

IS IT WRONG TO STUDY OR THINK FOR YOURSELF?

As strange as it sounds, the Watch Tower has strongly discouraged people from studying the Bible on their own or thinking for themselves. This teaching contrasts with what the Bible teaches. In the Bible we are told to study the Scriptures for ourselves. We are also told that the Holy Spirit can teach us, even without the aid of a human teacher.

We are warned of false teachers. How can you recognize what a falsehood is unless you study the truth? Read these Bible verses: 2 Timothy 2:15, Ezra 7:10, John 14:6, 1 John 2:27, Acts 17:11, 1 John 4:1-3, 2 Peter 2:1, Galatians 1:7-8, Romans 16:17, 2 Corinthians 11:13-15; after you have read this Scripture, compare its teachings to the Watch Tower teachings below.

Watch Tower, Feb.15, 1981, pg.19 (JW) (PDF pg. 115)

"We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the 'faithful and discreet slave' organization."

Watch Tower, August 15, 1981, pgs.28-29 (JW)(PDF pg. 508-509)

From time to time, there have arisen from among the ranks of Jehovah's people those who, like the original Satan, have adopted an independent, faultfinding attitudeThey say that it is sufficient to read the Bible exclusively, either alone or in small groups at home. But, strangely, through such 'Bible reading,' they have reverted right back to the apostate doctrines that commentaries by Christendom's clergy were teaching 100 years ago"

The most interesting implication of this statement is the assumption that those who read the Bible, alone or in small groups, will "revert back" to Christian doctrine, rejecting doctrines they were taught as Jehovah's Witnesses. I would think that, should tell them something.

Watch Tower, October 1, 1967, pg.587 (JW) (PDF pg. 587)

"Thus 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."

Watch Tower, October 1, 1967, pg. 591 (JW) (PDF pg. 591)

"Make haste to identify the visible theocratic organization of God that represents his king, Jesus Christ. It is essential for life. Doing so, be complete in accepting its every aspect. We cannot claim to love God, yet deny his Word and channel of communication."

Watch Tower, May 1, 1957, p. 274 (JW) (PDF pg. 274)

"It is through his organization that God provides this light that the proverb says is the teaching or law of the mother. If we are to walk in the light of truth we must recognize not only Jehovah God as our Father but his organization as our mother."

Watch Tower, February 1, 1952, pgs. 78-79 (JW)(PDF pg. 78-79)

"Down to this day the legal corporation, the Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, has been used as an agency to publish for and direct and unify the preaching activities of the society of witnesses overspreading the earth. **When Christ came for judgment in 1918** he found some associated with this group that thought the Lord had delayed his coming and they were oppressing their fellow slaves in Christ. These were cast off as the 'evil slave' class. Those faithfully serving God were identified as the 'faithful and discreet slave' class.

"What is the Master's decision regarding the discreet slave? 'Truly I say to you that he will appoint him over all his belongings.' Before this promotion the slave is over only the Lord's domestics or body of attendants, to give them their spiritual food at the proper time..."

(pg. 79) “...Are we assigned as individuals to bring forth the food for the spiritual table? No? Then let us not try to take over the slave's duties. We should eat and digest and assimilate what is set before us, without shying away from parts of the food because it may not suit the fancy of our mental taste.”

Watch Tower, July 1, 1973, pg. 402 (JW) (PDF pg. 402)

“Consider, too, the fact that Jehovah's organization alone, in all the earth, is directed by God's holy spirit or active force. (Zech. 4:6) Only this organization functions for Jehovah's purpose and to his praise. To it alone God's Sacred Word, the Bible, is not a sealed book.”

WATCHTOWER LITERATURE: IS IT TRUSTWORTHY?

The Watch Tower claims to be a prophet of God. The Watch Tower claims that we must belong to the Jehovah's Witness organization to be qualified to live on Paradise Earth. The Watch Tower informs us that we cannot read the Bible alone, but we also need their literature to help us to have true understanding. Considering these claims, one would certainly expect to find their publications to be extremely accurate — if there is any validity in their claims at all.

In this section I will question that validity by focusing on just two of the Watchtower publications.

1. Should You Believe in the Trinity? 1989

2. The New Worlds Translation of the Holy Scriptures

Should You Believe in the Trinity? 1989, pg. 7 (JW) (PDF pg.7)

“THE ante-Nicene Fathers were acknowledged to have been leading religious teachers in the early centuries after Christ's birth. What they taught is of interest.

“Justin Martyr, who died about 165 C.E., called the prehuman Jesus a created angel who is ‘other than the God who made all things.’ He said that Jesus was inferior to God and ‘never did anything except what the Creator . . . willed him to do and say.’

“Irenaeus, who died about 200 C.E., said that the prehuman Jesus had a separate existence from God and was inferior to him. He showed that Jesus is not equal to the ‘One true and only God,’ who is ‘supreme over all, and besides whom there is no other.’

“Clement of Alexandria, who died about 215 C.E., called Jesus in his prehuman existence ‘a creature’ but called God ‘the uncreated and imperishable and only true God.’ He said that the Son ‘is next to the only omnipotent Father’ but not equal to him.

“Tertullian, who died about 230 C.E., taught the supremacy of God. He observed: ‘The Father is different from the Son (another), as he is greater; as he who begets is different from him who is begotten; he who sends, different from him who is sent.’ He also said: ‘There was a time when the Son was not Before all things, God was alone.’

“Hippolytus, who died about 235 C.E., said that God is ‘the one God, the first and the only One, the Maker and Lord of all,’ who ‘had nothing co-equal [of equal age] with him But he was One, alone by himself; who, willing it, called into being what had no being before,’ such as the created prehuman Jesus.

“Origen, who died about 250 C.E., said that ‘the Father and Son are two substances two things as to their essence,’ and that ‘compared with the Father, [the Son] is a very small light.’

Summing up the historical evidence, Alvan Lamson says in *The Church of the First Three Centuries*: ‘The modern popular doctrine of the Trinity . . . derives no support from the language of Justin [Martyr]: and this observation may be extended to all the ante-Nicene Fathers; that is, to all Christian writers for three centuries after the birth of Christ. It is true, they speak of the Father, Son, and . . . holy Spirit, but not as co-equal, not as one numerical essence, not as Three in One, in any sense now admitted by Trinitarians. The very reverse is the fact.’ Thus, the testimony of the Bible and of history makes clear that the Trinity was unknown throughout Biblical times and for several centuries thereafter.” (End Quote)

Christian Response to the Watchtower pamphlet

Reading the last paragraph of this passage, a person is led to believe that no Christian writer in the first three centuries taught or believed the doctrine that is now known as the Trinity. But it is easy to show that the doctrine known as the Trinity was taught and believed well before the 4th century. To achieve this, we'll quote someone from an earlier time period. I would like to share two quotes from the Early Church Fathers before the 3rd century.

Ignatius was said to be a pupil of the Apostle John; he lived 90 A.D. **Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume I**, The Epistle of Ignatius to the Philippians, Chapter 2 "Wherefore also the Lord, when He sent forth the apostles to make disciples of all nations, commanded them to ‘baptize in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost,’ not unto one [person] having three names, nor into three [persons] who became incarnate, but into three possessed of equal honour." (PDF pg. 98)

This clearly shows that the early church in the 1st Century taught and believed in the same doctrine that we call The Trinity today.

Tertullian was a Christian theologian who lived 155-220 A.D.

Ante-Nicene Fathers: Volume III, Tertullian Against Praxeas, Chapter 25. (PDF pg. 1133-1134)

“What follows Philip’s question, and the Lord’s whole treatment of it, to the end of John’s Gospel, continues to furnish us with statements of the same kind, distinguishing the Father and the Son, with the properties of each. Then there is the Paraclete or Comforter, also, which He promises to pray for to the Father, and to send from heaven after He had ascended to the Father. He is called ‘another comforter’, indeed, but in what way He is another we have already shown. ‘He shall receive of mine,’ says Christ, just as Christ Himself received of the Father’s. Thus the connection of the Father in the Son, and of the Son in the Paraclete, produces three coherent Persons, who are yet distinct One from Another. These Three are one essence, not one Person, as it is said, ‘I and my Father are One’, in respect of unity of substance not singularity of number.”

The following definition of "Paraclete" is by **Webster's Collegiate Dictionary** 10th Edition. “Par.a.clete n [ME Paraclyte, fr. LL Paracletus, Paraclitus, fr. Gk Parakletos, lit., advocate, intercessor, fr. parakalein to invoke, fr. para- + kalein to call--more at low] (15c): **holy spirit**”

Here Tertullian is referring to John 14: 9-16, where Jesus said He would ask of the Father, and He would send the Holy Spirit (also referred to as “another Comforter” in the King James version of the Bible). We see in this text that Tertullian referred to the Paraclete as the Holy Spirit. Notice he stated that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit were three persons that were distinct from one another. He further stated that these three persons were one in essence.

Tertullian just defined the Trinity; remember he lived 155-220 AD.

Compare what Tertullian said to the following from **Nelson's Illustrated Bible Dictionary**. “TRINITY — the coexistence of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit in the unity of the Godhead (divine nature or essence). The doctrine of the trinity means that within the being and activity of the one God there are three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.”

The Ante-Nicene Fathers mentioned in this Watch Tower publication did not teach or believe what the Watch Tower stated. I have the writings of the Ante-Nicene Fathers on CD- ROM, and an application that has the capability of searching for words or phrases. I used this application to search for the quotes attributed in this Watch Tower publication. I did not find any of the quotes The Watch Tower mentioned. I did have two hits when I got to “Tertullian”; however, in both cases the text did not say what the Watch Tower claimed Tertullian said. My next course of action was to search for what Justin Martyr, Irenaeus, Clement of Alexandria, Tertullian, Hippolytus, and Origen did teach regarding the Trinity, or the deity of Jesus Christ. Following is a quote from each of these early Christian writers.

Justin Martyr

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 1(PDF pg.150)

The First Apology of Justin, Chapter LXIII

“And all the Jews even now teach that the nameless God spake to Moses; whence the Spirit of prophecy, accusing them by Isaiah the prophet mentioned above, said ‘The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master’s crib; but Israel doth not know Me, and My people do not understand’{Isaiah 1:3}. And Jesus the Christ, because the Jews knew not what the Father was, and what the Son, in like manner accused them; and Himself said, ‘No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son, but the Father, and they to whom the Son revealeth Him’ {Matthew 11: 27}.

Now the Word of God is His Son, as we have before said. And He is called Angel and Apostle; for He declares whatever we ought to know, and is sent forth to declare whatever is revealed; as our Lord Himself says, ‘He that heareth Me, heareth Him that sent Me’ {Luke 10:16}. From the writings of Moses also this will be manifest; for thus it is written in them, ‘And the Angel of God spake to Moses, in a flame of fire out of the bush, and said, “I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers; go down into Egypt, and bring forth My people”’ {Exodus 3: 6}. And if you wish to learn what follows, you can do so from the same writings; for it is impossible to relate the whole here. But so much is written for the sake of proving that Jesus the Christ is the Son of God and His Apostle, being of old the Word, and **appearing** sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels; but now, by the will of God, having become man for the human race, He endured all the sufferings which the devils instigated the senseless Jews to inflict upon Him; who, though they have it expressly affirmed in the writings of Moses, ‘And the angel of God spake to Moses in a flame of fire in a bush, and said, “I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob,”’ yet maintain that He who said this was the Father and Creator of the universe. Whence also the Spirit of prophecy rebukes them, and says, ‘Israel doth not know Me, my people have not understood Me’ {Isaiah 1:3}. And again, Jesus, as we have already shown, while He was with them, said, ‘No one knoweth the Father, but the Son; nor the Son but the Father, and those to whom the Son will reveal Him’ {Matthew 11:27}. The Jews, accordingly, being throughout of opinion that it was the Father of the universe who spake to Moses, though He who spake to him was indeed the Son of God, who is called both Angel and Apostle, are justly charged, both by the Spirit of prophecy and by Christ Himself, with knowing neither the Father nor the Son. For they who affirm that the Son is the Father, are proved neither to have become acquainted with the Father, nor to know that the Father of the universe has a Son; who also, being the first-begotten Word of God, is even God.

And of old He appeared in the shape of fire and in the likeness of an angel to Moses and to the other prophets; but now in the times of your reign [rather, 'of your empire'], having, as we before said, become Man by a virgin, according to the counsel of the Father, for the salvation of those who believe on Him, He endured both to be set at nought and to suffer, that by dying and rising again He might conquer death. And that which was said out of the bush to Moses, 'I am that I am, the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, and the God of your fathers'. This signified that they, even though dead, are let in existence, and are men belonging to Christ Himself. For they were the first of all men to busy themselves in the search after God; Abraham being the father of Isaac, and Isaac of Jacob, as Moses wrote."

(End Quote)

Justin did not say Jesus was "a created angel"; he did say Jesus was "called both angel and apostle" and gave an explanation as to why Jesus was given this title. One of the definitions of "angel" in the Webster's dictionary is "a messenger of God". One who is "sent forth to declare whatever is revealed" as Justin stated, is a messenger. This is Justin's explanation as to why Jesus was given the title "Angel of God". Justin also said of Jesus that He was "appearing sometimes in the form of fire, and sometimes in the likeness of angels." This does not mean that Jesus is literally an angel any more than it means that Jesus is literally a fire. Justin partially quoted Exodus 3:2-6; here the Angel of God said, "I am that I am, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob, the God of thy fathers". Justin did not say Jesus was a created angel, inferior to God, as the Watch Tower would have us believe. He did say that Jesus was given the title of "Angel and Apostle", and that Jesus is the God of Abraham.

Irenaeus

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 1(PDF pg. 409)

Irenaeus against Heresies, Book 3, Chapters XX and XXI

“And again, specifying the place of His advent, he says: ‘The Lord hath spoken from Zion, and He has uttered His voice from Jerusalem’. And that it is from that region which is towards the south of the inheritance of Judah that the Son of God shall come, **who is God**, and who was from Bethlehem, where the Lord was born [and] will send out His praise through all the earth, thus says the prophet Habakkuk: ‘God shall come from the south, and the Holy One from Mount, Effrem. His power covered the heavens over, and the earth is full of His praise. Before His face shall go forth the Word, and His feet shall advance in the plains’. Thus he indicates in clear terms that **He is God**, and that His advent was [to take place] in Bethlehem, and from Mount Effrem, which is towards the south of the inheritance, and that [He is] man. For he says, ‘His feet shall advance in the plains’ and this is an indication proper to man(Chapter XXI). 1. God, then, was made man, and the Lord did Himself save us.”

Clement of Alexandria

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2(PDF pg. 177)

Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor, Book 1, Chapter II

“Now, O you, my children, our Instructor is like His Father God, whose son He is, sinless, blameless, and with a soul devoid of passion; God in the form of man, stainless, the minister of His Father’s will, the Word who is God, who is in the Father, who is at the Father’s right hand, and with the form of God is God. He is to us a spotless image; to Him we are to try with all our might to assimilate our souls. He is wholly free from human passions; wherefore also He alone is judge, because He alone is sinless.”

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 2 (PDF pg. 190)

Exhortation to the Heathen, The Instructor, Book 1, Chapter VII

“But **our Instructor is the holy God Jesus**, the Word, who is the guide of all humanity. The loving God Himself is our Instructor.”

Tertullian

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 3(PDF pg. 1107-1108)

Tertullian, Against Praxeas, Chapter XII

“But in respect of the previous works of the world what says the Scripture? Its first statement indeed is made, when the Son has not yet appeared: ‘And God said, Let there be light, and there was light.’ Immediately there appears the Word, ‘that true light, which lighteth man on his coming into the world’, and through Him also came light upon the world. From that moment God willed creation to be effected in the Word, Christ being present and ministering unto Him: and so God created. And God said, ‘Let there be a firmament, and God made the firmament’ and God also said. ‘Let there be lights (in the firmament); and so God made a greater and a lesser light’. But all the rest of the created things did He in like manner make, who made the former ones—I mean the Word of God. ‘through whom all things were made, and without whom nothing was made’.

Now if He too is God, according to John, (who says.) ‘The Word was God’, then you have two Beings—One that commands that the thing be made and the Other that executes the order and creates. In what sense, however, you ought to understand Him to be another. I have already explained, on the ground of Personality, not of Substance—in the way of distinction, not of division. But although I must everywhere hold one only substance in three coherent and inseparable (Persons).” (End Quote)

Hippolytus

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 5 (PDF pg. 434)

The Extant Works and Fragments of Hippolytus, Part 2 Dogmatical and Historical, Against the Heresy of One Noetus

“Let us look next at the apostle’s word: ‘Whose are the fathers, of whom as concerning the flesh Christ came, who is over all, God blessed forever’. This word declares the mystery of the truth rightly and clearly. He who is over all is God; for thus He speaks boldly, ‘All things are delivered unto me of my Father. ‘He who is over all, God blessed, has been born; and having been made man, He is (yet) God forever. For to this effect John also has said, ‘Which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.’ And well has he named Christ the Almighty.”

Origen

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 4 (PDF pg. 1149)

Origen Against Celsus, Book 7, Chapter XLIV

“But he prays for no trivial blessings, for he has learnt from Jesus to seek for nothing small or mean, that is, sensible objects, but to ask only for what is great and truly divine; and these things God grants to us, to lead us to that blessedness which is found only with Him through His Son, **the Word, who is God.**”

The Ante-Nicene Fathers Volume 4 (PDF pg. 466)

Origen de Principiis, Book 1, Chapter I

“Whatever, therefore, is a property of bodies, cannot be predicated either of the Father or of the Son; but what belongs to the nature of deity is common to the Father and the Son.”

Anybody who wants to know whether Watch Tower literature is trustworthy should read Jehovah Witnesses’ own pamphlet, Should You Believe in the Trinity? (pg. 7), and then look up the references for themselves. This pamphlet and the volumes of the Ante-Nicene Fathers are in the Free Christian Library. Use the PDF page numbers in Adobe Reader to go to the correct page for each quote.

Remember that the Watch Tower claims to be a prophet of God, and further claims that we must belong to the Jehovah's Witnesses organization to be qualified to live on Paradise Earth. The Watch Tower informs us that we cannot read our Bibles alone, but we also need their literature to help us to have true understanding. One would certainly expect to find their publications to be extremely accurate, if there is any validity to their claims at all. Yet **the Watch Tower has grossly misrepresented six early Christian writers in this one pamphlet alone.** Keep in mind that this does not mean that your average Jehovah's Witness is untrustworthy; rather, it is the Watch Tower organization that is untrustworthy, deceiving its own followers.