

# Critiques on the *Proclaimers* Book

## Critiques and Notes on the JW history book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*

Alan Feuerbacher

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### Introduction

In 1993 the Watchtower Society published a history book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*.<sup>1</sup> In the Writing Department it was looked upon as a more comprehensive, accurate and honest update of the 1959 history book *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*.<sup>2</sup> It was also seen as a response to the increasing criticism the Society was receiving that complained of its distortion and hiding of many of the seamier sides of its history.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1993.

<sup>2</sup> *Jehovah's Witnesses in the Divine Purpose*, Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society of Pennsylvania, 1959.

<sup>3</sup> A list of some of the most influential publications:

*A People For His Name: A History of Jehovah's Witnesses and An Evaluation*, Timothy White, Vantage Press, New York, 1967;

*Millions Now Living Will Never Die: A Study of Jehovah's Witnesses*, Alan Rogerson, Constable London, The Anchor Press Ltd, Tiptree, Essex, 1969;

*Apostles of Denial: An Examination and Exposé of the History, Doctrines and Claims of the Jehovah's Witnesses*, Edmond Charles Gruss, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., 1970;

*The Jehovah's Witnesses and Prophetic Speculation: An Examination and Refutation of the Witnesses' Position on the Second Coming of Christ, Armageddon and the "End of the World"*, Edmond Charles Gruss, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co. and Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1972, 1975;

*We Left Jehovah's Witnesses: Personal Testimonies*, Edmond C. Gruss, Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co., Phillipsburg, New Jersey, 1974;

*1914 and Christ's Second Coming: An Examination of Jehovah's Witness Teachings on the Subject*, William MacCarty, Review and Herald Publishing Association, Washington, D.C., 1975;

*Visions of Glory: A History and a Memory of Jehovah's Witnesses*, Barbara Grizzuti Harrison, Simon and Schuster, New York, 1978;

*Crisis of Conscience: The struggle between loyalty to God and loyalty to one's religion*, Raymond Franz, Commentary Press, Atlanta, 1983;

*The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, Carl Olof Jonsson, Hart Publishers Ltd. of Lethbridge, Alberta, Canada and Good News Defenders of La Jolla, California, U.S.A. for Christian Koinonia International, 1983;

*Questions for Jehovah's Witnesses "who love the truth"*, William & Joan Cetnar, 1983;

*The Orwellian World of Jehovah's Witnesses*, Heather & Gary Botting, University of Toronto Press, 1984;

*Apocalypse Delayed: The Story of Jehovah's Witnesses*, M. James Penton, University of Toronto Press, 1985;

*The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, Carl Olof Jonsson, Second Edition, Commentary Press, Atlanta, 1986;

*Crisis of Allegiance: A Study of Dissent Among Jehovah's Witnesses*, James A. Beverley, Welch Publishing Company Inc.,

This paper is best read along with the *Proclaimers* book.

While generally well written and technically well executed, much of the book is a collection of historical bits and pieces, anecdotes and story fragments strung together with little historical continuity, so the casual reader will miss much. In the Society's usual fashion, the book gives few references for source material, which makes it difficult for a reader to check what has been said.

The Catholic Church and its clergy are hammered hard throughout.

The 1993 district assembly talks introducing the book said that it was a candid look at the history of Jehovah's Witnesses, whereas it actually gives a highly sanitized version of JW history. While there are a number of relatively candid discussions of material that was covered up in earlier historical material, information has been left out that could have presented a much clearer picture of JW history. Likely the Society still wanted to keep some of it hidden so as not to alarm the JW community.

I wrote the original of this paper in July 1993 shortly after getting a copy of the *Proclaimers* book at a "Divine Teaching" district convention in Corvallis, Oregon. I distributed it to a few friends, and it found its way to Randall Watters, who published an abbreviated version in his *Free Minds Journal*, Sept/Oct 1993, titled "Review of the new Watchtower book *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*".

In the **Comments** section below, for the page listed in bold I quote material from the *Proclaimers* book and then comment on it.

Burlington, Ontario, Canada, 1986;

*The "Sign" of the Last Days—When?*, Carl Olof Jonsson and Wolfgang Herbst, Commentary Press, Atlanta, 1987;

*Witnesses of Jehovah: A Shocking Exposé of What Jehovah's Witnesses Really Believe*, Leonard & Marjorie Chretien, Harvest House Publishers, Eugene, Oregon, 1988; also a VHS video of the same title;

Publications by Duane Magnani and Witness, Inc. in the 1970s and 1980s;

Publications by Randall Watters in the 1980s, such as *Bethel Ministries Newsletter*.

## Comments

### p. 44 (box)

“Let Both Grow Together Until the Harvest”

What happened to true Christianity after the first century? In an illustration, Jesus had warned that the Devil would sow “weeds,” imitation Christians, in among “the wheat,” true Christians, “the sons of the kingdom.” Both would grow together until “the harvest,” the “conclusion of a system of things.” (Matt. 13:24-30, 36-43) During the great apostasy that developed after the death of the apostles, “the weeds” predominated for many centuries.

But what about “the wheat”? Who were among “the sons of the kingdom” during the centuries-long apostasy? We cannot say for a certainty...

Throughout the centuries there have always been truth lovers...

Although we cannot positively identify any of such persons as “the wheat” of Jesus’ illustration, certainly “Jehovah knows those who belong to him.”

This is a marked change from what the Society had long taught, namely, that there have always been “Jehovah’s witnesses” who could be clearly identified, from righteous Abel on down to the present. For example:<sup>4</sup>

Jehovah's witnesses are the most ancient religious group of worshipers of the true God, the people whose history runs back farther than any religious denomination of Christendom, or even of Jewry...<sup>5</sup>

Jehovah's witnesses have a history almost 6,000 years long, beginning while the first man, Adam, was still alive. One of his sons is referred to as being a Witness. Read Hebrews 11:4...

Abel was only the first of an unbroken line of Witnesses. Noah carried this line through the flood after sounding a warning to his generation. Read Hebrews 11:7...

Throughout the history of the Bible Jehovah has raised up witnesses to give special warning in times of judgment. Moses warned Egypt of God's coming punishment upon Pharaoh and the Egyptians. That's Hebrews 11:24-29. Then the natural Jews, the ancient nation of Israel, were prophetically addressed as Jehovah's witnesses at Isaiah 43:10-12.

The above is a fine example of equivocation:<sup>6</sup> “the use of ambiguous language to conceal the truth or to avoid committing oneself; prevarication”. The term “Jehovah’s witnesses” is used in one sense as the name of the religion headed by the Watch Tower Society<sup>7</sup> but in another as a generic description equivalent to “witnesses of Jehovah” or “witnesses for Jehovah”, as in “witnesses to a crime”. This method of equivocation was invented by J. F. Rutherford in 1931 when he changed the name of the Bible Students to “Jehovah’s witnesses”. Ever since then Watchtower writers have used the same sort of verbal sleight-of-hand. Note the slippery use of “witnesses” in this 1970 *Watchtower* description:<sup>8</sup>

<sup>4</sup> *Divine Purpose*, p.8. Among the most dishonest of JW histories. Largely based on the 31-part series “Modern History of Jehovah’s Witnesses” that appeared in the April 1, 1955 through April 1, 1956 issues of *The Watchtower*. The book and the *Watchtower* series are studies in how to lie by omission and by making semi-true statements designed to mislead readers.

<sup>5</sup> This reminds me of the 19<sup>th</sup> century gospel lyrics: “Give me that old-time religion... it was good enough for old Noah, it’s good enough for me.”

<sup>6</sup> <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Equivocation> “In logic, equivocation (‘calling two different things by the same name’) is an informal fallacy resulting from the use of a particular word/expression in multiple senses throughout an argument leading to a false conclusion.” <https://www.txstate.edu/philosophy/resources/fallacy-definitions/Equivocation.html> “The fallacy of equivocation occurs when a key term or phrase in an argument is used in an ambiguous way, with one meaning in one portion of the argument and then another meaning in another portion of the argument.”

<sup>7</sup> The April 1, 1976 *Watchtower* began using “Jehovah’s Witnesses” as the name of the religion, and the Society has used it ever since. In English, names and other proper nouns are usually capitalized so as to set them off from generic nouns. Thus, “Jehovah’s witnesses” is a generic term and “Jehovah’s Witnesses” is a proper noun and a name.

<sup>8</sup> *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1970, pp. 249-250.

When did Jehovah's witnesses get started?

In all fairness, Jehovah's witnesses believe that this question should be answered by giving the ancient and modern history of Jehovah's witnesses. Since Jehovah's witnesses are not a sect but are an association of men and women who put God's service first and line up with Bible principles, they are part of the group of witnesses that began with the first true witness of God, Abel—all of whom have looked to the righteous conditions of God's new order to come. It was Jehovah God who spoke of his people as witnesses, saying: "You are my witnesses, ... and I am God." (Isa. 43:12) And it was Jehovah's Son, Christ Jesus, who said: "You will be witnesses of me ... to the most distant part of the earth." It was the apostle Paul who referred to Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac and the prophets as "so great a cloud of witnesses." (Acts 1:8; Heb. chap. 11; 12:1) So witnesses of Jehovah existed all the way back to Abel. In modern times Jehovah's witnesses began their activity in the early 1870's...

Note the usual misrepresentation of Isaiah 43: the paragraph clearly says that it refers to everyone who ever worshiped Jehovah, **but the prophet is writing to the Jews** (43:1): "Now this is what Jehovah says, Your Creator, **O Jacob**, the One who formed you, **O Israel**." This is an excellent illustration of the way JW writers have misrepresented Bible passages to support Watchtower traditions. Here is another example of this equivocation:<sup>9</sup>

Ever since the time of Abel Jehovah's witnesses have been objects of the hatred of men and nations.

And another:<sup>10</sup>

The Bible is the Book of Jehovah's witnesses. The Bible, in the first place, was written by more than thirty witnesses of Jehovah, pre-Christian and Christian. More than that, the Bible contains the history of Jehovah's witnesses, from Abel on down, including our day, by means of inspired prophecy. And particularly since the days of Ezra have Jehovah's witnesses been busy spreading the Bible.

And yet another:<sup>11</sup>

He then opens the next chapter, saying: "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race." (Heb. 11:2, 4, 5, 39, 40; 12:1, NW) So we awake to the fact that the writer means the witnesses of Jehovah from Abel on to John the Baptist. By this we know that Jehovah's witnesses did not have their beginning first in 1931.

Clearly, then, by equivocation and prevarication the Society, until the publication of the *Proclaimers* book in 1993, taught that "Jehovah's witnesses" existed continuously from righteous Able down through the present day. The purpose of this deception was to be able to claim that Jesus' illustration of the "wheat and tares" of Matthew 13 was a prophecy fulfilled with the appearance of "Jehovah's witnesses" around Jesus' return in 1914:<sup>12</sup>

So, by his illustration of the "wheat and tares," at Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43, Jesus indicated that on his return he would regather those faithful ones who are alive at that time and make them fellow witnesses of Jehovah. This he has done by separating them from false or apostate Christians and setting them forward as the climax to the 6,000-year-long succession of Jehovah's witnesses.

## ADD MORE?

### p. 45 § 3 and box

<sup>9</sup> *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1964. p. 39.

<sup>10</sup> *ibid.*, November 1, 1961, p. 668.

<sup>11</sup> *ibid.*, October 15, 1950, p. 387.

<sup>12</sup> *Divine Purpose*, p. 11.

Russell referred quite openly to the assistance in Bible study he had received from others. Not only did he acknowledge his indebtedness to Second Adventist Jonas Wendell but he also spoke with affection about two other individuals who had aided him in Bible study. Russell said of these two men: “The study of the Word of God with these dear brethren led, step by step, into greener pastures.” One, George W. Stetson, was an earnest student of the Bible and pastor of the Advent Christian Church in Edinboro, Pennsylvania.

C. T. Russell gratefully acknowledged the assistance that was given him by George W. Stetson, of Edinboro, Pennsylvania, in studying the Scriptures.

Stetson was probably an Adventist, but this is not mentioned.

## p. 46 § 2

Time Prophecies and the Presence of the Lord

One morning in January 1876, 23-year-old Russell received a copy of a religious periodical called *Herald of the Morning*. From the picture on the cover, he could see that it was identified with Adventism. The editor, Nelson H. Barbour, of Rochester, New York, believed that the object of Christ’s return was not to destroy the families of the earth but to bless them and that his coming would be not in the flesh but as a spirit. Why, this was in agreement with what Russell and his associates in Allegheny had believed for some time! Curiously, though, Barbour believed from Biblical time-prophecies that Christ was already present (invisibly) and that the harvest work of gathering “the wheat” (true Christians making up the Kingdom class) was already due.—Matt., chap. 13.

The writer gives the impression that Russell had believed in a sort of “invisible presence” doctrine for some time prior to 1876, although for how long is not stated. There is no evidence that Russell came to believe this until after the “end of the world” expectations of N. H. Barbour and other Adventists for October, 1874 failed.<sup>13</sup> See Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (1985), pp. 17-18 and p. 310, Note 19; Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015), pp. 26-27; Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered* (1986), pp. 24-28; Jonsson, *The Gentile Times Reconsidered* (2004), pp. 43-50. It is not likely Russell was unaware of Barbour's prediction. He was certainly aware of Adventist predictions in general; see p. 132, ¶ 5. He was also a reader of Joseph Seiss’s *Prophetic Times and Quarterly Journal of Prophecy*, and either referred to or quoted Seiss’s works in his own publications.<sup>14</sup> Seiss and the Adventist community had many beliefs in common, particularly with respect to the ‘end times’, and it is obvious that Russell borrowed many of his teachings from them.

## p. 46 § 3

Russell had shied away from Biblical time prophecies. Now, however, he wondered: “Could it be that the time

<sup>13</sup> Paraphrasing Penton (1985), p. 310, note 19: “According to Paul S. L. Johnson (one of C. T. Russell’s trusted lieutenants, who formed his own ‘Bible Students’ organization after 1918), Russell himself stated that he came to accept the doctrine of Christ’s invisible presence in October 1874. Paul S. L. Johnson, *The Parousia Messenger* (Philadelphia: 1938).” That is 64 years after Russell’s supposed acceptance. Also, many commentators who were expecting an imminent end of the world, such as the Evangelical Lutheran minister and prolific writer Joseph Seiss, promoted the notion of an “invisible presence”. Furthermore, Nelson H. Barbour, who Russell hooked up with in 1876 and from whom he got all of his chronological speculations, in 1869 began to proclaim “the end of the world” for 1873, and when that failed moved it to the autumn of 1874. When that failed, his small group of followers quickly adopted a version of an “invisible presence” doctrine and then claimed that Christ had returned invisibly in 1874. Russell was clearly aware of all of these goings on, and may have had leanings toward an invisible presence from shortly after Barbour’s prediction failed. On the other hand, in later years Russell was vague about exactly when certain key events in his religious life occurred, such as never commenting on exactly when he published the booklet *The Object and Manner of Our Lord’s Return*. All evidence is that the date was 1877, although until 1993 the Society claimed 1873. My suspicion is that Russell was sufficiently aware of Adventist publications that he leaned toward the notion of Christ returning not in the flesh but as a spirit, which implied an “invisible presence”, but did not flesh out that notion in his mind or teach it to his followers until after beginning his association with Barbour in 1876. Hence, *Object and Manner* soon followed in 1877.

<sup>14</sup> Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015). pp. 25-26.

prophecies which I had so long despised, because of their misuse by Adventists, were really meant to indicate when the Lord would be invisibly present to set up his Kingdom?" With his insatiable thirst for Scriptural truth, Russell had to learn more. So he arranged to meet with Barbour in Philadelphia. This meeting confirmed their agreement on a number of Bible teachings and provided an opportunity for them to exchange views. "When we first met," Russell later stated, "he had much to learn from me on the fulness of restitution based upon the sufficiency of the ransom given for all, as I had much to learn from him concerning time." Barbour succeeded in convincing Russell that Christ's invisible presence had begun in 1874.

This is the first mention in the book of Russell's belief that Christ's presence began in 1874. This was officially taught by the Watchtower Society until 1943, although various publications beginning in 1930 gradually migrated the date for Christ's presence to 1914.<sup>15</sup> The last clear mention of the 1874 date as the beginning of Christ's presence was in the 1929 book *Prophecy*, pages 65-66. It stated:

The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ began in 1874 A.D. This proof is specifically set out in the booklet entitled *Our Lord's Return*.<sup>16</sup>

The 1973 book *God's Kingdom of A Thousand Years Has Approached*,<sup>17</sup> probably written by or under the direction of the Society's head theologian Fred Franz,<sup>18</sup> stated:

It is true that the editor and publisher of *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Second Presence* calculated that the "presence" or parousia of the heavenly bridegroom began in the year 1874 C.E. ... 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.

This last is yet another deliberately fuzzy and Watchtowerish explanation for a doctrinal change. *The Truth Shall Make You Free* said nothing about 1874, so what is the *God's Kingdom* author saying? A careful look at the *Truth Shall* book shows that it actually changed the date for mankind's creation from Russell's 4128 BCE to 4028 BCE, which would have moved the 1874 date to 1974—which would have seemed ridiculous even to JW readers in 1973. So the most that can be said is that the *Truth Shall* book established a chronological necessity for getting rid of the 1874 date, and it certainly did not move the events claimed for 1874 to 1974, but to 1914. Since earlier Watchtower literature had already moved the 1874 'events' to 1914, between 1929 and 1933, 1874 did not have to be mentioned again.

## p. 47 § 2

To counteract wrong views regarding the Lord's return, Russell wrote the pamphlet *The Object and Manner of Our Lord's Return*. It was published in 1877. That same year Barbour and Russell jointly published *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of This World*. This 196-page book discussed the subjects of restitution and Biblical time prophecies. Though each subject had been treated by others before, in Russell's view this book was "the first to combine the idea of restitution with time-prophecy." It presented the view that Jesus Christ's invisible presence dated from the autumn of 1874.

<sup>15</sup> See my article '[Scholastic Dishonesty of the Watchtower Society With Respect to Christ's Parousia: "Presence" or "Coming"?](#)' Appendix A.

<sup>16</sup> *Our Lord's Return: His Parousia, His Apokalupsis, and His Epiphania*, 1929, p. 27.

<sup>17</sup> *God's Kingdom of A Thousand Years Has Approached*, 1973, pp. 206, 209-210.

<sup>18</sup> Fred Franz was on the Watchtower Society's Writing Staff from the early 1920s onward. From the writing style that later became so recognizable, it is likely that he wrote or had a hand in producing much of the Society's literature during that period. So he would surely have known about all the statements about 1874 and 1914 quoted above.

This was the Society's first admission that *Object And Manner* was first published in 1877, not 1873 as *Jehovah's Witnesses In The Divine Purpose* had claimed. See pp. 557, 575. See Penton (2015), pp. 26-27. See the *Watchtower Publications Indexes* under "Watch Tower Publications, Booklets." The 1986-1990 *Index* does not list it at all, the 1930-1985 *Index* lists it as 1873, the 1930-1960 *Index* lists it as 1877.

The paragraph gives the impression that Russell had a hand in writing the material in *Three Worlds*, but he only financed it.<sup>19</sup> And of course, he endorsed it and began teaching that material to his followers.

The paragraph fails to mention anything about the prediction Barbour and Russell made in *Three Worlds* that 1878 would see the 'rapture' to heaven of them and their followers, and 'the resurrection of the saints' to heaven.<sup>20</sup> This is mentioned later in the *Proclaimers* book, however (p. 632 ¶ 1). Also see the extended discussion at the end of these notes.

When Russell and Barbour and their followers were not taken to heaven in 1878, they rationalized that the 'saints' had indeed been resurrected. Some time after their split in 1879, Russell began teaching that the 'saints' began to be resurrected in 1878 and that the last of them would be resurrected in 1881.<sup>21</sup> This remained standard Watchtower doctrine until 1927. This 1878 resurrection doctrine is, according to current Watchtower teaching, rank apostasy, so the Bible Students were apostates from their beginning up to 1927, and particularly so in 1919 when "the faithful and discreet slave" was supposedly appointed over "all of Christ's belongings on earth".<sup>22</sup>

Note that in all the discussion in chapter 5, ostensibly about what was believed from 1870-1914, the *Proclaimers* book said nothing whatsoever about the particulars of the 1914 and Gentile times calculations. 606 BCE is not mentioned. Probably this is done to avoid having JW's question why 606 was changed to 607 BCE for the start of the Gentile times, and much stickier, why the destruction of Jerusalem was moved back by one year from 606 to 607. This last is completely unjustifiable, as the discussions on page 239 of *The Truth Shall Make You Free* and page 171 of *The Kingdom Is At Hand* show. The latter book flat-out lied in its claim about this.<sup>23</sup>

#### **p. 60 § 3-4 and box**

Meanwhile, what about October 1914? For decades Russell and his associates had been proclaiming that the Gentile Times would end in 1914. Expectations were high. C. T. Russell had been critical of those who had set various dates for the Lord's return, such as William Miller and some Second Adventist groups. Yet, from the time of his early association with Nelson Barbour, he was convinced that there was an accurate chronology, based on the Bible, and that it pointed to 1914 as the end of the Gentile Times.

As that significant year approached, there were great expectations among the Bible Students, but not all that they expected had been directly stated in Scripture. What would happen?

This is typical Watchtower phrasing to minimize the certainty and extent of Russell's claims: "*not all* that they expected had been directly stated in Scripture." This implies that at least *some* of what Russell expected had been directly stated in Scripture. The truth is that *nothing observable* that they

<sup>19</sup> Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015), p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015), pp. 27-32.

<sup>21</sup> Franz, *Crisis of Conscience* (2018), p. 215.

<sup>22</sup> See my article "[False Teaching On Resurrection of the Saints Proves JW's Are Not God's People](#)"

<sup>23</sup> See these articles for details on the Society's prevarications:

[The Change of 606 to 607 B.C. as the Start of the "Gentile Times"](#)  
[History of the Change of 606 to 607 B.C. in Watchtower Chronology](#)  
[The Evolution of 606 to 607 B.C.E. in Watchtower Chronology](#)

expected was even *implied* in scripture, which is proved by the fact that *every observable thing they expected failed*. The only thing that the Watchtower retains from Russell's teachings about 1914 is the phrase "the gentile times", but today the phrase means something quite different from what Russell taught.

Carl Sagan once remarked about the Bible Students' failed predictions for 1914:<sup>24</sup>

They announced that the world had in fact ended in 1914, and if the rest of us hadn't noticed, that was our lookout. It is astonishing in the face of such transparent evasions that this religion has any adherents at all.

What did Russell teach about the years around 1874, and about 1914 and the end of the "gentile times"? I will not list many of them here, but see several articles on my website <https://critiquesonthewatchtower.org/><sup>25</sup> Here are some of Russell's teachings:

Despite what many of Jehovah's Witnesses believe today, C. T. Russell *did not* believe that 1914 would mark the establishment of the Kingdom of God in heaven, because that had already happened in 1878. Neither did he believe that 1914 would be followed by another generation of conflict without any intervention by God. He did expect that in 1914 the saints—himself and his followers—would be glorified and they would be carried off to heaven to rule with Jesus. At the same time God would cause the break-up of all earthly kingdoms and would *substitute* theocratic rule during the rest of the Millennium. Russell believed that God would *restore* mankind to perfection—he would not destroy them in the Battle of Armageddon, because that had already started in 1874. So when war began in August 1914, Russell saw that as the beginning of an anarchy that would quickly turn into Christ's removing all earthly governments and replacing them with his own Kingdom. Of course, that did not happen, and everything else that he predicted would happen in connection with 1914 failed as well.

Again think about what the *Proclaimers* book said on page 60, that Russell believed:

there was an accurate chronology, based on the Bible, and that it pointed to 1914 as the end of the Gentile Times.

Since everything that Russell taught would happen when the end of the Gentile Times arrived failed, it was meaningless to point to it. The Society often uses phrases like, "the Bible Students pointed to 1914", but rarely says exactly what they pointed to. Now we can see why.

The box on page 60 is a typical example of the way the Society tells lies by omission. Rather than clearly stating what Russell and his Bible Students taught about 1914, it quotes someone who obviously did not understand exactly what they taught, but only caught a hyped-up version that focused on anarchy coming in 1914:

"Look Out for 1914!"

When World War I broke out in 1914, "The World," then a leading newspaper in New York City, stated in its magazine section: "The terrific war outbreak in Europe has fulfilled an extraordinary prophecy.... 'Look out for 1914!' has been the cry of the hundreds of travelling evangelists, who, representing this strange creed [associated with Russell], have gone up and down the country enunciating the doctrine that 'the Kingdom of God is at hand.'"—"The World Magazine," August 30, 1914.

**pp. 67-69**

<sup>24</sup> [Carl Sagan's Remarks About Jehovah's Witnesses False Prophecies](#)

<sup>25</sup> [Part 1: JW's Beliefs About Chronology in the Early Days](#)  
[Part 2: Statements Concerning 1799, 1874 and 1914](#)  
[The Watchtower Society and the End of the World](#)

This is the Society's usual distortion of the 1917 schism. For the facts, see Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015), pp. 71-79.

### p. 69 § 3-5, 70 § 1

Through the close of 1917 and into 1918, the Bible Students energetically distributed the new book, *The Finished Mystery*. By the end of 1917, the printers were busy on the 850,000 edition. *The Watch Tower* of December 15, 1917, reported: "The sale of the Seventh Volume is unparalleled by the sale of any other book known, in the same length of time, excepting the Bible."

But not everyone was thrilled with the success of *The Finished Mystery*. The book contained some references to the clergy of Christendom that were very cutting. This so angered the clergy that they urged the government to suppress the publications of the Bible Students. As a result of this clergy-inspired opposition, early in 1918, *The Finished Mystery* was banned in Canada. Opposition soon mounted against the Bible Students in the United States. ...

These sections try to give impression that *The Finished Mystery* was a book of truth and an exposé of "the clergy" and that is why "the clergy of Christendom" opposed it. In reality it was mostly complete nonsense. Falsely billed as the posthumous work of C. T. Russell (it was actually prepared by Watchtower officials Clayton J. Woodworth and George H. Fischer, and comprised of some of Russell's notes but was largely the product of Woodworth and Fischer) and promoted as being "of the Lord—prepared under his guidance",<sup>26</sup> it was filled with fanciful interpretations and speculations that the Society abandoned by 1927 when it ceased publishing all of the *Studies in the Scriptures* volumes.

Apparently the author of the *Proclaimers* book (Writing Department head Karl Adams) was well aware of the seamy nature of *The Finished Mystery* since in his descriptions (pages 66-70) he says little about its contents aside from hitting hard against "the clergy".

Some examples of the bizarre claims made in *The Finished Mystery*:<sup>27</sup>

- Revelation 14:20 predicted the precise distance from the place where *The Finished Mystery* was produced in Scranton, Pennsylvania to its shipping destination at Bethel in New York City (p. 230)
- Michael the Archangel is the pope of Rome. (p.188)
- "Behemoth" of Job 40:15-24 is a stationary steam engine. (p.84)
- "Leviathan" of Job 41 is a locomotive. (p.85)
- The "valiant men" of Nahum 2:3 are a train engineer and a fireman. (p.93)
- "The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another" of Nahum 2:4 are the clanking and bumping of railway cars. (p.93)

### p. 76 (box)

This an especially good example of how Watchtower writers lie by omission and by telling half-truths.

In 1929 Rutherford commissioned the building of a mansion on a 100-acre estate in San Diego for his use as a winter residence, using some \$25,000 donated by a wealthy Bible Student. This was for his health, since he had lung damage from a bout with pneumonia after his release from prison in 1919.

<sup>26</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studies\\_in\\_the\\_Scriptures](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Studies_in_the_Scriptures)

<sup>27</sup> Quotations and comments:

<https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/revelation-daniel-prophetic-interpretation.php>

<http://watchtowerdocuments.org/a-letter-from-sweden/#more-4608>

<https://www.jehovahs-witness.com/topic/206938/finished-mystery-1917-book-that-jesus-approved>

However, the Society told the Bible Student community that the purpose for building the mansion was mainly to house the “ancient worthies” such as Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and the rest of the Old Testament prophets and patriarchs who would soon be resurrected. The place was first deeded to Rutherford, then to the Watch Tower Society and the “ancient worthies”. Rutherford was to reside there only temporarily, with the Society only holding the property in trust until the “worthies” showed up and claimed it.<sup>28</sup> Through most of the 1930s, whenever the Society spoke of Beth-Sarim, the goal of holding it in trust for the “ancient worthies” was emphasized.

Note, in the description in the *Proclaimers* book, what is left out:

“House of the Princes”

Brother Rutherford had a severe case of pneumonia after his release from unjust imprisonment in 1919. Thereafter, he had only one good lung. In the 1920’s, under a doctor’s treatment, he went to San Diego, California, and the doctor urged him to spend as much time as possible there. From 1929 on, **Brother Rutherford spent the winters working at a San Diego residence he had named Beth-Sarim. Beth-Sarim was built with funds that were a direct contribution for that purpose.** The deed, which was published in full in “*The Golden Age*” of March 19, 1930, conveyed this property to J. F. Rutherford and thereafter to the Watch Tower Society.

According to this, the *purpose* of building Beth-Sarim was as a winter residence for Rutherford. So far, so good.

Concerning Beth-Sarim, the book “*Salvation*,” published in 1939, explains: “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.**”

According to this, the *purpose* of building Beth-Sarim was to provide proof that Watchtower adherents believed that the “ancient worthies” would soon be resurrected and take possession of Beth-Sarim.

In reality, *both* purposes existed. For the gullible Bible Student community, Rutherford’s residence in the mansion was of virtually no importance. For them the real purpose was to house the soon-to-be-resurrected “ancient worthies”.

Apparently the author of these paragraphs was unaware that they contradict one another.

Ken Raines of JW Research compiled every reference to Beth-Sarim he could find in Watchtower literature.<sup>29</sup>

The above material describes the two purposes claimed in Watchtower literature for building Beth-Sarim, but there was another purpose—the *real* purpose: to get the drunken Rutherford out of Brooklyn and out of the hair of the Watchtower officials who by then were actually running the show—in particular Frederick W. Franz and Nathan H. Knorr. After the failure of his prediction of Armageddon, etc., for 1925, Rutherford more or less fell apart and drank heavily. So Franz concocted a rationalization suitable for the gullible Bible Student community—he was a master of that—to build a mansion suitable for Rutherford’s expensive tastes in a region that could be claimed was for his health. Somehow these officials induced a wealthy Bible Student to contribute \$25,000 for the project.

While Beth-Sarim was always relatively low key in Watch Tower literature, the adjacent property

<sup>28</sup> *The Golden Age*, March 19, 1930, pp. 406-407.

<sup>29</sup> *Beth-Sarim*, Ken Raines, JW Research, Everett, Washington, U.S.A., 1993.

called Beth-Shan (“House of Security”) was kept virtually secret. Purchased in 1939 and sold in 1945, the deed contained the same language about holding it in trust for the “ancient worthies” as did the deed for Beth-Sarim. There is only one mention of Beth-Shan in all of Watch Tower literature—the May 27, 1942 *Consolation* magazine (p. 9)—as an alternative location for Rutherford’s burial (he had died in January 1942).<sup>30</sup> The real purpose of Beth-Shan was as its name implies—a place of security, almost certainly for Rutherford and his retinue. The 1945 buyers eventually discovered a bomb shelter accessible only by a secret entrance in what was called the ‘goat barn’ located some 250 feet from the main house, which house was of a quality and size comparable to the Beth-Sarim mansion. The shelter’s roof was three feet of concrete. To get in, one would go into the building’s bathroom area, pull a concealed lever in a medicine cabinet, go through a section of wall that swung open, and go down the stairs into the shelter. The property also had a caretaker’s house, a horse stable and barn, a goat barn and an equipment shed. There was a diesel-powered generator and 4,000 gallon underground diesel tank, and a workshop. There was a water well, a 2,000 gallon pressure tank and a 10,000 gallon water storage tank. Water was piped to the houses and barns, and to two fire hydrants. The place was obviously built to be self-sufficient, which again explains its name “House of Security”.<sup>31</sup>

This desire for security makes complete sense, because with the outbreak of World War II in 1939 the Society’s officials were expecting that war would lead right into Armageddon. It did not take a genius to conclude that Japanese aggression in the Pacific might well lead to an invasion of the west coast of the United States.

The *Proclaimers* book continues:

A few years after Brother Rutherford’s death, the board of directors of the Watch Tower Society decided to sell Beth-Sarim. Why? “*The Watchtower*” of December 15, 1947, explained: “It had fully served its purpose and was now only serving as a monument quite expensive to keep; our faith in the return of the men of old time whom the King Christ Jesus will make princes in ALL the earth (not merely in California) is based, not upon that house Beth-Sarim, but upon God’s Word of promise.”

Note that this fails to state exactly what is meant by “it had fully served its purpose”. What purpose? To house Rutherford during his drunken times? To house the soon-to-be-resurrected “ancient worthies”? Obviously, Rutherford had been dead for six years, so Beth-Sarim was not needed to house him and keep him out of the way of Knorr and Franz. And the Society seems to have realized that Rutherford’s teaching that the “ancient worthies” would soon be resurrected<sup>32</sup> was nonsense, both scripturally and in reality. And of course, World War II had ended and there was no more threat of foreign invasion of California.

Note how the Footnote for this box describes how the Society changed its teaching about the appearance of the “ancient worthies”:

<sup>30</sup> Rutherford had wanted to be buried in a crypt at Beth-Sarim, but San Diego officials denied a burial permit because it was on residential property. Watch Tower officials battled with San Diego officials for many months about it—they ultimately gave up and supposedly buried him in New York. One proposal was to bury Rutherford at Beth-Shan but that was also denied. Describing the interment situation as Watch Tower officials saw it, this May 27 *Consolation* said: “[The] new location for interment was in almost the center of the property known as Beth-Shan, which is roughly 75 acres of canyon and mesa land, adjoining Beth-Sarim but separated by a half-mile width of canyon. This property, also belonging to WATCHTOWER, has one small and one large dwelling upon it ... Judge Rutherford, in a discussion before his death, had said that as a second choice he wished to be buried somewhere on these wild acres.”

<sup>31</sup> Information about Beth-Shan and Beth-Sarim is taken from *Jehovah’s Witnesses—Their Monuments to False Prophecy*, Edmond C. Gruss with Leonard Chretien, Witness Inc., Clayton, California, 1997.

<sup>32</sup> Rutherford first set out this belief in the 1918 talk and 1920 book *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*. His claim was that the “ancient worthies” would be resurrected in 1925, along with the coming of the battle of Armageddon. After 1925 he simply moved the resurrection expectations for 1925 to “real soon now”.

[Footnote]

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.—See “*The Watchtower*,” November 1, 1950, pages 414-17.

Clearly then, the *Proclaimers* book presents a sanitized, misleading, and self-contradictory description of Beth-Sarim, and fails to mention Beth-Shan at all. It never mentions that the deeds to both were put in trust for the “princes”—an act that virtually all JW's would laugh at today. Since both properties had opulent mansions, a plausible “scriptural” reason had to be given to the rank-and-file for such profligacy during the depression. The idea of holding them in trust for the “ancient worthies” was a perfect foil.

This deception is reminiscent of what the Society did with literature distribution in the U.S. and other countries. The real reason literature was made free was to avoid sales taxes, probably to avoid the trouble associated with keeping track of the taxes. But the official and rationalizing reason was along the lines of “you received free, give free.”

Also related is the arrangement of ‘helpers’ for the Governing Body instituted in the early 1990s. A simple thing like spreading the work around was turned into a scripturally based doctrine, and the helpers were called ‘Nethinim’. This practice is nothing more than providing pacifiers for members who like the trappings of traditional religion but can't have it as JW's.

#### **p. 77 § 4-6 to p. 78 § 1**

‘Advertise the King and the Kingdom’

In 1922 the Bible Students returned to Cedar Point for a nine-day program, from September 5 to 13. Excitement ran high as the delegates arrived for this international convention. The climax of the convention was reached on Friday, September 8, when Brother Rutherford delivered the talk “The Kingdom.”

... that was the historic discourse in which Brother Rutherford urged his listeners to ‘advertise the King and the Kingdom.’ ...

As the spiritual light of understanding grew brighter, the Bible Students began to perceive some thrilling Bible truths. (Prov. 4:18) The understanding of these precious truths gave a powerful impetus to their work of proclaiming God's Kingdom.

A fine example of trying to turn a sow's ear into a silk purse. The basis for this ‘divinely guided’ advertising campaign was that “millions now living will never die”, which in turn was based on the claim that 1925 would bring Armageddon and the ushering in of God's Kingdom on earth, and about which J. F. Rutherford later admitted to the Bethel family, “I know I made an ass of myself.”<sup>33</sup>

Regarding these false predictions—prophecies, really, because they were predictions of the future made by someone who claimed to speak in Jehovah's name<sup>34</sup>—the 1920 book *Millions Now Living Will Never Die* said:<sup>35</sup>

As we have heretofore stated, the great jubilee cycle is due to begin in 1925. At that time the earthly phase of the kingdom shall be recognized... Therefore we may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old, particularly those named by the Apostle in Hebrews chapter eleven, to the condition of human perfection.

<sup>33</sup> *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1984, p. 24, footnote.

<sup>34</sup> Deuteronomy 18:20-22.

<sup>35</sup> *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, 1920 Edition, pp. 89-90.

On page 97 it said:

Based upon the argument heretofore set forth, then, that the old order of things, the old world, is ending and is therefore passing away, and that the new order is coming in, and that 1925 shall mark the resurrection of the faithful worthies of old and the beginning of reconstruction, it is reasonable to conclude that millions of people now on the earth will be still on the earth in 1925. Then, based upon the promises set forth in the divine Word, we must reach the positive and indisputable conclusion that millions now living will never die.

Note the continued arrogant hubris in the following statements:<sup>36</sup>

We have no doubt whatever in regard to the chronology relating to the dates of 1874, 1914, 1918, and 1925... It was on this line of reckoning that the dates 1874, 1914, and 1918 were located; and the Lord has placed the stamp of his seal upon 1914 and 1918 beyond any possibility of erasure. What further evidence do we need? Using this same measuring line ... 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. The fact that all the things that some looked for in 1914 did not materialize does not alter the chronology one whit. Noting the date marked so prominently, it is very easy for the finite mind to conclude that all the work to be done must center about it, and thus many are inclined to anticipate more than has been really foretold. Thus it was in 1844, in 1874, in 1878 as well as in 1914 and 1918. Looking back we can now easily see that those dates were clearly indicated in Scripture and doubtless intended by the Lord to encourage his people, as they did, as well as to be a means of testing and sifting when all that some expected did not come to pass. That all that some expect to see in 1925 may not transpire that year will not alter the date one whit more than in the other cases.

Many more such ridiculous chronological claims were made in *The Watch Towers* of 1922 and 1923.<sup>37</sup>

As in the *Proclaimers* book, the Society has often referred to the “Millions Campaign”, but has not informed its readers that the whole foundation of the claim that “Millions Now Living Will Never Die”<sup>38</sup> rested on the predictions about 1925, predictions that proved utterly false.

#### p. 78 § 2-3

“Unrealized Hopes Are Not Unique to Our Day”

“We may confidently expect,” stated the booklet *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, back in 1920, “that 1925 will mark the return [from the dead] of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old ... to the condition of human perfection.” Not only was the resurrection of faithful men of old expected in 1925 but some hoped that anointed Christians might receive their heavenly reward in that year.

The year 1925 came and went. Some abandoned their hope. But the vast majority of the Bible Students remained faithful. “Our family,” explained Herald Toutjian, whose grandparents had become Bible Students about the turn of the century, “came to appreciate that unrealized hopes are not unique to our day. The apostles themselves had similar misplaced expectations.... Jehovah is worthy of loyal service and praise with or without the ultimate reward.”

Two thoroughly misleading paragraphs devoted to “explaining” the 1925 fiasco. It is unbelievable that the writer of these paragraphs can display such hubris and utter disregard for the reader's intelligence. Author Karl Adams was a master of euphemistic doubletalk, and in fact, a deliberate liar.

“Some hoped ...”? Rutherford induced *almost all* the Bible Students to believe his false doctrines. Who among the Bible Students would dare to question the divinely guided material in *The Watch*

<sup>36</sup> *The Watch Tower*, May 15, 1922, pp. 147, 150

<sup>37</sup> See [Statements concerning 1925](#) at my website.

<sup>38</sup> The campaign got its start in a talk called “The World Has Ended—Millions Now Living May Never Die”, given February 24, 1918 by J. F. Rutherford in Los Angeles [1975 *Yearbook*, p. 127; W83, 7/1, p. 18; *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers of God's Kingdom*, p. 648]. The talk apparently struck such a chord that its name was soon changed to “Will Never Die” for even stronger effect.

*Tower* and other Watchtower literature, as shown above?

“The vast majority of the Bible Students remained faithful.” Perhaps immediately after 1925 the majority remained loyal to Rutherford’s Watch Tower Society, but in the next three years about three-quarters of them left.<sup>39</sup>

#### **p. 85 § 4**

“A Bunch of Hijackers”

A strong force of opposition came from certain Catholic Action groups. On October 2, 1938, Brother Rutherford was straightforward in delivering the lecture “Fascism or Freedom,” which later appeared in booklet form and was distributed by the millions. Brother Rutherford in this speech detailed a number of incidents of unlawful acts to demonstrate collusion between certain public officials and representatives of the Roman Catholic Church.

After presenting the facts, Rutherford noted: “When the people are told the facts about a crowd that is operating under a religious cloak to steal their rights, the Hierarchy howls and says: ‘Lies! Put a gag in the mouths of those and do not permit them to speak.’” Then he asked: “Is it wrong to publish the truth concerning a bunch of hijackers that are robbing the people? No! ... Shall honest men be gagged and compelled to remain silent while this bunch of hijackers destroy the liberties of the people? Above all, shall the people be denied their God-given privileges of peaceable assembly and freedom of worship of Almighty God, and freedom of speech concerning his kingdom and those who oppose it?”

Here Rutherford is described as courageously denouncing Catholic censorship of Jehovah’s Witnesses, even while practicing it himself and instituting attitudes that persist today. The hypocrisy of the author and the Watch Tower Society are very much on display here. The Society practices censorship of individual JWs by defining criticism of the Society and JW leaders as “apostasy”, and then using a handful of Bible verses to condemn apostasy as “rebellion against God” or the like, using other Bible verses to justify disfellowshipping and shunning critics.

#### **p. 98 § 1**

The anticipated period of world peace had set in. The era of global expansion and Bible education was well under way.

The phrase “era of global expansion” used. This is also the title of chapter 4 of Penton's *Apocalypse Delayed* (Third Edition, 2015).

#### **p. 104 § 2-4**

“Say, What Does This 1975 Mean?”

The Witnesses had long shared the belief that the Thousand Year Reign of Christ would follow after 6,000 years of human history. But when would 6,000 years of human existence end? The book *Life Everlasting—In Freedom of the Sons of God*, released at a series of district conventions held in 1966, pointed to 1975. Right at the convention, as the brothers examined the contents, the new book triggered much discussion about 1975.

At the convention held in Baltimore, Maryland, F. W. Franz gave the concluding talk. He began by saying: “Just before I got on the platform a young man came to me and said, ‘Say, what does this 1975 mean?’” Brother Franz then referred to the many questions that had arisen as to whether the material in the new book meant that by 1975 Armageddon would be finished, and Satan would be bound. He stated, in essence: ‘It could. But we are not saying. All things are possible with God. But we are not saying. And don’t any of you be specific in saying anything that is going to happen between now and 1975. But the big point of it all is this, dear friends: Time is short. Time is running out, no question about that.’

In the years following 1966, many of Jehovah’s Witnesses acted in harmony with the spirit of that counsel. However, other statements were published on this subject, and some were likely more definite than advisable.

<sup>39</sup> Penton, *Apocalypse Delayed* (2015). p. 83, chart “Bible Student Memorial Attendance, 1917-1928.

This was acknowledged in *The Watchtower* of March 15, 1980 (page 17). But Jehovah's Witnesses were also cautioned to concentrate mainly on doing Jehovah's will and not to be swept up by dates and expectations of an early salvation.

Again we find deception on a grand scale in this sanitized and downplayed description of the 1975 fiasco. The statement that "some [statements] were likely more definite than advisable" is truly amazing! For example, the very title of the *Watchtower* article "Why Are You Looking Forward To 1975?"<sup>40</sup> is, in JW-speak, *extremely* definite: it does not neutrally ask, "Are you looking forward?" but tells the reader that he *ought* to be looking forward: "**Why** are you looking forward?"

Various authors have pointed out that the enthusiasm generated after 1966 for "the end of the world by 1975" was immediately capitalized upon by Fred Franz and his associates. While they were usually careful in their writings to insert a caveat along the lines of "we're not being definite about Armageddon in 1975", a number of arguments were presented between 1966 and 1975 that left the JW reader no choice but to conclude that Armageddon *must* come by 1975, and that the caveats were there merely for the writers to cover their butts.

These themes were enthusiastically promoted by circuit and district overseers, and of course, many rank-and-file JWs. For example, district servant Charles Sinutko gave a talk at a circuit assembly in 1967 pleading with slackers to listen to the Society's words about 1975:<sup>41</sup>

We're going to listen to the agonizing entreaty, 'Brothers get in!', because **they know what's coming. And it's coming fast—and don't wait till '75. The door is going to be shut before then.**

xxx <sup>42</sup>

## p. 106

Reorganization of governing body. See p. 109. Compare with Ray Franz's *Crisis Of Conscience*.

## p. 111 § 1

WTS version of 1980 troubles. What a distorted picture! It's interesting that this is buried inside a subsection called (p. 110) "Filling Spiritual Needs With Bible Literature."

## pp. 132-137

<sup>40</sup> *The Watchtower*, August 15, 1968, pp. 488-501.

<sup>41</sup> Audio excerpt: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Yhn6ZF1Hl2A>

Full audio: <http://watchtowerdocuments.org/audio-archives/>  
<https://www.jwfacts.com/audio/do-duggan-assembly-pampa-texas-nov-1968-1975.mp3>  
<https://archive.org/details/ServingWithEverlastingLifeInView>

Audio and transcript: <https://www.jehovahs-witness.com/topic/140408/stay-alive-75-mp3-talk>

Transcript: [http://www.quotes-watchtower.co.uk/1975\\_-\\_sermon.html](http://www.quotes-watchtower.co.uk/1975_-_sermon.html)

<sup>42</sup> See my website articles:

["Statements Concerning 1918, 1925 and 1975"](#)

["1975 New Info"](#)

<https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/1975.php>

First detailed discussion in book of beliefs about the object and manner of Christ's return, and the Gentile Times.

**p. 132 § 4, 5** Fails to mention that it was probably the failure of Barbour's predictions of Christ's visible return that led to Barbour and Russell's claim about an invisible return.

**p. 133 § 4** Another mention of 1874 as the beginning of Christ's presence. Footnote is quite misleading; see below.

**p. 134 § 1** Another cover-up statement about what was expected about Christ's return: "they did not yet clearly discern all the details."

**p. 134 § 3** Says that J. A. Brown connected the seven times of Daniel with the Gentile Times. This is directly contradicted by statements in *The Gentile Times Reconsidered*, pp. 21, 22. Where did the WTS get its information?

E. B. Elliot's work mentioning 1914 as a possible Gentile Times date appears to be from the 1st edition of *Horae Apocalypticæ*, pub. 1844, according to Jim Parkinson, a Bible Student in Glendale, California. The calculation was dropped by the time the 4th edition was put out in 1851. The 1st edition does not appear to be in any library in the US, but may well be at the library of the British Museum.

Robert Seeley appears to be associated with Elliot, as "Seeley" is the name of one of the publishers of the 4th and 5th editions of *Horae*.

I wonder what Joseph Seiss actually said. It is of note that the book specifically mentions that Seiss's chronology was later rejected by Russell. Don't the writers know that a correct result arrived at by wrong reasoning is valueless?

**p. 134 § 4** Early Herald Of The Morning's mentioned. Where did they get the information? Do they have copies?

**p. 134 § 5** Discussion does not make it clear that 1914 and the end of the Gentile Times were predicted as the end of a series of important events that were to take place beginning in 1874.

**p. 135 § 1-3** More misleading and whitewashing of expectations for 1914. § 1 1st statement is wrong. Russell for many years claimed to know exactly what would happen by 1914 and spared no effort in publishing these claims. He called his chronology "God's dates." § 3 is priceless: "With varying degrees of success, they endeavored to avoid being dogmatic about details not directly stated in the Scriptures."

At least the Society is actually saying that things were really screwed up, rather than ignoring the whole episode.

**p. 137 § 1** Discusses, but thoroughly obscures, the changes that have occurred with regard to 1914. The reader is not told that in 1922 the time of the beginning of Christ's rule was changed from 1878 to 1914. He is not told that it was not until 1943 that the Society finally adopted the view that Christ's presence began in 1914, not 1874 (see extended discussion below). The impression is that these changes came swiftly, not during the next 29 years.

**p. 140 § 1, 2** Impression is given that description of Armageddon by Russell was to be future, whereas he claimed it started in 1874. Not until around 1910-13 did he switch the starting time to 1914.

**pp. 142, 143** Generally correct description of Russell's view of "slave," but p. 143 § 1 is not quite correct, that Russell "personally avoided making such an application." From *The Watch Tower*, 12/1/1916:

Thousands of the readers of Pastor Russell's writings believe that he filled the office of “that faithful and wise servant” ... His modesty and humility precluded him from openly claiming this title, but he admitted as much in private conversation.

**p. 143 § 2** Surprising that the paragraph reproduces Russell's reference to himself as God's mouthpiece. However, our understanding of “mouthpiece” may be different from Russell's. See p. 634 (box) § 4, for comments from C. J. Woodworth about a former Bible Student having been honored by the Lord as “a mouthpiece.” See p. 207 (box) § 2, for comments from Russell that Elders were mouthpieces of God.

**p. 146 § 3 (and on)** Key comments on new light, progressive understanding of prophecy, etc. They don't seem to realize that this concept can be applied by anyone to almost any conceivable belief system, and is therefore valueless.

**p. 147 § 1-3** No mention is made of the pre-1929 view of “superior authorities.” However, it is mentioned later; see p. 190 § 1. The effect is that the complete about-face is not mentioned all in one place in the book, so the casual reader is unaware of it.

**p. 147 § 3** Tries to extract mileage out of the flip-flop on superior authorities. As if Christians didn't know about the principle of relative subjection until 1962!

**p. 157 § 1** “Any group or individuals that speak in the name of Jehovah put themselves under obligation to convey his word truthfully.”

**p. 160 § 3** Apparently refers to Christians of a lower quality.

**p. 163 § 1** More obscuring of actual beliefs about 1925.

**p. 178 § 4** JWs should always speak the truth. Hypocrisy on the part of the Society.

**p. 184** Blood brochure.

**p. 190 § 1** Belated admission that “higher powers” referred to secular authorities. Why is this not admitted earlier, along with admissions on page 147? Because the references are separate, the reader probably won't see the flip-flop.

**p. 201 (sidebox)** Tiny admission of what was taught about pyramids.

**pp. 205-6** Russell's changing views on organization. This is a clear response to criticism comparing Russell's early ideas on organization to those of today. First establishment of elective elders.

**p. 206 § 2** Discusses Russell's instituting of the office of elective elders in 1895, pointing out that this was “sound Scriptural counsel.” But it carefully avoids using the term “elective elder,” and instead says elders were “chosen,” because later a discussion on pp. 212-9 says that the office of elective elder was eliminated in the 1930s because it was unscriptural. How can the office be scripturally sound in 1895 but become unscriptural in the 1930s?

The discussions on pp. 213-4 and 217-9 talk about how elders were completely eliminated, but never explicitly say that they were. All local authority became vested in the company or congregation servant. The discussion leaves the impression that there was still a body of elders. It is astounding that anyone who was a JW before the current elder arrangement could accept this as a true picture.

- p. 219 § 1** Typical gloss: “the facts of modern-day history already considered show that this 'slave' employs the Watch Tower Society as a legal instrument.” The “facts” already considered don't show this at all.
- p. 219 § 2** In 1938 there was no Governing Body. Rutherford was the only governing authority, and the directors were more for show than anything. See *Crisis of Conscience*, by Raymond Franz.
- p. 220 § 2** Karl Klein's comments about Rutherford are very revealing about both of them. Rutherford acted as if he were God, even though he was a drunk and an adulterer. Klein's approval of Rutherford shows his true colors. But coming from the man who wrote the infamous *Watchtower* articles comparing “new light” with the tacking of a sailboat, this makes sense. Neither of them had any respect for the intelligence of the rank-and-file. Unfortunately, this is perhaps justified.
- p. 222 § 1** Thorough distortion of Acts 15.
- pp. 228-9** Much fiction about the Governing Body. There may have been a sort of generic governing body, in that Knorr and Franz were not one man, and in that there was a figurehead board of directors, but using the current capitalized terminology is sheer lying.
- p. 248 § 4** Says WTS publications are available to anyone, but this is not true. The Society, through local elders, sometimes denies them to persons they don't like.
- p. 425 § 5** Sanitizes the 1925 prediction given in the “Millions” talks: “It expressed the conviction that the time for the realization of that hope was very near.” Very misleading to the casual reader. See also p. 648. This mentions the original talk, “The World Has Ended—Millions Now Living May Never Die.” Most JWs would be rather taken aback by the full text of these presentations, such as claiming 1799 as the start of the time of the end, etc. this book never mentions 1799 or 1844.
- p. 466 § 3** Interesting phrasing about JWs as a cultural organization in Mexico. Clearly treading on eggshells here. Apparently don't want to raise any questions. See *Crisis Of Conscience*, by Raymond Franz.
- p. 509 § 1** Compare last statement in the paragraph, Russia “was long viewed by the world as a stronghold of atheism,” with WTS predictions about the fulfillment of prophecies in Daniel about the king of the north, etc.
- p. 528 § 1** Interesting comments about the WTS being so concerned about the spiritual needs of insignificant persons that it sent out a missionary just because one person wrote a letter. Contrast this with the Society's refusal to answer, or even acknowledge, letters from people who disagree with it. Which is the harder thing to do?
- p. 560** Top newspaper clipping. Note claims about *Finished Mystery*, that it “throws an additional flood of light upon present conditions.” Yet the book was trash and full of fanciful speculations.
- p. 568 § 1** Another claim about Jehovah's Witnesses, that God “had put his word in their mouths.”
- p. 571 § 1, 2** Ignores other meanings for “house to house” in the Greek.
- p. 602** Interesting comments on WTS belief that the *New World Translation* in English is so accurate that it can be used as the basis for translation into other languages. Implies the original Greek and Hebrew were not necessary.

Discussion indicates that the Society has many of its publications available in on-line computer files. Wouldn't that be interesting to have!

**p. 603 § 2** Society commits itself to sticking to God's Word the Bible rather than its own ideas.

**p. 610 § 3** Extols virtues of *Kingdom Interlinear* in bringing out original meaning of Greek text. However, compare the way the Greek word *melle* (about) is rendered in Mark 13:4 and Luke 21:7 with how it is rendered in Rev. 10:7 in the *New World Translation*.

**p. 620 § 3** Discussion of Paton's books is rather confused. He wrote two versions of *Day Dawn*. The first was approved by Russell and widely distributed. The second was written after their break. See Penton, p. 23.

**p. 621 § 1** The quotation from Russell shows how big an ego he had at age 29. He was so supremely confident that his own interpretations and beliefs were precisely those of God that others' deviations from them were seen as deviations from God, not from his own opinions.

**p. 621 § 3** A backhanded way of attributing God's approval to Russell: "It certainly could not be expected that God would use C. T. Russell if he did not loyally adhere to God's Word." By the same reasoning, anyone who claims to adhere to God's Word could claim to be used by God in a special way. All this means is that God doesn't use wicked people to represent him. The Society is deliberately confusing a specific issue—whether God used Russell—with a general one—whether God uses loyal Christians. See paragraph 4.

**p. 621 § 4, 5** Implied claim is that Russell was God's visible channel because he advocated the ransom and rejected certain creeds of Christendom (trinity, immortality of the soul).

**p. 622 § 1** All this says is that Russell was eclectic in his use of various doctrines and enthusiastic in disseminating his views, particularly his view of Christ's return. The paragraph conveniently neglects to mention that Russell's claim that Christ returned in 1874 was false and therefore unscriptural. How such false teachings can be claimed as evidence that God was using the false teacher is astounding. The book forgets that Russell tended to confuse his own interpretation of the Bible with direct revelation from God. Any JW today acting as Russell did would immediately be disfellowshipped and denounced as an apostate.

**p. 622 § 2** Says Russell urged others to check his writings carefully against God's Word, but neglects to say what Russell suggested they do if they found discrepancies. He said that they were being disloyal to God. Russell's speaking out of both sides of his mouth at the same time is duplicated by the Society today.

The issue of guidance versus inspiration is brought up. For all practical purposes they are identical concepts, but Russell distinguished between them and so does the Society today. This allows them to claim the benefits accorded to one who is inspired without shouldering the responsibility. Compare the quotation with what was published about how Bible Students ought to view *Studies In The Scriptures*. Russell virtually equated his own writings with the Bible itself. The following material is from the September 15, 1910 *Watch Tower* article "Is the Reading of 'Scripture Studies' Bible Study?", pages 298-9 (4684-5 Reprints).

If the six volumes of SCRIPTURE STUDIES are practically the Bible topically arranged, with Bible proof-texts given, we might not improperly name the volumes—the Bible in an arranged form. That is to say, they are not merely comments on the bible, but they are practically the Bible itself...

Furthermore, not only do we find that people cannot see the divine plan in studying the Bible by itself, but we see, also, that if anyone lays the SCRIPTURE STUDIES aside, even after he has used them, after he has become familiar with them, after he has read them for ten years—if he then lays them aside and ignores them and goes to the Bible alone, though he has understood his Bible for ten years, our experience

shows that within two years he goes into darkness. On the other hand, if he had merely read the SCRIPTURE STUDIES with their references, and had not read a page of the Bible, as such, he would be in the light at the end of the two years, because he would have the light of the Scriptures.

How would Russell view the Watchtower Society today, having laid aside the *Scripture Studies* some seventy years ago?

Further along in the article, after suggesting that people should check *Studies In The Scriptures* against the Bible, Russell said:

We would conclude, practically, that we could not understand anything about the Bible except as it was revealed. We would, therefore, not waste a great deal of time doing what we know some people do, reading chapter after chapter, to no profit. We would not think of doing it. We would not think we were studying the Scriptures at all. We would think we were following the course that had been anything but profitable to ourselves and many others in the past—merely reading over the Scriptures. We would say that the same Heavenly Father who had guided us to this truth, to this understanding of the Scriptures as his children, if he had some further information for us he would bring it to our attention in some manner; and therefore we would not see the necessity of reading the new Testament every day or every year; we would not consider that necessary. We would consider that the Scripture which says, “They shall be all taught of God,” would imply that in his own appointed way God would bring to our attention whatever feature of divine truth would be “meat in due season” for the household of faith.

In other words, God had already revealed to Russell everything he needed to know up to that point, and when God wanted him to know anything else, he would bring it to Russell's attention. In the meantime there was no need for Russell to read the Bible, since he already had everything he needed from it. Was he not God's specially appointed messenger, God's mouthpiece? Of course, this applied especially to the Bible Students. Apparently Russell never read Joshua 1:8:

This book of the law should not depart from your mouth, and you must in an undertone read in it day and night, in order that you may take care to do according to all that is written in it; for then you will make your way successful and then you will act wisely.

**p. 622 § 3** Totally pulling the wool over the reader's eyes about how Russell got his “guidance” from God. The book uses the Society's time-worn but effective technique of saying that “some older publication states 'blah, blah, blah,' and so therefore the current conclusion is right.” This obviates the need for the current writer to have to explain things, leaving the reader who doesn't understand what is being said thinking he must be stupid for not following the argument. Remember that the writer of the *Proclaimers* book is supposed to be presenting evidence that Russell was guided by God.

The context of the quotation in paragraph 3 changes the meaning considerably from what the paragraph intends the reader to get. In the July 15, 1906 *Watch Tower*, on page 229, Russell wrote:

Many are the inquiries relative to the truths presented in MILLENNIAL DAWN and ZION'S WATCH TOWER, as to whence they came and how they developed to their present symmetrical and beautiful proportions—Were they the results of visions? Did God in any supernatural way grant the solution of these hitherto mysteries of his plan? Are the writers more than ordinary beings? Do they claim any supernatural wisdom or power? or how comes this revelation of God's truth?

No, dear friends, I claim nothing of superiority, nor supernatural power, dignity or authority; nor do I aspire to exalt myself in the estimation of my brethren of the household of faith...

No, the truths I present, as God's mouthpiece, were not revealed in visions or dreams nor by God's audible voice, nor all at once, but gradually, especially since 1870, and particularly since 1880. Neither is this clear unfolding of truth due to any human ingenuity or acuteness of perception, but to the simple fact that God's due time has come; and if I did not speak, and no other agent could be found, the very stones would

cry out.

**p. 623 § 2** States: “As his death neared, he did not take the view that there was nothing more to be learned.” That is true, based on WTS quotations from 1914 through 1916. However, compare this claim to Russell's earlier discussion from the September 15, 1910 *Watch Tower* quoted above, which said that God had already revealed everything Russell needed to know, and when God wanted him to know more he would bring it to his attention.

**p. 623 § 3** Russell only “realized” there was more work to be done after the near total collapse of his chronological speculations. The second sentence tries to plaster the Society's current view about “spirit-anointed” Christians onto what Russell said about all true Christians. The quotation should be looked up for context.

**p. 624 § 3** Mention is made of “the blunt manner in which new Bible study material denounced false religion.” This may be referring to *The Finished Mystery*.

**p. 626 § 1** Admission that *The Watch Tower* itself called Russell the “faithful and wise servant.” The Society is to be congratulated on its first clear and open admission of a wart on its history. Too bad the rest of the book is not so honest. This ought to raise some questions in the minds of JW's about the Society's claims about the F&DS being appointed in 1919, etc., but it probably won't.

**p. 626-8** Discussion should be checked against other historical references.

**p. 629 § 4** A textbook example of self-serving circular reasoning. The fact that we observe change proves that change must take place. Since change must take place, it is to be expected that we will observe change. This is a sailboat tacking in circles.

**p. 629 § 5** A false analogy. God's ancient servants certainly did not understand all of his purposes, but they did not speculate about what God had not revealed, and then require every other servant of God to accept that speculation on pain of disfellowshipping. As Russell wrote, on page 188 of the February 1881, *Zion's Watch Tower*:

If we were following a man undoubtedly it would be different with us; undoubtedly one human idea would contradict another and that which was light one or two or six years ago would be regarded as darkness now: But with God there is no variableness, neither shadow of turning, and so it is with truth; any knowledge or light coming from God must be like its author. A new view of truth never can contradict a former truth. “New light” never extinguishes older “light,” but adds to it. If you were lighting up a building containing seven gas jets you would not extinguish one every time you lighted another, but would add one light to another and they would be in harmony and thus give increase of light: So is it with the light of truth; the true increase is by adding, not by substituting one for another.

**p. 629 § 6** The argument presented is reasonable. Unfortunately it nullifies the Society's claim of being guided by God. One who has to “tack” back and forth to arrive at a correct understanding of God's Word is clearly under his own power, not God's. He should be humble enough to realize it.

**p. 630 § 2** More circular reasoning re: the great crowd. The great crowd couldn't be clearly identified until it began to manifest itself. It manifested itself by being clearly seen. Absurd! It's no wonder “those who severely criticized Brother Russell did not understand these matters either.”

**p. 630 § 3, 4** Doesn't give the reader enough information to understand what it's talking about. All the reader knows is that some sort of dispute took place. Finally the Society decided on an understanding that has more or less remained in place until today. Again God is left out of this procedure.

Throughout this time, the Society was publishing various statements that indicated it really knew what it was talking about. What's wrong with simply saying, We don't know what this means? The Society does not want to do this simply because it wants to be elevated in the minds of its adherents as a spiritual authority.

**p. 631** See below for an extended discussion of some of Russell's chronological speculations discussed in this section.

**p. 631 § 1** Some of the Bible Students' hopes and expectations were ridiculed by critics. The writer would like to be able to add, “but this was unjustified.” Of course he cannot. The best he can muster is that those promulgating the false teachings were sincere.

**p. 631 § 2** A good and clear statement of basic beliefs. What is not stated is that Russell and Rutherford went way beyond these into totally unjustified speculation, and then required their followers to believe these speculations as truth. Had they been labeled as speculations there would have been no problem. The truth is that the originators of these speculations did not see them as such, but as the product of God's guidance of them as individuals.

**p. 631 § 3, 4** Again, using the term “Bible chronology” for the speculations of Christopher Bowen and others is an insult to God's Word. The paragraph misleads the reader by saying that “they had surely approached the dawn of the foretold Millennium.” But they believed that the Millennium had already started in 1874. Furthermore, the paragraph assumes that 6000 years and a 7th 1000 year period have some significance. This ancient rabbinic tradition is so ingrained in WTS thinking that writers never even question it. Even after the failure of the 1975 prediction this view has barely been moderated. Note that, as usual, the *Proclaimers* book gives no dates for the basis of the chronological calculations.

**p. 631 § 5** Explanation of early views on Jubilee cycles. This partly led to the claim of 1874 as Christ's return.

**p. 632 § 1** Belief that the resurrection occurred in 1878 is described. This claim is a serious matter, because 2 Tim. 2:18 indicates that some in the 1st century who taught that the resurrection had occurred when it really hadn't were classed as men who “have deviated from the truth.” The Society uses this example as a basis for declaring apostate any who even slightly deviates from its corporate line. By the Society's own standard, Russell was an apostate.

The 2nd footnote says that certain “parallels” led to the suggestion of 1915 as a “culmination of anarchistic upheaval,” and that this new date was incorporated in revised versions of *Studies In The Scriptures* beginning in about 1914. The paragraph does not say when this change of understanding occurred, merely saying “it was stated,” but it occurred sometime in 1912. This can be seen from the dates given in Vol. 2 of *Studies*, where early 1912 printings use 1914 everywhere, mid-1912 versions have 1915 substituted in certain places, and late 1912 versions have 1915 substituted in every place the 1916 versions do. The March 1, 1915 *Watch Tower* called attention to some of these changes, on page 5649 of Reprints, and may have additional information. By not giving the source references, this book deftly covers over the fact that there were some 35 years between the original speculations about parallels and the later ones that caused 1915 to become significant.

The evidence is that 1914 was changed to 1915 in some places simply because many of the events Russell had predicted would occur long before 1914 never happened, and this failure forced him to rethink all of the dates. This has some support in the following material from a 1912 *Watch Tower*. Likely this is the source for the “extended parallels.”

The discussion was in the context of a question about Russell's chronology that came up as early as 1904—what about the “zero year”? Was the length of time from 1 B.C. to 1 A.D. one year, or two? Russell discussed this, as

well as summarizing its application to his chronology, in the December 1, 1912 *Watch Tower*, pages 377-8. He was evidently rather confused about it, and said that the end of the times of the Gentiles could come in either 1914 or 1915.

Since this question is agitating the minds of a considerable number of the friends, we have presented it here in some detail. We remind the readers, however, that nothing in the Scriptures says definitely that the trouble upon the Gentiles will be accomplished before the close of the Times of the Gentiles, whether that be October, 1914, or October, 1915. The trouble doubtless will be considerable before the final crash, even though that crash come suddenly, like the casting of a great millstone into the sea. (Rev. 18:21) The parallel between the Jewish harvest and the present harvest would corroborate the thought that the trouble to the full will be accomplished by October, 1915.

Many of our readers will recall our reference to this subject in a sermon preached at Allegheny, Pa., January 11, 1904, and published in the *Pittsburgh Gazette*. We make an extract from that sermon as follows:

“We find, then, that the Seven Times of Israel's punishment and the Seven Times of Gentile dominion are the same; and that they began with the captivity of Zedekiah, and, as will be seen from the Chart, they terminate with the year 1915. According to the best obtainable evidences on the subject, synchronized with the Scriptural testimony, Zedekiah's captivity took place in October, 605 1/4 years before A.D. 1. If we will add to this 1914 1/4 years, we will have the year, October, 1915, as the date for the end of Gentile supremacy in the world—the end of the lease of 2,520 years, which will not be renewed. Instead, he whose right the kingdom is, shall take possession of it. This, therefore, marks when the Lord himself shall assume control of the world's affairs, to end its reign of sin and death, and to bring in the True Light.”

There surely is room for slight differences of opinion on this subject and it behooves us to grant each other the widest latitude. The lease of power to the Gentiles may end in October, 1914, or in October, 1915. And the period of intense strife and anarchy “such as never was since there was a nation” may be the final ending of the Gentile Times or the beginning of Messiah's reign. [See Vol. 2, *SCRIPTURE STUDIES*.]

**p. 632 § 2** A lesson in how to sanitize a false prophecy. Explains the basis for the 1925 prediction as yet another revised misunderstanding of the Jubilee cycles. Pulls a rabbit out of the hat: “What a happy prospect!” Kind of like Santa Claus coming this Christmas: “What a happy prospect!”

**p. 632 § 3** Blames KJV for Russell's getting the chronology wrong. See the extended discussion at the end of these notes for details. The footnotes admit that Russell's chronology was completely wrong. The “corrected” chronology led to the 1975 prediction. Again note the hilarious attempt at sanitizing the false prediction: “This later led to the idea—sometimes stated as a possibility, sometimes more firmly—that since the seventh millennium of human history would begin in 1975, events associated with the beginning of Christ's Millennial Reign might start to take place then.”

**p. 633 § 1** Admits that the chronological speculations were wrong and bore the fruit of disappointment. “Disappointment” is an understatement.

**p. 633 § 2** Clearly referring to Raymond Franz, Ed Dunlap and others. The paragraph is again thoroughly misleading because the only dates given are 1925 and 1975. Most of the crucial events with respect to 1975 that are referred to actually took place in 1980 through 1983. They really had no relation to 1975. The difficulties that Raymond Franz and certain others had may have had some relation to the 1975 date, but their published material shows that other factors were far more important in their ultimately leaving the Society. Of course, the Society does not want its membership to know the truth, and so it casts all these events in as vague a manner as possible.

**p. 633 § 4** States that “some expectations had not been fulfilled.” The truth is that no expectations had been fulfilled, not for 1914, 1918, 1925 or 1975, or times in between. Gives Daniel's prophecy of the 69 weeks as an example of fulfilled prophecy. This raises several issues. First, the Society's “explanation” of the chronology of

the 69 weeks prophecy has about as much weight as its claims about 1914. Second, Daniel's prophecy leaves little to the imagination. Events associated with the starting and ending times are clearly stated. The only speculation involved is whether the “weeks” are weeks of years. All commentators agree that they are. Claims about 1914 are in a different category entirely.

**p. 634** A fascinating letter by C. J. Woodworth. It is of note that, as screwy as he was in some ways, he made the effort to write to someone he saw as in spiritual trouble. Contrast this with the Society's present attitude that any who dissent are not worthy of further contact.

Paragraph 6 of this letter indicates once again that the belief of the Bible Students just after 1914 was that the war would culminate in world anarchy. The last paragraph does not indicate that Woodworth was later seen as a crank. See Penton, p. 52.

**p. 635 § 1** Another self-serving argument. Paints a picture that the 1914 prediction was a unique and wonderful thing. In reality, very many years of the 19th and 20th centuries have been claimed as the end of the Gentile Times by someone.

**p. 635 § 2** Admits that Russell believed old order would end in 1914 and new order would begin.

**p. 635 § 3** The meaning of the quoted material is grossly distorted by leaving off a key statement from the end. The paragraph states:

In its issue of October 15, 1913, *The Watch Tower* had stated: “According to the best chronological reckoning of which we are capable, it is approximately that time—whether it be October, 1914, or later. Without dogmatizing, we are looking for certain events: (1) The termination of the Gentile Times—Gentile supremacy in the world—and (2) For the inauguration of Messiah's Kingdom in the world.”

This is completely misleading because the very next sentences in *The Watch Tower* (p. 5328 Reprints) said:

The kingdoms of earth will come to an end, and “the God of heaven will set up a kingdom.”

Other references show that this kingdom was to be earthly, not heavenly, as the *Proclaimers* book implies. See *The Time Is At Hand*, pp. 76-7, 101. Furthermore, the same *Watch Tower* issue contained an introduction to the book by Morton Edgar on how the Great Pyramid supported the claim of 1914 for the end of the Gentile Times. See p. 5336 of Reprints.

**p. 635 § 5** Yet another false analogy. The apostles at times had wrong expectations but they did not teach them to others. Jesus corrected them as soon as they questioned him about it.

**p. 637 § 2** Introduction to section that explains importance of adherence to witnessing work and to “theocratic” organization. Very self-serving claims imply that only those who adhered to the Society's methods of preaching and believed that it is truly God's organization were of good heart condition.

**p. 638 § 1** Speaks of those who “felt it beneath their dignity to preach from house to house.” But Rutherford was the prime example of this. Even today many GB members don't do it. See *Crisis of Conscience*, by Raymond Franz.

**p. 638 § 4** In 1932 elective office of elder was discontinued. Elective is emphasized since office of appointed elder was instituted in 1971. Does not indicate how elders were then appointed, except that a service director was appointed by the Society.

**p. 639 § 3** Another subtle attempt at misrepresentation. “Governing Body” is capitalized, whereas in 1938 the

function was vested in Rutherford alone. The board of directors could hardly be called a governing body. There wasn't even a "governing body" mentioned until 1944. See various Publications Indexes, under "Jehovah's Witnesses, governing body." These indicate the official switch from gb to GB in 1976. See also *Crisis of Conscience*, by Raymond Franz.

**p. 639 § 4** How does the WTS know that "the work" applies to "our day?" Because of the claims that we are now in the last days, and that its interpretation of Matthew 24, Mark 13 and Luke 21 is correct. We may well be in the last days, but this assumption should be clearly set out.

**p. 645** Begins discussion of Russell's marital situation. No mention made of what were probably the real sources of the trouble—Russell's insistence on a "platonic" marriage, and his gigantic ego. No mention of the following statement by the presiding Justice from the decision in his 1908 divorce trial:

His course of conduct towards his wife evidenced such insistent egotism and extravagant self praise that it would be manifest to the jury that his conduct towards her was one of continual arrogant domination, that would necessarily render the life of any Christian woman a burden and make her condition intolerable.

**p. 648 § 1** 1918 talk "Millions Now Living \*May\* Never Die" mentioned. This use of 'may' rather than 'will' was the source of some confusion at the 1991 and 1992 district assemblies, since 'will' was always used in published material.

**p. 692 § 3** Describes with approval the publicity given to JW opposers' tactics. Note the contrast with p. 633 § 2, where JW opposers are ostracized for giving publicity to the wrongs done.

**p. 706 § 1** States that "true followers of Christ in our day must be humble, willing to accept discipline and, when necessary, make adjustments, in order to bring their thinking into ever closer harmony with God's." First, this is a non-sequitur with respect to the two questions the paragraph asked. Second, does anyone think that the Governing Body is willing to apply this counsel to itself?

**p. 706 § 3** States that "the one true Christian congregation would have to be an organization that holds to the Bible as its foremost authority, not one that quotes scattered verses but rejects the rest when these do not conform to its contemporary theology." Well said! Will the Society apply this standard to itself from now on? How about with respect to all the scriptures it ignores that bear on the 1914 doctrine?

**p. 707 § 3** Lists some of Russell's fundamental beliefs. Unfortunately leaves out some that he considered fundamental but were later abandoned, such as on the pyramids. Oddly enough the book only mentions pyramids once, on page 201, although it was a prominent feature of Russell's theology and deserves more than a passing mention.

**p. 708 § 1** Begins discussion of how JWs are led by God. Also presents key question asked by critics about 'adjustments to understanding': "If they were truly chosen and led by God and if their teachings were backed by Scriptural authority to begin with, why would such changes be necessary?"

**p. 708 § 2** Explicitly states that JW organization is not inspired.

**p. 708 § 3** Contradicts the previous paragraph by making an implicit distinction between being 'inspired' by God and merely being 'led' or 'guided,' and then claiming that "Jehovah leads or guides them to such understanding by means of his holy spirit." This is the key: a flat claim that God guides them. No other explanation is given of how "Jehovah leads his people."

**p. 708 § 4** False analogy with a dark room, and more circular reasoning. How do we know that Jehovah

gradually and progressively enlightens his people? Because that's how he's done it with Jehovah's Witnesses. See p. 709 § 1. Fails to mention Russell's view: "A new view of truth never can contradict a former truth. 'New light' never extinguishes older 'light,' but adds to it."

**p. 708 § 5** Again compares the lack of understanding of God's servants in ancient times with those in modern times. Again fails to mention that those ancient servants are not recorded as having censured and persecuted those who refused to accept their misunderstandings.

**p. 709 § 1** Fine words about truth remaining fixed despite the misunderstandings of God's servants.

**p. 709 § 2** Claims that it was the "zeal and enthusiasm for the vindication of Jehovah's sovereignty" that "have led to premature expectations as to when the end of Satan's wicked system of things would come." Hogwash! Zeal and enthusiasm for God most certainly do not have to lead to the gross prophetic speculations the Watchtower Society has indulged in. The Bible records no such things.

**p. 709 § 3** A key argument in the question of whether the Society is a false prophet. Again compares the mere question of Jesus' disciples about the imminence of the Kingdom in their day with the gross speculation the Society has forced its members to accept. This is total nonsense! The Society has preached these falsehoods worldwide for many decades. It has disfellowshipped and labeled as wicked any members who publicly disagreed with these false prophecies. There is no comparison.

**p. 709 § 4** Lists the requirements for the one true religion. Of course, these are precisely the doctrines of JWs, so no surprise here. They fail to note that several other religions also meet these requirements.

**p. 711 § 5** Talks about the love JWs have for one another. But on command, this love can be turned off or on as by a switch. The Society need only push the switch.

**p. 713 § 4** Says that JWs "keep searching the Scriptures with an open mind." Time will tell.

## ***Proclaimers'* book blames Russell's chronological error of 100 years on the King James Version**

Beginning on page 631, *Jehovah's Witnesses—Proclaimers Of God's Kingdom* discusses a bit of the development of the chronological framework used by C. T. Russell. Of course, nearly all this framework has been abandoned because later research showed it was quite unscriptural even at the time it was first written down. In an effort to soften how unscriptural this chronological speculation actually was, and to give the impression that it was in fact scriptural, the book says, with reference to the Bible Students' hopes and expectations for when many of their beliefs would be fulfilled:

It was only natural that they should wonder when and how these things would occur. Did the inspired Scriptures provide any clues?

Using Bible chronology that had first been laid out by Christopher Bowen of England, they thought that 6,000 years of human history had ended in 1873, that thereafter they were in the seventh thousand-year period of human history, and that they had surely approached the dawn of the foretold Millennium. The series of books known as *Millennial Dawn* (and later called *Studies In The Scriptures*), which were penned by C. T. Russell, drew attention to the implications of this according to what the Bible Students understood from the Scriptures.

Note that the *Proclaimers* book calls Bowen's chronology Bible chronology. That is like calling belief in hellfire a Bible doctrine.

Something else that was seen as a possible time indicator involved the arrangement that God instituted in ancient Israel for a Jubilee, a year of release, every 50th year. This came after a series of seven 7-year periods, each of which ended with a sabbath year. During the Jubilee year, Hebrew slaves were freed and hereditary land possessions that had been sold were restored. (Lev. 25:8-10) Calculations based on this cycle of years led to the conclusion that perhaps a greater Jubilee for all the earth had begun in the autumn of 1874, that evidently the Lord had returned in that year and was invisibly present, and that “the times of restitution of all things” had arrived.—Acts 3:19-21, KJV.

Next are discussed other aspects of Russell's chronology, such as his claim that the resurrection had begun in 1878. Finally, a different understanding of the Jubilee cycles is discussed. This became the basis for Rutherford's failed prediction of 1925 as “the end of the world.”

On pages 632-3, the *Proclaimers* book continues:

Later on, during the years from 1935 through 1944, a review of the overall framework of Bible chronology revealed that a poor translation of Acts 13:19, 20 in the *King James Version*,\* along with certain other factors, had thrown off the chronology by over a century.#

The footnotes read:

\* Compare the rendering in *The Emphasised Bible*, translated by J. B. Rotherham; see also the footnote on Acts 13:20 in the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures—With References*.

# See *The Truth Shall Make You Free*, chapter XI; *The Kingdom Is At Hand*, pages 171-5; also *The Golden Age*, March 27, 1935, pages 391, 412. In the light of these corrected tables of Bible chronology, it could be seen that previous use of the dates 1873 and 1878, as well as related dates derived from these on the basis of parallels with first-century events, were based on mis-understandings.

As is usual in the *Proclaimers* book, just enough information is given the reader to form a dim picture of the real situation. The things that were done are described with passive tense verbs, and the people who did them are not mentioned. This casts a comfortable anonymity over the proceedings and isolates those responsible from what they did. Everything is seen through a veil of obscurantism.

The last paragraph quoted above gives the impression that the chronology used by Russell and the Bible Students was thrown off by a factor not under their control, namely, the poor translation of Acts 13:19, 20 in the KJV. See also p. 133, footnote\*. But this factor was only a problem for Christopher Bowen, not for anyone with access to newer Bible translations based on ancient Greek texts that were just coming to light. For example, the *Emphatic Diaglott*, first published in completed form in 1864, had a marginal note showing the alternate rendering from the “Vatican Manuscript,” which was not available to the KJV translators but is the basis for the Society's *New World Translation*. This alternate rendering was part of the basis for the Society's changes to chronology from 1935 through 1946. It came to light as early as 1775, when the first of J. J. Griesbach's Greek texts became available. This text was the basis for the *Diaglott*. The *Diaglott* was well known, of course, to N. H. Barbour and C. T. Russell, since its rendering of the Greek *parousia* as “presence” was the basis for their doctrine of the “invisible presence” of Christ. They knew this translation very well.

Was the *Emphatic Diaglott* the only translation that indicated an alternate rendering for Acts 13:19, 20? Not at all. After the mid-19th century many translations became available using the latest Greek texts. The well-known text of Westcott and Hort, today's standard, became available in 1881, although others were available much earlier. The *English Revised Bible*, using the latest Greek texts, was available by 1885, and many other Bibles using the latest texts became available by about 1900. The *American Standard Version*, a revision of the *English Revised Bible*, was published in 1901. According to the *Proclaimers* book (pp. 605-6) the Society was distributing a variety of Bibles by 1896, of which the following used the latest Greek texts to render Acts 13:19, 20: *Tischendorf's New Testament*, *the Variorum Bible*, *Rotherham's translation*, *the Holman Linear Parallel Edition containing the English Revised Version*, and the *Emphatic Diaglott*.

So while Christopher Bowen might be excused for publishing an incorrect chronology, there was no such excuse for N. H. Barbour in the early 1870s, and certainly not for the Watchtower Society after 1900. It is quite evident that the only reason the chronology was retained in spite of the availability of correct translations is that it had already become well established doctrine and was seen by Russell as divinely inspired. Concerning these dates, *Zion's Watch Tower*, July 15, 1894, said on page 226, under the subtitle "Can It Be Delayed Until 1914?":

"We see no reason for changing the figures—nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, God's dates, not ours."

The footnote marked with a \* above inadvertently admits that this information was known early on. The footnote marked with a # refers to several other references. Interestingly, chapter XI of *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (1943) quotes Acts 13:19, 20 from the *American Standard Version* and makes no references to any changes of understanding from earlier publications or from the *KJV* or from the *Diaglott*. Nor does the reference in *The Kingdom Is At Hand* (1944) explain these things. It only states the results as a given.

Apparently it was left for the 1973 book *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* to explain what was done. Chapter 11 contains an explanation of the reasoning behind the presentation in the earlier books. The book gives an explanation on pages 206-11, which will not be reproduced here. Let it suffice to say that a discrepancy of 100 years is evident between the 450 year period of the Judges implied by the *KJV* and *Diaglott* renderings of Acts 13:19, 20 and the 350 years calculated in the discussion in paragraph 51. The *Proclaimers* book says that the discrepancy was due to a poor translation of this scripture in the *KJV*, but *God's Kingdom Of A Thousand Years* expressly states that the error was due to following the suggestion of a footnote in *The Emphatic Diaglott*. Paragraph 52 does mention the *KJV* as being in agreement with the *Diaglott*, but the impression is that the argument in the *Diaglott* was the deciding factor. So the book clearly admits that there were factors that could have caused a correct chronology to be ascertained, if only proper account was taken of all the relevant information. It must be asked, Since the correct information was available to N. H. Barbour and C. T. Russell, why did God's spirit not direct them to a correct understanding? Did God really want the correct understanding to be hidden for some 70 years, until 1943?

The *God's Kingdom* book also only speaks of C. T. Russell as having made these calculations. No mention is made of N. H. Barbour or Christopher Bowen or any other so called Bible chronologers of the time. This is another example of the Society's past practice of attempting to credit Russell with originating all of his teachings, rather than attributing them to various Adventist and other sources. The Watchtower Society is to be commended for rectifying this in the *Proclaimers* book.

Continuing with our discussion of the presentation in the *Proclaimers* book, a serious omission is that it does not tell the reader about the alternate rendering for Acts 13:19, 20 mentioned in the *Diaglott*, as discussed above. Instead, the *KJV* is blamed for the error. This alternate rendering, if followed, would have required all of Barbour and Russell's chronology to be shifted forward by 100 years. Christ's presence would have to begin in 1974, not 1874. Of course, this was not a desirable result, and so rather than honestly evaluating both renderings, which were available in *The Diaglott*, they used the incorrect but comforting rendering of Acts 13 as a basis for their calculations.

This discussion brings up another problem with the *God's Kingdom* book. It says that the error in the calculation of the start of Christ's presence was due to faulty information in the *Diaglott*. However, the difference between 1874 and 1914 is 40 years, not 100. The book, in paragraph 55, sidesteps the explanation of how 1874 was moved to 1914 as the start of Christ's presence. Rather than explaining how the 100 year discrepancy fits in, it merely says:

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... 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... What, then, about the parousia (presence) of Christ? Page 324 of the above book positively says: "The King's presence or parousia began in 1914." Also, in the *Watchtower*... the statement is made: "... Messiah, the Son of man, came into Kingdom power A.D. 1914 and... this constitutes his second coming and the beginning of his second parousia or presence."

So, with a wave of the pen—"the book positively says..."—the author of *God's Kingdom* evades a difficult explanation. This is reminiscent of a similar evasion in the 1944 book *The Kingdom Is At Hand*. On page 171 it stated that *The Truth Shall Make You Free* explained how the Society changed the date of Jerusalem's destruction from the summer of 606 B.C. to 607 B.C. But the latter book did no such thing, and so the Society never actually gave a reason for the change, although it claimed it did. The same kind of thing was done in changing the date for the beginning of the prophecy of 69 weeks for the Messiah from 454 to 455 B.C.E. in the mid-1940s.

Our discussion brings up some other interesting points. Paragraph 49 of the *God's Kingdom* book makes a number of unstated assumptions that have all proved unfounded. While the Bible nowhere states it, the book assumes that Russell's assigning 7000 years to a "magic" time period is correct. In other words, it assumes that there are precisely seven millennia in a creative "week." This notion can be traced back to Jewish rabbinical thought. Russell himself knew this was only an assumption, but his successors seem to have forgotten it. He wrote in *The Time Is At Hand*, p. 39:

Though the Bible contains no direct statement that the seventh thousand will be the epoch of Christ's reign, the great Sabbath Day of restitution to the world, yet the venerable tradition is not without a reasonable foundation.

The Society applied this "venerable tradition" to its 1975 prediction, and the failure is known to all students of religion.

A little thought shows how unreasonable this assumption is. When God created the earth, "all the sons of God began shouting in applause" (Job 38:7). So angels were on hand when God created man, and **they knew the exact date this occurred**. Therefore, if the 7th millennium corresponded to Christ's reign **the angels would have known when it would start, and also the start of Armageddon and "that day and hour" of Matthew 24:36**. But because Matt. 24:36 says that "concerning that day and hour nobody knows, neither the angels of the heavens nor the Son, but only the Father," there can be **no correspondence** between the 1000 year reign and the 7th 1000 year period of human history.

It should be clear that the Society's publications, even the new history book that was billed in the public talk releasing it as a candid look at the history of Jehovah's Witnesses, do not give a complete picture of the many chronological calculations it has advanced over the years.

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