

SPECIAL STUDIES NUMBER TWO

Revelation 3:14

Revelation 3:14 reads as follows:

"And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God."

Here, the phrase we purpose to consider is, "the beginning of the creation of God." This phrase is one of the favorite phrases used by those who deny the deity of Christ. They tell us in their literature that Jesus Christ is a created being, and, in fact, the very first creature created by God. And, according to them, Christ, having been created by God, then is responsible for bringing into existence "all other" things. Thus, in their view, Christ was created first by Jehovah God, and then all other subsequent creation came into being as a result of Christ's creative power. The words "the beginning of the creation of God," in referring to the Lord Jesus Christ, are used in support of their theory.

Let us cite several excerpts from the literature of Jehovah's Witnesses in order that the reader might know exactly what they say and think of the Son of God.

In a book entitled *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, copyright 1968, we read as follows:

"The Bible informs us that he is God's 'firstborn' son. This means that he was created before the other sons of God's family. He is . . . the only one directly created by Jehovah God; all other things came into existence through him as God's Agent" (end quote, page 47).

Then on pages 22, 23 of the same book, we read:

"When Jesus was on earth he certainly was not equal to his Father. . . After Jesus' death, God raised him to life again . . . However, he was still not equal to his Father" (end quote).

Then on page 19 of the same book, we read:

"As the Creator of all things, Jehovah God . . . existed

before all others . . . How right, then, that our worship should go only to him" (end quote).

In another book entitled *Things In Which It Is Impossible For God To Lie*, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, copyright 1965, we read as follows:

"Jehovah God as the Sender and Anointer is greater than the anointed Jesus, the Sent One . . . Jesus was a servant or slave to the One whose will he obeyed . . . There is only one 'God and Father of all persons'; and since that exclusive one is 'over all,' he is over . . . Jesus Christ" (end quote, page 269).

In another book entitled *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, published also by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, copyright 1944, we read on pages 46, 47, 49 as follows:

"At the time of his beginning of life he was created by the everlasting God, Jehovah . . . he was the first and direct creation of Jehovah God . . . He was the start of God's creative work . . . He was not an incarnation in flesh, but was flesh, a human Son of God, a perfect man, no longer a spirit, although having a spiritual or heavenly past and background" (end quote).

In paraphrase, their doctrine is simply that Jehovah created a lesser god, who originally was spirit, but then in the incarnation became flesh, a human son, no longer spirit, and then in the resurrection became no more human, but a spirit creature. Thus, according to them, there is no one in heaven today called Jesus Christ in a glorified body.

Other blasphemous statements could be cited, but these suffice to show exactly what they think of the Son of God. This rot is being propagated by religious people, not atheists, and by not a few. There are a number of other religious groups that are on the same band wagon. The religious world today is caught up in issues like abortion, premarital sex, birth control, family values, etc., but who are not offended in the least by the vile, blasphemous statements regarding "the Saviour of the world."

Most of the statements previously quoted, and representing the views of the Jehovah's Witnesses, will be dealt with in the course of this entire article, but let us just single out a few of their sayings, and place them over against positive statements in God's word as follows:

1. They said, "He is . . . the only one directly created by Jehovah God; all other things came into existence through him as God's chief Agent" (end quote).

2. God's word says, "All (not some things, and not all other things, but all) things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3).

If, as the text affirms, "All things were made by him," then He preceded "all" created things. If He preceded "all" created things, then He is uncreated. If He is uncreated, then He is eternal. And, if He is eternal, then He is God.

1. They said, ". . . Jesus was . . . not equal to his Father," either "on earth" or "still."

2. God's word says, ". . . God was his Father, making himself equal with God . . . Who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God" (John 5:18; Philippians 2:6).

We comment of John 5:18 and Philippians 2:6 more fully in the course of this writing, but here, simply quote them to show the contrast between "not equal" in the view of the Russellites, but "equal with God" in the view of the inspired writers.

1. They said, "As the Creator . . . Jehovah God . . . our worship should go only to him."

2. God's word says, ". . . they worshipped him. . . they worshipped him . . . he worshipped him . . ." (Matthew 28:17; Luke 24:52; John 9:38), etc., all speaking of the Lord Jesus Christ as the object of worship.

We devote an entire article to "worship," but here simply call attention to the fact that the Lord Jesus Christ was worshipped, He received it, and no rebuke was made to the worshipper.

1. They said, ". . . all other things came into existence through him. . ."

2. God's word says, "All things were made by him. . ." (John 1:3).

To them, it is "all other things," implying that Christ is the only exception being, according to them, created Himself. But Christ is not an exception since "all things were made by him."

1. They said, "Jehovah God. . . the sender . . . is greater than . . . Jesus, the sent one . . ."

2. God's word says, "Behold, I will send my messenger . . . and the Lord . . . shall . . . come . . . even the messenger . . . he shall come, saith the Lord . . ." (Malachi 3:1).

If words mean anything, "the Lord" was the sender, and the one sent was "the Lord." Therefore, "the Lord" sent "the Lord." We know "that the Father sent the Son" (I John 4:14). But, since "the Lord" sent "the Lord," then the one sent was not less than God, but was "equal with God."

Jehovah's Witnesses can't make their doctrine square with the truth. They speak of Christ as "a powerful godlike one" (end quote, *The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life*, page 24). Listen, my friend, He is not "godlike," but He is God. That is the plain teaching of God's word, and so said John (John 1:1, 2; 5:18; I John 5:20), and so said Paul (Romans 9:5; Philippians 2:6; Titus 2:13, 14), and so said Luke (Acts 20:28), and so said Thomas (John 20:28), and so said God the Father (Hebrews 1:8, 10), and so said Isaiah (Isaiah 7:14; 9:6), and so said Matthew (Matthew 1:23), and so be it.

Why anyone would want a creature for a saviour is beyond me! A creature, exalted or otherwise, cannot save himself, much less anyone else. If Christ is relegated to mere creature, the entire redemptive plan is destroyed, and the soul of man is forever lost.

Let us now look at Revelation 3:14, which speaks of Christ as "the beginning of the creation of God." If these words are construed to mean that Christ is a creature, whether first, second, or last, He is still a creature. But that cannot be! John 1:3 plainly states, and we hang our hat on it:

"All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made."

Interestingly enough, *The New World Translation*, endorsed by the Jehovah's Witnesses, reads as follows:

"All things came into existence through him, and apart from him not even one thing came into existence" (end quote).

I also have in my possession a copy of the *American Standard Version*, 1901 edition, that has the endorsement of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in the opening format. This text, endorsed and distributed by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, Inc., and John 1:3 reads in that version as follows:

"All things were made through him; and without him was not

anything made that hath been made" (end quote).

All three translations, the *King James Version*, *The New World Translation*, and the *American Standard Version*, the latter two being endorsed by the Jehovah's Witness, unequivocally affirm that "all things were made by him." If Christ is a creature, then "all things were" not "made by him" because He himself would be an exception. But, since "all things were made by him," then He is not an exception, not a created thing, but rather He is the Creator, who preceded "all" created things. Thus, He is without beginning and, therefore, is God. John 1:3 does not say "all other things were made by him." It lucidly declares, "All things were made by him."

Since "all things were made by him," notice what A. T. Robertson says as to the meaning of the expression "the beginning of the creation of God" in Revelation 3:14 as follows:

"Not the first of creatures as the Arians held and Unitarians do now, but the originating source of creation through whom God works . . ." (end quote, *Word Pictures in the New Testament*, Volume VI, page 321).

Thus, in Robertson's view, the phrase means "the originating source of creation" (end quote). Since "all things were made by him," then He truly is "the originating source of creation."

Marvin R. Vincent, in his 4 volume work, *Word Studies in the New Testament*, states that the meaning of the expression "the beginning of the creation of God" in Revelation 3:14 is as follows:

"The beginner, or author" (end quote, Volume II, "Revelation of John," page 469.)

Since "all things were made by him," then He truly is "the beginner, or author" of creation.

Kenneth S. Wuest, another Greek scholar, in his 4 volume work, *Word Studies in the Greek New Testament*, translates the entire New Testament in Volume IV, called *The New Testament, An Expanded Translation*. On page 593, he translates the expression "the beginning of the creation of God" as follows:

". . . the originating source of the creation of God" (end quote).

Of the three scholars, two speak of the phrase as meaning "the originating source," and the other speaks of it as meaning "the beginner, or author."

The word "beginning" in Revelation 3:14 is from the Greek word "arche," and is the root of the word translated "author" in Hebrews 12:2, from the Greek "archegos." In Revelation 22:13, Christ said, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning (arche) and the end, the first and the last." That Christ is the speaker is ostensible in view of the fact that the speaker, three times, said, "I come quickly," verses 7, 12, 20, and is identified as "Jesus . . . Lord Jesus," verses 16, 20.

The words "Alpha and Omega" refer to the first and last letters of the Greek alphabet. They are a fit descriptive of the One who is designated "the Word of God" (Revelation 19:13). A word is a medium of expression. Thoughts cannot be known until they are clothed with words. Christ, as "the Word of God," revealed God the Father, and apart from that revelation "neither knoweth any man the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him" (Matthew 11:27).

The words "the beginning and the end" speak of His creative works. He is "the beginning" of all created things inasmuch as "all things were made by him" (John 1:3). He is "the originating source." He is "the beginner." He preceded "all" created things. Thus, He had no beginning, and is God. Moreover, He is "the end" since "on the seventh day God ended his work . . . which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2, 3).

The words "the first and the last" speak of His eternity. Jehovah said, "I am the first, and I am the last" (Isaiah 44:6). He is "the first" because "before me there was no God formed." And He is "the last" because "neither shall there be after me."

This is the Christ of God's word. If He is creature, He can't save Himself, much less you. If He is God, then He is able to save you, and what He did on your behalf, in dying so as to satisfy the justice of a holy God, is meaningful. He willingly took the place of sinners. But, more importantly, He was qualified for He was "without blemish and without spot." He can bring you no nearer to God than He Himself is, but being God, He is qualified, and able, to bring you to God. He said, "if ye believe not that I am (the he is in italics), ye shall die in your sins" (John 8:24).

Notice again the quote as to what Jehovah's Witnesses say about Christ as follows:

"At time of his beginning of life he was created by the everlasting God, Jehovah . . . he was the first and direct creation of Jehovah God . . . He was the start of God's creative work . . . He was not an incarnation in flesh, but was flesh, a human Son of God, a perfect man, no longer a spirit, although having a spiritual or heavenly past and background" (end quote, *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, pages 46, 47,

49).

Then on page 48, Revelation 3:14, "the beginning of the creation of God," is used to support their blasphemous position. Well, we hang our hat on John 1:3 for the interpretation of Revelation 3:14. "All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made" (John 1:3). If He preceded "all" created things, then He is uncreated. If He is uncreated, then He is eternal. And, if He is eternal, then He is God. If "all things were made by him," then He is truly "the beginning," the originating source, "of the creation of God."

To interpret Revelation 3:14 in such a way as to make it contradict John 1:3 is the method employed by the enemies of Christ.