

## THE WITNESS OF THE SPIRIT

“The spirit itself bears witness with our spirit that we are God’s children.” – *Romans 8:16*

We recently responded to a visitor’s question regarding the “special overwhelming feeling” that some Jehovah’s Witnesses describe that gives them an assurance that they are anointed sons of God – **Question and Response 12/3/14**. Some of these brothers and sisters describe unusual spiritual experiences, including visions, audible words, a sensation of oil being poured over their body, and many other things. As a result, Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that without these unusual occurrences, they could not be anointed sons of God. These brothers and sisters are mistaken.

As the scripture above explains, what assures one of their sonship with God is the witness of two spirit influences described as “**the spirit**” and “**our spirit**.” It is a spiritual awakening – a realization that one is a child of God. And it is natural and authentic. It will be accompanied by an emotional release, but not necessarily by a super-human or a super-spiritual experience. Let us explain further.

### Bearing Witness

We know from Paul’s writing that the spirit of the Father dwells within all of us:

“Do you not know that you yourselves are God’s temple and that **the spirit of God dwells in you?**” – *1 Corinthians 3:16*

“Do you not know that **your body is the temple of the holy spirit within you, which you have from God?** Also, you do not belong to yourselves, for you were bought with a price. By all means, glorify God in your body.” – *1 Corinthians 6:19-20*

It is because of the indwelling of the Father’s spirit that Paul could say that the Father was ‘in fact, not far off from each one of us.’ (*Acts 17:27*) This indwelling spirit is a part of us. It is the line of communication by which the Father communes with us, motivates us, encourages us, assures us. The personal fragment of the Father’s spirit that dwells within us is “**our spirit**” as Paul wrote in the introductory scripture.

The other spirit influence that Paul referred to as “**the spirit**” is the Spirit of Truth that Jesus poured out to all mankind at Pentecost circa 33 C.E. The Spirit of Truth is the Son’s spirit, the spirit that guides us and teaches us about the Christ:

“However, when that one comes, the spirit of the truth, **he will guide you into all the truth**, for he will not speak of his own initiative, but what he hears he will speak, and he will declare to you the things to come. That one will glorify me, because **he will**

**receive from what is mine and will declare it to you.** All the things that the Father has are mine. That is why I said he receives from what is mine and declares it to you.” – *John 16:13-15*

These two spirit influences – the spirit of the Father and the spirit of the Son – work together to assure or testify or ‘bear witness’ that we, too, are the children of God. The witness bearing is the Father welcoming His son and the son acknowledging his Father – an awakening to our true relationship!

### Accepting the Witness Bearing

The Father’s spirit is always with us, reaching out to us, responding to our prayers. As the Apostle John wrote, “he first loved us.” (*1 John 4:19*) Our challenge is to accept and respond to the Father, and for many of us, there is a process leading up to accepting the ‘witness bearing.’ Paul described it when he wrote:

“And he made out of one man every nation of men to dwell on the entire surface of the earth, and he decreed the appointed times and the set limits of where men would dwell, so that they would seek God, **if they might grope for him and really find him**, although, in fact, he is not far off from each one of us.” – *Acts 17:26-27*

This groping for God is what we personally experienced as part of our own awakening. We do not recall what sparked it, but at some point in our spiritual journey, we developed an insatiable hunger for a closeness with God. As Jehovah’s Witnesses, we had been taught that only 144,000 Christians throughout history were in a parent/child relationship with God, so we questioned the intimate feelings we felt. In addition to incessant prayers, we scoured Watchtower publications. One of us, who had been an Elder, would spend several hours late at night until the wee morning hours in the Kingdom Hall library reading articles and publications all the way back to the writings of Charles Taze Russell. The other one of us, the sister, would do the same in her home.

This went on for months. And the more we read, the more convinced we were that we were in a parent/child relationship with the Father. Jesus became more than a great teacher. He was our older brother, our exemplar, and we longed to be with him and the Father in heaven, just as a child naturally would want to be with their parent and family. We had no kingly or priestly aspirations or expectations. We simply wanted to be with our heavenly family.

Because we were taught by the Watchtower organization that due to our age (we were in our mid-30s) we could not be sons of God, it fueled our search and made us go deeper and deeper in our study. We knew that we would be faced with skepticism, ridicule, and even strong disciplinary counsel by the elder body if we dared to confess union with God as His sons. We knew we could lose our congregation privileges and be ‘marked’ as mentally unstable, so we had to be absolutely certain before we dared to partake of the Memorial emblems. Yet the connection with the Father was simply too strong to deny and growing stronger daily. If the elders insisted that there was only 144,000 sons of God, then we would have to respond that there was now

144,002! And in a tremendous leap of faith, against all odds, we did it! We openly partook of the bread and wine at the next Memorial in 1996 and 1997, respectively.

At first, we thought our experience was rather unique until we met other ‘young anointed ones.’ They, too, had the insatiable hunger for truth that led to their partaking. Even just this week, we received this email:

“When my husband first had his ‘anointing’ over 12 years ago, he was overwhelmed with the feeling of the heavenly calling, and searched the Watchtower publications for more information. For months he would have books everywhere open to the subject. To my dismay he went fanatical and was spiritually overwhelming to us and many in the congregation. He told no one else except me and our daughter, and we could not believe it, so he went silent for many years and we did not discuss this again.

“Eventually he calmed down and through many trials and tribulations it resurfaced 3 years ago, when he said to me that he would partake of the emblems at the next memorial. His feeling of destiny being heaven, had never diminished. As a Witness, to me it was devastating, as I would be on earth and he in heaven.

“Once the ‘cat was out of the bag’ though, many were derisive and many were silent. It was a strange thing to witness among our brothers and sisters and this got me thinking as to why no one was interested in what the heavens held. Hence my own investigation took place into the Watchtower publications, and there was no satisfactory answers from the Governing Body who were the lead in being heaven bound.

“I was confused with reactions and longing to find out more I came across AnointedJW.org. Things began fitting into place and questions were being answered. Surprising to all, I now partake of the emblems and we both have left the organization that is keeping its constituents earth bound.

Yes, we had an awakening as you have said, a realization of who we really are. And this concept of an ‘anointing’ that has developed within the organization presents itself as a maze of absolute confusion with no real exit from the earthly hope.”

Our brothers and sisters who are not Jehovah’s Witnesses may find this hard to understand. Why would Christians hesitate about partaking of the body of Christ? And why would other Christians persecute their brothers who believed they were sons of God and wanted to be with God in heaven? Yet this is the reality that faces every one of Jehovah’s Witnesses who dares to unite with Christ Jesus!

What most Christians do not realize is that Jehovah's Witnesses are not truly Christian. With the exception of about 13,000 of them (most of whom they view as mentally unstable), Jehovah's Witnesses are not in union with Christ Jesus. We are not bashing them by making this statement. We are simply stating what Jehovah's Witnesses will openly admit, specifically:

1. They are not sons of God as Paul said. (*Galatians 3:26*)
2. They are not brothers of Jesus Christ as Jesus said. (*Matthew 23:8*)
3. They are not baptized into Christ's death as Paul described. (*Romans 6:3*)
4. They are not anointed with Holy Spirit as Jesus promised. (*Acts 1:8; 2:17-18*)
5. They are not in the covenant with Jesus as he promised. (*Matthew 26:27-28*)
6. They do not want to live in the places Jesus prepared in heaven. (*John 14:2*)
7. They will not participate in the Memorial Supper as Jesus commanded. (*John 6:53-56*)
8. And they are not part of the body of Christ, the true Christian congregation as Paul described. (*Colossians 1:24*)

Shocking, but true. If you doubt us, simply ask them and see for yourself. And while you are at it, ask them how they can consider themselves Christian if they reject these major aspects of Christianity. Perhaps by your questions, you may be able to assist the spirit to bear witness with these lost brothers and sisters.

Although certain Watchtower publications give token counsel that a person's relationship with God is personal, in reality, those who profess union with Christ and claim sonship with God are marked, judged, and ostracized. In fact, as we have reported, the Governing Body has sent confidential letters to certain bodies of elders telling them to be on the look out for those who talk about sonship and who indicate a desire to partake of the Memorial emblems with a view to marking them as apostates or apostate thinkers! Already, those who accept their sonship among Jehovah's Witnesses are being entrapped and called into judicial hearings to establish a pretext for disfellowshipping them. (See **Apostasy in the Fenway Congregation.**)

But for most Christians, accepting the witness of the spirit and partaking of the Christ is a natural progression and a welcomed joy! They see the opportunity to confess union with Christ Jesus as an inestimable privilege. They are not pressured to reject Christ as are Jehovah's Witnesses. On the contrary, other Christians are joyfully encouraged to do so. In fact, in most Christian churches, refusing communion is unheard of! Accordingly, they may not be faced with the insatiable drive to find the Father before they partake because they already accept the fact that the Father is ready and available to them.

For most of our brothers and sisters who are not associated with Jehovah's Witnesses, their drive to devour anything having to do with sonship with God often comes **after** their communion. Since there were no stumbling blocks that separated them from the Father, accepting their sonship was not a hurdle they needed to jump over first. But in every instance, every faith son yearns to be with the Father, 'to grope for Him and really find him.' (*Acts 17:27*)

Nevertheless, in the face of strong opposition, hundreds of thousands in the Jehovah's Witness community are now partakers in the body of Christ, even though most partake privately

or outside of the congregational arrangement. The witness of the spirit is strong and persistent and will not yield until the person makes a decision to reject it.

### **Do Not Reject the Spirit's Witness**

As hard as it may be for some to understand, so many of our brothers and sisters among Jehovah's Witnesses have rejected the witness of the spirit because of fear of man and/or a desire for congregational privileges. We know of brothers who are otherwise very strong in their faith, but who tremble at the idea of going against men. We know of brothers and sisters who accepted the witness for a couple of years, but caved to the pressure and no longer partake. And, of course, we know of brothers and sisters who partake not only privately, but in hiding. They have not yet developed the courage to openly confess union with Christ Jesus.

To all these brothers and sisters, we caution you about rejecting the spirit's witness. Recall Jesus' words:

“Everyone, then, who acknowledges me before men, I will also acknowledge him before my Father who is in the heavens. But **whoever disowns me before men, I will also disown him before my Father who is in the heavens.** . . . And whoever does not accept his torture stake and follow after me **is not worthy of me.** Whoever finds his soul will lose it, and whoever loses his soul for my sake will find it.” – *Matthew 10:32-33, 38-39*

With all of the above scriptural admonition, we wonder how lovers of God would choose to disown Jesus for the sake of having a ‘good standing’ in a religious organization!

There is also the matter of time. As the proverb says, “Time and unforeseen occurrences befall us all.” (*Ecclesiastes 9:11*) Who knows what tomorrow will bring? Who knows whether we will have the opportunity to confess the Christ before our mortal life expires? Better to take the counsel of the Apostle James:

“Now listen, you who say, “Today or tomorrow we will go to this or that city, spend a year there, carry on business and make money.” **Why, you do not even know what will happen tomorrow. What is your life? You are a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes.** Instead, you ought to say, “If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that.” As it is, you boast in your arrogant schemes. All such boasting is evil. **If anyone, then, knows the good they ought to do and doesn't do it, it is sin for them.**” – *James 4:13-17*

It is surely the Father's will that all of His children ‘grope for Him and really find Him.’ Now is the opportune time. If you are experiencing an awakening to your sonship, understand what is happening to you and do not give up in your search. As Jesus said:

**“Keep on asking**, and it will be given you; **keep on seeking**, and you will find; **keep on knocking**, and it will be opened to you; for everyone asking receives, and everyone seeking finds, and to everyone knocking, it will be opened.” – *Matthew 7:7-8*

Continue until you are at peace with the Father and Christ Jesus. Do not let the errors and arrogance of men ‘separate you from God’s love that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.’ (*Romans 8:39*) And when you have the witness of the spirit borne to you, accept your anointing as the Father’s will and do what you know to be right at your earliest opportunity. No need to wait for the annual commemoration. Join with others of like faith now, remembering Jesus’ words:

“For where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst.” – *Matthew 18:20*

We are so proud to be associated with so many courageous and faithful men, women and children who delight in obeying God rather than men. (*Acts 5:29*) Our most recent report indicates that there are about 23.4 million sons of God who accept the plain and open teachings of Jesus as presented in this ministry and who look forward to the heavenly destiny. At this rate, we will surely bring heaven down, all to the honor and glory of the Father and His Christ.

May all accept the witness of the spirit and shake off the dust of manmade doctrines designed to separate you from God’s love. And as always, we welcome your comments.

***“Elaia Luchnia”***