gods are really the components of our psyches. We are the gods, in the sense that we, as the sum total of human beings, are the sum of the gods.”**³⁶ It should be noted that, at first glance, one might be tempted to see Miller and Pendderwen’s view as simply some psychoanalytical metaphor for human experience—a Jungian exercise to understand human psychological harmony. Indeed, some Pagans do see the gods this way. The majority do talk a lot about the gods in the context of psychology:

“I do not believe in gods as real personalities on any plane, or in any dimension. Yet, I do believe gods as symbols or personifications universal principles. The Earth mother is the primal seed—source of the universe ...”³⁷

Yet, in the same explanation, this Pagan reaffirms some real existent power manifested in nature: **“... I believe in gods perceived in nature; perceived as a storm, a forest spirit, the goddess of the lake, etc. Many places and times of the year have a spirit or power about them. Perhaps these are my gods.”**

This kind of dichotomy functions smoothly in a worldview that puts little, if any, value on reason and logic. However, once first principles are applied to the view, the dichotomy reveals itself. The gods must either exist as beings or exist only as ideas. They cannot exist as ideas and as beings in the same relation. They can exist as ideas and beings at the same time in the following relation. A banana can exist in my mind as an idea and exist physically as a banana. But my idea is not a banana, and the physical banana is not

an idea. In the same way, the idea of a god is not the same as a being, and a being is not ontologically an idea. Once again, their worldview brings the Pagan to a dilemma. If they say the gods are just psychic metaphors, then they have yet to explain the cause of a contingent universe. The principle of causality says nothing cannot cause something. If the gods are only metaphors, then we have no cause for the contingent universe. We are essentially worshipping something that has no intrinsic reality. We are worshipping an idea. The debt of causality never gets paid, and in reality, there are no gods at all. The gods are not ultimate in their power. Worship existentially is what Paul Tillich called an ultimate commitment to an ultimate.³⁸ Yet, according to the principle of causality, something has to be ultimate and the first cause. So then, if this version of Polytheism is adopted, we have people who are worshipping ideas in their mind rather than any ultimate being. This is Atheism by ignorance.

If, however, the Pagan says the gods are existent in some way, then they have to explain how they have existence. What is the source of the existence? If the gods are finite (and, therefore, contingent), then what caused them? The principle of contingency ultimately says a contingent being cannot be the cause of another contingent being. There cannot be an infinite regress of finite causes. If the Pagan says the gods are caused by nature, then the gods are still contingent beings and not ultimate. Whatever is caused by something else is dependent on that something.³⁹ If the universe makes the gods, then what makes the universe? The universe seems, by all scientific evidence, to have had a beginning. Something has to be a first cause according to the principle of causality. That cause cannot be contingent or finite according to the principle of contingency. But, in Polytheism, the gods are contingent and nature (the universe) is contingent. Therefore, neither the gods nor nature can be the first cause. This leaves only two options. Either nature is eternal, in which case we are back to Pantheism with all its problems, or there is a necessary (non-contingent) being who is infinite and the first cause of all else—the precise view of Christian theism.

The Roots of Ignorance: Moral Rebellion

The Pagan worldview (whether it be Pantheism, Panentheism, or Polytheism) does not stand up to the test of rationality according to first principles. The gods and goddesses of Paganism just don’t measure up to the way things really are. In fact, they are contradictory to the first principles which are the same for Pagan and Christian alike. When confronted with this undeniable fact, most Pagans will simply beg off the argument and return, once again, to the trite assertion that all this logic is merely word games. One Pantheist I spoke to ignored the implications of our argument by saying, “Well, that’s your logic and first principles. I don’t accept your logic.” When I asked if there was another kind of logic he would like to offer, he, of course, had no reply. There is no other logic but the first principles. They are not arbitrarily dictated by some belief system. All belief systems are tested by them. To use a crude analogy, they are “woven into the very fabric of reality.” We are all subject to the same logic. This is our common ground. I asked him, point blank, why he did not accept my logic in light of the fact he had no other logic to offer as a substitute. His answer was very telling. He replied, “If I accepted your logic, I would have to accept your God.”⁴⁰ And that is the one thing he would not do. His answer strikes at the heart of all Pagan belief, indeed, at any belief contrary to the true nature of God. His problem was not that


he *could not* accept my God; it was that he *refused* to accept my God. The problem ultimately is not philosophical, but moral. This is echoed in Paul's address to the Romans:

"The wrath of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of men who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them."⁴¹

All men ultimately know there is one eternal, intelligent, and moral being. It is not a question of there being enough evidence. The evidence is adequate and the logic is inescapable. The problem is one of moral rebellion. This leads to a depraved mind and false worship:

"For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images made to look like mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles."⁴²

Notice the mind is depraved first due to rebellion, and then, the false views of reality and Paganism are a result. Why is Paganism so hostile to the notion of a Christian God who is rational according to first principles, knowable, infinite, and moral? Because, if such a God exists, then we are all accountable to Him for our actions and our lives. This is the God of the Bible. Jesus Himself claimed to be this God manifest in human flesh, and He proved He was not a liar or a lunatic by His resurrection from the dead. The neo-Pagan is right about their assessment that Christianity is exclusive and dogmatic. First principles demand all truth be exclusive and dogmatic. The principle of excluded middle says that something either is or is not true. There is no middle ground. When Jesus says, ***"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me,"***⁴³ He is affirming what first principles make undeniable. There is an objective reality, and it can be known. But, Jesus goes farther. Not only does He claim to be the infinite, He claims the infinite earnestly seeks the finite. The divine seeks the human with a love unsurpassed. He claims truth is knowable because, "I am the truth and I am knowable." He says the way is singular because, "I am the way and I am singular." He says a life of relationship is possible because, "I am life and a relationship with me is possible." He does not claim, "I have the truth." He says, "I am the truth. All reality corresponds to Me." This is why Christianity must be exclusive because first principles demand that if Christ is truth, then all that is contradictory to Him must be false.

Our Pagan friends must be confronted with the reality their worldview does not work logically. The Christian worldview does. God has made Himself plain to them, and furthermore, He seeks them out. Once first principles are seen as the test for truth, and the Pagan worldview is rejected; then the tenets of Christianity can be tested. This includes the reliability of the New Testament, the proof of the resurrection, and atonement. It is beyond the purview of this article to touch on those subjects. In that part of the apologetic, Christianity is shown to be true in that it does correspond to first principles and presents a rational worldview. Once this is affirmed, apologetics can do no more. Only the Holy Spirit can quicken the heart toward salvation. The task of the apologist is to remove the barriers in the mind—to till the ground for the seed of evangelism. 

***metaphysics**: the branch of philosophy that deals with first principles and seeks to explain the nature of being or reality (ontology) and of the origin and structure of the world (cosmology): it is closely associated with the theory of knowledge (epistemology). (*Webster's*)

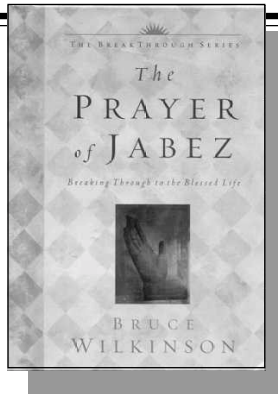
****epistemology**: the study or theory of the origin, nature, methods, and limits of knowledge. (*Webster's*)

†**Kantian phenomenology**: the philosophy of Kant, who held that the content of knowledge comes a posteriori from sense perception, but that its form is determined by a priori categories of the mind: he also declared that God, freedom, and immortality cannot be denied and must necessarily be presupposed, although they cannot be proved. (*Webster's*)

Endnotes

- 1) C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 33.
- 2) 1 Peter 3:15 (NIV) 3) *Designer Faith*, Midwest Christian Outreach, Taped Seminar: Foundations of Faith Conference, 1999. cassette.
- 4) Anonymous Pagan, interviewed by author, approx. 21 December 1997. 5) Margot Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, (New York: Penguin/Arkana, 1986) 23. 6) *The Need for Defending the Faith*, taped seminar, Impact AC9601, 1996, cassette. 7) Nota Bene: This writer's primary experience is with the Wiccan version of Paganism. Many of the quotes and examples will come from the Wiccan perspective. While it is true that paganism is myriad and varied, most if not all of the evaluation will be relevant to other traditions within paganism. 8) Starhawk, *The Spiral Dance*, 10th Anniversary ed. Revised and Updated, (San Francisco: HarperCollins, 1989) 22. 9) Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 20. 10) *Ibid*, 171. 11) *Ibid*, 165 12) Anonymous Pagan, interviewed by the author, 17 November 1999. 13) John 14:6 (NIV) 14) Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 25. 15) Anonymous Pagan, interviewed by the author, 17 October 1999. 16) *Ibid*. 17) Norman Geisler, *The Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1999) 250. 18) The three-fold law says that any good or evil act or spell done by someone will return three times as great upon the person committing the act. It is similar to the idea of Karma accruing in the next life from Hinduism. The only difference is that the effect is experienced in this life not the next. 19) Anonymous Druid, interviewed by the author, approx. April 1998. 20) There cannot be two infinities because, by definition, an infinite being has no limits. If one being differs from another in some way such as form (i.e. there are two forms; two tokens of the same substance), then there is not an infinite. If the two beings do not differ by anything, then there are not two beings but one. To differ by nothing is not to differ. Logically, there only can be one infinite being and all others must differ from the infinite by their finitude. This is precisely what Christian theism holds. God is infinite, and we are finite. 21) Nota Bene: Pagans define all of these ideologies somewhat differently than we will define them here. Margot Adler admits this in *Drawing Down the Moon* (25). For instance, Adler says Pagans see Polytheism as an "attitude or perspective that affect more than what we consider to be religion." (24) I will categorize Pagan cosmologies according to their classical definitions. Christians should be careful to not take Pagans at their own categories but clarify terms. In Pagan thought, one could be a Polytheist in attitude and a Pantheist in their basic understanding of the relationship between the divine and the world. Adler affirms this: "Many other neo-Pagans emphasized that polytheism allowed for both unity and diversity and several asserted that they were Monotheists at some moments and Polytheists at others." (35) 22) Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, Pantheism, 580. 23) Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 139. 24) *Ibid*, 25. 25) Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, 581. 26) "Why Not Burn Witches" *Midwest Christian Outreach Journal* (November/December 1995) 11. 27) Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, Panentheism, 577. 28) Nota Bene: Starhawk's Panentheism is not as developed as that of Whitehead's or Hartshorne's. The standard idea of Panentheism is offered here as a context and support. The two ideas are not identical. The reader is cautioned not to draw too many parallels between the two. 29) *The Spiral Dance*, (San Francisco: Harper Collins, 1989.) 26. 30) *Ibid*, 38. 31) *Ibid*, 31. 32) *Ibid*, 41. 33) *Ibid*, 32. 34) *The Spiral Dance* (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1989). 35) Adler, *Drawing Down the Moon*, 29. 36) *Ibid*., 31 37. *Ibid*., 35. 38) Geisler, *Encyclopedia*, 605. 39) *Ibid*. 40) Anonymous Pantheist, interviewed by author, approx. February 1999. 41) Romans 1:18 (NIV) 42) Romans 1:21-23 (NIV) 43) C.S. Lewis, *The Screwtape Letters* (New York: Macmillan, 1975),





JABEZ

The FORMULA

by Randall Birtell

*Bruce Wilkinson is a graduate of Dallas Theological Seminary. He founded Walk Thru the Bible Ministries in 1976. His ministry now conducts some 2,500 conferences each year to assist students in their understanding of Scripture.¹ His ministry has undoubtedly helped many in their understanding of the Bible. His recent book, *The Prayer of Jabez*,² has sold over seven-million copies.³ There are Jabez plaques, calendars, and leather bound editions. However, its popularity has not been without controversy. Some have claimed it is nothing more than "Word Faith" theology in an evangelical wrapper. While I believe this is an unfair claim,⁴ I do believe there are serious concerns that need to be addressed.*

Miracles Trivialized

Miracles are something everyone would like to experience. But miracles, by their very definition, are rare and irregular. One should not expect to see a miracle. That is not to say miracles are not possible. God certainly has and can divinely interact with His creation at any time. Throughout the Bible, God used miracles to confirm His prophets to Israel.

Bruce Wilkinson asks rhetorically "...when was the last time you saw miracles happen on a regular basis in your life?"⁵ A miracle by Wilkinson's definition is "an intervention by God to make something happen that wouldn't normally happen."⁶ Without God there would be nothing that could happen *normally*! Jesus Christ created all things and holds all things together (Col. 1:17-18). The biblical idea of a miracle is much narrower. God gave miracles "to accredit God's message and messenger."⁷ Miracles were not the norm in Israel. People took note of them because they weren't a regular occurrence. This primary misunderstanding of miracles leads Wilkinson to an improper theological understanding of 1 Chronicles 4:9-10, the so-called prayer of Jabez.

Wilkinson refers to the so-called miracles as "Jabez appointments."⁸ He describes situations where God used him in chance encounters with others. These are hardly miracles by biblical standards. He describes situations such as speaking to a woman about marriage troubles before boarding a plane. Once they get into the plane, a man lets Wilkinson have his seat so they can continue their conversation.⁹ None of the events that occurred in this story were beyond the laws of nature. A better explanation of what happened here is the outworking of the providence of God. God used natural events to speak to this woman. It is true God supernaturally did this

from His perspective. It is equally true that *everything* God does is supernatural, because He *is* supernatural.

A miracle is quite different. Norman Geisler, President of Southern Evangelical Seminary, defines a miracle as a "...divine intervention into or interruption of, the regular course of the world that produces a purposeful but unusual event that would not have occurred otherwise."¹⁰ A miracle is an act of God that suspends the natural laws. A man giving up his seat on a plane for another is generous, but not miraculous. Wilkinson does not agree. He believes God performs miracles through nature, or as he says it "...miracles don't have to break natural law to be a supernatural event."¹¹ He then cites Jesus calming the storm and Elijah making the rains stop as examples of miracles that did not impose on the normal laws of nature.

All storms come to a *natural* end. The winds gradually die down, the clouds drift away, and the raindrops stop. But, this is not what occurred in Matthew 8. Jesus rose from His slumber, He rebuked the winds and the waves, and they became perfectly calm. This was not a natural end to the storm. One does not expect a storm to end when someone commands it to stop. The miracle was not merely that the storm ended, but that *it ended at the command of Jesus*.

As for Elijah, he was a prophet of God. He spoke what the LORD commanded—namely when it would (1 Kings 18:1) and wouldn't (1 Kings 17:1) rain. Wilkinson's argument uses these two passages as pretexts to underscore his belief that miracles need not break natural law to be considered as such. These passages show that the LORD completely controls the precipitation that falls upon the earth. They do not suggest, as Wilkinson believes, that miracles can regularly happen within the normal course of daily events.

Wilkinson believes every Christian should pray as Jabez did to expand his territory—the territory of his spiritual influence within his business and all other areas of his life. Certainly this is a worthwhile prayer, one believers should pray. We are commanded to give all of our self as a living sacrifice to God (Rom. 12:1-2). The mistake Wilkinson makes is believing miracles, or "Jabez appointments" as he calls them, are the indicator whether or not we are expanding our spiritual influence. "It's when you thrust yourself in the mainstream of God's plans for this world—which are beyond our ability to accomplish—and plead with Him, Lord, use me—give me more ministry for You!—that you release miracles. At that moment, heaven sends angels, resources, strength, and the people you need. I've seen it happen hundreds of times."¹²

Our spiritual influence is not based on the number of "Jabez moments" that occur in our life, but rather on the intentions and motives of our heart (1 Cor. 3:9-15). God's perfect will is found in the obedience of His commands (John 15:10). Furthermore, we are not

called in Scripture to “**release miracles.**” God used men to perform miracles, but *He* released them for His good purpose.

Another problem that occurs when events are misinterpreted as miracles is that true miracles are degraded. The miracle of creation becomes on par with two people sitting together on a plane unexpectedly. In addition, it undermines the authority of the prophets. For if everyone can expect a miracle in their life, then on what basis should Israel have listened to Moses, Joshua, and the other prophets? The very Word of God was authenticated by true, divine miracles (Mk. 2:10-11, Jn. 3:2, Acts 2:22). Miracles do not, by definition, happen on a regular basis. We are not to expect a miracle, rather we trust in the providential care of an Almighty God.

Miracles are a shadow of the power of God. They point the world to their Creator. *Nelson’s Illustrated Bible Dictionary* describes a “**miracle**” as any event “**which appear to violate natural laws but which reveal God to the eye of faith at the same time.**”¹³ When mere uncommon events are misclassified as miracles, God’s power is not fully understood when a true miracle does occur.

Hermeneutics Compromised

The application of Scripture is lifted in highest esteem in the church of today. A sermon or Sunday school lesson is not considered complete without a practical application explained. What tends to get cheated with such an emphasis on application is the *meaning* of a passage. The relevance of a Scripture passage can only be properly understood if the correct interpretation is made. The manner one interprets the Bible is called hermeneutics.

A good hermeneutical method considers several things. First, the genre of literature must be known. A poetical passage from Psalms is treated different than the historical narratives of Acts. Second, the context of the passage is vital. One must not lift a verse out of context to prove an idea. Any single verse must be understood in the context that it was written. Third, the meaning of the text is found *in the text* not in the reader. Meaning comes *from* the text; it is not put *upon* the text. The Bible contains objective truths outside the mind of the reader. A student of the Bible must never study it subjectively.

Sadly, subjective interpretation is a common method for some contemporary Bible teachers. Bible students are all too often asked what a passage means to *them* rather than what it *means*. Proper hermeneutics commands the reader to discover the meaning of the text prior to making a personal application. Then, and only then, can the reader make a correct application to their life.

Unfortunately, Wilkinson uses poor hermeneutical methods in the *Prayer of Jabez*. Jabez is mentioned in two verses of the Bible: “*Jabez was more honorable than his brothers, and his mother named him Jabez saying, ‘Because I bore [him] with pain.’ Now Jabez called on the God of Israel, saying, ‘Oh that You would bless me indeed and enlarge my border, and that Your hand might be with me, and that You would keep [me] from harm that [it] may not pain me!’ And God granted him what he requested*” (1Chron. 4:9-10).

From this passage, Wilkinson asserts the following subjective deductions: Jabez’s life started bad, no one knew him, he prayed an unusual short prayer, and things turned out well for Jabez.¹⁴ Did these propositions come from the text? The prayer was short, but was it unusual? How does Wilkinson know this? By examination of the text, it is Jabez’s mother who had the “bad time.” She is the one who had the pain not Jabez. And on what basis does Wilkinson assert that no one *knew* Jabez? Where is this in the text? He could mean that readers of the Bible today did not know Jabez until he

introduced him to us. This would be an example of the reader determining the meaning. In other words, since we had never heard of Jabez, contemporaries of Jabez must not have known him either. This is illogical reasoning.

Wilkinson’s hermeneutics of 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 is weak. He chooses to use *eisegesis** instead of *exegetis*** . He adds his own meaning to the text rather than letting the text speak for itself. When biblical text is misinterpreted poor applications will certainly follow. This is precisely the case with Wilkinson’s practical applications.

Wilkinson incorrectly deduces from the text that Jabez started slow in his walk with God but finished strong. What made this supposedly incredible turn-around? According to Wilkinson, it was his prayer. “**Clearly, the outcome can be traced to his prayer. Something about Jabez’s simple, direct request to God changed his life and left a permanent mark on the history books of Israel.**”¹⁵ Thus, if it worked for Jabez, it can work for us.

Wilkinson further explains *how* the prayer works by giving six steps to “**follow unwaveringly...for the next 30 days.**”¹⁶

1. Pray the Jabez prayer every morning, and keep a record of your daily prayer by marking off a calendar or a chart you make especially for the purpose.
2. Write out the prayer and tape it in your Bible, in your day-timer, on your bathroom mirror, or some other place where you’ll be reminded of your new vision.
3. Reread this little book once each week during the next month, asking God to show you important insights you may have missed.
4. Tell one other person of your commitment to your new prayer habit, and ask him or her to check up on you.
5. Begin to keep a record of changes in your life, especially the divine appointments and new opportunities you can relate directly to the Jabez prayer.
6. Start praying the Jabez prayer for your family, friends, and local church.”¹⁷

When the results of the prayer occur also seems clear to Wilkinson. When he was asked on the *Focus on the Family* radio broadcast how people react when the prayer doesn’t seem to be answered, this dialog with James Dobson took place:

Wilkinson: “I encourage people to not get discouraged, God begins answering the prayer in the middle of the second week.”

Dobson: (laughter) “Is that right?”

Wilkinson: “He does.”

Dobson: “You can really be that specific?”

Wilkinson: “Oh, there are so many hundreds of people, and I encourage people when I preach to them to commit to pray this 30 days in a row. And there are massive numbers of people who are doing this.”

Dobson: “The same prayer?”

Wilkinson: “The same prayer every morning.”¹⁸

Is this what God expects of us? Is this what the whole counsel of Scripture teaches? It seems clear from the Bible it is not. A sanctified life is not lived by following a formula. To be conformed to the image of Christ is a pilgrimage. As the Apostle Paul says, “*Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already been made perfect, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me*” (Phil. 3:12). The Christian life is lived by faith in God. It is being obedient when the circumstances in life do not seem in favor of our well-being or happiness. It is finding joy in the things of God, not the things of this world. I agree with Wilkinson that our faith and ministry should expand as we mature as followers of Christ.

(Continued on next page)

“Jabez” (Continued from page 17)

But to propose that by following a certain formula for a specific amount of time leads to the desired results is beyond what Scripture teaches.

Many of the suggestions Wilkinson gives are helpful. Daily prayer and accountability are needed in our Christian walk. However, it is a fallacy to believe that centering these ideas on a specific prayer will unleash God to work in your life. God is looking at the intent of the heart, not the words of the mouth. The prophet Isaiah spoke *“These people come near to me with their mouth and honor me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. Their worship of me is made up only of rules taught by me”* (Isa. 29:13).

First Chronicles 4:9-10 does not teach the formula for successful Christian maturity. It teaches only that God chose to answer the prayer of a man named Jabez from the tribe of Judah.

Pragmatic Methodology

The foundation for the pragmatic method for discovering truth is results. If a specific answer or choice leads to the desired result, it is then declared true or right. For a theologian to use the pragmatic method while interpreting the Bible would be inappropriate. For example, “all things” in Paul’s command to *“...consider all things loss for the sake of Christ”* (Phil. 3:8) would mean “all things that I do not need” when understood pragmatically. This, however, is not the meaning of the passage. Paul means everything is lost when compared to Jesus Christ. Not just the things we don’t need in the world, but absolutely *everything*.

Wilkinson uses the pragmatic method to justify his understanding of Jabez’s prayer. Much of the book is devoted to stories about what he calls **“Jabez encounters.”** These stories are offered as proof that praying like Jabez works. Managing editor of *Christianity Today*, Mark Galli, believes these stories do not paint the larger picture of the Christian walk. **“Wilkinson is also a decent, though breathless, storyteller. Unfortunately, his stories are all examples of hit-and-run ministry: California college students ministering in Trinidad for a summer; a youth group evangelizing suburban youth on Long Island for six weeks; and Wilkinson counseling a newlywed on the Isle of Patmos for one afternoon.”**¹⁹

Wilkinson believes 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 should be the model prayer for Christians. Jabez received more land when he prayed. The Christian can have increased ministry if they pray like Jabez. Wilkinson believes his experience in life proves this to be true. **“How do I know that it will significantly impact you? Because of my experience and the testimony of hundreds of others around the world with whom I’ve shared these principles.”**²⁰ He further believes the success of his ministry stems from his understanding and application of 1 Chronicles 4:9-10. He says, **“Just by looking at what is happening, I can assure you that God still answers those who have a loyal heart and pray the Jabez prayer.”**²¹

The Bible agrees with only one of the two conditions Wilkinson offers. A “loyal heart” toward God assures our prayers will be answered. If we abide in Christ we will be given what we ask for (John 15:7). To abide in Christ is to conform our will to His. We do not presume to understand the thoughts of God. We are also instructed to not put God to the test (Ps. 78:17-18). In other words, we do not have the power or authority to call God into our plans. Our plans are to be adjusted to His. Although he repeatedly says only to ask for an expanded ministry and not to define it, Wilkinson does not always allow God to define his encounters. In his stories he determines *when* (at the airport before his flight²²), *where* (told

students to pray for Trinidad²³), and *how* (flying in a DC-10²⁴).

The interpretation Wilkinson gives to 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 has worked for himself and many others. Are we then to conclude any interpretation that works must be true? Author Norman Vincent Peale believed our lot in life is largely directed by thinking positive or negative thoughts. By thinking positively, we can have good things in our life. He wrote in his “Introduction” to *The Power of Positive Thinking*²⁵ that in **“... this book’s thirty-fifth anniversary, the publishers tell me it has been translated into 33 languages and sold more than 13-million copies and the message of the book is being put on audio and videocassettes.”**²⁶ While positive thinking seemed to work for Peale, it does not make it true. Our days are not determined by our own thoughts, they are ordained by God (Ps. 139:16).

We must not forget truth is not determined by what is expedient. If the sole test for truth is whether or not it is livable, then Mormonism and Atheism could not be demonstrated to be false. For the Mormon can live a pure life and be in harmony with his beliefs as could an Atheist live a selfish, vulgar life and be in congruency with his beliefs. This does not make Mormonism or Atheism true. So, *The Prayer of Jabez* does not stand or fall based on how it works, rather it is to be tested against an objective standard—namely the Bible. For something to be true it must be so for all times. A pragmatist looks only at the contemporary world. Truth stands the test of time, now and forever. If it is true today, it will be true forever. **“Of course all truth must work, but not everything that works is necessarily true.”**²⁷

Conclusion


The information given in Scripture about Jabez is obscure. We know little more than he was from the tribe of Judah and that God answered his prayer by expanding his territory. Wilkinson adds his own assumptions and possibilities to the passage, which leads him to the conclusion everyone should pray this prayer. Augustine warns against such methods of studying Scripture. He believed **“...it is far safer to walk by the light of Holy Scripture; so that when we wish to examine the passages that are obscured by metaphorical expressions, we may either obtain a meaning about which there is no controversy, or if a controversy arises, may settle it by the application of testimonies sought out in every portion of the same Scripture.”**²⁸ It is biblical testimonies that shed light on the obscure words of Scripture not human experience as Wilkinson promotes. In context, 1 Chronicles 4:9-10 is within a genealogical listing. It is in this context Jabez should be understood.

Genealogies can function to explain three general areas: domestic, political, and religious.²⁹ A purpose genealogies do not serve is to broaden our understanding on how the Christian life is to be lived. Unfortunately, this is what *The Prayer of Jabez* tries to do by transforming Jabez’s prayer into a *method* rather than a *manner* we are to follow. Certainly, expanded ministry and more opportunities to communicate Christ are to be a part of the life of the believer. We are commanded to preach throughout the world (Matt. 28:19-20) and be alert for opportunities with unbelievers (Col. 4:5-6). The difficulty is not in these conclusions, but rather in the method they were derived.

The Lord Himself gave us an example how to pray (Luke 11:1-4). It seems reasonable to deem the prayer of Christ as infinitely more powerful than the prayer of an obscure character in the Old Testament. The Lord’s Prayer is not to be recited as a mantra; rather Christ was showing in what *manner* we should pray. We should

acknowledge God is holy, we are sinful, and God is the provider of our daily needs.

Did God record Jabez's prayer so that we may repeat it and have our influence expanded? A better understanding of this prayer can be found by examining other passages of Scripture. Throughout Scripture blessing is tied to obedience and not to some ritualistic prayer. Take, for instance, these words of Moses to Israel: "***If you fully obey the Lord your God and carefully follow all of His commands I give you today, the Lord your God will set you high above all the nations on earth. All these blessings will come upon you and accompany you if you obey the Lord your God***" (Deut. 28:1-2). Theologian R.C. Sproul in his book *Knowing Scripture*³⁰ writes, "**Nearness to God is blessing; absence of God is curse.**"³¹ It seems more plausible Jabez was obedient and God was faithful to bless him. So, God chose to bless Jabez because of his obedience that produced his prayer not because of the prayer itself.

Now is the time for followers of Christ to begin to take seriously the command to be equipped for every good work (2 Tim. 3:17). We must not simply be able to quote verses or tell the story of a particular Bible character. We must begin to understand the entire counsel of Scripture. Then we will understand the importance of a miracle, the meaning of Scripture, and that truth is found outside of our own experiences. 

*eisegesis: an improper method of exposition by which the expounder introduces his own ideas into the interpretation of a text (*Webster's*).

**exegesis: the exposition, critical analysis, or interpretation of a word, literary passage, etc., especially of the Bible (*Webster's*).

Endnotes

1 <http://www.prayerofjabez.com/BreakthroughPages/AboutBruce.html> on August 9, 2001.

2 Bruce Wilkinson, *The Prayer of Jabez* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah Publishers, 2000).

3 <http://www.prayerofjabez.com> on August 16, 2001

4 Wilkinson himself has repeatedly denied that the Jabez prayer is for more material wealth. He states the prayer is for increased ministry and that material blessing may come.

5 Wilkinson, 16.

6 *Ibid.*, 43.

7 Don Campbell, Wendell Johnston, John Walvoord and John Witmer, *The Theological Workbook* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 247.

8 *Ibid.*, 37.

9 *Ibid.*, 79-82.

10 Norman L. Geisler and Ron M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1996), 76.

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31 *Ibid.*, 89.

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