

What is Truth?

*The claims of the
**Jehovah's
Witnesses**
Compared with
The Bible*

PILATE, governor of Judea in the days of the Lord Jesus Christ, asked the question: "What is Truth?" He saw before him a man delivered to be crucified, who boldly declared: " ..I am a king. To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth" (John 18:37). But his life, death and resurrection are just as gravely misunderstood by religious people today, as by the Jews, and Herod, of his days. There are many different and varied teachings concerning the gospel message — yet only one can be right. The apostle Paul declared to the Galatian believers: "I marvel that ye are so soon removed. . unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ" (ch. 1:6-7). For this reason we feel compelled to reveal the real facts concerning some religious teachings, and ask the reader to carefully peruse the arguments presented herein. In doing so, we desire to establish what really is the saving "Truth" that leads to salvation.

HERALD OF THE COMING AGE

A Christadelphian Publication

**DECLARING THE TRUTH OF THE SCRIPTURES REVEALED FOR THE SALVATION OF
THOSE WHO ARE PREPARED TO EXAMINE THE CLAIMS OF GOD'S WORD;
AND PRESENTING THE GLORIOUS MESSAGE OF THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS
CHRIST AND THE ESTABLISHMENT OF GOD'S ETERNAL KINGDOM ON EARTH.**

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WHAT IS TRUTH?

The claims of the Jehovah's Witnesses Compared with the Bible

We ask the thoughtful reader to give sincere and careful consideration to the contents of this booklet, and to check every point made with the Bible itself. The issue before us is an important one—it deals with matters of personal salvation. The Bible clearly says “*To the law and the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them*” (Isaiah 8:20). It is essential that we consult the Scriptures—God’s inspired Word—and accept wholeheartedly what they declare on all matters of belief and practice.

Life eternal, and the opportunity of a future beyond the present, is only possible to those who acknowledge and uphold the saving truths of God’s Word. In many places the Bible clearly reveals that salvation is bound up in so doing. The apostle Paul wrote: “I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God unto salvation to *every one that believeth*” (Romans 1 16). The Lord Jesus said. “This is life eternal that they *might know Thee* the only true God, and Jesus Christ whom Thou hast sent” (John 17:3). This means that the hope of salvation depends upon *an accurate and true* understanding of the teaching of the Scriptures.

What if a person is in ignorance of the *truth it reveals* or misunderstands its teaching? Then he or she lacks the “power of God unto salvation,” and cannot claim to “**know** the only true God. ” Christ further declared that “true worshippers shall worship the Father in *spirit* [attitude] and in *truth* [teaching]: for the Father seeketh such to worship Him” (John 4:23). The fact that the apostle Paul warns that men would turn their ears *away FROM THE TRUTH*” unto *fables* clearly shows that there is a true understanding of the Scriptures, and a *false* one (2Timothy 4:4). Therefore, it is important to discover the truth and reject any error

It is to this end that we provide this series of booklets, examining

various teachings extant in the community today We do so not to criticize, but to help the reader to discover the key to Bible Truth, and thereby the path to eternal life.

We trust the reader will follow the example of the Bereans of old, for they “received the Word with *all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so*” (Acts 17:11). Their diligent search led them to Christ and to the hope of eternal life to be received at Christ’s coming (1 Corinthians 15:20-23). It is for this purpose that we put this important booklet into the hands of the reader.

**Truth,
not
merely
zeal, is
required
by God
of His
people**

THE BIBLE WARNS AGAINST FALSE WITNESSES

The Apostle Paul unequivocally declared. ***“If Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain. Yea, and we are found false witnesses of God”*** (1 Corinthians 15:14-15).

This statement shows that it is possible for a person or a community, to sincerely claim to follow Christ, and yet, because of wrong teaching, prove to be a “false witness of God.” We believe the Bible clearly reveals that the sect, self-styled *Jehovah’s Witnesses*, is in that category

In stating this, we do not call in question the sincerity and zeal of its members. Indeed, they are outstanding in that regard. Their publishing organization has flooded the world with a succession of leaflets, pamphlets and books proclaiming its doctrines, it has extensively used the radio and media to broadcast its ideas, and its members are untiring in their proselyting zeal.

All this would be commendable if the things preached were in accordance with divine Truth. Otherwise, the words of the Master apply: ***“If the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness”*** (Matthew 6:23). More than sincerity, zeal, and proselyting fervour is needful to please God. He requires “true worshippers” to “worship Him in spirit and in truth” (John 4:24). Paul referred to some in his day who had a “zeal of God, but not according to knowledge” (Romans 10:2). They “compassed sea and land to make one proselyte” only to lead such into greater error (Matthew 23:15).

Unfortunately, as we shall show, the energy of *Jehovah’s Witnesses* has been harnessed to error and not truth. As such, their teachings cannot provide the means to harmony with God or salvation from death.

GOD’S TRUE WITNESSES

Jehovah’s Witnesses do not hesitate to hold up the failings of other sects for all the world to see, and to classify most other denominations as part of “Satan’s organization.” A sect that so roughly handles the

opinions and teachings of others must, itself, be prepared to have its own ideas ruthlessly examined. Of course, it has nothing to fear if its teachings are based upon the rock of Truth.

In a widely distributed book, *Let God Be True*, issued by Jehovah's Witnesses, the author states. "To arrive at truth, we must dismiss religious prejudices from heart and mind. We must let God speak for Himself. Any other course would lead only to further confusion."

Yet sad to say, this very book reveals that Jehovah's Witnesses are not prepared to do what it asks of others. Passages from the Bible are quoted, but often out of context, or misapplied to support doctrines propagated by the sect that are contradicted by the true teaching of the Bible.

We are not alone in stating this. One of their own members, in a publication entitled *Back to the Bible* (Vol. 1, No. 4), describes how he went from door to door with the society's book, *Let God Be True*, but being pressed with the need to explain how Jeremiah 32:37-44 could possibly apply to spiritual Israel as it is in that book, he was lost for a satisfactory reply. This forced him to examine the use of other references more closely, so that he now publicly confesses he "can no longer offer the book to the public!"

A CHANGING PROGRAM OF TEACHING

This wrong use of Scripture by the JW Organization is the cause of the great instability of doctrine manifested by the sect. For it is a significant fact, that though Truth does not vary with time, the doctrines of the *Jehovah's Witnesses* have been revised and altered over the years.

An example is their teaching concerning the Jews.

C.T. Russell, founder of the movement, taught that the fulfilment of Bible prophecy demands that the Jews must return to their ancient homeland (see *Let God Be True*). His teaching was endorsed by his successor, J. Rutherford. But later, the *Jehovah's Witnesses* repudiated the doctrine they previously endorsed and proclaimed as basic truth. Since then, the Jews have returned to the Holy Land in fulfilment of prophecy—as Christadelphians have always maintained. Ezekiel declared that God would "scatter them [the Jews] among the nations, and disperse them through the countries," where they would "profane God's holy Name." But the prophet declares that, in the last days, God would regather His people, and bring them back into their own land (Ezekiel 36:19-24).

THE BIBLE TEACHES THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT OF ISRAEL

These prophecies are today having partial fulfilment. In the face of incredible difficulties, and unceasing hostility, the Jews have re-established their nation in the land promised their forefathers. This is exactly as God, through Ezekiel, declared: "I will take the children of Israel from among the nations, whither they be gone, and will gather

them on every side, and bring them into their own land; and I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all. neither shall they defile themselves any more with their idols. " (Ezekiel 37:21-23, cp. Jeremiah 31:20-11). This obviously relates to the Jewish people as such—to the nation God dispersed among the Gentiles but whom He promised to restore in the "last days."

But *Jehovah's Witnesses* try to ignore that clear fact by "spiritualising" the verses, claiming that they relate to spiritual Israel! Accordingly, they apply the prophecy to themselves! But do the *Jehovah's Witnesses* constitute "one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel" as the prophecy requires? Of course not! The prophecies relate to the Jewish people, and not to any religious sect. Paul, consistent with the Old Testament, taught that Israel as a nation is to be saved (Romans 11:26), and the context of his statement clearly shows that he had in mind the Jewish people who then bitterly opposed Christianity — for he adds. "*As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes, but as touching the election* ["selection," as a nation of destiny], *they are beloved for the fathers' sakes.*"

The term "the fathers" relates to the founders of the Israelitish nation. Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, to whom God made wonderful promises concerning the future of their descendants. Because of those promises the disobedient nation of Israel was not destroyed, and has been revived in these latter days. Of this restoration, God declared: "*I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for Mine holy name's sake, which ye have profaned among the nations, whither ye went*" (Ezekiel 36:22).

ISRAEL RESTORED AND ITS KING IDENTIFIED

The present revival of Israel as a nation, and the partial return of the Jews to the Holy Land, are in fulfilment of Bible prophecy. They are steps toward the consummation of Ezekiel's prophecy (ch. 37:21-22), which requires *firstly, a restoration of the people; secondly, a revival of the nation; finally, the re-establishment of its monarchy.* Two parts of that prophecy have been fulfilled, and Christadelphians eagerly anticipate the fulfilment of the third part, namely: "one king shall be king to them all." This "one king" is the Lord Jesus Christ. He was given the title of "King of the Jews" both at his birth and his death (Matthew 2:2; 27:37), but has never been accepted as such. However, he will be acknowledged as king when his promise to his twelve apostles is fulfilled: "*Ye which have followed me, in the regeneration when the Son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel*" (Matthew 19:28).

The modern revival of Israel as a nation witnesses to the truth of God's prophetic word. In that regard, the Jewish people comprise His true witnesses (Isaiah 43 10), even though they remain, as the Bible

predicts they would, blind to the truth in Christ Jesus (Romans 11:25).

The rejection by *Jehovah's Witnesses* of the basic teaching of the Bible that God's purpose requires the complete restoration of the ancient nation and monarchy of Israel under the Lord Jesus Christ, shows that the whole system of religion set forward by them is not based upon the Word of God.

CHANGES IN J.W TEACHING SHOWS INCONSISTENCY

More remarkable is the fact that they once taught that Bible prophecy requires the restoration of the Jews to their land—but today reject this! Can any confidence be placed in a sect that reverses its teaching so drastically? This change of doctrine has been accompanied by changes of name. The sect was first known as *Millennial Dawnism*, later as *The International Bible Students*, and since 1931 by *Jehovah's Witnesses*.

Among the tenets promulgated by J W 's, are some that are true (such as the mortality of man), and others that are false; some that are peculiar to them alone, and others that have been borrowed from other religious systems. They are most outspoken against Roman Catholicism, and yet cling to some of the false teachings of that system. Both hold the erroneous idea of the devil as a fallen angel of heaven; both teach a Jesus who existed as a spirit before he was born; both put forth the death of the Lord as substitutionary instead of representative. Both endorse doctrines that are quite unscriptural.

It is impossible for us to thoroughly deal with all errors propagated by the J W 's within the compass of this short article. We propose to comment upon a few of those peculiar to the sect, recognising that much more could be said. ***We do not do this to be contentious, but because eternal life is bound up with an acceptance of the saving truths of God's Word (John 17:3; Romans 1:16; 1Corinthians 15:1-2).*** It is the personal responsibility of each one interested in eternal salvation to search out the saving truths of God's Word. The Lord Jesus Christ taught: "*If you continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed. And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free*" (John 8:31-32).

A careful, reverential, consideration of Bible teaching will deliver a person from error, and provide opportunity to embrace Christ in truth and through baptism. By that means comes freedom from sin through the gracious forgiveness of God (Acts 2:38).

JESUS' BODILY RESURRECTION DENIED

A further denial of Bible truth is seen in the teaching of *Jehovah's Witnesses* concerning the resurrection of Christ.

They deny the bodily resurrection of the Lord, and so earn the title Paul gives to those who reject the Lord's bodily resurrection: "*false witnesses of God*" (1Corinthians 15:12-15).

When asked the question: *Did the dead body of Jesus that was laid*

in the tomb, ever come to life again? they answer **No!**

This, in fact, is a denial of the actual resurrection of the Lord. They claim that the Lord was given another body, a "spirit-body," invisible to mortal eyes, whilst his earthly body remained in the state of death to which it had been reduced by his crucifixion! The fact that the risen Lord showed Thomas the wounds in his hands and side (John 20:26-27) is explained as a temporary miracle performed only to confirm his resurrection. But this, in fact, would mean that they were not the real wounds!

Christ took care to convince his disciples otherwise. He invited them to carefully examine his hands and side where the marks of the crucifixion, and of the spear thrust, could be clearly seen (John 20:20). He said,* *"Handle me and see, for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have"* (Luke 24:39). One disciple, Thomas, who was not present at these earlier demonstrations, was so incredulous of the resurrection, that he exclaimed: *"Except I shall see in his hands the print of the nails and thrust my hand into his side, I will not believe!"* Eight days later, the Lord appeared to Thomas, and invited him to examine him in that very way Thomas was convinced! But the Lord rejoined: *"Thomas, because thou hast **seen** me, thou hast believed, blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed"* (John 20:24-29).

Unfortunately, this is not the case with the *Jehovah's Witnesses*. They deny that the body Thomas touched was the one that came from the tomb, and, in effect accuse the Lord of some form of trickery

One of their writers has expressed his opinion thus: *"Our Lord's human body, however was supernaturally removed from the tomb. We know nothing about what became of it, except that it did not decay or corrupt (Acts 2.27-31). Whether it is still preserved somewhere as the grand memorial of God's love, of Christ's obedience, and our redemption, no one knows."*

To teach that the dead body of the Lord which was placed in the tomb, never came alive, is to deny a fundamental doctrine of the Bible! And that is serious indeed! Paul taught: *"If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain, ye are yet in your sins"* (1Corinthians 15.17).

* It is thought by some that in declaring that "flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God" (1Corinthians 15:50), Paul was suggesting that an immortal body is intangible and invisible. However, Paul taught that those who attain unto eternal life in the Age to come will be given **a change of nature, not a change of body**, in which the corruptible will "put on incorruption, and the mortal must put on immortality" (1Corinthians 15:53; see Philippians 3:21 1John 3:2; Revelation 1:7, etc.). A spiritual body thus has flesh and bones, but not blood. It should be also noted that "all" the approved will be so "changed" in nature (cp. vv 51,46-54), and not merely 144,000 specially selected Jehovah's Witnesses. Those resurrected will be "seen" in the Kingdom (Luke 13:28-29).

If *Jehovah's Witnesses* teaching was true, the dead body of the Lord never came alive and he was not raised, for the word "resurrection" signifies a rising *again*. The term demands the coming to life again of a dead body

Denying the resurrection in this way results from a false conception of the sacrifice of Christ. J W 's claim that the Lord paid his life as a ransom only for others, and having done so, could not take it up again. It is true that the Lord died as a ransom, but not in the legalistic sense taught by them. He did not die *instead* of believers, else they should not die—which they do! He died "for them," as their representative and ideal. Therefore, as he rose from the dead, so also will his followers (cp. Romans 6:4; John 10:17-18).

Contrary to the teaching of the J W 's, the Bible sets forth the raising again in life of the body that died on the cross, as absolutely vital to the purpose of God, and the salvation of individuals. Paul taught: "*Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and was buried, and rose the third day*" (1Corinthians 15:3-4). What rose from the dead? That which died on the cross! But this, J W 's deny Even though Paul advances over 500 witnesses who "had seen" the risen Christ (v 6)! He declared: "*They [the Jews] took him [Jesus] from the tree [the cross], and laid him in a sepulchre, but God raised HIM from the dead*" (Acts 13.29-30). What did God raise from the dead? Obviously that which had been laid in the sepulchre: the dead body of the Lord.

The language of Peter is very specific. In preaching the gospel, he declared: "*David, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit upon His throne. He spake of the resurrection of Christ*" (Acts 2:30-31).

What did Peter teach rose from the dead? The "fruit of David's loins according to the flesh"! That physical body, once dead, was resurrected to eternal life. This is now the hope of all those "in Christ" (see Romans 6:4-5, 1Corinthians 15:23, Philippians 3:20-21). The flesh-body of Christ, having been resurrected from the dead, was clothed upon with immortality Therefore, he now possesses a tangible and visible body, the apostle Peter being witness.

A sect that teaches contrary to this explicit teaching of the Bible must deserve the title: "*False witnesses of God*" (1Corinthians 15:15).

The claim of J.W 's that the Lord appeared in another form, whilst his previous body remained dead, is foolishness. The women who visited the tomb, expecting to find the Lord's body, were told: "*Ye seek Jesus, which was crucified. He is not here, for he is risen*" (Matthew 28:5-7).

When the Jews demanded of Jesus a sign attesting his divine mission, he replied: "*Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.*" The Jews imagined that he spoke of Herod's temple in

Jerusalem, which had taken some 46 years to build, but the record plainly states: "*He spake of the temple of his body*" (John 2:21). John continues: "*When, therefore, he was risen from the dead, his disciples remembered that he had said this unto them, and they believed the scripture, and the word which Jesus had said*" (v 22).

To maintain that Jesus' crucified body did not come to life is to take the stand of antichrist (1John 4:3; 2John 7).

In confirmation of the resurrection of the Lord's flesh-body, Peter quoted from an Old Testament prophecy of Christ: "*My flesh also shall rest in hope, because Thou wilt not leave my soul [body] in hell [the grave], neither wilt Thou suffer Thine Holy One to see corruption*" (Psa. 16:8-11). In explanation of this prophecy, Peter taught: "*He [the prophet] spake of the resurrection of Christ, that his soul [body] was not left in hell, neither his flesh did see corruption. This Jesus, hath God raised up, whereof we are all witnesses*" (Acts 2:24, 26, 27, 31, 32).

Paul taught that any who claim to be followers of Christ, and who yet deny his physical resurrection, preach Christ "in vain" (1Corinthians 15:14).

CHRIST'S SECOND COMING DISTORTED

The fundamental mistake of J.W.'s referred to above, leads to other errors destructive of truth. They further maintain that as Jesus was put to death in the flesh and resurrected an invisible spirit creature, therefore, "the world will see him no more" (*Let God Be True*).

In so claiming they deny the Bible teaching that at the second coming of Christ "*every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him*" (Revelation 1:7). J.W.'s claim that this refers to people discerning the presence of Christ in the clouds of trouble surrounding them, but how can it be said that "they which pierced him" shall see him if he is invisible? Christ plainly told those Jews who unjustly condemned him to death over 1,900 years ago, that they will be raised to be arraigned before him and condemned (Luke 19:27) In that day, they will certainly "see" him as he declared (Matthew 26:64), then clothed in power and glory

The visible return of the Lord to the earth is clearly testified in the message of the angels to the disciples who witnessed his ascension into heaven: "*This same Jesus which is taken up from you into heaven, shall so come, in like manner as ye have seen him go into heaven*" (Acts 1:11).

This language is definite. There is no ambiguity, no metaphor, no symbol about it. It is literal and true. "This same Jesus," means the same one with whom the disciples had been talking, the one they had handled and seen, and who had earlier eaten fish they prepared for him (Matthew 28:9; Luke 24:39-43). He is to return as they saw him leave: visible to the human eye. In Zechariah 13:6 it is prophesied that, at his second coming he will reveal his identity to the unbelieving Jews by

showing them the wounds in his hands, and they will be convinced of their past blindness. They will "look upon him whom they have pierced, and shall mourn" at their past blindness (12:10). This has not yet happened. It awaits the second advent of the Lord when he will assume his rightful position as monarch of the world and king of the Jews, suppressing their revolt against his rule of almost 2,000 years ago (John 18:37; Luke 19:27).

But *Jehovah's Witnesses* teach that Christ returned in 1914, and the resurrection of what they call the "heavenly organization" occurred in 1918.

When pressed for proof, they explain that it is all invisible to the human eye. Apparently Christ returned, but no one saw him! The resurrection occurred, but no one noticed it because, actually, no dead body came to life!

On such flimsy evidence as that, anything can be proved. Let the reader, concerned about his personal salvation, examine the many references to the coming of Christ, and he will find that they speak of the Lord's visible presence to the world of mankind. "We shall see him," declared John (1John 3:2). "Ye shall see me," Jesus told the unbelieving Jews (Matthew 26:64). "His glory shall be revealed," declared Peter (1Peter 4:13). "He shall appear" wrote Paul (Hebrews 9:28). "They shall see the Son of man," declared the Lord (Matthew 24:30; Mark 13:26; Luke 21:27). No amount of juggling with words can destroy the clear Bible teaching of the visible appearance of the Lord at his second coming.

THE LORD'S COMING OR "PAROUSIA"

J W's try to bolster up their case for the invisible presence of Christ by the use of the Greek word *parousia*. They argue that, "The Greek word rendered 'coming' is *parousia*, and this signifies 'presence, and not 'return' " So much is built upon this word *parousia* that many members of the sect seem to have an entirely wrong conception of its meaning, believing that the word invariably denotes an invisible presence; although such a statement is not officially presented in the books issued by the sect, as far as we have discovered.

How is the word actually used in Scripture? In 1Corinthians 16:17, Paul writes: "I am glad of the coming [parousia] of Stephanos." In 2Corinthians 7:6, he writes of the "coming [parousia] of Titus." In Philippians 1:26, he makes reference to "my coming [parousia] to you again." Quite clearly, the apostle used the word to denote a bodily, visible presence.

Parousia is formed by a conjunction of two Greek words, *para* meaning "with," and *ousia* signifying "being," from *eimi*, "to be"—thus "to be with." Christ's coming, or *parousia*, therefore signifies his actual bodily presence in company with those to whom he is coming. It is absurd to allege that Christ returned in 1914, and that his kingdom has been set up!

Christ warned his followers to take no heed of those who claim that he has returned, but in a way not openly manifested. He declared: *"If they shall say unto you, Behold, he is in the desert, go not forth. Behold he is in the secret chambers, believe it not. For as the lightning cometh out of the east, and shineth even unto the west: so shall also the coming of the Son of man be"* (Matthew 24:26-27). This is a clear warning against those who claim that Christ is in the earth but cannot be seen. Christ is coming to overthrow present forms of rule, and establish his own righteous government. The effect of his intervention in world events will be openly apparent. The Scriptures declare: *"The God of heaven shall set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed. it shall break in pieces and consume all kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever"* (Daniel 2:44).

The effect of Christ's presence and rule will be apparent to all. But if he has been in the earth since 1918, as taught by J.W.'s, his influence has been singularly ineffectual, having accomplished nothing in the way of world reform as the Scriptures teach that he will—which is proof positive that the teaching of the J.W.'s is contrary to that of the Bible!

GATHERED WITH THE LORD FOR JUDGMENT

Furthermore, the Bible teaches that when the Lord returns, his believers will be gathered to him for judgment (2Timothy 4:1). It refers to *"the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,"* and *"our gathering together unto him"* (2Thessalonians 2:1). For that purpose, *"the dead in Christ shall rise first"* (1Thessalonians 4:16).

It is quite obvious that the resurrection has not yet taken place, for the Lord taught that in consequence of that wonderful event people *"shall see Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets, in the kingdom of God"* (Luke 13:28). It was the hope of Paul to be *"blessed with faithful Abraham"* at that time (cp. Galatians 3:9, 29).

In passing, it should be noted that the word *parousia* not only denotes "presence," but also in certain relationships, presence in an official capacity. Moulton and Milligan, joint authors of *Vocabulary Of The Greek New Testament*, declare: *"What, however more especially concerns us in parousia is the quasi-technical force of the word from Ptolemaic times onwards to denote the 'visit of a king, emperor or other person in authority, the official character of the visit being further emphasized by the taxes or payments that were exacted to make preparations for it."* Hence the term, when used of Christ, not only denotes his presence, but also such in his capacity as king.

Christ is coming as king to reign on the earth over the kingdom of God (Revelation 20:6; 5:9-10).

WAS J. RUTHERFORD GREATER THAN ABRAHAM?

J.W.'s divide the kingdom of God into two parts: the heavenly and the earthly. Those worthy to attain unto the "heavenly" organization reign with Christ in heaven, and are limited to 144,000 specially

selected *Jehovah's Witnesses*, whilst the earthly remain on earth, and comprise what is termed the "Jonadab" or servant class. This amazing belief introduces a class distinction among the elect, that deprecates such worthies as Abraham, the "friend of God" and "father of the faithful," and David "the man after God's own heart," for it claims that *Jehovah's Witnesses*, such as C. Russell and J. Rutherford, gain a higher place in God's kingdom than will those men of faith. In the widely circulated book *Let God Be True*, such men as Abraham, David, Daniel and others who 'stopped the mouths of lions, etc. not accepting deliverance', are named as being inferior in the kingdom of God to men like C. Russell, J. Rutherford, and other J. W.'s. It is claimed of the latter that they never really die, for at death they are instantly changed, and ascend to heaven to reign with Christ. Therefore a higher position is allotted them than Abraham, David and other men of faith, who, this sect teaches, "must await their time of resurrection, and then will be clothed in a lower form of life, on earth!"

To claim that J. W.'s (no matter how lofty their position in the publishing organization) will attain unto a greater reward than Abraham, David, or Daniel, is self-conceit, the folly of which is evident. Against this, Scriptural evidence is found on almost every page of the Bible. Paul, who "*fought a good fight, and had kept the faith,*" declared. "*Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day, and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing*" (2Timothy 4:7-8).

J. W.'s allege that the reward to be given Paul is that special life reserved for 144,000 specially selected J. W.'s, but the apostle taught that his reward will be the common heritage received by "all" the worthy. Christ did likewise (Matthew 19:28-29). He prayed on behalf of all those who believe on him that "*they all may be one; as Thou, Father art in me, and I in Thee, that they also may be one in us. that they may be made perfect in one*" (John 17:20-23). In Galatians 3:9, Paul flatly contradicts the idea that Abraham will inherit a lower position in the kingdom, as alleged by J. W.'s. He teaches, "*they that be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.*" In verse 29 he declares that the hope of all believers is to become heirs of the promise made to Abraham (v. 16). Yet J. W.'s claim that some of their members will receive a greater inheritance than Abraham. This does not witness to God's truth: it is the height of folly.

The apostles looked for the same reward as was promised Abraham. Paul stated: "*I stand, and am judged, for the hope of the promise made of God unto our fathers*" (Acts 26:6). He was referring to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, the fathers of Israel, as also in ch. 28:20, "*For the hope of Israel, I am bound with this chain.*" To the Corinthians he wrote, "*Knowing that He who raised Jesus up will raise us up also together with Jesus and will present us together with you*"

(2Corinthians 4:14). We quote this passage in the form it appears in *The New World* translation issued by J W 's. It shows conclusively that Paul taught that his hope was that of all believers. He did not set himself aside as above others, claiming for himself a "heavenly" inheritance, whilst they will only receive an "earthly" one. There is no such division in the "one body of Christ." Contrary to the teaching of J.W 's, the hope of *all* the redeemed is to be with Christ (John 14:1-3; 1John 3:2), and to "reign on the earth" (Revelation 5:10).

IS THERE ANY FUTURE FOR JERUSALEM?

The Bible sets forth Jerusalem as the "*city of the great king,*" Jesus Christ (Matthew 5:35). From it will emanate the righteous laws of Christ for mankind (Isaiah 2:2-4), for it is the purpose of God to send Jesus Christ to reign in Jerusalem over a world of peace (Acts 3:19-21, Daniel 2:44; Micah 4:1-4; Zechariah 14:9). "The Lord shall reign in Jerusalem and before his ancients [*Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, etc*] gloriously" (Isaiah 24:23). Though men might oppose the work of Christ at first, they will ultimately be forced to submit to his rule (Psalm 2), for all authority and power will be made subject to him. He will not only be king of the Jews, but king of all mankind, and will rule to the glory of God and the benefit of humanity. Reigning with him will be the faithful, like him, raised from the dead and given immortality (Revelation 5:9-10).

The clear teaching of these passages is that Christ will reign from Jerusalem in association with his "ancients," those who proved faithful to God before his birth, 2,000 years ago, as well as those who have since believed in him, and obeyed his precepts.

Zedekiah was the last king on the throne of David. He proved unfaithful, and was therefore removed from his position of authority, and the throne itself overturned, "*until,*" as God told the king, "*he come whose right it is and I will give it him*" (Ezekiel 21:27). Therefore, at the birth of Jesus, his mother was told: "*Thou shalt call his name Jesus. He shall be great, and the Lord God shall give unto him the throne of his father David; and he shall reign over the house of Jacob for ever and of his kingdom shall be no end*" (Luke 1:32).

CHRIST IS COMING TO REIGN ON DAVID'S THRONE

These verses, and many others speak of the time when the strong, infallible hands of Christ will take over the affairs of this earth, and ruling from Jerusalem, will bring all nations subject unto God. This glorious truth clothes the future with substance and hope.

But this Bible Truth is destroyed by the teaching of the J.W 's who claim that the Lord is already reigning invisibly in heaven, upon the throne of David that is supposedly located there! The book *Let God be True* alleges that "if Jesus were to sit as a man on an earthly throne, then he would be lower in status than the angels." That is entirely false. The Scriptures do not say that Christ would sit upon David's throne in

the weakness of mortality, but "in the glory of his Father" (Matthew 25:31). And as for David's throne being compared with Gentile power, even in the days when mortal men reigned thereon it was styled "the throne of the Lord" (1Chronicles 29:23, 28:5). This throne will be restored and the "man Christ Jesus," at present mediator "between God and men" (1Timothy 2:5) will reign thereon—not as a weak, mortal man, but as the divine (though visible) and powerful Son of God: "*I (Jesus Christ) will return, and build again the tabernacle of David WHICH IS FALLEN DOWN; and I will BUILD AGAIN THE RUINS THEREOF, and I will set it up, that the residue of men might seek after the Lord*" (Acts 15:16).

Terms such as "fallen down," "ruins thereof," cannot apply to a throne set in the heavens as taught by J W 's. David's throne was in Jerusalem, and the prophets teach that Jerusalem shall again be called "the throne of the Lord, and all nations shall be gathered unto it" (Jeremiah 3 17). Obviously it is not in heaven! Zechariah reveals that during the millennium of peace which Christ will establish on earth, representatives of the nations shall go up, from year to year to worship before the King in Jerusalem (Zechariah 14:16). They certainly will not ascend, each year, to heaven!

WHEN WAS THERE WAR IN HEAVEN?

J W 's speak more about the devil than they do about God. In doing so, they frequently interpret obviously symbolic statements of the Bible literally, whilst giving a parabolic meaning to those which should be understood literally!

This leads to serious error

For example, prophecies relating to the return of the Jews, which form a large section of the prophetic Scriptures, are interpreted in a figurative sense, and applied to their own organization yet, symbols of the book of Revelation are treated literally

An outstanding instance of this is their teaching regarding war in heaven. They claim that a battle royal raged there between Christ and the Devil. It was resolved in favour of Christ, who apparently literally flung his diabolical enemy out of heaven into earth! Yet no one has ever seen this supernatural devil!

But the idea of war in heaven is repulsive to reason, and comes from interpreting Scriptures literally that obviously should be treated symbolically Revelation 12:7-9 reads. "*There was war in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon. and the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth.* "

At first glance this seems to support the teaching of the J W 's. But in so interpreting the verse, they fail to take into account other important, qualifying teaching of the Bible. For example, the concept of war in heaven is incongruous, for it implies that God lacks control in His realm above. Yet Christ taught his disciples to pray: "*Thy kingdom*

come, Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven." That prayer presupposes that perfect harmony exists in heaven, as, indeed it does, for the Bible teaches that God is of purer eyes than to "look upon iniquity" (Habakkuk 1:13). Moreover, if bitter and desperate warfare disturbs the peace of heaven, as implied by the teaching of the J.W.'s what point is there in praying that God's will be established on earth "as it is in heaven?"

Then, what is the meaning of this prophecy?

Let the Bible itself answer. It teaches that *The Revelation* is a book expressing its message in symbolic, or sign language (see ch. 1:1). Among those symbols is "the dragon" described as having "seven heads and ten horns," and with its tail drawing "a third of the stars of heaven and casting them upon the earth" (ch. 12:3-4). Obviously this should not be taken literally, for the casting of one star, or sun, upon the earth would annihilate it.

In fact, Revelation provides its own explanation of the symbols: "*Here is the mind that hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth. and the ten horns, which thou sawest are ten kingdoms, which have received no kingdom as yet*" (ch. 17:9-12).

The "dragon" is a symbol representing a political organization. It is shown in association with "a woman" described as "Babylon the Great" (v 5). And she, in turn, is identified with "that great city, which [then] reigned over the kings of the earth" (v 18). That city was Rome, also known as the city of the seven hills! This politico-religious organization, identified with Rome, is called "that old serpent, called the Devil and Satan" because Roman Catholicism perpetuates the lie of the serpent in Eden which asserted: "thou shalt not die" (Genesis 3:4; John 8:44), whilst falsely accusing (the significance of the word *devil*), and brutally opposing (the significance of the word *satan*) those who have faithfully stood in defence of Bible truth.

Nowhere in the Bible are the terms *devil* ("false accuser") and *satan* ("adversary") applied to an immortal, fallen angel. However, they do relate to sin in its various forms, whether social, political, religious or personal. In Revelation 12 the terms relate to sin politically manifested*. The prophecy was fulfilled when, in AD312, Constantine claimed to have fought for Christ (Michael), establishing Christianity as the state religion of Rome in place of the prevailing paganism.

How can this be said to have taken place "in heaven?"

The term "heaven" is used frequently in Scripture to define ruling authorities on earth. In speaking to the rulers and people of Israel, Isaiah declared: "Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth" (Isaiah 1:2). To illustrate what he meant by these terms, he continued: "Hear the

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word of the Lord, ye *rulers* of Sodom; and give ear unto the law of God, ye *people*" (v 10).

"Heavens" and "earth" used in that way are not literal terms but symbolically speak of governments (the *rulers*) and the people (the *ruled*). The terms are used frequently in that manner (see Deuteronomy 32.1, Isaiah 34:5; Luke 21:25, 35, etc.), even in relation to God's future purpose with the earth. For example, God's purpose to replace the present rule of man with a divine government under Christ (Daniel 2:44) will bring "glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace and goodwill among men." The metropolis of that worldwide dominion will be Jerusalem (Isaiah 2:2-4). Figuratively, therefore, this means the replacing of the present political "heavens and earth" with an administration of righteousness. Accordingly, Isaiah predicts: "*Thus saith the Lord, behold, I create new heavens and a new earth. and the former shall not be remembered, nor come into mind. But be ye glad and rejoice for ever in that which I create for behold, I create Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy*" (Isaiah 65:17-18).

In that statement, "heavens" and "earth" are used figuratively, or symbolically, for the new government to be set up by Christ in Jerusalem, and the new order of society, the people, to be ruled thereby

If this Scriptural method of interpretation is applied to Revelation 12, the "war" there described must relate to war in the political heavens, and not about an impossible concept of armies of God's angels engaged in violent warfare in the literal heavens.

The same chapter (vv 1-3) displays another "sign" or "wonder" in the same "heaven." A woman, "clothed with the sun and the moon under her feet" is described as giving birth to a son *in heaven*, whilst the dragon awaits opportunity to devour it as soon as it is born!

This is the same "heaven" in which "the war" of v 7 takes place! It is folly to interpret this as relating to God's throne. In the prophetic symbolism of the chapter it predicts the political birth of Constantine as the champion of a pseudo-Christianity, and the bitter hostility he received from the pagan authorities, or the dragon-occupied "heavens" or government of the times. The symbol of pagan government common at the time was a red dragon—and this was often borne into battle by the pagan soldiers of Rome.

The false interpretations perpetuated by J W 's lead them into error destructive of the basic, saving truths of God's Word, and "limits" the power of God to the extent that it implies He lacks the ability to control the aspirations of His angels so that bitter warfare raged in His own domain. Such a doctrine is dishonouring to God who is set forth in Scripture as omnipotent and all-powerful (see Psalm 78:41).

GOD'S OFFER TO MAN

The Bible holds out to death-stricken man the hope of life eternal in the kingdom of God, and co-rulership with Christ (Matthew 19:28-

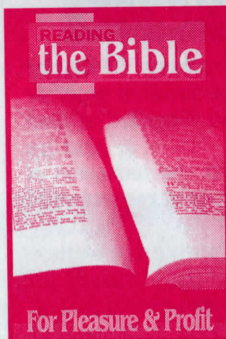
29, 2Timothy 2 12, Revelation 5:9-10) Christ's power will be localised in Jerusalem from whence it shall extend throughout all the earth. Under his government, the nations will be educated in principles of truth and righteousness, so that ultimately, the Lord's prayer will become a reality: "*Thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven.*"

Eternal life in the kingdom of God is the greatest possession we can hope to attain. It is the offer that God makes to earnest seekers of truth. Christ commissioned his apostles, to go into all the world and "*preach the gospel. he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*" (Mark 16:15-16). Unfortunately, Christendom presents a medley of antagonistic sects and contradictory doctrines proclaimed in the name of the Lord Jesus. This is not only discouraging to those who would seek the true message of God, but is the subject of scorn and ridicule by unbelievers and atheists.

We urge the reader to ignore this contempt and make a diligent search for Truth, accepting no man's word as final, but bringing all matters to the bar of Scripture. Let him conscientiously study the Bible itself, not only by text, but also in context, and by this means be guided into all truth.

To assist to this end, we invite the reader to write to us for a free copy of our booklet *The Key to Understanding the Bible*. It will assist in developing a correct understanding of this most fascinating of all books, and can lead to live eternal in the impending kingdom of God on earth.

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TEACH:	THE BIBLE TEACHES:
The dead body of Jesus never came alive	The dead body of Jesus was resurrected to life (Acts 2:24-32).
Jesus has returned invisible	Jesus will return corporeally and visibly to the earth (Acts 1:11; Zech. 12:10).
The reward of the 144,000 under the new dispensation is greater than that of Abraham.	All the accepted have one common hope (Acts 26:6-7; Gal. 3:9, 26-29; 2Tim. 4:8).
Natural Israel has no future in God's purpose.	The current restoration of the Jews is part of God's purpose (2Sam. 7:23-24; Ezek. 36:22-24; 37:21-22; Zech. 12:10; Ezek. 38:16).
The devil is a fallen angel that waged war in heaven	The Devil is a Bible personification for sin in its various manifestations (Heb. 2:14; Rom. 6:23; 7:17; Mark 7:15,21-22).



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or as the name implies the **Brethren of Christ** (**Hebrews 2 11**) are a body of people associated together by a belief in the things concerning the Kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ (**Acts 8 12**) and by immersion into Christ (**Galatians 3:27**) for the remission of sins (**Acts 2:38**) and identification with his resurrection (**Romans 6:5**)

They do not profess to have received any new revelation but hold that the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments are able to make a person wise unto salvation (**2 Timothy 3 15-17**) Believing in the divine authorship of the Bible they think it only reasonable to reject any interpretation which fails to harmonise all the testimonies of the Holy Scriptures and finding that the creeds of the various existing religious groups are in a great variety of ways, opposed to the direct teaching of the Bible, they feel compelled to stand apart making appeal in all such matters to the statements of Scripture and testing all teachings thereby

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