

Belief in this concept has given the men of the Governing Body tremendous control over the thinking of the rest of Jehovah's Witnesses. To question *them*, to doubt *them*, to disagree with *them* becomes the same as questioning, doubting and disagreeing with God himself! Witnesses don't notice how often they accept what comes from the Society simply because they believe it is God's organization rather than because they can prove it to themselves from the Bible.

The Point: Of all the things that *can* be known about this religion, there is only one thing that **needs** to be known—**Is the Watchtower Society God's organization?** In other words, they can tell you about paradise earth, everlasting life (you will never die), God's name "Jehovah," God's name is not "God" or "Lord," God is not a trinity, Jesus is not God, the Holy Spirit is not a person but just an active force, Jesus didn't die on a cross, the soul is not immortal, hell is not hot, the dead are not conscious, Armageddon, etc., etc. But the only thing that you **need to know** is—**Is the Watchtower Society God's organization?**

When Jehovah's Witnesses are asked *why* they believe the Watchtower Society is God's organization, they will give a variety of answers which usually have to do with what the Society is teaching and doing **today**. But according to their official teaching, *whatever is going on today has nothing to do with whether or not the Watchtower Society is God's organization*. The only way any organization could be God's organization would be if God had appointed it as such. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Watchtower Society received that appointment **in the spring of 1919** in fulfillment of Matthew 24:45-47. On the Watchtower's official website under the heading, "What Jehovah's Witnesses Believe," they list 40 of their teachings. But their most important teaching, the only teaching that needs to be known—"The Watchtower Society is God's organization"—is not mentioned.

MATTHEW 24:45-47 — THE MOST IMPORTANT SCRIPTURE IN WATCHTOWER THEOLOGY

It's not necessary to agree or disagree with *their interpretation* of this passage. It is necessary to *understand it*, and then *hold them to it*. Whether *their interpretation of it is biblically* correct doesn't matter. The only concern here is if it is **historically** correct. That is, does what went on in their history agree with the way they interpret Matthew 24:45-47...

45 Who really is the faithful and discreet slave [organization] whom [Jesus] appointed over his [disciples], to give them their [spiritual] food at the proper time? **46** Happy is that slave [organization] if [Jesus] on arriving [in 1914] finds him doing so. **47** Truly I say to you [in the spring of 1919] he will appoint [the Watchtower Society] over all his [earthly interests].

They teach that the Second Coming of Christ occurred in 1914 to begin Jesus' "invisible presence" in fulfillment of Matthew 24:3. (For the purpose of this study, it helps to temporarily assume that Jesus did return in 1914 and then hold them to that teaching.) Then in 1918 he began to make

an examination of all the religions claiming to represent him to see if any of them had been faithfully and discreetly providing true teachings of the Bible (spiritual food) at the proper time during his absence. They say the only religion he found doing so was the Watchtower Society, and therefore *Jesus appointed them over all his earthly interests in the spring of 1919*. Their *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* book explains this very critical point (pp 350-355):

The serving of food, the right sort of food at the proper time was the issue. It had to be according to this that a decision must be rendered by the returned master [Jesus].. On inspecting [the Society] in the year 1919...Jesus Christ did find the appointed "slave" faithful and discreet in the feeding of his [disciples].

This was the most important event in Watchtower history. And while the Governing Body prefers to draw attention to what is *presently* being taught by the Society, it is evident that Jesus would not have made a decision *in 1919* based upon what the Society is teaching *today*. He would have made his decision based upon what they had been teaching *up until 1919*. He would check the "quality" of those teachings to make sure they were the right things to be teaching and the right time to be teaching them ("the right sort of food at the proper time"). What was Jesus' decision? The above book simply asserts—they "met the test" (p 350). This is the *only official basis* for their claim to being God's "faithful and discreet slave organization" and "the only true religion" today. The only way to know if the Watchtower Society is God's organization today is to **examine the same teachings they say Jesus examined in 1918-1919**. Jehovah's Witnesses have never done this! While the Society no longer publishes any of the literature they say Jesus examined then, they have made such an examination possible today with the publication of the organization's history in their book—*JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES Proclaimers of God's Kingdom (1993)*.

The Watchtower always has strict standards when judging other religions, thus according to Matthew 7:2, Jesus would have judged the Society's teachings (from their beginning in 1876 up until 1919) using those same standards. We have mentioned two of those standards already. The June 1, 2001 *Watchtower* gives us two more: "To enjoy God's backing, one must **(1)** teach only what God reveals in his Word, and **(2)** reject teachings based on human wisdom" (p 14). These Watchtower standards will visually show which of the 44 teachings being considered did or did not pass the test.

44 TEACHINGS JESUS EXAMINED #1 THE SECOND COMING OF CHRIST 40 years too early, then 29 years too late

Today the Watchtower teaches that Jesus returned in 1914. But the *Proclaimers* book says that this was *not* what they were teaching *before, during* and for many years *after* Jesus' inspection in 1918-1919. It says (pp 46,47) that in 1876 Second Adventist Nelson Barbour "succeeded in convincing Charles Taze Russell that Christ's invisible presence [Second Coming] had

begun in **1874**." Page 133 mentions this again along with a footnote explaining that "a clearer understanding of biblical chronology [pointing to 1914] was published in **1943**." The footnote refers to the 1943 book *The Truth Shall Make You Free* that **changed the date** of Jesus' return from 1874 to 1914. Page 209 of *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached* refers to this same 1943 book where the Society's new understanding of the end of six thousand years of man's existence "did away with the year 1874 C.E. as the date of the return of the Lord Jesus Christ." Even if Witnesses notice what the *Proclaimers* book *says*, they don't realize **what it means**.

(1) The Society didn't meet any of their own standards relative to their teaching about the Second Coming of Christ.

Christ's Second Coming in 1874	Yes	No
Watchtower Standards		
1. Right teachings		X
2. Right time to be teaching them		X
3. Teachings that God revealed in his Word		X
4. Rejected because of human wisdom		X

(2) It also means that if Jesus did return in 1914, neither President Russell nor President Rutherford ever knew it! Russell died in 1916, and Rutherford died in 1942. According to the *Proclaimers* book, the date for Christ's Second Coming was not changed to 1914 until the year following Rutherford's death. So if Jesus returned in 1914, neither man ever knew it. It's possible that there's not a single Jehovah's Witness that realizes this. What are the chances that God would select such prominent men for his sole "channel of communication" but then never communicate to them when his Son had returned?

(3) It isn't just that they didn't know that Jesus Second Coming was in 1914. They both insisted that they *did* know that it happened in 1874. What are the chances that "the God of *truth*" would deliberately allow his earthly channel to misinform the whole world about his Son's return for almost **seven decades** (1876-1943)?

(4) The title of *The Watchtower* magazine included the words "Herald of Christ's Presence." According to what they teach today, from 1879 to 1914 it was announcing that he was present *when he wasn't!*

(5) Since they believed Jesus returned in 1874, it means they were not "watching" for his return in 1914. And yet in Luke's parallel account (12:37) Christ said that they would be "happy" only if "on arriving [he] found them watching for his return." But he would not have found them watching in 1914 because they believed he had already arrived 40 years earlier.

(6) Luke 12:36 says, "...at [Jesus'] arriving and knocking they may *at once* open to him." But if he arrived and began knocking in 1914, but they didn't acknowledge his arrival until 1943, it means that he would have had to knock for *twenty-nine years* before they opened to him.

(7) Since in 1914 they were the only religion that believed that Jesus had already returned, it means that they were the

only Christian religion that was *not* watching or waiting for his return in 1914. And yet Jehovah's Witnesses have been led to believe that they were the *only* religion that was watching for his return in that year! Page 713 of the *Proclaimers* book refers to the December 1, 1984 *Watchtower*. That magazine contains a series of articles dealing with "Christian watchfulness." On page 14 it says, "So when Christ's invisible presence began in 1914, happy were [Jehovah's Witnesses] to have been found watching." But that's not true, is it? There wasn't anyone associated with the Watchtower Society watching for Christ's "invisible presence" to begin in 1914 because they all believed it had already begun *forty years earlier*.

So the Watchtower Society had not been either faithful or discreet relative to the time of the Second Coming of Christ. And yet the only way they even have a *chance of being God's organization today* is if they had been both faithful and discreet from 1876 to 1919. They had not been "faithful" by waiting for God to reveal the date of Christ's Second Coming; and they had not been "discreet" when they announced the wrong date, not only up until 1919, but all the way until 1943 (67 years).

#2 CHRIST'S 1000-YEAR REIGN—1873

Today Jehovah's Witnesses are looking forward to the beginning of "the 1000-year Reign of Jesus Christ." But the "spiritual food" that Russell had provided right up to his death was that Christ's Reign had *already* begun. In his *Foreword* to the 1916 edition of *The Time is at Hand*, he said,

The Bible chronology herein presented shows that the six great thousand-year Days, beginning with Adam were ended, and that the great Seventh Day, the thousand years of Christ's Reign, began in 1873.

Russell placed great emphasis on the modern inventions that had come into existence since 1873 as proof that "Christ's 1000-year Reign" had begun in that year. The very first invention he offered as proof was "**the sewing machine**, one of the first, began to reach its perfection 43 years ago" (*Ibid.*).

Christ's Reign Began in 1873

Watchtower Standards	Yes	No
1. Right teachings		X
2. Right time to be teaching them		X
3. Teachings that God revealed in his Word		X
4. Rejected because of human wisdom		X

#3 "MILLIONS NOW LIVING WILL NEVER DIE!"

In February of 1918 (just when they say Jesus began his examination) President Rutherford began a worldwide public campaign with the above dramatic title. In 1920 he published a booklet with the same name. The reason why millions of people then living would never die was because Jesus was going to begin his "1000-year Reign" in **1925**. He also assured everyone that they "may confidently expect that **1925** will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and the faithful prophets of old" (p 89). They and many other "faithful men of old" would then become "Princes" in all the earth to help in the administration of "Christ's Kingdom on earth." Then just

as confidently he concluded: “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!” (p 97). But as it turned out, millions then living *did* die. Jesus *didn't* begin a 1000-year Reign, and he *didn't* resurrect anyone in 1925. The reason this matters so much is because Jesus' illustration doesn't allow for his “faithful and discreet slave” to be proclaiming a false teaching or prophecy at *any* time, *especially not all during the time he was examining them.*

Millions Now Living Will Never Die—1925

Watchtower Standards	Yes	No
1. Right teachings		X
2. Right time to be teaching them		X
3. Teachings that God revealed in his Word		X
4. Rejected because of human wisdom		X

37 OTHER DATES/EVENTS THAT DIDN'T HAPPEN

4-31 taught by Russell—32-40 taught by Rutherford

- #4 1799: The beginning of “the last days” or “time of the end”
- #5 1829: The beginning of an understanding of the mysteries of prophecy
- #6 1844: Wise virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom
- #7 1846: God's sanctuary was cleansed
- #8 1873: End of 6000 years of human existence
- #9 1874: The beginning of the 40-year “Harvest” or preaching work
- #10 1874: Second cry, “Behold the Bridegroom”
- #11 1874: The beginning of the Battle of Armageddon
- #12 1878: God's Kingdom was “set up” in heaven
- #13 1878: Beginning of Christ's Kingdom Rule
- #14 1878: The fall of “Babylon the Great” (false religion)
- #15 1878: Beginning of “Times of Restitution”
- #16 1881: Close of “the heavenly calling” (spiritual Israel)
- #17 1881: Resurrection of all the “dead in Christ”
- #18 1914: The anointed Christians would be taken to heaven before 1914
- #19 1914: The end of the “Harvest” or preaching work
- #20 1914: God's Kingdom would be firmly established in the earth
- #21 1914: Jesus would be present as earth's new Ruler
- #22 1914: All Gentile nations would be destroyed by God by the end of 1914
- #23 1914: Jerusalem would begin to rise from the dust of divine disfavor to honor
- #24 1914: Israel's blindness would begin to be turned away
- #25 1914: This year would be the farthest limit of the rule of imperfect man
- #26 1914: Battle of Armageddon would end
- #27 1914: Peaceful blessings would begin to be recognized on earth
- #28 1914: Complete destruction of “Babylon the Great” (all other religions)
- #29 1914: The “last days” would end in 1914
- #30 1915: God's Kingdom will be fully established near the end of 1915
- #31 1915: Anointed Christians would be taken to heaven soon after 1914
- #32 1918: God's “fire” from heaven would fall on Christendom

- #33 1918: Millions of church members of Christendom would be destroyed by God
- #34 1918: Christendom would go down to oblivion as a system
- #35 1918: God will destroy the churches wholesale
- #36 1920: There would be worldwide all-embracing anarchy
- #37 1920: All earthly governments will pass away
- #38 1920: All republics will disappear in the fall of 1920
- #39 1925: Anointed Christians would be taken to heaven
- #40 2914: End of the thousand-year Reign of Christ

The references to all the above can be found at <http://www.freeminds.org/history/part1.htm> under the heading, “Spiritual Food at the Proper Time.” Russell's *Studies in the Scriptures* and Rutherford's *The Finished Mystery* are available at <http://www.freeminds.org/sales/tempsale.htm>. In the July 1894 *Watchtower* Russell stated, “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.” Rutherford said his date of 1925 was “**indisputable.**” All of the above dates/events were said to be in fulfillment of *Bible* prophecies, but they all turned out to be unfulfilled *Watchtower* prophecies. Keep in mind that the Society now acknowledges that *all* of these teachings were *not true*. Although Jehovah's Witnesses treat all of this “*wrong food*” at the “*wrong time*” as having no importance today, these teachings would have been very important to Jesus in 1919 if he was examining them to make sure they were serving the “*right food*” at the “*right time.*”

Russell & Rutherford's 37 Dates/Events

Watchtower Standards	Yes	No
1. Right teachings		X
2. Right time to be teaching them		X
3. Teachings that God revealed in his Word		X
4. Rejected because of human wisdom		X

#41-44 CHRISTMAS/BIRTHDAYS/THE CROSS & THE GREAT PYRAMID OF GIZEH

On pages 200 & 201 the *Proclaimers* book mentions four other “Practices That Have Been Abandoned” sometime after 1919. They didn't stop celebrating **Christmas** until more than seven years after Jesus' inspection was completed. They didn't stop celebrating **birthdays** until several years after 1919. Today they say **the cross** is of pagan origin. But it was predominantly displayed on the front cover of *every* issue of the *Watchtower* magazine up until October 15, 1931! The *Proclaimers* book says, “For some 35 years Pastor Russell taught that the **Great Pyramid of Gizeh** was God's stone witness, corroborating biblical time periods” (p 201). One of those time periods was that Jesus' Second Coming occurred in 1874. Russell used internal measurements of this pyramid—one inch equals one year (“inch years”)—to arrive at his dates. He often referred to the pyramid as the “Bible in stone.” The *Proclaimers* book says that nine years after Jesus' inspection was over Rutherford “abandoned the idea that an Egyptian pyramid has anything to do with true worship.”

Today these four teachings are considered so offensive to God that any Witness who believes or practices even *one* of

them will be disfellowshipped—deserving of God's “everlasting punishment.” If they are so wrong today when the Society *doesn't* teach them, they must have been just as wrong during all the years they *did* teach them. If these teachings would fail an examination by Jesus today, they sure would have failed his examination in 1918-1919!

Christmas/Birthdays/Cross/Pyramid of Gizeh

Watchtower Standards	Yes	No
1. Right teachings		X
2. Right time to be teaching them		X
3. Teachings that God revealed in his Word		X
4. Rejected because of human wisdom		X

So what would have happened at this *most important event* in Watchtower history—the appointment of Matthew 24:47? What decision would Jesus have made in the spring of 1919? Would he have agreed with former President Fredrick Franz who said in *God's Kingdom of a Thousand Years Has Approached*, “Jesus **did** find the appointed ‘slave’ faithful and discreet in the feeding of his disciples” (pp 349-355)? Or would Jesus have agreed with former Governing Body member Raymond Franz who said in *In Search of Christian Freedom*, “It would be **an insult to Christ Jesus** to say that he selected this organization on the basis of what it was teaching as of 1919” (p 145)?

THE ONE MISTAKE ALL JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES MAKE

All Witnesses fail to carefully examine the Society's claim to being “God's faithful and discreet slave organization” based upon what Russell and Rutherford had been teaching from 1876 to 1919 in fulfillment of Matthew 24:45-47. This is a **BIG** mistake! Because once people have come to believe that Jesus made that Matthew 24:47 appointment in the spring of 1919, from that moment on they become **captives** of that belief—**captives of the concept** that all of God's direction to mankind comes only through the Watchtower Society. It then dominates and controls the thinking of those who write the literature as well as the Witnesses who read it.

The Jehovah's Witnesses Bible study program leads the student to believe that the Society is God's organization *for the wrong reasons*. Those who do a **history study** sooner don't ask for a **Bible study** later! It's ridiculous to believe that any thinking person could imagine that the Watchtower Society could have *ever* passed an examination by Jesus in 1919! Once this is seen about the Society—what went on prior to 1919—then “**God's organization**” becomes an *illusion* that exists only in the minds of Jehovah's Witnesses! The organization that *does* exist is “**The Watchtower organization,**” which is governed, not by the Lord Jesus Christ from heaven, but by a few elderly men in Brooklyn, New York. ☐

—Adapted from **CAPTIVES OF A CONCEPT** by Don Cameron
Former elder of the Jehovah's Witnesses



The **concept** that held about a thousand members of The People's Temple captive was their belief that *Jim Jones* was *God's chosen individual* to teach them God's truths. The **concept** that holds millions of Jehovah's Witnesses captive is their belief that *the Watchtower Society* is *God's chosen organization* to teach them God's truths. Former Jehovah's Witness and Governing Body member, Raymond Franz, had this to say in his book, *Crisis of Conscience* (p 296):

I try in my own mind and heart to understand the feelings of all Jehovah's Witnesses, including those of the Governing Body. Based on my own [60 years] experience among them, I believe that they are, in effect, the **captives of a concept**. The concept or mental image they have of “**the organization**” seems almost to take on a personality of its own, so that the concept itself controls them, moves them, or restrains them, by molding their thinking, their attitudes, their judgments...

Total belief in this concept explains why Jehovah's Witnesses are so willing to accept whatever comes to them from the Watchtower Society no matter how complicated it is or how impossible it may be to understand, even if it doesn't make any sense at all. They view what comes from “God's organization” as coming from God himself. The Society promotes the belief that whatever *they* say, it is as if *God* is the One who is speaking. For example, the February 1, 1967 *Watchtower* asks, “How can one identify the organization through which God is speaking to mankind today?” (p 72). And in the May 1, 2000 *Watchtower*, the Governing Body reminds Witnesses that, “Jehovah speaks to us through the Bible and by means of ‘the faithful and discreet slave’ [organization]” (p 15).

The concept of “the organization” becomes the dominant, controlling force in their lives without them realizing it. Everything is explained and understood from the standpoint that the Society is “God's organization.” This concept keeps most Jehovah's Witnesses from noticing anything wrong no matter how wrong it is. The May 1, 1957 *Watchtower* said,

If you have become thoroughly convinced that this is Jehovah's organization [once you are captive to this concept]...*you shall not be unsettled by anything that happens*...If you really have faith you will know that if something is wrong God will straighten it out eventually (p 284).

For example, although they know that the Bible says that one must come to Jesus Christ for salvation, it doesn't concern them when the Society claims that mankind must also come *to them* for salvation. The November 15, 1981 *Watchtower* said, “Our witness yet includes the invitation to *come to Jehovah's organization for salvation*” (p 21).