

Who's That Knocking at My Door?

They carry black briefcases and they dress as sharply as salesmen. With a smile, they knock at your front door in the morning, afternoon, or on special holidays. They have been preparing for this with months and years of intense training. They will confront you tactfully and refute the deity of Jesus Christ. They are the Jehovah's Witnesses.

For several months Regina had been ignoring the neatly dressed couple who were repeatedly knocking at her door. As she peered out through wooden blinds, she contemplated doing so again; Regina's understanding of the trinity was sketchy. She believed that Jesus was God merely because her parents and her pastor did. This couple at the door would challenge her beliefs, and she was not ready for that confrontation. As she watched the Jehovah's Witnesses walk away through the gateway, she pulled out her cell phone. It was time to make an appointment to see her pastor.

Furnished with an odd blend of dated furniture, Pastor Ray's office was rather homey. Looking at his accumulation of books in his office, she knew Bible study was more important to him than nice office décor. He was gracious as he removed commentaries from a chair so that she could sit down. His pleasant voice reassured her: "Most Christians don't know why they believe that Jesus is God. There is, however, ample evidence in the Bible that Jesus is God indeed."

Pastor Ray reached for his Bible and flipped through the pages with dark-skinned fingers until he arrived at the book of Titus. He leaned over toward Regina to give her a closer view from his well-worn Bible. "In his letter to Titus, Paul wanted to convey that there is One who is responsible for saving us. This One who saves us," he said as he pointed to Titus 1:3, "is '*God* our Savior.' Pretending to be startled he continued, "But wait--in the very next verse Paul writes, '*Christ Jesus* our Savior.' Is Paul mixed up?" Pastor Ray smiled at Regina as he continued. "Is it God or is it Jesus who is our Savior? Will Paul unravel the mystery for us?"

Pastor Ray stood up and left the Bible in Regina's hands as he continued: "Paul does not resolve the puzzle, but he adds to it in the following chapter. In Titus 2:9-10 he urges bond slaves to 'adorn the doctrine of *God* our Savior.' On the other hand, only three verses later he instructs readers that it is *Christ Jesus* who is our Savior when he writes the following: 'our great God and Savior, *Christ Jesus*.' Finally, in chapter 3:4 and 6, Paul adds, for the third time that *God* is 'our Savior' and *Jesus Christ* is 'our Savior.' We might ask, "Will the real Savior please stand up?"

"For a Christian, Paul's claim that both Jesus and God are the one Savior is not perplexing—Jesus IS God. For the Jehovah's Witnesses, however, it is a difficulty because they do not believe that Jesus is God, Pastor Ray continued. "Regina, you may want to underline these verses in your own Bible for the next time the Witnesses knock at your door. Then you can turn to Titus and share with them that Paul claims three times in this book that *both* God and Jesus are the Savior. The Jehovah's Witnesses, however, may argue that they have no problem in agreeing with you that both Jesus and God are called Savior."

"But they DO have a problem."

Pastor Ray sat on the edge of his desk and gazed at Regina as he explained, "According to Isaiah, there are NOT two Saviors; there is only one Savior. Paul, a

former Jewish teacher of the Old Testament, would have known what God announced in Isaiah 43:11, 'I, even I, am the LORD, and there is no Savior besides Me.' Additionally, Hosea 13:4 repeats the claim when God states: 'for there is no Savior besides Me.' God knows of only one savior: Himself."

"Regina, Paul knew these verses which state that only God is Savior, yet he still declared in his letter to Titus that Jesus is 'our Savior.'" As if to emphasize his final point, Pastor Ray sat down as he said, "You might want to ask the Witnesses, 'If God professes that He alone is the Savior, how can Paul assert that Jesus is the Savior?' They may be drawn to the inevitable conclusion which Christians have affirmed for two thousand years—Jesus can only be called Savior if He Himself is God."