

JWs: here are a couple observations and a challenge (the challenge comes at the end). If you have the patience to follow all the way through, I think you'll be rewarded with some critical thinking skills you can apply to *anything* that anybody tells you.

I asked about the JW beliefs regarding a mediator (1 Tim. 2:5-6) on another site whose purpose is to explain the actual beliefs of JWs. This scripture says that there is only one mediator, Jesus, implying that He mediates for all. But the Watchtower and other references (including Insight on the Scriptures, published just last year) say that Jesus only mediates for the 144,000. They cited a lengthy article from the August 15th 1989 Watchtower that attempt to explain how the scriptures mean that Jesus only mediates for the few.

In this article, it states "To grasp what Paul is saying, we must first appreciate that the Bible sets out two destinies for faithful humans: (1) perfect life on a restored earthly paradise and (2) life in heaven for Christ's "little flock," numbering 144,000. (Luke 12:32; Revelation 5:10; 14:1-3)"

I see two things here. The first is called "begging the question". No, begging the question is not when a question naturally follows a given statement, as is commonly thought. It's when circular logic is used by assuming the thing you're trying to prove is already true. In this case, the Watchtower is assuming that JW doctrine is true (two destinies for faithful humans) in order to demonstrate that JW doctrine is true (that Jesus mediates for those following one destiny, but not the other). This type of logic is not only worthless in testing anything, it's blatantly deceptive. Using this technique, I can prove any lie I make up by first telling others to "appreciate" that the lie is true to begin with.

The second thing I see here is called "prooftexting". This is when you make an assertion (which can be totally made up), then cherry-pick verses to try to back up your assertion instead of reading the text and letting it speak for itself. Here's an example: "The world is flat (Dan. 4:10-11, Matt. 4:8, Rev. 1:7)." Each of these verses speaks of either seeing everything from one place or seeing one thing from everywhere, therefore the earth is flat. But if you were to read those verses individually within their context, you'd realize immediately that they have nothing to do with a description of the earth's geography.

So where is the prooftexting in this WT article on a mediator? It cites Luke 12:32, Revelation 5:10, and Rev. 14:1-3 to support the assertion of Christ's "little flock" numbering 144,000. Yes, Luke 12:32 refers to a "little flock". Rev. 5:10, refers to those whom Christ has purchased who will be "a kingdom and priests to our God". And Rev. 14:1-3 refers to 144,000. Yet there's absolutely *nothing* in *any* of these verses that connects them to any of the others unless you first *assume* that JW doctrine is true. Again, I could choose any three unconnected verses from

anywhere in the Bible, make up my own doctrine that contains an element from each verse, then cite those verses as proof that my doctrine is sound. That's nuts!

Now, let's look at 1 Tim. 2:5-6 and see what it says when we let the scripture speak for *itself* instead of a magazine telling us what it means. Note the first word of 1 Tim. 2:5 - "For". That means this verse is continuing a thought. We then look to see what is immediately in front of it to see which thought is being continued. In the preceding verses of the chapter, Paul entreats Timothy to pray for *all* men (v. 1), and for *all* who are in authority (v. 2). He should do this because it is good in God's sight (v. 3), who wants *all* men to be saved (v. 4) and come to a knowledge of the truth (not just 144,000!). This brings us to v. 5-6, where Paul explains all this is so *because* Jesus is the mediator for *all*, giving Himself as a ransom for *all*. There's simply no way you can read this passage and derive a limited audience of only 144,000, because that runs contrary to every fiber of the text! The text is plainly saying that Jesus is indeed the only mediator between God and *all* mankind. If He is not your mediator, you will have no place in the kingdom of God.

You may spot these logical errors used by *anyone* to mislead you in *any* belief. Now for the challenge, and it's a simple one. Prove me wrong. Scrutinize *any* issue of the Watchtower or Awake and see if there aren't examples of begging the question (assuming something is true in order to prove it is true) or prooftexting (using scattered verses to prove a point instead of examining what an individual scripture is saying within its own context). I think you'll be surprised at what you find once you know what to look for.