

## TWO CLAIMS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES EXAMINED

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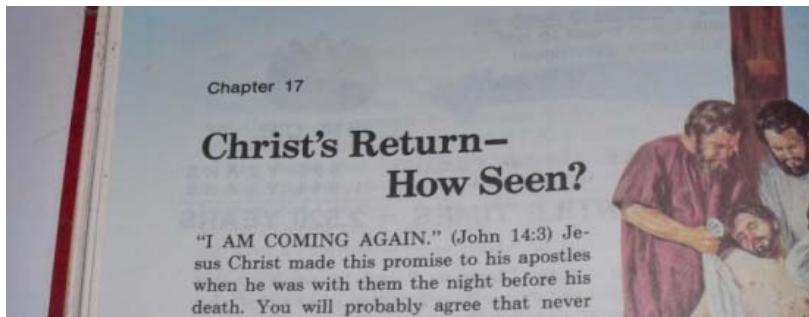
To the average person, the term "Jehovah's Witnesses" brings to mind people canvassing neighborhoods and city streets distributing the Watchtower magazine. Many who profess the Jehovah's Witness faith spend upwards of sixty hours a month in this missionary work. There's no doubt that these Witnesses are sincere about their religion; but sincerity, in and of itself, is not necessarily an indication that a religion's message is true. Many, if not all, religious groups have sincere followers. The Jehovah's Witnesses are no exception. But what type of a gospel message do they have?<sup>1</sup> In this study we will look into evidence that the Jehovah's Witnesses have been proclaiming a false gospel since their organization was first formed.

As Jehovah's Witnesses engage a prospective convert, they usually begin a weekly Bible study. The new convert learns to interpret the Bible through the careful instruction of Watchtower publications. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, which is the official organization of the Jehovah's Witnesses, have been in the publishing business<sup>2</sup> for over 130 years. It's from this printed material that we will look into some foundational teachings, and bring two extraordinary claims to light.<sup>3</sup>

### JEHOVAH'S WITNESS CLAIMS:

- Claim One: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ occurred in 1914.
- Claim Two: The Watchtower Society was handpicked by Christ as God's only channel of communication to man in 1919.

Let's start with the first claim:



In the 1982 Watchtower book, You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth, on page 146, a verse from the Bible is spelled out:

*“Look! He is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him, and those who pierced him; and all the tribes of the earth will beat themselves in grief because of him” (Rev. 1:7).*

This Book of Revelation scripture gives specific details about Christ's return. The words,

*“every eye will see him”*

are noteworthy. If taken literally, this verse would mean that every man, woman and child on the entire earth would actually see Jesus return. At the very least, a literal understanding of our Revelation text would mean that the return of Jesus Christ would be so significant that no one on earth could possibly miss it.

The Watchtower Society explains the meaning of Revelation 1:7 in this manner:

*“Here the Bible speaks of seeing, not with physical eyes, but in the sense of discerning or perceiving. Thus, when a person comprehends or understands a matter, he may say, ‘I see it’” (Paradise, 1982 p. 146).*

They go on to explain:

*“So the expression ‘every eye will see him’ means that everyone will then understand or recognize that Christ is present” (Paradise, 1982 p. 146).*

Taken at face value, the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ explanation is not that far removed from a literal interpretation. They hardly lessen the impact of Christ’s return with their explanation, because, stipulating that

*“everyone will then understand or recognize that Christ is present,”*

*still demands that everyone on the face of the planet will know when Jesus returns.*

If the 1914 date for Christ’s *“presence”* is valid, it’s only reasonable to expect to see a historical account of the Watchtower Society heralding Christ’s presence from 1914 on.

### **History tells a different story:**

When Charles Russell was a teenager, the man whom the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim as their founder, he was influenced<sup>4</sup> by a Christian Adventist movement which was teaching that Jesus was going to return to earth in 1873. Christ’s return was expected to be visible, powerful, with Christians taken to heaven, and the world immediately destroyed by fire.

Thousands of people were looking forward to this Advent, or as it was often called, *“Second Advent.”* Charles Russell was one of them. When it looked like none of the things forecast for the mid 1870s came to pass, Russell was left disillusioned, looking for answers. Then in January of 1876, Russell read a magazine called Herald of The Morning written by an Adventist preacher named Nelson Barbour. Barbour claimed that Jesus had returned to earth in the autumn of 1874, yet his return was invisible. Barbour also claimed that Christians would be caught up to heaven three-and-one-half years later, in the spring of 1878.

Russell was so moved by the news of Christ's invisible return and the prospect of an impending rapture that he went to work with Barbour helping to publish and promote Barbour's magazine. Russell, along with thousands of Adventists fully expected to be caught up to heaven in 1878.

When 1878 came to a close with Christ's followers still firmly on the ground, Russell was once again looking for answers. He eventually came to believe that the expected rapture could also have been invisible. Charles Russell surmised that the dead in Christ were raised and ascended to heaven in 1878 – 3 and a half years after Christ's supposed return. One thing is certain; in Russell's mind, Jesus Christ's Second Coming took place in 1874.

After a falling out with Barbour, in 1879 Russell created his own magazine heralding the 1874 presence of Jesus Christ, called,

*"ZION'S WATCH TOWER HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE."*

Throughout Russell's lifetime he never lost faith in the idea that Jesus had returned to earth invisibly in 1874, nor did Russell lose faith in the significance of the year 1878. The years 1874 and 1878 were spelled out many times in Watchtower publications.

Here's one example:

*"Our Lord, the appointed King, is now present, since October 1874, A.D., according to the testimony of the prophets, to those who have ears to hear it: and the formal inauguration of his kingly office dates from April 1878, A.D." (The Battle of Armageddon, 1913, p. 621).*

In 1916 Russell died.

From 1917 through 1921 the Watchtower Society, under Russell's successor, Joseph (Judge) Rutherford, still taught that Christ's presence began in 1874, not in 1914, which is the current teaching.

In 1922 the Society penned these words,

*“No one can properly understand the work of God at this present time who does not realize that since 1874, the time of the Lord’s return in power, there has been a complete change in God’s operations” (The WATCH TOWER, September 15, 1922, p. 278).*

In 1923 the Society claimed,

*“The Scriptures show that the second presence was due in 1874... This proof shows that the Lord has been present since 1874” (The WATCH TOWER, March 1, 1923, p. 67).*

Then in 1924, ten years after the supposed actual 1914 return of Christ occurred, this was written in the Watchtower magazine,

*“Surely there is not the slightest room for doubt in the mind of a truly consecrated child of God that the Lord Jesus is present and has been since 1874” (The WATCH TOWER, January 1, 1924, p. 5).*

During the years 1925 and 1926 the Watchtower Society still maintained that Christ’s presence began in 1874, not 1914.

Then in 1927 the Society wrote,

*“To understand the events concerning the Lord’s second presence from 1874 to 1914 requires one to be spiritually minded...” (Creation, 1927 p. 312).*

Throughout the year 1928 it was still taught that Christ’s presence began in 1874.

Then in 1929 the Society said,

*“The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ began in 1874 AD” (Prophecy, 1929, p. 65-66).*

### **Let's do some math:**

There is a 35 year time-span between July 1879, the date the first edition of the Watchtower magazine proclaimed Christ's 1874 return, to 1914. Therefore, the Watchtower Society,

*“understood or recognized”*

that Jesus Christ returned 35 years before he supposedly really did return. Something is seriously wrong here. The Watchtower Society claimed in Paradise 1982 that when Christ returns,

*“everyone will then understand.”*

The word

*“then”*

plainly means at that time.

*“Then”*

never means before that time.

Again, using the Watchtower Society's own words, they said,

*“I see it”*

conveying a mental picture of the alleged Second Coming of Christ. Now they claim that for those 35 years there was actually nothing to "see."

This type of flip-flopping on Christ's return casts serious doubt on the Society's credibility in such matters.

### **The record gets worse:**

In 1929 the Society under Rutherford was still publishing material claiming an 1874 return of Jesus. So, if we are to believe that Jesus did actually return in 1914, we can be sure that for 50 consecutive years the Society was

spreading a false gospel message about when Jesus returned.

In 1943, which was the year following Judge Rutherford's death, the change in the year of Christ's return from 1874 to 1914 became official, meaning history records that the Jehovah's Witnesses were distributing publications for 63 years in a row claiming that Jesus Christ returned in 1874.

Think about the heart-wrenching-confusion Witnesses went through as they contemplated the implications of the new teaching — if 1874 was no longer a valid date, then how could they be sure about 1914?

Countless people walked away from the Watch Tower Society due to this change in the year of Christ's return. Others had to face the fact that remaining would make them objects of scorn like never before.

Skeptics had a heyday when the Society itself admitted they were wrong about 1874. The faithful were assured that this change in the "Time" and the resulting shakeup was part of God's plan to remove the tares which had been planted among the wheat.

### **Let's do some more math:**

Charles Russell maintained that 40 years after Christ's return in 1874, the Battle of Armageddon would occur. By adding 40 years to 1874 we arrive at the year 1914. Russell taught that during Armageddon Christianity would be destroyed. Here is an example of this Watchtower teaching:

*"Christendom will be completely destroyed by October 1914" (ZION'S WATCH TOWER, January 15, 1892, p. 1355).*

Armageddon did not occur in 1914, so it was pushed ahead to 1915. Russell died still believing that Armageddon was at the door. Year after year went by and Armageddon was still nowhere in sight; could this be the reason why the Society changed the 1914 date which had originally been set for

Armageddon, to mark Christ's return instead? One thing is certain; in 1943 modifications were made to the Watchtower Society's timetable, which pushed Armageddon off until the 1970's.

Over 95 years have passed since 1914. Russell's teaching of a 40 year waiting period after Christ's return, until Armageddon, was passed over 55 years ago. The fact that Armageddon still hasn't happened puts the validity of the Watchtower present teaching of a 1914 return of Christ into serious doubt. Then, considering that everyone still hasn't recognized that Jesus is present some 95 years after he allegedly became present, it's becoming obvious that the current system behind the 1914 Watchtower date is just as faulty as the system was for their old 1874 date.

In the late 1970's, a few of the leaders in the Watchtower headquarters in Brooklyn New York began to realize that 1914 was no longer a valid date:

*“According to Raymond Franz, he and Lynman Swingle pressed their colleagues on the governing body to abandon or at least examine the Society’s Gentile Times chronology and its teachings concerning 1914”*  
*(Apocalypse Delayed, The Story of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Penton, 1997 edition, p. 218).*

The Society rejected the notion to change or abandon the 1914 date. As a result, Raymond Franz resigned from the governing body. Other workers and Bible students within the Jehovah's Witness headquarters who had questioned the 1914 date were forced out. Hundreds of thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses all over the world left the organization in the late 1970's because of this breakup within the Society and the failed 1975 Armageddon prophecy.

From the top on down Jehovah's Witnesses were losing faith in the 1914 return-of-Christ teaching. Something had to be done. What the leadership did was sweep the 1914 teaching under the rug; for example, a modern Watchtower magazine is entitled,

*The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom.*

But it wasn't always called that.

The magazine was first called,



In 1909 The Society dropped the word Zion from the title and called it,



From its first issue in 1879 to 1938, that is for the first 60 years, the Watch Tower magazine's title contained the words "*Herald of Christ's Presence.*"

Then, on January 1st 1939 the magazine's title was changed to,

*The Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Kingdom.*

On March 1st of 1939 the Society changed the title to its present form,



The reason the Watchtower magazine was originally created was to  
*"HERALD CHRIST'S PRESENCE."*

Yet today, *"Christ's Presence"* has been eliminated from the title.

Why?

One thing is certain; doctrinal changes concerning Christ's presence accompanied this change in the magazine's title:

Throughout Charles Russell's lifetime, he maintained:

*"Some may have confounded our remarks on the presence of Christ in a spiritual body, with the presence of the spirit of Christ; but they are quite distinct. The latter never left the church..." (Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return, 1877, p. 51, emphasis ours)*

Russell made it clear that he believed Jesus' return encompassed him returning,

*"in a spiritual body."*

This is what,

*"HERALD OF CHRIST'S PRESENCE"*

meant to those reading the Watch Tower magazine for the first 60 years.

Russell went on to say,

*“...we have Christ's own words to prove that He will be present in the world, and the world will know not of it. Matt. 24:37.” (Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return, 1877, p. 52)*

Again, speaking of Christ's return, Russell used the words,

*“His arrival” (ZIONS WATCH TOWER, June 1881)*

He also claimed,

*“...both the King and the Kingdom are not only coming, but are here...”*  
*(The WATCH TOWER, July 1, 1916)*

The original teaching was that Christ returned to the confines of earth's atmosphere — this is where it is taught that Satan and his demon host dwell since they were cast out of heaven — in this way Christ began ruling in the midst of his enemies.

In the 1950s this teaching was retracted:

*“...we should not even think of his [Christ] leaving heaven and coming within the confines of earth's atmosphere for him to be present. He returns or ‘visits’ the earth as did Jehovah in times past, by turning his attention to things of earth.” (The Watchtower 02/15/1955 pp. 102-103)*

Some may wonder how,

*“turning his attention to things of earth”*

can mean he is

*“present.”*

Former publications, which speak of,

*“...his actual coming” (The Time is at Hand, 1902, p. 32)*

are in disagreement with the position maintained by Jehovah's Witnesses today.

## **The 1914 generation:**

Another changing claim of the Watchtower Society is the teaching that the majority of the generation alive in 1914 would still be living when Armageddon takes place. This teaching is a direct spin off of the "1914 Return-of-Christ-doctrine." The Watchtower magazine spelled it out as follows:

*"There are hundreds of millions of persons living now that were living in 1914 ... Just when the lives of the majority of them will be cut short by Armageddon we can not say." (The Watchtower, September 1, 1952, p. 543).*

The Jehovah's Witnesses were so sure about the 1914 generation living to see Armageddon that in 1962 the following statement was included in their Awake! magazine:

*"Was Jesus using the word 'generation' in a symbolic way? No, we should not say that the word "generation" here has a symbolic meaning....The "generation" of Matthew 24:34 includes persons alive at the time that the war in heaven began in 1914....Members of that generation will see the end of this world" (Awake!, September 22, 1962, p.27).*

Every two weeks for almost<sup>5</sup> 43 years — from 1952 to 1995 — the Watchtower Society's "Awake!" magazine's masthead used to read,

*"Why Awake is Published— Awake is for the enlightenment of the entire family... Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world before the generation that saw the events of 1914 passes away" (Awake!, October 22, 1995).*



This picture from the Jehovah Witness publication *The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life*, 1968, illustrates this promise. Yet, there came a day when the promise was changed. With the release of the Nov. 8, 1995 *Awake!*, the masthead was altered to read,

*"Most important, this magazine builds confidence in the Creator's promise of a peaceful and secure new world that is about to replace the present wicked, lawless system of things."*

Why the elimination of the year "1914" and the term "generation" from the *Awake!* magazine's masthead? The reason is simple. 1914 was over 95 years ago. The majority of the generation who once lived to see 1914 are now dead. This Watchtower prophecy about the majority of the 1914 generation having their lives,

*"cut short by Armageddon"*

has clearly failed, which brings even more evidence that the year 1914 has nothing to do with Christ's return, a war in heaven, the Battle of Armageddon, or for that matter, the Truth.

The year 1914 is seldom mentioned in modern publications, but it's an essential year. The Society's very existence hangs upon Jesus returning in 1914. Because, if Jesus did not return in October of 1914, then there would have been no 3 &  $\frac{1}{2}$  year<sup>6</sup> testing period beginning in 1914 during which Christ allegedly decided to pick the Watchtower Society as God's only channel of

communication to mankind, which is the subject of our next claim.

The Jehovah's Witnesses are stuck with a foundational teaching that doesn't make any sense, that looks bad from a historical point of view, that their own people have a hard time believing, and even their writing staff is trying to cover up.



With a track record this bad why would anyone believe in the Watchtower Society's claim that the Second Coming of Jesus Christ occurred in 1914?

Let's now turn to the Bible and look at a few passages that speak of Jesus Christ's promised return: Jesus said,

*"There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. Men will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory" (Luke 21: 25-27, NIV).*

The Watchtower Society has striven hard to paint a picture showing that world events leading up to the year 1914 fit the model spoken of by Jesus.

But, would an objective appraisal of that time period in world history really lead one to conclude that Christ's words in the gospel of Luke were fulfilled in 1914? Probably not. After all, the world has yet to see

*“the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory.”*

In Matthew's gospel Jesus said,

*“For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man” (Matt. 24:27, NIV).*

This account paints a picture of a very “visible” return, which is not at all like the alleged return of Jesus Christ the Watchtower Society claims took place in 1914.

Luke 21 and Matt. 24 make it clear that when Jesus Christ actually does return,<sup>7</sup> it will be with such power and glory everyone will know.

**Now let's look into Claim Two:**

- In 1919<sup>8</sup> the Watchtower Society was hand picked by Jesus Christ as God's only channel of communication to man.

Here's one example of how this claim is spelled out in Watchtower publications:

*“The Watchtower Society is God's sole channel of truth for people on earth today...” (The Watchtower, Jan 15, 1969 p. 51)*

The reason Jesus supposedly picked the International Bible Students, now known as the Jehovah's Witnesses, as

*“God's sole channel of truth” in 1919,*

is because, when Christ allegedly returned in power, taking his place on the heavenly throne on October 22, 1914, Christ's work had just begun. The next thing on his agenda was to judge among his servants on earth.

By the year 1918<sup>9</sup> Christ had allegedly judged his church. In the spring of 1919 the selection was made. Jesus supposedly picked the Watchtower Society as God's

*"only channel."* <sup>10</sup>

History tells a different story:

In 1909, Russell wrote these words:

*"... of his [Christ's] presence, he [Jesus] would bring forth from the storehouse of Grace, Wisdom and Truth things 'new and old,' and that he would select at that time one special channel through which those blessings would be called to the attention of the household of faith—" (Watch Tower 1909, October 1, 1909 p. 292, emphasis ours)*

What Russell expressed in that 1909 Watch Tower magazine is the understanding that the Watch Tower Society had been selected by Christ as the,

*"one special channel,"*

long before the year 1919.

In Russell's mind, Jesus Christ's presence began on October 22nd, 1874; not in 1914, which is what the Society teaches today.

Therefore, when Russell penned the words,

*"at that time,"*

he was speaking of the first time the Society claimed Christ returned; which was in the 1870s!

The exact timing of Christ selecting the Society in those days is given in the 1919 Watchtower magazine:

*“Is not the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the one and only channel which the Lord has used in dispensing his truth continually since the beginning of the harvest period?” (Watchtower April 1, 1919 p. 6414)*

In 1919 the Society was teaching an 1874 date for Christ's return and an 1878<sup>11</sup> date for the beginning of the “harvest period.”

Therefore, when this “only channel” statement was spelled out, the Jehovah's Witnesses were teaching that the “harvest period” had begun<sup>12</sup> 40 years before. So, at that time, the Watchtower Society was claiming they were,

*“the one and only channel which the Lord has used in dispensing his truth continually”*

since the 1870s — not since 1919 which is the Society's current teaching.

The beginning of this supposed harvest period was pushed ahead in the early 1940s when the year of Christ's return was changed from 1874 to 1914. This “one and only channel” claim conveniently moved ahead with the change in dates for the “harvest”<sup>13</sup> and “Christ's return.”

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses these events go hand in hand. Jesus Christ had to return in power first before he could judge among the churches and reward the Society as “God's sole channel of truth.”<sup>14</sup>

What it all comes down to is this: The Watchtower Society claimed that they were “*the one and only channel which the Lord has used*”<sup>41</sup> years before Jesus supposedly chose them in 1919. So, if they were the “*only channel*” God was using from the beginning of the harvest in 1878, then why would Jesus pick them again as “*the one and only channel*” 41 years later in 1919? The significance of Christ picking the Society in 1919 is completely lost if they were already the “*only channel*” God was using before that year.

**The story continues:**

Out of all the Christian sects worldwide, the Watchtower Society was supposedly picked because of their outstanding record of providing, “*the Christian household with food at the proper time.*”<sup>45</sup>

If this really was the case, that between 1914 and 1919 — from the time Jesus Christ allegedly returned in power, to the time he supposedly selected the Watchtower Society as his only channel of communication — the Watchtower Society was providing

“*the right sort of food*”<sup>46</sup>

or in other words, “*teaching*” to Christ’s flock, we should be able to look back to those critical years and see correct teaching coming forth from the Watchtower Society.

In 1914, the 1913 edition of the Watchtower book, The Time is at Hand was being widely distributed; here is an excerpt from page 33:

*“In this chapter we present the Bible evidence which indicates that six thousand years from the creation of Adam were complete with A.D. 1874...”*

Here the Society claimed six thousand years of human history ended in 1874.

This is an important point because in the 1960s, the Watchtower Society changed the year of this historic event from 1874 to 1975, as spelled out in their magazine:

*"Interestingly, the autumn of the year 1975 marks the end of 6,000 years of human experience" (The Watchtower May 1, 1967 p. 262).*

Let's do some math, by changing the date for the close of six thousand years of human history from 1874 to 1975, the Jehovah's Witnesses admitted that they were wrong about their earlier date by a whopping 101 years. Because the Society admitted they were wrong about this teaching, it only stands to reason that they were not providing

*"the right sort of food"*

in this area of doctrine to Christ's followers from the beginning of their organization in 1879, all the way up to the year 1967.

This is noteworthy, because the Society's ideas about when Armageddon would occur and Christ's Kingdom would be ushered in are based upon the close of six thousand years of human history. Therefore, one basic formula that the Jehovah's Witnesses used when proclaiming that Armageddon was near, and Christ's Kingdom was at the door, was amiss by 101 years during the first 88 years of their history! Could this mean that their other date-setting formulas are also off by 101 years?

At one time they harmonized with each other; adding to the evidence of Christ's return / etc. Being 101 years off on this teaching puts the date Christ picked them as *"God's only channel"* into question? With this in mind, using the old formula, if one were to add 101 years to the year 1919, which is the last time Christ chose them, then Christ should be choosing them as *"God's sole channel of truth"* in 2020.

The earliest date for Christ choosing the Jehovah's Witnesses would be 1979 — if one added 101 years to 1878 — which is the year he first chose

them. One might think that 1919 should no longer be considered a valid year, unless the Society goes back to one of their older dates for the close of human history. This flip flopping on the year for the close of human history casts serious doubts on the significance of the year 1919.

### **The record gets worse:**

In 1915, during the very years Christ was supposedly judging the household of faith, the Watchtower Society, speaking of World War I, penned these words:

*"The Battle of Armageddon, to which this war is leading, will be a great contest between right and wrong, and will signify the complete and everlasting overthrow of the wrong, and the permanent establishment of Messiah's righteous kingdom for the blessing of the world..." (Watchtower Reprints, Apr 1, 1915 p. 5659).*

Obviously, World War I did not lead to Armageddon.

Then, in 1916 the Society claimed,

*"We see no reason for doubting, therefore, that the Times of the Gentiles ended in October, 1914; and that a few more years will witness their utter collapse and the full establishment of God's kingdom in the hands of Messiah" (Watchtower Reprints, Sept 1, 1916 p. 5950).*

God's kingdom was not established within a few years from 1914, which gives a good indication that the Society's "Gentile Times" chronology is seriously flawed. This is a real problem for the Jehovah's Witnesses because if nothing significant happened in 1914, then the years 1918 and 1919 would also have no special meaning. Because events that allegedly took place in both the years 1918 and 1919 are dependent upon the October 1914 date.

The 1917 Watchtower book, The Finished Mystery claimed on page 485,

*“In the year 1918 God will destroy the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions. Any that escape shall come to the works of pastor Russell to learn the meaning of the downfall of ‘Christianity.’”*

The downfall of Christianity did not occur in 1918. God didn't  
*“destroy the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions.”*

To say that Christ's sheep suffered malnutrition from the food they were served by the Society during the years Christ was allegedly judging the household of faith — from 1914 to 1918 — would be more accurate than saying they were being fed

*“the right sort of food.”*

### **The record gets worse:**

The Watchtower magazine, in 1938, claimed

*“mark the words of Jesus, which definitely seem to discourage the bearing of children immediately before or during Armageddon.. It would therefore appear that there is no reasonable or scriptural injunction to bring children into the world immediately before Armageddon, where we now are”*  
*(Watchtower Nov 1, 1938, p. 324).*

Once again the Watchtower was wrong about another time they set for Armageddon. In 1938 the world was not,

*“immediately before Armageddon.”*

Is the admonition not to have children because Armageddon is near really the type of message Christ would have conveyed to his church back in the 1930s? Children born in 1938 would be over 71 years old today, and Armageddon still hasn't happened.

More problems arise when one takes into account that the Jehovah's Witnesses claim divine inspiration for their publications:

*"The Watchtower is not the instrument of any man or set of men, nor is it published according to the whims of men. No man's opinion is expressed in The Watchtower. God feeds his own people" (The WATCH TOWER, November 1, 1931, p. 327).*

They also claim that angels work with their writing staff:

*"You likely know that after 1919 the anointed remnant got busy in the preaching work in cooperation with the angels..." (The Watchtower, June 15, 1992, p. 21).*

This brings us to the dilemma: If what the Jehovah's Witnesses say is true, that their writing staff are:

- *"under the direct supervision of Christ"*<sup>17</sup>
- *"in cooperation with the angels"*

and that,

- *"no man's opinion is expressed in the Watchtower"*

then we should expect to see proper teaching coming forth from the Watchtower headquarters from 1919 on — when Jesus allegedly chose them as

*"God's sole channel of truth."*

This did not happen:

In the years following 1919, the Society continued its false prophecies. The 1920 Watchtower book, Millions Now Living Will Never Die claimed,

*“Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old” (p. 89).*

The resurrection of the dead did not happen in 1925. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are still in their graves. Also, the book's claim that

*“millions now living will never die”*

is fast becoming a non-reality: anyone living in 1920 would be over 89 years old today.

In 1922 the Watchtower Society said,

*“We have no doubt whatever in regard to the chronology relating to the dates of 1874, 1914, 1918 and 1925. ...it is an easy matter to locate 1925, probably in the fall, for the beginning of the antitypical jubilee. There can be no more question about 1925 than there was about 1914” (Watchtower May 15, 1922, p.150).*

The

*“antitypical jubilee”*

was thought to mark the beginning of God's earthly Kingdom, which would start right after Armageddon. We should keep in mind that between 1914 and 1922 the Watchtower Society was forecasting that Armageddon was imminent.

In 1922, in the Jehovah's Witnesses' minds, Jesus had returned over 40 years earlier. This is evident from a speech given at Cedar Point, Ohio on September 8, 1922, by Judge Rutherford:

*“Bible prophecy shows that the Lord was due to appear for the second time in the year 1874. Fulfilled prophecy shows beyond a doubt that he did appear in 1874... and these facts are indisputable” (Watchtower November, 1, 1922, pp. 332-337).*

It only makes sense that if Jesus had appeared for the second time in 1914, Christ would have known about it. If Jesus Christ was really

*“feeding the members”<sup>18</sup>*

of the Watchtower writing staff information, they too should have been aware of the 1914 date when Christ supposedly returned. So, why was the most prominent figure of the Jehovah's Witnesses saying in 1922,

*“Fulfilled prophecy shows beyond a doubt that he [Christ] did appear in 1874... and these facts are indisputable.”*

Surely Jesus Christ was not relaying false information to the Society about the time he returned, the year the resurrection would take place, or the date Armageddon would happen. It makes more sense to believe that the Jehovah's Witnesses were not being directed by Christ whatsoever.

The failed 1920's resurrection prediction:

Can you imagine Jesus Christ leading the Watch Tower Society to build a 10 room mansion in San Diego California for King David, Abraham, and other biblical “princes” to live in?



(Watch Tower mansion: Beth Sarim).

Yet, in 1929 that is exactly what the Society did. The deed spelled out that the property was to be held

*"perpetually in trust"*<sup>19</sup>

for Old Testament princes, and the property was to be surrendered to the princes, once they arrived. Yet, the Society sold the property in 1948.

Beth Sarim, which is Hebrew for,

*"House of the princes"*<sup>20</sup>

is a major embarrassment to the Jehovah's Witnesses today. It stands as a monument to how blind the leaders were in the past when it came to perceiving God's leading.

Reason given for the sale:

*"At the time, it was believed that faithful men of old times, such as Abraham, Joseph, and David, would be resurrected before the end of this system of things and would serve as 'princes in all the earth,' in fulfillment of Psalm 45:16. This view was adjusted in 1950, when further study of the Scriptures indicated that those earthly forefathers of Jesus Christ would be resurrected after Armageddon." (Jehovah's Witnesses: Proclaimers of God's Kingdom, Watchtower, 1993, p. 76)*

This explanation is noteworthy! Because, in it the leaders of the Watch Tower's governing body admit that they adjusted their view concerning when the resurrection would take place based on,

*"...further study of the Scriptures,"*

not because of any special channel of communication, or leading from God!

In 1931 the Society claimed,

*"...concerning the years 1914, 1918, and 1925... the faithful learned that these dates were definitely fixed in the Scriptures..." (Vindication I, 1931 ed., pp. 338-339)*

The Society came to realize<sup>21</sup> that the year 1925,<sup>22</sup> in which the resurrection of the dead was expected to occur, had no special meaning; even though they once assured the faithful,

*“The date 1925 is even more distinctly indicated by the Scriptures than 1914.”* (Watchtower, 9/1/22, p. 262)

Will they ever admit that the years 1914, 1918, and 1919 also have no special meaning?

Probably not?

Because if the Watch Tower Society did admit that those years have no special meaning, they would lose their,

*“only channel of communication”*

status.

What a twisted web of deceit the Watch Tower Society has woven, in which the prey — people seeking truth — are led to believe in a myth.

### **Closing Arguments:**

When a judge evaluates a claim in a court of law, he weighs evidence surrounding the claim to see if there are inconsistencies. This last claim by the Jehovah's Witnesses not only lacks corroborating evidence, the facts of history clearly deny its authenticity. Based upon these findings, why would anyone believe the Watchtower Society's claim that Jesus picked them as

*“God’s only channel for communicating the truth.”*

Let's talk plainly here: The Jehovah's Witnesses have no exclusive *“channel of communication”* with God. People don't need to be held captive by their<sup>23</sup> empty words.

Our God and Father desires to fellowship and communicate with his children through His son Jesus Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The God of the Bible has not limited Himself to speaking only through the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society's publications and leadership.

In the Book of Revelation Jesus said,

*"Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him, and he with me." (Rev. 3:20, NIV)*

What's available to every man, woman and child is a personal relationship with Jesus, not through an organization, but rather through the spirit.<sup>24</sup>

If you aren't sure you've found this relationship with Jesus Christ, pray this salvation prayer, "Jesus my sins were placed upon you when you died; you were crucified for my iniquity," as spelled out in the following scripture:

*"But he was pierced for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities; the punishment that brought us peace was upon him, and by his wounds we are healed. We all, like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all." (Isaiah 53:5-6, NIV)*

Ask Jesus into your life, believing in his role as your Savior. Then, live for Jesus every day. Eternal life will be your reward!

If you have found this to be an informative read then please send links of this article to those who may benefit from reading it.

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Another work on the Jehovah's Witnesses which Rich Kelsey penned is entitled,

### The Great Disappointment

it covers the Millerite revival of the mid 1800s and the splinter groups which were born out of that movement. It is a very accurate yet somewhat brief history of the Watch Tower Society from its very beginning in the 1870s to 1975.

Please send comments to [globalevangelism@msn.com](mailto:globalevangelism@msn.com) they will be included in the [comments page](#).

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Endnotes:

<sup>1</sup> "We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. ...If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination." (The Truth That Leads To Eternal Life, 1968, p. 13)

<sup>2</sup> Charles Taze Russell founded "Zion's Watch Tower" in 1879 and later incorporated the group under the name "Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society" in 1884. The name of the organization was officially changed in 1931 to the "Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society."

<sup>3</sup> "Therefore, how will you respond when pointed statements are made about false religious teachings and corrupt practices? Will you immediately condemn the person or organization making the expose? Contrary to what some may think, it is not unkind and unloving to lay bare falsehood and corruption." (Watchtower, March 1, 1966 p. 132)

<sup>4</sup> "And note, further, that both of these measures are given in answer to Daniel's question as to what would occur to God's holy ones after their power (the truth) would be released from Papal crushing, (that is, after 1799), and before the setting up of the kingdom of Messiah - Michael. The reply in substance is that Daniel need not hope to understand further, but that in thirty years after the beginning of the Time of the End (1260 + 30 = 1290), a purifying, cleansing, refining work would begin among the holy people... it would be deficient in some of its chief elements until 45 years later (1290 + 45 = 1335), or 75 years after the beginning of the Time of the End, A.D. 1799 (1260 + 75 = 1335). This is clearly indicated by the Hebrew text, which represents the matter as though the watchers, who already have seen something, and are waiting patiently, would suddenly (when '1335 days' had passed) get a full, clear view, far beyond their expectations. 'Oh! the blessedness of him!'. Reckoning from A.D. 539, the 1290

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symbolic days ended in 1829 .. A religious movement .. generally known as 'Second Adventists' and 'Millerites,' .. began about 1829.. Thus it will be seen that the separating work of the 'Miller movement' had its beginning at the time foretold - at the end of the 1290 days, 1829." (Thy Kingdom Come, 1891)

<sup>5</sup> With the January 8, 1987 issue of the Awake! magazine; the traditional masthead on page 4 discontinued the original statement saying that "the generation that saw 1914 would not pass away," only to resume the original reading with the March 8, 1988 issue. Then on November 8, 1995, the Awake! magazine again discontinued its reference to "the 1914 generation."

<sup>6</sup> "And when the year 1914 ended amid the flames of World War I and the remnant of spiritual Israel found themselves still here on earth, then they were inclined to think that they would be glorified in the year 1918, three and a half years after the end of the Gentile Times" (Watchtower Publication: Man's Salvation Out Of World Distress At Hand, 1975 p. 136).

<sup>7</sup> "Bible evidence shows that in the year 1914 C.E. God's time arrived for Christ to return and begin ruling" (Watchtower Publication: Paradise, 1982 p. 147).

<sup>8</sup> "Let us now unmistakably identify Jehovah's channel of communication for our day, that we may continue in his favor. Listen to the inspired answer to the situation, in Matthew 24:45-47 (NW): "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, he will appoint him over all his belongings." And has he? Yes, particularly since 1919 has it been true that he has appointed the collective body of the anointed remnant over all the visible interests of the Kingdom. The "slave" then became responsible not only for ministering to the needs of the anointed body members but also for taking on the responsibility of preaching the good news of the established Kingdom to people of all nations" (Watchtower, June 15, 1957 p. 370).

<sup>9</sup> "By his spirit, the holy spirit, Jehovah God guides or leads his people up to a certain point of time, and thus he did until the time when 'the comforter' was taken away, which would necessarily occur when Jesus, the Head of his organization, came to the temple and gathered unto himself those whom he found faithful when he, as the great Judge, began his judgment, in 1918" (Watchtower Publication: Preservation, J.F.Rutherford, 1932 p.p. 193-194).

<sup>10</sup> "Is not the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society the one and only channel which the Lord has used in dispensing his truth continually since the beginning of the harvest period?" (Watchtower, April 1, 1919, p. 6414)

<sup>11</sup> "...the harvest began in 1878, there is ample and convincing proof. The end of the harvest is due in the spring of 1918" (Watchtower Reprints, May 1, 1918 p. 6243)

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<sup>12</sup> "For instance, as we look back and note that the Scriptures marked 1873 as the end of six thousand years from Adam to the beginning of the seventh thousand, and the fall of 1874 as the beginning of the forty- year harvest of the Gospel age..." (Watchtower Reprints, July 15, 1894 p. 1675)

<sup>13</sup> "The parallel, therefore, would establish definitely that the harvest would close forty years thereafter; to wit, in the spring of A.D. 1918. If this is true, and the evidence is very conclusive that it is true, then we have only a few months in which to labor before the great night settles down when no man can work." (Watchtower, October 1, 1917 p. 6149)

<sup>14</sup> "The Watchtower Society is God's sole channel of truth for people on earth today..., and has proven to be a faithful guide in the interpretation of Bible prophecy" (Watchtower, January 15, 1969 p.51).

<sup>15</sup> "Modesty on the part of the faithful and discreet slave class, commissioned to provide the Christian household with food at the proper time, prevents it from presumptuously running ahead and wildly speculating about things that are still unclear" (Watchtower, June 1, 1997 p. 14).

<sup>16</sup> "The serving of food, the right sort of food, at the proper time was the issue, It had to be according to this that a decision must be rendered by the returned master [Jesus Christ]" (Watchtower Publication: God's Kingdom a Thousand Years Has Approached, 1973).

<sup>17</sup> "Similarly today the power of appointment of all servants in congregations rightfully rests with the governing body of the 'faithful and discreet slave' class, which is under the direct supervision of Christ Jesus at the temple" (Watchtower, June 1, 1955 p. 333 Part 11: Restoration of Theocratic Organization).

<sup>18</sup> "As surely as Jehovah has an organization on the earth, just so surely he is feeding the members of that organization by the hand of Christ Jesus" (Watchtower, November 1, 1933 p. 296)

<sup>19</sup> "...that kingdom of God will have visible representatives on the earth who will have charge of the affairs of the nations under the supervision of the invisible ruler Christ; that among those who will thus be the faithful representatives and visible governors of the world will be David, Israel; and Gideon, and Barak, and Samson, and Jephthae, and Joseph, formerly the ruler of Egypt, and Samuel the prophet and other faithful men who were named with approval in the Bible at Hebrews the eleventh chapter... The condition herein is that the said Watchtower Bible and Tract Society shall hold said title perpetually in trust for the use of any or all of the men above named as representatives of God's kingdom on earth and that such men shall have possession and use of said property hereinabove described as they may deem for the best

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interest for the work in which they are engaged... the said Joseph F. Rutherford in such lease or other paper writing shall have the right and privilege of residing on said premises until the same be taken possession of by David or some of the other men herein named and this property and premises being dedicated to Jehovah and the use of his kingdom it shall be used as such for ever" (December, 24 1929).

<sup>20</sup> "At San Diego, California, there is a small piece of land, on which, in the year 1929, there was built a house, which is called and known as Beth Sarim. The Hebrew words Beth Sarim mean 'House of the Princes;' and the purpose of acquiring that property and building the house was that there might be some tangible proof that there are those on earth today who fully believe God and Christ Jesus and in His kingdom, and who believe that the faithful men of old will soon be resurrected by the Lord, be back on earth, and take charge of the visible affairs of earth" (Watch Tower book: Salvation, p. 311)

<sup>21</sup> The year 1925 is here. With great expectation Christians have looked forward to this year. Many have confidently expected that all members of the body of Christ will be changed to heavenly glory during this year. This may be accomplished. It may not be. In his own due time God will accomplish his purposes concerning his people. Christians should not be so deeply concerned about what may transpire this year. (Watchtower, 1925, January 1)

<sup>22</sup> [By 1925] You will have secured the services of the best decorators you can find. Some of them used to be undertakers; but since there are no more people dying, they have had to seek some new occupation. Their experience as undertakers prepared them to become decorators with very little difficulty. (The Way To Paradise 1924 p.228)

<sup>23</sup> "If what a prophet proclaims in the name of the LORD does not take place or come true, that is a message the LORD has not spoken. That prophet has spoken presumptuously. Do not be afraid of him" (Deuteronomy 18:22).

and:

"It is obvious that the true God, who is himself 'the God of truth' and who hates lies, will not look with favor on persons who cling to organizations that teach falsehood." (Watchtower Publication: Is This Life All There Is?, 1974 p. 46)

<sup>24</sup> "The promise (God pouring out His Spirit on all people— see Acts 2:17) is for you and your children and all who are far off— for all whom the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39, NIV).