

About Rutherford’s writings, the Witnesses believe that “those books do not contain the opinion of any man.”⁶ Only months after his death, *The Watchtower* (1 July 1942, p 203) stated, “During the past twenty years [God] has equipped them with his revealed Word in print, in the form of books, booklets, magazines, tracts and leaflets.”

The Third Watchtower President Taught that Jesus is to be Worshipped

Nathan H. Knorr was elected president when Rutherford died (8 Jan 1942). These are taken from *The Watchtower* in the 1940’s: “Since Jehovah God now reigns...whoever would worship him must also worship and bow down to Jehovah’s Chief One...Christ Jesus...” (1945)⁷ “When he returned to the spirit realms from which he descended to earth, Jesus Christ was again seen in the midst of God’s holy messengers or angels in heaven...fulfilling the Scripture: ‘And let all the angels of God worship him’ (Heb 1:6).” (1948)⁸

The Official Watchtower Charter States that Jesus is to be Worshipped

Resolutions amending Articles 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, and 10 of the original 1884 Watch Tower charter were adopted on 2 October 1944, in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. This was a significant event in the Society’s history.⁹ Article II of the amended charter is pertinent to the subject of the worship of Jesus Christ. The original charter was printed in the 1 November 1917 *Watch Tower* (Reprints, p 6162). Article II as amended is reproduced in its entirety in the 1945 *Yearbook of Jehovah’s Witnesses* (p 32). It states that one of the purposes of the Society was “for public Christian worship of Almighty God and Christ Jesus.”*

The Watchtower Reverses Its Position in 1954! No One Can Worship Jesus Anymore!

The new anti-worship doctrine was first clearly stated in *The Watchtower* (1 Jan 1954), “No distinct worship is to be rendered to Jesus Christ...Our worship is to go to Jehovah God” (p 31). This is a direct contradiction to what they had just published the previous year! Their popular book, *Make Sure of All Things* (1953), affirmed the worship of Christ with this subsection title: “Christ to Be Worshipped” (p 85). And this title was even retained in the 1957 revision of the book!

This all gets very amusing to true believers who know Christ. From 1879 to the mid-20th century, Jesus was worshiped and properly so by Jehovah’s Witnesses. But then, abruptly—*it’s idolatry!* For most of the Witnesses’ history—75 years!—it was “worship Jesus!” But ever since 1954—it’s “no worship of Jesus!” Honestly, can you even remotely imagine such an organization being lead by God’s Spirit? This doctrinal change by the Watchtower makes every Jehovah’s Witness before 1954 guilty of the gross sin of idolatry!

The question arises—What does the Society do with this glaring contradiction in their charter which speaks of the “worship of Almighty God and Christ Jesus”? They hide it! That’s right! Since 1954 whenever they quote the charter in any of their publications, the three words they never want anyone to see—“and Christ Jesus”—are either altered, or left

out completely! For example, when Article II was reproduced in their 1969 *Yearbook*, they quoted the entire Article, but left out “and Christ Jesus” replacing it with an ellipsis (...) (p 50). Then in the 15 December 1971 *Watchtower*, the entire Article is quoted but at this point says, “for public Christian worship of Almighty God [through] Christ Jesus” (p 760). This subtle change altered the charter’s meaning completely!

The Scriptures display Christ worshiped as God many times—see the wise men, the leper, the ruler, the woman, Mary Magdalene, the blind man and the disciples worshiping him (Matt 2:1; 8:2; 9:18; 15:25; 28:9,17; John 9:38). Thomas worshiped him with all due reverence calling him “my Lord and my God” (John 20:28). In all these passages Jesus never sought to correct his followers when they bowed down and worshiped him—full proof of who he really is: “Emmanuel...God with us” (Matt 1:23). “In him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily” (Col 2:9). He is truly “our great God and Savior Jesus Christ” (Titus 2:13 RSV). The fact that Jesus was worshiped shows his true identity, for the consistent testimony of Scripture is that only God can be worshiped (Exo 34:14; Matt 4:10). What does the Watchtower do with all this biblical evidence of Jesus being clearly worshiped as “God manifest in the flesh” (1Tim 3:16)? Wherever the Greek word for “worship” (*proskuneo*) is used of “Jehovah,” the *New World* translators correctly rendered it “worship” (22 times); but when the same Greek word is used referring to Christ, they conceal it. In the gospel accounts above where our Lord was worshiped, they replace the word “worship” in their Bible with “obeisance.”

What is “obeisance”? The Watchtower defines it—“the custom of prostrating oneself before a person.”¹⁰ Applying their own definition of “obeisance” to the people who gave obeisance to Jesus, we could say they “prostrated themselves before a god,” since Jesus is “a god” in Watchtower theology—“the Word was a god” (John 1:1 NWT). This is a clear and logical conclusion reached by following the Watchtower’s own definition of obeisance and who they believe Jesus to be. Yet this is a direct violation of Scripture! It is written, “You must not prostrate yourself to another god, because Jehovah, whose name is Jealous, he is a jealous God” (Exo 34:14 NWT). The Watchtower claims that “obeisance” to Jesus is okay because it’s not worship; but the simple conclusion is—either Jesus is God, or those rendering obeisance to him are guilty of “prostrating themselves before another god!” (see Psalm 45:11 NWT).

There was one “worship” passage referring to Jesus that they did translate correctly—“Let all God’s angels worship him” (Heb 1:6). But that didn’t last long. You’ll find it that way in their 1961 edition; but ten years later it was changed—“Let all God’s angels do obeisance to him” (1971 ed.). This is consistent with the Society’s ongoing campaign to eliminate all traces of the deity of Christ from the Word of God. The Watchtower, though, did inadvertently admit that “worship” is given to Jesus. In their book, *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, this question is posed in a subsection title: “Does the fact that worship is given to Jesus prove that he is God?” (p 214). That question

makes a powerful statement! Consider three things: (1) They are admitting here that it is a “fact” that “worship is given to Jesus!” (2) It is a fact that he never refused it nor rebuked anyone for worshiping him! and, (3) It is a fact that worship is to be given only to God! Facts are stubborn things, and these facts leave no doubt about who Jesus really is!

The Watchtower teaches three phases of Jesus’ existence: (1) before he came to earth he was a spirit creature, Michael the archangel, (2) while he was on earth he was not a spirit creature, but only a man, the exact equivalent of Adam before the fall, and then, (3) he was raised from the dead a spirit creature, Michael.” So, we have a couple of questions in light of this teaching: Michael–Jesus–Michael, or angel–man–angel.

(1) When Cornelius met Peter, he “fell down at his feet and did obeisance” (*proskuneo*) (Acts 10:25). Listen to the reason Peter gives as to why he “lifted him up” and refused to accept such worship—he said, “I myself am also a man” (v 26). If Peter had to tell someone not to do obeisance to him because he was only a man, why did Jesus not have to do the same? The Watchtower says that Jesus on earth was a man, “a perfect man,” yes, but still only a man. If Peter had no right to accept obeisance because he was “also a man,” then Jesus had no right to accept it either, because he too was “also a man.”

(2) The Witnesses teach that Jesus was raised a “spirit creature,” higher in status than he had been when he lived on earth as a man, but still only a creature. He now lives the life of an exalted angel called Michael. In Revelation 22:8-9, the angel who had been speaking to John told him not to “worship” him (*proskuneo*), but to “worship” (*proskuneo*) only God. If Jesus after his resurrection was only an angel—higher, to be sure, than the other angels, but less than God—how could he accept the “proskuneo” (worship) of the two women and the disciples in Matthew 28 without rebuking them? (w 9,17).

If Jesus is not to be “worshiped,” both the Holy Spirit and the writers of the New Testament know this. So the obvious question is: Why do they use the word “proskuneo” at all when speaking of Jesus? Take the gospel of Mark for example. We have Jairus who “fell at his feet” (5:22); and the woman who “fell down before him” (5:33); and the rich young ruler who “fell upon his knees before him” (10:17); and the unclean spirits who “prostrated themselves before him” (3:11); and the Syrophenician woman who “prostrated herself at his feet” (7:25). According to the Watchtower, what did all of these do? Obeisance! Plain and simple! That’s their definition of obeisance! So, right in the middle of all this in Mark 5:6, why does the Holy Spirit use the word “proskuneo” with reference to Jesus if it’s not something different? The man with the unclean spirit ran to Jesus and did what? The Watchtower would have us believe that he did the same thing as all those above, because they say he “did obeisance.” But the Scriptures will allow for no such interpretation! In this singular instance, a definite distinction is made! It is made by the writer’s use of the word *proskuneo!* He “worshiped” Jesus! If it’s not “worship” in 5:6, Mark would have worded it the same as he did in 5:22, “fell at his

feet,” or 5:33, “fell down before him.” Why would Mark not say the same thing if it is the same thing? Without question, the Holy Spirit has marked out this instance as “worship!”

Two of the gospel accounts where Jesus was worshiped clearly show the Society’s insertion of “obeisance” not only to be false, but ridiculous. *The Watchtower* (Feb 15, 1983, p 18) defines “obeisance” as “a respectful bow.” On seeing the child Jesus, the *New World Translation* says of the wise men, “falling down, they did obeisance to it” (Matt 2:11). But the Holy Spirit’s wording shows the fallacy of their translation. You don’t “fall down” and then “bow” (that’s ludicrous!)—you “fall down” and then “worship!” The same is true of the two women Jesus met after he arose (Matt 28:9). It says, they “caught him by his feet and did obeisance to him.” But here again, you don’t catch someone by the feet and then “bow”—you catch someone by the feet and then “worship!” We have the same nonsensical wording with Cornelius before Peter—he “fell down at his feet and did obeisance [bowed!] to him” (Acts 10:25). Any thinking person can see the absurdity of all this!

Compare what Jairus did with what the wise men did. He “fell at his feet,” they “fell down.” Both did obeisance. But with the wise men something is added—*proskuneo*. Notice: (1) “falling down” (*obeisance*) (2) “they _____.” This is clearly two distinct things set before us. Even so with the two women: (1) “caught him by his feet” (*obeisance*) (2) “and _____.” This word “and” (Greek: kai) is simply a connecting word. Matthew uses it to connect two separate things: (1) obeisance, “and” (2) “_____.” And the same with Cornelius—two things: (1) “fell down at his feet” (*obeisance*) (2) “and _____.” It’s pointless to put “obeisance” in these blank spaces because obeisance is already there! All three of these are already on the ground! The five examples in Mark’s Gospel we listed previously all have obeisance, but no *proskuneo*. These three examples now (the wise men, the two women & Cornelius) all have obeisance and *proskuneo*. Now, the Watchtower wants us to see “obeisance” in both (1) & (2) above. But that can only work for someone who doesn’t know how to speak proper English, or perhaps someone who’s “twisting the Scriptures to their own destruction” (2 Peter 3:16). I’ll show you what I mean. To say, as the Watchtower does, that Cornelius “fell down at his feet and did obeisance”—This is to say the same thing twice! It would be just like saying today, “He shook his hand and did shake his hand.”—“Cornelius fell down and did fall down.”—“Cornelius did obeisance and did obeisance.” That’s nonsense! Anyone can see that! The Watchtower will stop at nothing to dishonor the Lord Jesus Christ! There’s only one word that fits in those blank spaces above—**worship!**

Revelation 22 reveals the Society’s deliberate deception in their use of “obeisance.” Compare Cornelius with John—“I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel” (v 8). The wording is the same, but the *New World* translators could not translate it “obeisance”—they were forced to properly render *proskuneo* as “worship.” Why? because they were stopped cold by just two words from the angel himself!—“Worship God” (v 9). The same word is used in all of the above passages, but now

it's affixed to **God!** And if it's really "worship" in verse 9, then it has to be the same in verse 8, because the angel is referring to *what John is doing!* And John is doing the same thing that *Cornelius was doing!* The same thing *the women were doing!* The same thing *the wise men were doing!*

When John fell down to "worship" at the feet of the angel, the angel rebuked him, saying, "Be careful! Do not do that! ... Worship God" (*Rev 22:8-9 NWT*). The Watchtower teaches: "Jesus is Michael the archangel."¹² Yet the *proskuneo* (worship or obeisance) that angels refuse to accept, but say to give only to God, is the same *proskuneo* (worship or obeisance) that the Father commands to be given to the Son!—"Let all the angels of God worship him" (*Heb 1:6*). The Son cannot be an angel!—"To which one of the angels did [God] ever say: 'You are my son?'" "To which one of the angels has [God] ever said: 'Sit at my right hand?'" (*Heb 1:5 & 13 NWT*). Could words be any clearer! We're deceived if we refuse to give the same worshipful honor to the Son as to the Father. Jesus said, "...that all may honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He that does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent him" (*John 5:23 NWT*). In other words, if you fail to give *worshipful honor* to the Son, then your worship of the Father is in vain!

Religious Doctrines vs. Organizational Doctrines "No Man Can Serve Two Masters"

Witnesses present their beliefs with reasoning and Scripture, claiming the Bible as their final authority; but they have another authority, another master, that determines what they believe. Witnesses have two kinds of doctrines, their *religious doctrines* (dealing with faith and morals) and their *organizational doctrines* (dealing with the role and authority of their directors). They are generally more attached to their *organizational* doctrines than their *religious* doctrines. While their history shows continual changes in their religious doctrines, their belief in their directors' authority has been constant.

Jehovah's Witnesses need to see the conflict between the esteem they give their directors and the worship they give to God. The principle underlying this is Jesus' statement, "**No man can serve two masters:** for either he will hate the one, and love the other..." (*Matt 6:24*). While this was said in reference to the love of money it applies to human masters as well. A person may imagine he can serve two masters, but Jesus explained eventually one will be forced to choose between the two, and thus, in effect, love one and hate the other. Witnesses, without realizing it, serve two masters—the Society's directors and "Jehovah," their preferred name for God. What follows is designed to bring Witnesses to discover that their *religious* doctrines collide with their *organizational* doctrines, thus, forcing them to choose between Jehovah or the Society's directors. What follows is based on these **five facts:**

(1) Jehovah's Witnesses believe *Jesus is Michael the archangel*. **(2)** Unknown to most Jehovah's Witnesses, their official charter says that Jesus is to be worshiped, that is, Michael the archangel. **(3)** Although in 1954 they officially dropped

their belief in worshiping Jesus, today they still claim this charter amendment fulfilled biblical prophecy and brought their organization into a "holy" and right relationship with God. See their 1999 book *Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!* (pp 175-79). ** **(4)** The Society's primary *organizational* doctrine is that their directors, "the faithful and discreet slave" (*Matt 24:45*), were appointed by Jesus in 1919 to be the channel of true religion on earth with the authority to tell mankind what to believe. **(5)** The Watchtower organization has always taught that idolatry, including angel-worship, is false worship, causing one to be disapproved by God.

Do you see the conflict? A Witness who is loyal to his own *religious* doctrines will hold that angel-worship is always wrong, for everyone. He could never serve any master that insists on angel-worship. But a Witness who is loyal to his *organizational* doctrines must believe that in 1944 the charter amendment, which advocated angel-idolatry, brought the Watchtower directors into a right relationship with God. Either way, if the Witness makes a choice, he will love one master and hate the other.

In *Knowledge That Leads to Everlasting Life*, the book that explains in depth their fundamental beliefs, chapter 5, *Whose Worship Does God Accept*, it says on page 49—**Angel-Worship: (1) offends God (2) is unacceptable (3) contaminates true worship (4) is idolatry**. The contradiction—**(1)** Their *Knowledge* book says that *angel-worship offends God, is idolatry, and contaminates true worship*. **(2)** The Society's official charter *promotes angel-worship*. They even claim in their *Daniel's Prophecy!* book that the 1944 amendment was a fulfillment of prophecy and restored them to a right relationship with God.

Six Questions to Ask Every Jehovah's Witness

(1) Does angel-worship *always* offend God and contaminate true worship? **(2)** Do you believe that worshiping an angel, even a special angel, would *always* be false worship, and any church that did this would be offensive to God? **(3)** Did the charter's statement about worshiping an archangel offend God and contaminate true worship? **(4)** Did the charter amendment restore your religious organization to a right relationship with God? **(5)** Do you believe God found the charter's authors to be offensive because of this? and what about the directors who approved the charter amendment?

If the Witness says that God *was* offended by the directors and the charter because it advocated false worship, then he has rejected the authority of the directors and is subject to be expelled for disloyalty. But if he says that God was *not* offended when the charter promoted angel-worship, then he has rejected his own *religious beliefs* condemning angel idolatry. And if he rejects *his own* religious beliefs, how could he be persuaded to accept the true gospel that *exalts* Christ? He loves his church directors more than God and true worship. He serves a human master. They can only choose one master. Either God's worship must be kept holy and the directors are tossed out with their charter, or their leaders are in heaven, along with all the other Watchtower angel-worshippers.

(6) If I conclude that this charter, which promoted angel-worship, offended God and could not possibly have restored anyone to true worship, could I be a Jehovah's Witness?

They will admit that if you reject angel-worship, *at all times*, you will necessarily reject their charter, the charter they insist fulfills prophecy. Therefore, their church leaders will never let you join, even if you begged them. In other words, now that you believe their doctrine on angel-worship—that it *always offends God*—they can't let you join! □

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* For \$10.00 (money order) a copy of the amended charter is available from: Office of Recorder of Deeds, 101 County Office Building, 542 Forbes Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219-2947. Allegheny County Pennsylvania Charter Book, vol 70, pp171-76 (recorded 27 Feb 1945). The charter can also be obtained from the internet by searching for "Watchtower" and "charter." If you merely would like a copy of the page of the charter where this "worship of Jesus" is mentioned, just write to us or call; it'll be sent at no charge.

** "26 For 'the holy place' [*the Watchtower Society*] to be 'brought,' or restored, to what it should be, the 2,300 days [*Dan 8:14*] must have begun when it previously was in the 'right condition' from God's standpoint. At the earliest, this was on June 1, 1938, when *The Watchtower* published part 1 of the article *Organization*. Part 2 appeared in the issue of June 15, 1938. Counting 2,300 days (6 years, 4 months, and 20 days on the Hebrew calendar) from June 1 or 15, 1938, brings us to October 8 or 22, 1944... At the annual corporate meeting on October 2, **the Society's charter was amended** in an effort to bring it as close to a theocratic arrangement as the law would allow. With the publication of clarified biblical requirements, theocratic organization was soon more fully installed in the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses...²⁸In fact, *The Watchtower* of October 15, 1944, contained an article entitled *Organized for Final Work*. It and other service-oriented articles of the same period indicated that the 2,300 days had *ended* and that 'the holy place' [*the Watchtower Society*] was again in its 'right condition.' [*Dan 8:14 NWT*]"

References:

(1) C. T. Russell, *Zion's Watch Tower*, June 1883, p490; *Insight on the Scriptures*, vol 2, WT 1988, p393 **(2)** *Deliverance*, WT 1926, p204; later eds., p215 **(3)** *Light*, vol 2, WT 1930, p166 **(4)** *Ibid.*, p251 **(5)** *Ibid.*, p321 **(6)** *Riches*, pp 353-54 **(7)** *Watchtower*, 15 Oct 1945, p313 **(8)** *Watchtower*, 1 Sept 1948, p260 **(9)** *1975 Yearbook*, WT 1974, pp246-47 **(10)** *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, WT 1989 ed., p215 **(11)** *What Does the Bible Really Teach?*, WT 2009 ed., pp42,50-51 **(12)** *Reasoning*, p218

The Watchtower and the Worship of Jesus

Consistent with their denial of the deity of Christ, the Jehovah's Witnesses deny that Jesus should be worshiped. When they were asked, "*Is it proper to worship Jesus?*" in *Awake!* (*April 8, 2000*), they were then instructed: "Reverent adoration should be expressed only to God. To render worship to anyone or anything else would be *a form of idolatry*" (pp 26-27). *The Watchtower* (*Nov 1, 1964*) dogmatically stated: "It is *unscriptural* for worshipers of the living and true God to render worship to the Son of God, Jesus Christ" (p 671). What most Jehovah's Witnesses don't know is that for *more than 60 years* Watchtower founder C. T. Russell (*d. 1916*) and his successor J. F. Rutherford (*d. 1942*) taught that Jesus Christ *was to be worshiped*, a belief that would be expressed even after Rutherford's death. And the Watchtower's official Charter, amended in 1944, even states the same. But in the mid-20th century, *things changed* for Watchtower worshipers.

The First Watchtower President Taught that Jesus is to be Worshiped

C. T. Russell, the Society's first president, launched the publication of *Zion's Watch Tower* in 1879. In an article, "The Name of Jesus" (*Nov 1879, p 48*) his associate J. H. Paton wrote of Jesus, "His position is contrasted with that of men and angels, as he is Lord of both, having 'all power in heaven and earth.' Hence it is said, 'Let all the angels of God worship him'; [that must include Michael, the chief angel, hence Michael is not the Son of God]..." (*brackets in original*). Paton's position on Michael would later be rejected by Russell.¹ The Witnesses still identify Jesus as Michael the archangel. In the *Watch Tower* article, "A Living Christ" (*March 1880, pp 82-83*), Russell said: "He still is Lord, and as such we worship him... to worship Christ in any form cannot be wrong."

The Second Watchtower President Taught that Jesus is to be Worshiped

Russell died on 31 October 1916, and Joseph Rutherford succeeded him. What did Rutherford state concerning worship of Jesus Christ? "Crucifixes were erected, and the worship of the people turned to these rather than to let them intelligently worship the Lord Jehovah and the Lord Jesus Christ."² "...the great Jehovah commands: 'Let all the angels of God worship him' (*Heb 1:6*)."³ "All the restored human race will...delight to worship him and the great King. Christ Jesus is the 'King of Kings' (*Rev 1:5*)."⁴ "God...announced that all the angels of heaven should worship him and every knee to him shall bow, every tongue shall confess that he is Jehovah's anointed one and the high officer of the Most High (*Phil 2:11*)."⁵