

15-Minute Guide to Truth

Most Jehovah's Witnesses are honest people that want to please God and follow truth, devoting a large commitment in terms of time, lifestyle, relationships, and even thought processes. The question remains; is it "the Truth?" By the end of this article, you will understand where to start in determining whether or not the Watchtower Society teaches the Truth.

All religions say they teach truth, and many claim that belonging to *their* particular organisation is essential for salvation. Likewise, the Watchtower Society says that they alone teach truth. They make the assertion that there is absolute truth, that the Watchtower Society is the organisation that explains it most accurately and the only organisation by which a person can receive salvation. Regular study of the Bible and strong emphasis on doctrine is used to "prove" what they teach is correct. Jesus statement at *John 13:35* ("By this all will know that YOU are my disciples, if YOU have love among yourselves") is also pointed to, and it can be shown that Jehovah's Witnesses belong to a loving organisation.

But consider this; most other religions do the same. At least some of the members have an in-depth knowledge of the doctrine, are firmly convinced they have the truth, and claim to have proof they are the most loving religion. Many grow at similar rates to the Watchtower Society and are filled with as many sincere and intelligent people. Therefore, *it is not debatable doctrine or subjective measurements of love that prove the Witnesses are the true religion*. Using doctrine to determine if the Watchtower teaches truth is tedious and ineffective, particularly if as a Witness you have spent many years subjected to constant indoctrination through repetitive meeting attendance and Watchtower study.¹

Though Jehovah's Witnesses believe they are part of God's only spirit-directed organisation, the reality is that they follow what they are told to believe by a group of men, referred to as the Governing Body. Consider:

Up until the 1950's, Witnesses worshipped Jesus. In 1954, the Watchtower said it was wrong to worship Jesus, so all Witnesses stopped worshipping him. Before 1954, a person could be disfellowshipped if they did not worship Jesus; afterwards they were disfellowshipped if they did! Bible truth had not changed so either before or after 1954 Jehovah's Witnesses were not following Bible truth. It was not God's Spirit that created this important discrepancy; it was the leaders of the organisation. To be classified as a Jehovah's Witness following truth was not important, following the incorrect teachings of men was. God is a God of truth (Ex 34:6). If this organisation was not teaching truth, either before or after the 1950's, then it was not Spirit directed. Its members were not following God's truth; they were following the untruths of men.

The underlying premise to being a Jehovah's Witness is that *the Watchtower Society is God's visible organisation*. *Everything* hinges around this concept. Prove that the Watchtower Society is God's organisation and it does not matter if doctrines change or practices are wrong, because it must be God's will to reveal things in his own time. Prove that the Watchtower Society is not God's organisation and it becomes irrelevant if the doctrines are correct or not. To know if Jehovah's Witnesses have the truth only requires being able to prove or disprove this premise. Once this is understood it becomes easy to test the validity of such a claim.

There are a several things to consider when determining if the Watchtower Society, a United States corporation started in 1884,² is God's organisation. To start, it is necessary to understand where the claim comes from. The Watchtower Society uses the parable of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" to

justify that a new religion would become prominent in the Last Days. This is referred to at *Matthew* 24:45-47;

“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.”

The parable of an appointed slave is the primary Scriptural support the Watchtower Society has that following Watchtower leaders, the Governing Body, is a requirement of salvation in the Last Days. However, *Matthew* 24:45 is a vague parable that does not mention the word organisation, Watchtower or Jehovah's Witnesses. In fact, the word organisation and term Governing Body never appears in the Bible. For this reason this parable is applied differently by various religions. (The Watchtower also discusses the concepts that Jehovah has always used an organisation and that the Watchtower Society is structured around the first century congregation. The validity of these claims is discussed at Organisation and Faithful & Discreet Slave.)

The Watchtower teaches that the Slave that provides spiritual food is the entire group of the 144,000. In reality, up until 1976, a single person, the President of the Watchtower Society, decided upon the doctrines of the organisation. This was limited to Russell, Rutherford, and finally Knorr. Since 1976, the members of the Governing Body have approved doctrine, with virtually no input from any others of the anointed class.

The Watchtower makes the claim that:

“Beginning with Pentecost, 33 C.E., and **continuing through the 19 centuries since then**, this slavelike congregation has been feeding its members spiritually.” *Watchtower* 1981 Mar. 1 p.24

If that is true, who was the Slave immediately preceding Russell? There has never been a religion that taught what Russell taught. Russell felt that:

“It was often the case, however, that one religious group was distinguished by a clearer understanding of one Bible truth; another group, by a different truth. Their further progress was frequently hindered because they were shackled to doctrines and creeds.” *Proclaimers* p.120

For this reason, he created a new religion with no connections to any nineteenth-century historical lineage.

To test if the parable is referring to the Watchtower Society, the history of the Watchtower can be examined by referencing Watchtower publications.

The reason a Jehovah's Witness is supposed to believe that the Watchtower Society was chosen as God's only true organisation is because they were supplying the right sort of food, the truth, when Jesus inspected the organisation in 1919. Between 1914 and 1919 they removed the shackles of false Babylonish practice.

- It is explained that in **1914 Jesus took rule** and first cleansed the heavens.

“Obeying his Father's order, Jesus cleansed the heavens of Satan and his demons, hurling them down to the earth. After seeing this occur in vision, John hears a heavenly voice proclaim: “Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ!” Yes, in 1914 Christ began ruling as King!” *Watchtower* 1991 May 15 p.9

- Three and a half years later, in **1918 he cleansed** his spiritual temple on earth.

“In 1918, three and a half years after his enthronement, he cleansed Jehovah’s spiritual temple, as represented on earth by the congregation of anointed Christians.” *Isaiah’s Prophecy- Light for all Mankind II* p.348

“... finally cleansed by a fiery test by 1918, the matured “slave” as represented by a remnant now stood ready for new assignments of service.” *Watchtower* 1960 Jul 15 p.436

- In **1919 Jesus re-inspected the organisation and found it clean.**

“Anointed Christians who survived the testing **period of 1914-19 were freed from the dominating influence of the world** and from many Babylonish religious practices. The remnant went forward as a **cleansed and refined people**, willingly offering sacrifices of praise to God and having the assurance that they as a people were acceptable to him.” *Watchtower* 1998 May 15 p.17

“In 1919 the cleansed slave class could look forward to ever-expanding activities.” *Watchtower* 1993 May 1 p.16

Jesus is said to have chosen the Watchtower Society as his only means of salvation because it was the only organisation providing food at the proper time, and so justly appointed over all Jesus “belongings”.

“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... On inspecting the remnant of his anointed disciples in the year 1919 C.E., the reigning King Jesus Christ did find the appointed “slave” faithful and discreet in the feeding of his “domestics.” Accordingly, he appointed this “slave” class over all his belongings.” *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* pp.350,355

Is this really what Jesus found in 1919 when he inspected the Watchtower Society? No, he found the following teachings being promoted:

- The "Last Days" started in 1799² and the 1800's were the worst time period of all history
- That Jesus presence commenced in 1874³
- That Jesus had begun ruling in 1878⁴
- Armageddon had occurred in 1914
- That the end was going to come in 1925
- That blood was acceptable as food for Christians
- That Jesus should be prayed to and worshipped, as well as Jehovah
- That the Great Crowd were a heavenly class
- That birthdays and Christmas were acceptable celebrations
- The cross was on the cover of the Watchtower
- Teachings adapted from Freemasons such as that pyramids and astrology supported 1914
- Strong Zionist support for a new nation of Israel in fulfillment of Bible prophecy
- That the Faithful and Discreet Slave was not the anointed, but rather Pastor Russell

Furthermore, the most noteworthy doctrine introduced in 1918 - that the earthly resurrection would start in 1925 - was a false and embarrassing failure.

Are these teachings the “right sort of food at the proper time”? By current Watchtower truth the food the Watchtower Society was providing in 1919 was filled with inaccurate prophecy, spiritism,

paganism, polytheism, idolatry and political activism. Certainly anyone belonging to such a religion could not be considered one of the anointed. It brings into question if Russell, who had died in 1916, could be in heaven. Did Jesus go about immediately cleansing his organisation in 1919? No! The reality is that virtually no teachings or Babylonish practices were changed between 1914 and 1919. All of the above teachings were still being promoted in 1925. In fact, the understanding of 1914 was not changed until 1943,⁵ and the (so called) idolatry of Jesus continued until after 1950! Can you imagine Jesus pronouncing the slave clean and then allowing them to worship the wrong God for the next 30 years?

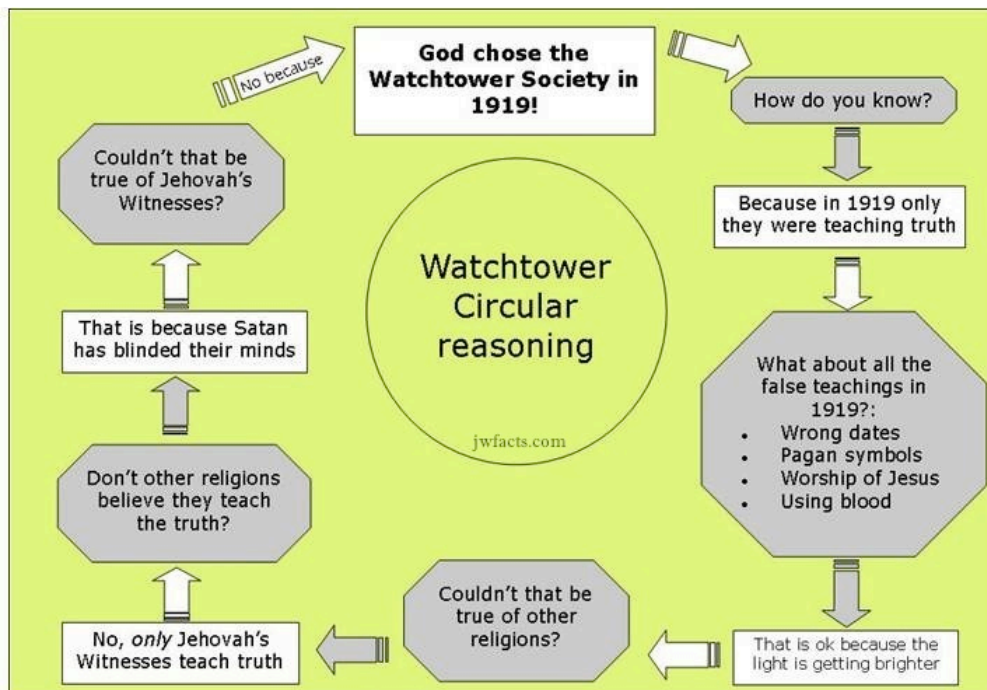
One interesting twist to all of this is that in 1914 there was no Faithful and Discreet Slave class awaiting the Lord's arrival. *Luke 12:35-43* is the parallel prophecy about this slave class. It says:

“Let YOUR loins be girded and YOUR lamps be burning, and YOU yourselves be like men waiting for their master when he returns from the marriage, so that at his arriving and knocking they may at once open to him. Happy are those slaves whom the master on arriving finds watching! Truly I say to YOU, He will gird himself and make them recline at the table and will come alongside and minister to them.”

However, at that time there was no slave class, as it was believed that Russell was the Slave.⁶ Neither were any members of the Watchtower Society waiting for the Lord's return as described in this Scripture. The *Watchtower* 1984 December 1 p.14 states:

“Russell and his associates quickly understood that Christ's presence would be invisible. They disassociated themselves from other groups and, in 1879, began publishing spiritual food in Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence. From its first year of publication, this magazine pointed forward, by sound Scriptural reckoning, to the date 1914 as an epoch-making date in Bible chronology. So when Christ's invisible presence began in 1914, happy were these Christians to have been found watching!”

This is untrue, as in 1914 no one was waiting for Christ's invisible return, since at the time it was believed he already had returned invisibly over 40 years earlier, in 1874.



There is still a religious group that follows the Watchtower teachings as they were in 1919 - Bible

Students. If Bible Students were found to be spiritually clean in 1919, then Bible Students today must still be considered acceptable to Jehovah. In fact, Bible Students are closer to the 1919 teachings than Jehovah's Witnesses. Between 1916 and 1932, with Rutherford's dramatic and often incorrect overhaul of Russell's doctrine, around three quarters of all Bible Students separated and formed their own organisations. Bible Students to this day reject the Trinity, immortal soul and hell-fire, and believe we are living in Christ's presence.

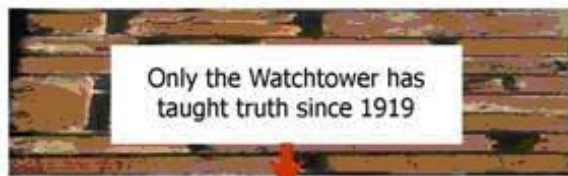
The above information briefly shows that any claim about Jesus choosing the Watchtower Society as his organisation in 1919 has no basis. The Watchtower Society carried many false teachings as part of the religion until Rutherford made significant changes in the late 1920's, and has continued changing teachings ever since.

Stumbling Blocks

To shut down clear thinking, thought-stopping concepts, common amongst high control groups, are used. You need to overcome each of these to see through Watchtower dogma successfully.

A powerful thought-stopping concept of the Watchtower Society is that "light gets brighter", used to explain why truth constantly changes. This enables Jehovah's Witnesses to put aside doubts, allowing them to feel that it is unnecessary to deal with inconsistencies that occurred in the past or are still apparent now. Rather than accept that the many wrong dates and changed teachings indicate God does not direct the Organisation, it is explained away as progressive enlightenment. This is provisional infallibility, that is; the Watchtower is to be considered the "voice of God" (w57 6/15 p.370) even though it has regularly been wrong. This is illogical when examined but satisfies the minds need for stability.

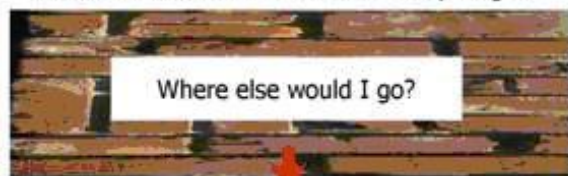
When confronted with this information the mind of a Jehovah's Witness will immediately raise a



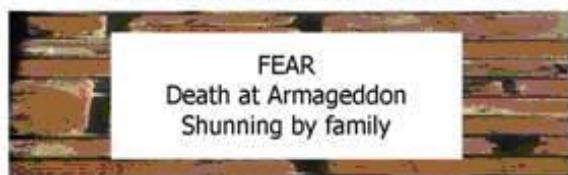
But since 1919 there have been numerous significant doctrinal changes.



This is an excuse to justify prior falsehood. If the Watchtower can use this so can every religion.



The question is not "where" but "whom".



further "thought-stopping" question, "if it is not the truth where else will we go?" and of course they know of no other place. Such a dilemma causes the mind to suffer what is referred to as cognitive dissonance. It is safer mentally to refuse to consider the implications of such inconsistencies of belief than to confront them. If a person confronts these inconsistencies and realises what they believe is wrong, they are faced with accepting that many years of their life may have been spent in pointless pursuits and are left not knowing what to do next. This is a common dilemma for members of many high control groups.

Sadly, the last hurdle, fear, is most difficult of all. Fear is so ingrained that for years after leaving, former Witnesses may still suffer panic about dying at Armageddon. Even more real is fear of the pain suffered being shunned by family and friends on leaving.

With the Watchtower Society no longer stipulating your beliefs in areas as disparate as theology, morals and your view of the historical past, present, and future, the mind grasps for a new reference point. There is no easy way to avoid this, which results in

cognitive dissonance. It parallels well with the philosophical question posed in the movie *The Matrix* written by Andy & Larry Wachowski.

Neo: What truth?

Morpheus: That you are a slave, Neo. Like everyone else, you were born into bondage, born inside a prison that you cannot smell, taste, or touch. A prison for your mind. (long pause, sighs) Unfortunately, no one can be told what the Matrix is. You have to see it for yourself. This is your last chance. After this, there is no turning back.

(In his left hand, Morpheus shows a blue pill.)

Morpheus: You take the blue pill and the story ends. You wake in your bed and believe whatever you want to believe. (a red pill is shown in his other hand) You take the red pill and you stay in Wonderland and I show you how deep the rabbit-hole goes. (Long pause; Neo begins to reach for the red pill) Remember - all I am offering is the truth, nothing more.

For many people, it is easier to take the figurative blue pill and think no further as to whether what they believe is truth.

Viewing the history of Watchtower doctrine, complete with all that was wrong and that has changed back and forth multiple times brings one to the understanding that holy spirit does not direct the Watchtower teachings. The same is true in regard to the appointment of brothers as well as the disfellowshipping of wrongdoers, which are also said to be done under the guidance of the holy spirit. At times, Witnesses are appointed to positions of authority whilst engaging in gross sin, making it apparent that holy spirit is not guiding the Watchtower organisation in this area either.

Few people, aware of the above information prior to baptism, convert to being Jehovah's Witnesses. Once a person is ready to accept that the Watchtower Society has made significant mistakes, was not dispensing the proper food in 1919 and is not an organisation directed by God and his holy spirit, the question arises, "How was I ever so sure it was the truth?" Over time, it becomes difficult to comprehend how you could ever have been convinced that the Watchtower teaches truth. A small amount of research will uncover that:

- There are other religions with almost identical doctrine to the Watchtower
- There are some that have a far sounder doctrinal foundation
- There are religious groups that display a stronger anti-war stance
- Other groups are more effective in their preaching work
- Many religions display charity to an extent unheard of amongst Witnesses

Why does a Witness believe no one else worships Jehovah? This is due to the effects of constant indoctrination, as described in the article on Mind Control.

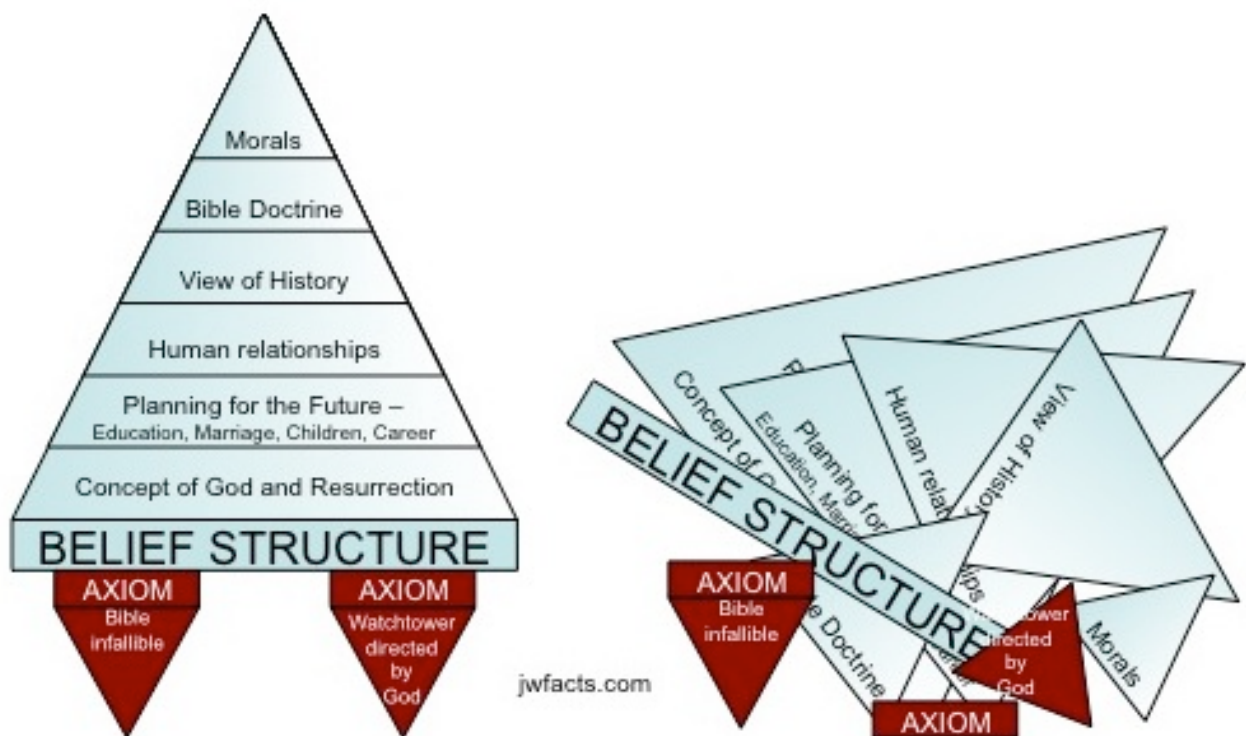
You will also wonder, "are the doctrines correct, or at least isn't this religion the closest to truth?" Once you realise the leaders are not directed by God, make mistakes and can be questioned, studying the Bible takes on new light. You will find many doctrines you believed without question take on different meaning. Much of the doctrine unique to Jehovah's Witnesses centre around an application to the Watchtower organisation, so when this is seen to have no basis so does the interpretation. This includes a large portion of prophetic understanding and doctrine, such as the Great Crowd. Studying objectively, you will quickly see many doctrines are incorrect and understand that:

- By dishonestly adding the word Jehovah to the New Testament the Society gives false importance to this word.

- Watchtower blood doctrine is unchristian and members needlessly lost their lives for a standard that changed in 2000, when the Society started to allow almost the entire volume of blood to be transfused in fractionated form
- 1914 has no basis as the start of the Last Days
- Disfellowshipping is misapplied and used as a form of manipulation

More damaging spiritually is to notice the number of times that the organisation is implicated in place of Jesus, including that Jesus is not Mediator for the other sheep of Jehovah’s Witnesses but just for the leaders.²

If you stop accepting the Watchtower as Truth, your viewpoints will undergo dramatic alteration. This should not be surprising. Beliefs are based on underlying axioms. If a fundamental axiom is flawed, so will be much that is based on it. With the Watchtower being dominant in every aspect of a person’s life, all areas will undergo reassessment. This is even more so for a person born a Witness, as boundaries and beliefs are dictated, not developed.



After this has occurred, it is interesting finding out the reasons people in other religions hold to their beliefs. A word of caution. People that come out of one high control group are often attracted to similar groups and can quickly become ensnared in the same situation they have just left. You have plenty of time. There is no need to make a hasty decision in regards to leaving the Watchtower Society or joining another religion.

It generally takes what Raymond Franz termed a “Crisis of Conscience” to start seriously wondering whether the Watchtower religion is really the truth. There are numerous different events that have prompted this first important moment for former Jehovah’s Witnesses. This includes:

- Disfellowshipping of a loved one
- Death of a loved one for refusing blood
- Lack of love in the congregation
- Treatment by a judicial committee

- Appointment of a sinner
- Specific incorrect doctrine or changes such as
 - 1925
 - 1975
 - Changing generation teaching
 - 607 BCE
- Scandal such as
 - Handling of paedophiles
 - Watchtower NGO membership to the United Nations

You can take comfort that you are not alone. Many tens of thousands leave every year, over one third of the number baptized, in what is the world's "most mobile"⁸ religion.

References

¹ "It is important to understand that in most Bible-based cults, although the member is aggressively taught doctrine, it is not the doctrine that holds him in the group. It is the sense that the group is God's true people, a feeling cultivated by techniques of mind control. Thus, to engage the cult member in a Biblical argument or discussion is often futile." Stephen Hassan, *Releasing the Bonds* p.145

² "Ever since its incorporation in 1884, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania has played an important role in our modern-day history. Still, it is merely a legal instrument available for use by 'the faithful and discreet slave' when it is necessary." *Watchtower* 2001 Jan 15 p.31

³ "'The time of the end' embraces a period from A. D. 1799, as above indicated, to the time of the complete overthrow of Satan's empire and the establishment of the kingdom of the Messiah. The time of the Lord's second presence dates from 1874, as above stated." *The Harp of God* (1921) p.231

⁴ "Based on the premise that events of the first century might find parallels in related events later, they also concluded that if Jesus' baptism and anointing in the autumn of 29 C.E. paralleled the beginning of an invisible presence in 1874, then his riding into Jerusalem as King in the spring of 33 C.E. would point to the spring of 1878 as the time when he would assume his power as heavenly King." *Jehovah's Witnesses – Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* p. 632

⁵ "A clearer understanding of Biblical chronology was published in 1943, in the book *"The Truth Shall Make You Free,"* and it was then refined the following year in the book *"The Kingdom Is at Hand,"* as well as in later publications." *Jehovah's Witnesses – Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* p.133

"In the year 1943 the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society published the book *"The Truth Shall Make You Free."* In its chapter 11, entitled "The Count of Time," it did away with the insertion of 100 years into the period of the Judges and went according to the oldest and most authentic reading of Acts 13:20, and accepted the spelled-out numbers of the Hebrew Scriptures. This moved forward the end of six thousand years of man's existence into the decade of the 1970's. Naturally this did away with the year 1874 C.E. as the date of return of the Lord Jesus Christ and the beginning of his invisible presence or parousia." *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* pp.209-210

⁶ "Over a decade later, however, Brother Russell's wife publicly expressed the idea that Russell himself was the faithful and wise servant. The view that she voiced concerning the identity of the 'faithful

servant' came to be generally held by the Bible Students for some 30 years. Brother Russell did not reject their view, but he personally avoided making such an application of the text, emphasizing his opposition to the idea of a clergy class commissioned to teach God's Word in contrast to a lay class that was not thus commissioned. The understanding expressed by Brother Russell in 1881 that the faithful and wise servant was in reality a collective servant, made up of all the members of the spirit-anointed body of Christ on earth, was reaffirmed in *The Watch Tower* of February 15, 1927." *Jehovah's Witnesses - Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* p.143

⁷ "Likewise, the Greater Moses, Jesus Christ, is not the Mediator between Jehovah God and all mankind. He is the Mediator between his heavenly Father, Jehovah God, and the nation of spiritual Israel, which is limited to only 144,000 members. This spiritual nation is like a little flock of Jehovah's sheeplike ones." *Worldwide Security Under the "Prince of Peace"* pp.10-11

"Today, according to authentic records, there is a "great crowd" of dedicated, baptized Christians who actively collaborate with the small remnant of spiritual Israelites. Ever since the spring of 1938 they have been invited to attend the annual memorial celebration of Christ's death, not to partake of the memorial emblems, the unleavened bread and the red wine, but as respectful observers. They recognize that they are not spiritual Israelites in the new covenant mediated by Jesus Christ, nor part of the "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation." - 1 Pet. 2:9. To keep in relationship with "our Savior, God," the "great crowd" needs to remain united with the remnant of spiritual Israelites." *Watchtower* 1979 Nov 15 p.24

⁸ *Leadership* "Currents Shaping Our World: Switched after Birth" (<http://www.ctlibrary.com/le/2003/summer/19.7.html> July 1 2003) See also the *Pew Report*, which found, "Jehovah's Witnesses have the lowest retention rate of any religious tradition. Only 37% of all those who say they were raised as Jehovah's Witnesses still identify themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses." (<http://religions.pewforum.org/reports> March 8 2008) This figure is supported by annual Watchtower publisher reports, published at jwfacts.com/statistics



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