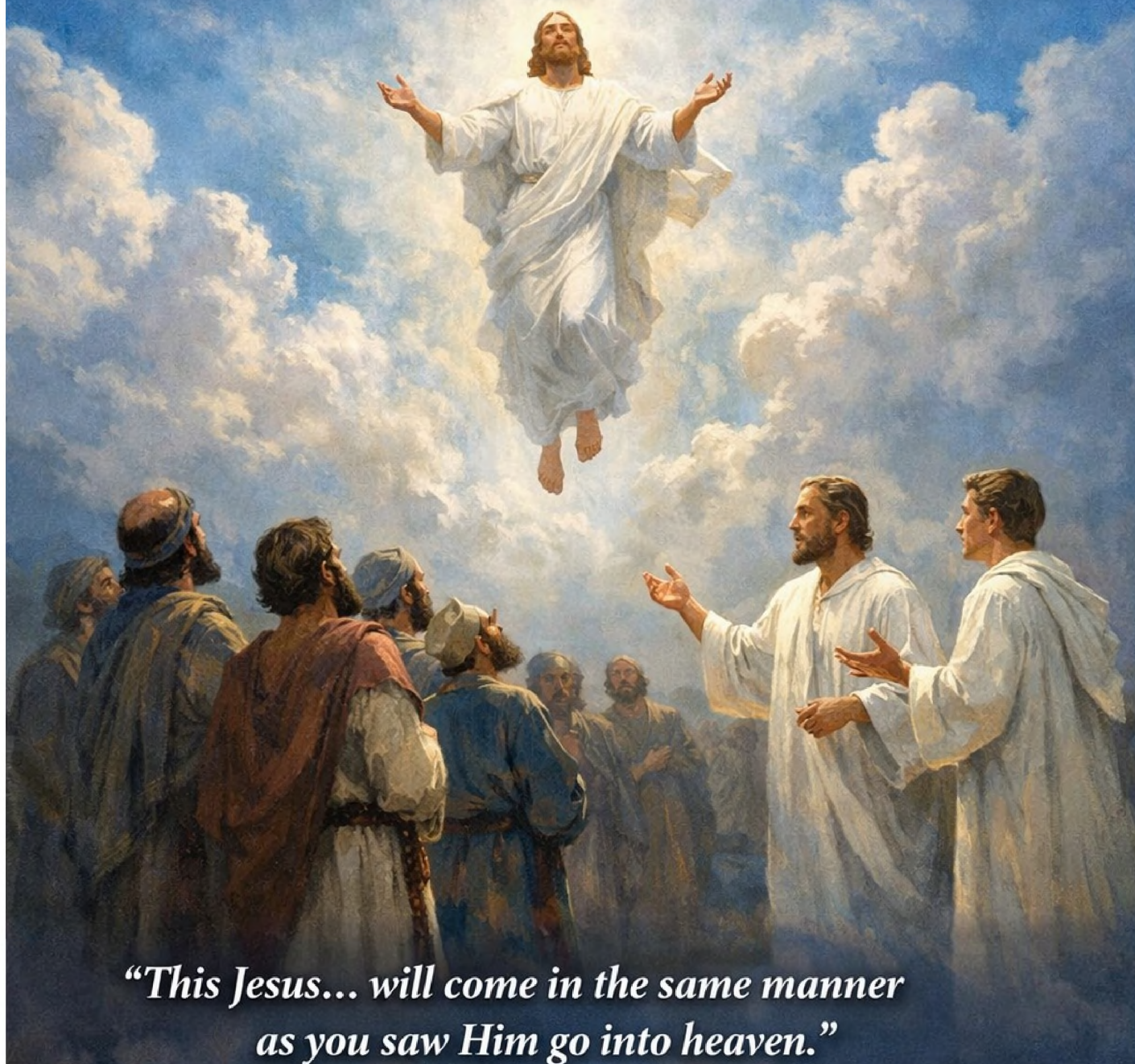


JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

*A look at the Watchtower Society's teachings on the Second
Coming / Presence of Jesus throughout its history*



*“This Jesus... will come in the same manner
as you saw Him go into heaven.”*

Acts 1:11 (ESV)

JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES AND THE SECOND COMING OF JESUS CHRIST

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as you saw him go into heaven.’” Acts 1:9–11, ESV.¹

Ever since the angels spoke those words, individuals have looked forward with eager anticipation to His promised Return. All too often, though, their zeal has led to attempts to calculate and proclaim a date for that return, leading, in turn, to shattered hopes and bitter disappointment.

One such attempt—whose influence continues to this day—emerged within the nineteenth-century Adventist movement and would eventually help shape the theology of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Nelson Horatio Barbour

In January of 1874, an Adventist writer from New York, named Nelson H. Barbour, began publication of a periodical named *Herald of the Morning*, to promote his views that the second coming of Christ would occur that year. But, to the dismay of Barbour and his followers, Christ failed to appear in the flesh in 1874.

Shortly afterward, an associate of Barbour, who had a copy of Benjamin Wilson’s *Emphatic Diaglott*, a Greek-English interlinear translation of the New Testament, noticed something in it which he thought noteworthy: that in Matthew 24:27, 37, & 39, the word παρουσία (parousia) which in the King James version is rendered “coming”, is translated “presence” in the *Diaglott*. This observation was later described as the clue that led Barbour’s group to advocate that Christ’s return had occurred invisibly.²

¹ Unless otherwise specified, scripture quotations are taken from *The Holy Bible, English Standard Version*. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All Rights Reserved. Quotations from modern Bible translations and Watchtower publications follow the capitalization and wording of their respective sources. Capitalization elsewhere reflects the author’s own theological usage.

² Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, *Qualified to Be Ministers* (Brooklyn, NY: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1955), 298

Through the pages of the *Herald of the Morning*, Barbour then advanced his belief that the prophecies indicated that the Lord had, indeed, returned in 1874, and was already present in the world, although unseen and invisible. He further wrote that Christ's kingdom would be fully established in 1914, and his millennial reign would commence at that time.

Charles Taze Russell

Charles Taze Russell, the founder and first president of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, had moved through several Protestant traditions in his early religious life. In 1869, or thereabouts, he attended a service conducted by Second Adventist preacher Jonas Wendell. The subject of Wendell's message on the night Russell attended is unknown at this time. Since a core Adventist belief is the imminent return of Jesus Christ, it is possible, if not likely, that his discourse centered on Jesus' second coming. But, whatever the topic, Russell reported that the preaching motivated him to more zealous and careful Bible study than previously in his life.³

In January of 1876, Russell received a copy of Barbour's *Herald of the Morning*. Although he had previously shied away from Biblical time prophecies, Russell wanted to learn more about Barbour's teachings and views. He arranged for the two of them to meet in Philadelphia. Russell came away from the meeting convinced that Christ's **invisible presence** had begun in the autumn of 1874.⁴

In 1877, Russell and Barbour jointly published a 196-page book, authored by Barbour, entitled *Three Worlds, and the Harvest of this World*. It presented their shared view that Jesus Christ's invisible presence dated from the autumn of 1874.⁵

But, the collaboration between Russell and Barbour was short-lived. In May of 1879, Russell disassociated himself from Barbour over doctrinal differences.⁶

Two months later Russell began publishing his own monthly periodical, *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence*.⁷ He also wrote numerous pamphlets and tracts, as well as a series of

³ Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc., *Jehovah's Witnesses Proclaimers of God's Kingdom* (Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., 1993), 43–44.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 46–47.

⁵ *Ibid.*, 47.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 47–48.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 47–48.

six books, originally titled *Millennial Dawn*, later renamed *Studies in the Scriptures*.

In 1881 Russell formed Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society—renamed Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in 1886. In 1910, he introduced the name International Bible Students Association, to identify the then-worldwide community of Bible study groups who followed his teachings.

Much of Russell's teaching on Christ's return closely followed Barbour's, although there were some minor differences. Through his preaching and written works, Russell advanced his understanding Jesus began his invisible presence in October 1874, with the "formal inauguration of his kingly office", as Russell described it, dating from April 1878.⁸

Up to the time of his death, on October 31, 1916, C. T. Russell continued to maintain that Christ had returned to the earth invisibly in 1874 and that the full establishment of the kingdom on earth remained close at hand.

Joseph Franklin Rutherford

Following Russell's death, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, formerly the Watch Tower Society's legal counsel, ascended to the presidency of the Society. Rutherford had been briefly appointed a substitute judge in Missouri in 1913. Although his judicial service was limited in scope and duration, the title "Judge" continued to be used in Watchtower publications and public settings for the remainder of his life.

Among the many changes under his leadership was a systematic revision of what had been Russell's teaching on the return or presence of Jesus. This, however, came about incrementally, over several years.

In 1921 Rutherford penned his first hard-cover book, *The Harp of God*. In it, he reiterated Russell's earlier teaching that the time of Lord's second presence dated from 1874.⁹ In fact, he wrote that Russell "was the greatest preacher of modern times", and that his extensive preaching and writing, which resulted in the gathering together of believers out of all denominations in all parts of the earth,

⁸ Charles T. Russell, *Millennial Dawn, Volume IV, The Day of Vengeance* (Allegheny, PA., U.S.A.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1897), 621. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 24.

⁹ J. F. Rutherford, *The Harp of God*, (Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1921), 231.

served as “corroborative” and “conclusive” proof of the Lord’s second presence from 1874 forward.¹⁰

Rutherford also asserted that the “increase of light” in the form of inventions and discoveries since 1874 provided further evidence of the Lord’s presence since 1874.¹¹

In an address entitled “The Kingdom”, delivered by Rutherford on September 8, 1922, at the International Bible Students Convention held in Cedar Point, Ohio, attendees were informed that although Jesus’ second coming occurred in 1874, that date simply marked the beginning of a “day of preparation”. That “day” extended from 1874 to 1914.¹² Rutherford proclaimed that it was in 1914, rather than 1878 as Russell had taught, that Jesus took his kingly power, and it was at that time that his reign commenced.¹³ On Sunday, September 10, 1922, a resolution was adopted by those in attendance, proclaiming that 1914 marked the end of “the old world”, at which time Christ had become king, and was then invisibly present, working to establish his kingdom; and that such was the “message of good tidings contained in the Bible” to be published henceforth by the International Bible Students.

Russell had clearly taught his belief that Christ’s invisible presence was here on earth, and Watch Tower literature, for the first several years of Rutherford’s leadership, consistently employed language that naturally conveyed an earthly presence. But, the June 1, 1927 issue of *The Watch Tower* magazine provided “new light” relative to Christ’s presence. The lead article, entitled “The First Resurrection”, rather than stating that Christ’s presence occurred in 1874, as previously asserted, announced that his presence merely “began to be made manifest about 1874”, that he took his great power and began to reign in 1914, and that he came to his temple in 1918.¹⁴ The article went on to state that a belief in Jesus’ presence being here in the vicinity of the earth was an “unreasonable” conclusion. It went on to explain that when Jesus had finished his sacrifice and ascended to sit down on the right hand of God, it was necessary for him to wait there until God’s “due time” to take possession of his kingdom, which time had come in 1914. Prior to that time, Jesus had been doing “a work of preparation”, including “gathering together the saints on earth” and “restoring to them the

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 237–241.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, 234–235.

¹² *The Watch Tower*, November 1, 1922, 333. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 25.

¹³ *The Watch Tower*, November 1, 1922, 337. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 26.

¹⁴ *The Watch Tower*, June 1, 1927, 163. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 27.

fundamental truths which had long been hid from them.”¹⁵

Our Lord’s presence began to be made manifest about 1874, according to the article, but only in the sense that it was then that “he began to give his attention to preparing the saints and restoring to them the truth” as well as “preparing to oust the Devil”. Although he did this while still at the right hand of God, *The Watch Tower* asserted that he was “present” in the sense that he was “directing the things of his church on earth”.¹⁶

The Watch Tower taught that spiritually-minded ones could discern this “presence of the Lord” from 1874 forward. Readers were then told that the Greek word *parousia* means “presence”, which, in turn, means “giving his attention to things pertaining to his church and kingdom, as these things have to do with the saints on the earth”.¹⁷

Allusions to the beginning of the Lord’s “presence” in 1874 continued to appear in print until the fall of 1930¹⁸ (although they weren’t to be understood as literally “being present”; only as “giving his attention to his church and kingdom”).

In 1931, a new booklet written by Rutherford, titled *The Kingdom, The Hope of the World* was released. Like his 1922 speech at the Cedar Point Convention, it referred to 1874 as the date the Lord “began preparing the way before Jehovah”¹⁹ and “began to bring to the attention of his people the great fundamental truths that had been obscured by the many errors taught by men”.²⁰ No reference was made to a “presence” or “second coming” occurring in that year. Rather, it was stated that Jesus came the second time in 1914, and was set upon his throne at that time²¹ (although this latter element had already been introduced at the Cedar Point Convention in 1922).

The booklet proclaimed that Charles Taze Russell had been a leader “in the teaching and preaching of the divine Word and particularly with reference to the second coming of Christ and the

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 164. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 28.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1930, 275.

¹⁹ J. F. Rutherford, *The Kingdom, The Hope of the World*, (Brooklyn, N. Y., U.S.A.: Watch Tower Bible & Tract Society, 1931), 29.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 29.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 56–57. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 29.

setting up of his kingdom”.²² However, despite this commendation, by moving the date of the Lord’s presence or return from 1874 to 1914, the last traces of Russell’s teachings on the second coming had been replaced over time.

Invisible Angelic Messengers

As the Society’s teaching about Christ’s presence continued to change in the years after 1914, explanations were also offered as to how those teachings were being communicated. Publications from this period frequently spoke of direction and *increased light*. To follow this line of explanation as presented by the Society to the faithful, it is helpful to look at how those instructions and guidance were received.

Nearly all the changes in the Society’s presence/kingdom teachings came into being after 1922, following the occurrence of a significant event. Although not disclosed until the 1930s, it was, according to Rutherford, in 1919 that “invisible angels” began to “pass ... instruction on to the remnant”. Then, in 1922, the faithful remnant began to “hear and respond” to those messages.²³ Rutherford specifically stated that the resolution adopted at the 1922 Cedar Point convention, announcing that Christ had taken on his Kingdom power in 1914, was a message sent through those invisible angels.²⁴ Not only the resolutions adopted at the Society’s conventions, but also the booklets, magazines, and books it published thereafter—the use of which God commanded—were all said to be given by God through Jesus and the angels.²⁵

Rutherford taught, through the pages of *The Watch Tower*, that it was not necessary for his readers to understand just how God communicates His instructions through His delegated angels, but that “if one in the organization receives directions, and those directions come through the place designated to give instructions, then the instructions should be obeyed as unto the Lord.”²⁶ It is difficult to avoid the conclusion that the “one in the organization” who received instructions from

²² *Ibid.*, 29.

²³ J. F. Rutherford, *Vindication, Vol. III*, (Brooklyn, New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1932), 250. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 30.

²⁴ J. F. Rutherford, *Light, Book One*, (Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1930), 106. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 31.

²⁵ *The Watchtower*; May 1, 1938, 143. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 32.; Rutherford, *Vindication, Vol. III*, Reproduced in Appendix, p. 30.

²⁶ *The Watchtower*, December 1, 1933, 364. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 33; Rutherford, *Light, Book One*, 64. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 34.

these angels was Rutherford, himself.²⁷

While some might have been inclined to view this as *spiritism*, Rutherford argued that it should not be regarded as such, but was, instead, a means God uses “to direct his people without any audible communication with them”.²⁸ It was not necessary, he contended, that they hear audible sounds, as God had “his own good way to convey thoughts to the minds of his anointed ones on earth”.²⁹ Rutherford wrote that the angels, as *invisible messengers*, first hear the instructions issued by God, and then pass them on to the remnant.³⁰

The September 1, 1930 issue of *The Watch Tower* explained that while the holy spirit³¹ had been the advocate, comforter, and helper for the church prior to Jesus’ coming to his temple in 1918, there was no further need for the spirit to continue to serve in that role after that time, as Jesus was then with the temple class of anointed believers.³² An even more definitive statement appeared in Rutherford’s 1932 book *Preservation*, where he wrote that the holy spirit only guided and led Jehovah’s people up to a certain point in time, which occurred in 1918 when Jesus came to the temple, and the holy spirit was taken away.³³ Rutherford also taught that when the holy spirit ceased to function as advocate or paraclete on behalf of believers, angels assumed those responsibilities.³⁴ These angelic beings had begun “rendering service” to the remnant in 1919, but it was not until 1922 that the “faithful remnant . . . began to hear and respond to their messages”.³⁵

However, nowhere in God’s Word is it taught that there will come a time when the Holy Spirit will be taken away from – or cease to operate toward – the Church as the helper, comforter, teacher, and means of communication between God and men. To the contrary, Jesus promised us, in John

²⁷As an additional consideration supporting this conclusion, it is noteworthy that, since his death in January of 1942, nothing further has been said in Watchtower publications about their teachings being directly received from such beings.

²⁸ Rutherford, *Light, Book One*, 64. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 34.

²⁹ J. F. Rutherford, *Preparation*, (Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A., 1933), 64. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 35; *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1938, 286. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 36.

³⁰ J. F. Rutherford, *Vindication, Vol. III*, (Brooklyn, New York, U.S.A.: 1932), 250. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 30.

³¹ Capitalization of “Holy Spirit” reflects the theological context being described: usage drawn directly from Scripture and from historic Christian theology is capitalized, while Watchtower usage is rendered in lower case in keeping with the Society’s teaching that the holy spirit is an impersonal force.

³² *The Watch Tower*, September 1, 1930, 262–264.

³³ J. F. Rutherford, *Preservation* (Brooklyn, NY: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1932), 193–194. Reproduced in Appendix, pp. 37–38.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 51. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 39.

³⁵ *Vindication, Vol. III*, 250. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 30.

14:16, that the Holy Spirit, as our Comforter, would be with us *forever*. The consistent message of Scripture is that the Holy Spirit, not angels, is to be the believers' teacher after Jesus' departure. Luke 12:12, John 14:26, 1 John 2:20 & 27.

Just prior to the start of the remnant's beginning to hear and respond to messages from the spirit realm, *The Watch Tower* had taught that "the good spirits, the holy angels, make no communications with man now: that these communications belonged to a previous time, when they were appropriate and necessary as the channels of divine communication."³⁶ Rutherford had acknowledged earlier, in his 1920 booklet *Talking with the Dead*, that fallen angels, or demons, often communicate through human channels, sometimes claiming to speak with the voice of the Almighty, and having the power to inject thoughts into mortal minds.³⁷ This sounds remarkably similar to the way the "one in the organization" received angelic messages or directions.

At 1 Timothy 4:1, the Apostle Paul wrote that the Holy Spirit clearly warned that in later times men would be led away from the faith by following deceitful spirits and the teachings of demons. He told believers, at 2 Corinthians 11:14, that since Satan transforms himself into an angel of light, it should come as no surprise that his servants pose as servants of righteousness. Although Paul was speaking expressly of mortal men whose conduct marked them as false apostles of Christ, those servants of Satan who advance themselves as servants of righteousness could certainly include his demonic angels who claim to speak with the voice of the Lord while communicating through susceptible human channels.

At this point, it is no longer sufficient to simply describe the Society's claims historically; claims of spiritual communication must be evaluated by the standard of Scripture itself.

The mere fact that an invisible spirit being conveys or injects inaudible thoughts into the mind of an individual in the Watchtower organization, and claims to be speaking for Jesus Christ, in no way qualifies that claim as truth.

The Apostle John wrote, "Beloved, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see

³⁶ *The Watch Tower*, March 15, 1922, 90. Reproduced in Appendix, p. 40.

³⁷ J. F. Rutherford, *Talking With the Dead* (Brooklyn, NY: Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1920), 100–101, 112.

whether they are from God, for many false prophets have gone out into the world.” 1 John 4:1. At 1 Thessalonians 5:21, Paul instructs Christians to “test everything; hold fast what is good.” Acts 17:11 tells us (speaking of the Bereans’ response to the preaching of Paul): “Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica; they received the word with all eagerness, *examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so.*”

Clearly, the best way to test the spirits which convey messages of instruction and prophetic interpretation to the anointed remnant is to examine the Scriptures and measure those teachings by the yardstick of God’s Word, rejecting those things which do not measure up, and holding fast to those that do. Such testing would have been extremely difficult for the Watch Tower’s remnant class, from at least 1919 until 1930, since they plainly admitted that the holy spirit ceased, in 1919, to operate toward them as helper, comforter, advocate, and the means of revelation and instruction from the Lord.³⁸ 1 Corinthians 2:14 tells us that the natural man, unaided by the Holy Spirit, cannot understand the things of the Spirit of God. Scripture says nothing about angels stepping in when the Holy Spirit has been deemed unnecessary.

However, although *The Watchtower* taught that from 1919 until at least September 1, 1930 there had been no necessity for the holy spirit as the advocate for the servant class, and that the holy spirit had been taken away, this understanding was subsequently abandoned. Following the close of the 1930s and the subsequent organizational transition of the early 1940s, references to the holy spirit began to reappear in *The Watchtower*. By November 1, 1944, the journal was teaching that the holy spirit should determine and guide in organizational matters, such as filling the governing body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.³⁹ In the January 1, 1945 issue of *The Watchtower*, the holy spirit was explicitly restored to a central role of necessity in the lives of Jehovah’s anointed ones, with the statement that, “Jehovah causes his active force to rest upon his anointed ones. He has a most important work for them to do, and without the active force or spirit of the Lord Jehovah the anointed ones could never accomplish it.”⁴⁰

Many of the teachings and doctrines presently held by Jehovah’s Witnesses developed between 1922 and 1944, during that time when, according to the Society’s own teaching, the holy

³⁸ *The Watch Tower*, September 1, 1930, 262–264.

³⁹ *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1944, 333.

⁴⁰ *The Watchtower*, January 1, 1945, 3.

spirit was absent from their lives, and invisible spirit creatures furnished the content of the Society's booklets, magazines, and books. And, although all references to one in the organization receiving angelic messages ceased upon the death of Rutherford, Jehovah's Witnesses today continue to teach that they receive angelic guidance or direction in carrying out their work. A search of the Watchtower Online Library for the term "Angelic Guidance" yields over 100 references to such, published in recent years.

Parousia — Presence or Return?

The invisible messengers, who imparted to Jehovah's Witnesses their present understanding of Christ's return, conveyed the thought that, following Jesus' ascension to Heaven as described in Acts chapter 1, he has continued to be positioned there. Although they teach that His presence or *parousia* commenced in 1914, this was really nothing more than a continued presence in Heaven. The only thing that changed, in Watchtower belief, was that Jesus was placed on his kingly throne, in Heaven, in 1914. Thus, they teach that he came to be "present" in Kingdom power, although the location of that "presence" remained unchanged.

It is interesting, though, that in the Watchtower's discussion of Christ's presence⁴¹ they state, "Jesus' parables and other texts show that his presence is like that of a master returning to his household and that of a man receiving kingship who returns to take control of his domain," citing Matthew 24:43–51; 25:14–45; and Luke 19:11–27. Note, however, that, in these examples, they do *not* say that the master went away (as Jesus went to Heaven) and he didn't come back. They do not say that he stayed away, and simply "gave his attention" back to where he had been. The Scriptural illustrations say that both the master and the man *went away* and *returned to the place of origin*. It is that return, back to their starting points, which is emphasized, not what transpired while the master and the man were in the place to which each went away. It is likewise so with the Biblical references to Christ's *parousia* or presence. What is described is Christ's presence with His followers upon His return from Heaven to Earth.

In the New Testament, or Christian Greek Scriptures, as the Watchtower Society prefers, there are principally four verbs, and their varying tenses, used with reference to the second coming, or

⁴¹ *Insight on the Scriptures*, (Brooklyn, N.Y., Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1988), 676–679.

return, of Jesus Christ, each with different meanings, and referring to separate and distinct aspects or phases of his second coming or return.

The first of these is ἔρχομαι — *erchomai*, the basic meaning of which is *to come*, or *to arrive*. The emphasis of *erchomai* is the **act of coming itself** (the arrival). This is the most common and ordinary verb for “coming,” and when applied to Christ, it emphasizes the **moment of arrival**, not what follows afterward. Some examples of the usage of *erchomai* are:

- **John 14:3**

καὶ ἐὰν πορευθῶ καὶ ἐτοιμάσω τόπον ὑμῶν, πάλιν ἔρχομαι

“And if I go and prepare a place for you, **I am coming again...**”

- **Matthew 24:30**

καὶ ὄψονται τὸν Υἱὸν τοῦ ἀνθρώπου ἐρχόμενον ἐπὶ τῶν νεφελῶν

“They will see the Son of Man **coming** on the clouds of heaven...”

- **Acts 1:11**

οὕτως ὁ Ἰησοῦς... οὕτως ἐλεύσεται (future of ἔρχομαι)

“This Jesus... **will come** in the same way...”

Erchomai answers the question “**Does He actually arrive?**” The Scriptures answer: *Yes—visibly, decisively, historically.*

The second of these words is ἐπιφάνεια — *epiphaneia*, which conveys a meaning of *appearance, manifestation*, or a *visible shining forth*. The emphasis here is the **sudden visibility and glory** of His Coming.

It is impossible to find any theory of an *invisible* return in *epiphaneia*. A few examples from Scripture include:

- **Titus 2:13**

προσδεχόμενοι... τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν τῆς δόξης

“Awaiting... the **appearing of the glory** of our great God and Savior...”

- **2 Timothy 4:8**

τοῖς ἠγαπηκόσι τὴν ἐπιφάνειαν αὐτοῦ

“To all who have loved **His appearing.**”

- **2 Thessalonians 2:8**

ὃν ὁ Κύριος... καταργήσει τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ

“Whom the Lord will destroy by the **appearance** of His coming.”

Eriphaneia answers “**How does He come?**” The answer from God’s Word is: *in manifest, visible, glory.*

Thirdly, we come to **ἀποκάλυψις** — *apokalypsis*, the basic meaning of which is: *unveiling, revelation, disclosure*, the emphasis here being Christ **revealed as who He truly is.**

This word assumes Christ is presently *hidden* from sight and will be **uncovered** at His return. Examples of *apokalypsis* include:

- **1 Corinthians 1:7**

ἀπεκδεχομένους τὴν ἀποκάλυψιν τοῦ Κυρίου ἡμῶν Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

“Waiting for the **revelation** of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

- **1 Peter 1:7**

ἐν ἀποκαλύψει Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ

“At the **revelation of Jesus Christ.**”

- **2 Thessalonians 1:7**

ἐν τῇ ἀποκαλύψει τοῦ Κυρίου Ἰησοῦ ἀπ’ οὐρανοῦ

“At the **revelation of the Lord Jesus from heaven...**”

Apokalypsis answers “**What happens at His return?**”, to which the answer is: *He is unveiled—no longer hidden, disputed, or denied.*

And finally, we arrive at **παρουσία** — *parousia*, of which *presence* is an accurate translation.

At its core, *παρουσία* denotes the state of being present, often in contrast to *ἀπουσία*

(“absence”; cf. Phil 2:12). The emphasis lies not on the act of coming, but on being there once arrival has occurred. Parousia is the condition or state that results from arrival — presence with someone. Where *erchomai* focuses on **coming**, *parousia* focuses on **having come** and **now being present**.

Representative New Testament examples:

- **1 Thessalonians 4:15**

ἡμεῖς οἱ ζῶντες... εἰς τὴν παρουσίαν τοῦ Κυρίου

“We who are alive... **until the presence of the Lord**”

Here *parousia* refers not to the instant of arrival itself, but to an ongoing condition in which events unfold.

- **1 Corinthians 15:23**

Χριστὸς ἀπαρχή, εἶτα οἱ τοῦ Χριστοῦ ἐν τῇ παρουσίᾳ αὐτοῦ

“Christ the firstfruits, afterward those who belong to Christ **at His presence**”

What is described here is the resurrection of believers with Christ being present, not with the verb of coming itself.

- **2 Thessalonians 2:8**

τῇ ἐπιφανείᾳ τῆς παρουσίας αὐτοῦ

“By the appearance of His **presence**”

This striking combination shows that *parousia* is not itself the appearing but something that has an appearing. The grammar naturally suggests:

- a **presence** that exists
- and an **appearing** that manifests it

Parousia answers the question “What is the result of His return?” Answer: ***He is present***.

Taken together, the New Testament presents a coherent pattern involving *erchomai*,

epiphaneia, apokalypsis, and parousia.⁴² This is not a set of words all having the same meaning. *Parousia* describes the state *cf* being present that follows the act *cf* coming.

Returning, once again, to the Scripture passage with which we opened:

“And when he had said these things, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight. And while they were gazing into heaven as he went, behold, two men stood by them in white robes, and said, ‘Men of Galilee, why do you stand looking into heaven? This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as you saw him go into heaven.’” Acts 1:9–11, ESV.

In **Acts 1:11**, the Greek word translated “**come**” is:

ἐλεύσεται (*eleusetai*)

- It’s the **future middle (deponent) indicative, 3rd person singular**
- From the verb **ἔρχομαι** (*erchomai*), meaning **to come / to go / to arrive**

So, the angels say that Jesus will “**come**” (**ἐλεύσεται**) “**in the same way**” (*ὁν τρόπον*) as the disciples saw Him **go** (*πορευόμενον*) into heaven.

- *Acts 1:11* uses **ἔρχομαι**, (*erchomai*), not **παρουσία** (*parousia*)

⁴² The distinctions outlined here between ἔρχομαι (*erchomai*), ἐπιφάνεια (*epiphaneia*), ἀποκάλυψις (*apokalypsis*), and παρουσία (*parousia*) are standard in Greek dictionaries used for studying the New Testament and are not unique to this study. *Erchomai* denotes the act of coming or arrival itself; *epiphaneia* emphasizes visible manifestation or appearing; *apokalypsis* denotes unveiling or disclosure of what was previously hidden; and *parousia* refers to the resulting state of presence following arrival, often in contrast with absence (cf. Phil. 2:12). See, for example, J. H. Thayer, *Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament* (definitions of παρουσία and ἀπουσία); W. E. Vine, *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, under “Coming,” “Presence”; and W. Bauer, F. W. Danker, W. F. Arndt, and F. W. Gingrich, *A Greek–English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature* (BDAG), under the entry for παρουσία. These standard word meanings consistently distinguish the concept of *presence* (*parousia*) from the act of *coming* (*erchomai*), while recognizing that παρουσία (*parousia*) assumes that the arrival has already occurred, and denotes the condition that follows it.

- The emphasis is on a **future, observable coming**, paralleling the visible ascension

Christ's Return — Does It Really Matter?

Yes — it matters profoundly.

The return of Jesus Christ is not a peripheral teaching of Scripture. It stands at the very heart of the Christian hope. From the moment our Lord ascended into heaven, His followers were taught to live in expectation of His return — not an abstract presence, not an invisible administrative oversight from heaven, but **the personal, visible return of the risen Christ Himself**.

Jehovah's Witnesses are taught that Christ returned invisibly in 1914, that He has remained invisible ever since, and that His presence (*parousia*) can be discerned only by interpretations supplied by the Watchtower Society. Yet the angels who witnessed Jesus' ascension plainly told the disciples:

“This Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will come in the same manner as you saw him go into heaven.” (Acts 1:11)

Nothing in this statement suggests an invisible return, a delayed recognition, or a presence discernible only through organizational authority. The manner of His departure was visible, bodily, and unmistakable. Scripture offers no reason to believe that the manner of His return would be fundamentally different. The same Jesus who departed visibly will return visibly.

Throughout the New Testament, the writers consistently speak of Christ's Second Coming as a future event — something believers are to **await, anticipate, and love**.

When Jesus' disciples asked about the sign of His coming (*parousia*) and the conclusion of the age, He did not direct them to await explanations from an organization. Instead, He cautioned them:

“Look out that nobody misleads you.” (Matthew 24:4)

He went on to warn against claims that He had already come secretly or invisibly:

“If people say to you, ‘Look! He is in the wilderness,’ do not go out; ‘Look! He is in the inner

rooms,' do not believe it." (Matthew 24:26)

Jesus did not say that His presence would be recognized only by those with "eyes of understanding" receiving spiritual food from a central channel. On the contrary, He compared His coming to lightning flashing across the sky — sudden, visible, and impossible to miss (Matthew 24:27).

The apostle John likewise wrote:

"Behold, he is coming with the clouds, and every eye will see him." (Revelation 1:7)

These statements cannot reasonably be reconciled with the idea of an invisible presence beginning in 1874 or 1914, detectable only through organizational interpretation and constantly revised chronology.

The tragedy of the Watchtower Society's teaching on Christ's return is not merely that dates were set and later abandoned. Many sincere Christians have made similar errors throughout history. Rather, the deeper problem is that **the clear, biblical hope of Christ's return has been replaced by reliance upon an organization that claims exclusive insight into events no human eye has ever witnessed.**

In doing so, confidence has been shifted:

- away from Scripture;
- away from the promised return of Christ;
- and toward the authority of fallible men claiming invisible confirmation.

Yet the New Testament never directs believers to place their trust in an organization to mediate Christ's presence. Instead, we are told to "fix our eyes on Jesus" (Hebrews 12:2), to "stand firm" in the apostolic teaching (2 Thessalonians 2:15), and to test every claim by the Word of God (Acts 17:11; 1 John 4:1).

The Bible consistently directs Christians to place their confidence, not in fallible men or institutions, but in God's Word and in Christ Himself. Jesus promised that the Holy Spirit would

remain with His followers forever as their teacher and guide (John 14:26), not that angels would replace the Spirit or communicate new doctrine through inaudible messages.

Jehovah's Witnesses are rightly encouraged to value accuracy in doctrine and truthfulness in teaching. It is therefore reasonable — and scriptural — to ask: *if Christ truly returned in 1914, why has that teaching required so many corrections, reversals, and reinterpretations?* Why did earlier proclamations, once declared to be Jehovah's truth, later become "misunderstandings"? And why does Scripture itself never once say that Christ's return would be invisible, prolonged, or dependent upon a human organization for verification?

The hope set before believers is not that Christ has already come and that we simply failed to recognize it. The hope is that **He will come again**, just as He promised — personally, visibly, and gloriously — to judge the world in righteousness and to gather His people to Himself.

Until that day, believers are not called to decipher secret chronologies or submit to ever-changing interpretations delivered by unseen messengers. They are called to faithfulness, watchfulness, and confidence in the plain promises of God's Word.

Christ has not returned yet.

But He will.

And when He does, no organization will be needed to announce it.

Jehovah's Word will have spoken for itself.

AFTERWORD

“Lord, to Whom Shall We Go?”

If you have read this study carefully and honestly, you may now find yourself facing a deeply unsettling question:

If the Watchtower Society is not Jehovah’s organization, where do I go from here?

Many Jehovah’s Witnesses have asked that very question — sometimes aloud, sometimes only in their own hearts. It is not a small question. For years, perhaps decades, the organization has presented itself not merely as a teacher, but as *the place where God is found, the channel through which truth flows, and the means by which one remains acceptable to Jehovah*. To question the organization, therefore, can feel like questioning God Himself.

You are not the first person to face such a moment.

In John 6, after Jesus spoke hard truths that many found difficult to accept, large numbers of His followers turned back and no longer walked with Him. Jesus then asked the Twelve a simple but piercing question:

“Do you want to go away as well?”

(John 6:67)

Peter answered — not with certainty about the future, not with a new plan, and not with an organization to replace the one he might lose — but with a confession of faith:

“Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life, and we have believed, and have come to know that You are the Holy One of God.”

(John 6:68–69)

Notice what Peter did *not* say.

He did not say, “Where shall we go?”

He said, **“To whom shall we go?”**

That distinction changes everything.

Salvation Was Never Found in an Organization

One of the most difficult things for a Jehovah's Witness to unlearn is the idea that safety, truth, and salvation are found *inside* an institution. Scripture does not teach this.

The Bible does not say:

- *Join the right organization and you will have life.*
- *Remain loyal to the correct channel and you will be saved.*

Instead, it says something far more personal — and far more demanding:

“I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me.”

(John 14:6)

Jesus did not point people to a system.

He pointed them to **Himself**.

The apostles preached **Christ**, not an arrangement.

The early Christians belonged to Christ before they belonged to anything else.

And salvation was never mediated by any religious system, but by faith in a living Savior.

What Does It Mean to “Come to Jesus”?

To come to Jesus is not to switch denominations.

It is not to join a new group.

It is not to adopt a different vocabulary.

To come to Jesus is to do what Scripture consistently calls people to do:

- **To acknowledge your need** — that you cannot make yourself right with God by effort, knowledge, or loyalty.

- **To trust in what Christ has already done** — His death for sins, His resurrection, and His sufficiency as Savior.
- **To place your confidence in Him personally**, not in a governing body, a teaching authority, or your own works.

The apostle Paul put it plainly:

“If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.”

(Romans 10:9)

And again:

“By grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.”

(Ephesians 2:8–9)

Salvation is not something you earn by staying “inside.”

It is something you receive by trusting **Christ Himself**.

You Are Not Being Asked to Leap Into the Unknown

Leaving the Watchtower can feel like stepping into emptiness. In reality, it is a step *out of mediation* and *into direct relationship*.

Jesus does not say, “Come to an organization and I will represent you.”

He says:

“Come to Me.”

(Matthew 11:28)

He does not require you to know everything before you come.

He does not demand that you have all questions resolved.

He asks for trust — the same trust Peter expressed when he said, “*You have the words of eternal life.*”

Where Do You Go From Here?

You go **to Christ**.

You go to Him:

- with your questions,
- with your fears,
- with your uncertainty,
- and with your need for forgiveness and life.

You read the Scriptures — not through an organizational lens, but with the simple prayer, “*Lord, teach me.*”

You discover that the One who promised to return has already given what no organization ever could: **peace with God, assurance of salvation, and eternal life.**

A Word About Asking God for the Holy Spirit

Many Jehovah’s Witnesses are taught—explicitly or implicitly—that spiritual understanding flows through an organization, and that prayer must remain carefully aligned with that channel. Yet Jesus Himself made a promise that bypasses all mediation:

“If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!”

(Luke 11:13)

This promise was not made to an organization.
It was made to individuals.

There comes a moment for many who begin questioning the Watchtower’s claims when doubt gives way to a deeper hunger: *if the organization is not my mediator, who will guide me?* Jesus’ answer is simple—and profoundly personal.

He promised not an impersonal force, but **a Helper.**

“I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Helper, to be with you forever... the Spirit of truth.”

(John 14:16–17)

That promise still stands.

For some, the first truly decisive step away from organizational dependence is the simplest—and the most courageous: to pray directly to Jesus, taking Him at His word, and to ask for the Holy Spirit to teach, guide, and lead into truth. Not as an “active force,” but as the personal presence of God Himself, given to those who seek Him.

Jesus did not say the Spirit would be given only after perfect understanding, nor only after every question was answered. He said the Spirit would be given **to those who ask**.

And when that prayer is offered sincerely, it does not leave a person stranded or confused. It begins a journey—sometimes difficult, often stretching, but never solitary—in which Christ Himself remains present through His Spirit, leading step by step into truth.

If you are reading this and find yourself uncertain of what comes next, you are not being asked to walk forward alone. You are invited to ask God for what He has already promised to give.

A Final Word

If this study has unsettled you, that may be because something false has been shaken loose. But God does not leave honest seekers in darkness.

Jesus is not waiting at the end of an organizational path. He is waiting where He has always been — calling people to Himself.

“Whoever comes to Me I will never cast out.”

(John 6:37)

That promise was not made by an organization.

It was made by **the Holy One of God**.

APPENDIX

The following pages reproduce selected source materials cited in the footnotes of this report. Although many of these references may be accessed through publicly available archives and online databases, the excerpts are provided here for the reader's convenience and ready verification. Particular attention has been given to those statements whose wording or historical context may invite closer examination. The materials are presented so that readers may consult the original language directly and assess the discussion in light of the published record.

Readers who have questions, comments, or who would like copies of source documentation not included in the appendix are invited to write to:

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It is offered without charge in the hope that thoughtful readers will examine the Scriptures and the historical record carefully for themselves.

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lated out of the power of darkness into the Kingdom of God's dear Son.—Col. 1:13.

This *submission* for over eighteen centuries to the violence of dominant evil has not been because of lack of power on the part of our risen, ascended and glorified Lord to protect his people; for after his resurrection he declared,—“All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth.” (Matt. 28:18.) The exercise of the power is delayed for a purpose. In the Father's plan there was a “due time” for the great sacrifice for sins to be given, and another due time for the Kingdom to be set up in power and great glory to rule and bless the world: and these were far enough apart to permit the calling and preparing of the “elect” Church to be joint-heirs of the Kingdom with Christ. The evil influences and opposition of sinners have been *permitted* for the purifying, testing and polishing of those “called” to be members of the Kingdom class. As with the Head, so with the body, it is God's design that each member shall as a new creature be “made perfect through suffering.”—Heb. 5:9.

But now we are in the end of this Gospel age, and the Kingdom is being established or set up. **Our Lord, the appointed King, is now present, since October 1874, A. D.,** according to the testimony of the prophets, to those who have ears to hear it: and the formal inauguration of his kingly office dates from April 1878, A. D.: and the first work of the Kingdom, as shown by our Lord, in his parables and prophecy (the gathering of “his elect”), is now in progress. “The dead in Christ shall rise *first*,” explained the Lord through the Apostle; and the resurrection of the Church shall be in a moment.* Consequently the Kingdom, as represented in our Lord, and the sleeping saints already fitted and prepared and found worthy to be members of

* VOL. III, Chap. 6.

do, and injects into the minds of others, thoughts of slander. *Satan* means adversary or opposer. He has opposed every step in the development of the kingdom class. He is the enemy of God, the enemy of man, the deadly foe of the righteous class.

Jehovah, the great ruler of the universe, in whom all dominion rightfully lies, planned the redemption and deliverance of the human race and organized the nation of Israel to foreshadow such. With that nation he organized the true religion, commanding that they should worship him as the only true God. Satan, the opposer, the mimic God, organized amongst the people round about Israel the false religion, and caused them to worship him and other devils. The power exercised by Jehovah upon his people is the holy spirit. The tie that binds Satan to his followers is the evil spirit. Because of yielding to his machinations Israel was overreached by him. God pronounced a decree against the nation, and enforced that decree in 606 B.C.; and there Satan became the god of this world. He is also called the prince of the power of the air, thus indicating his organization visible and invisible.

THE KINGDOM CLASS

While the Law was intended to lead Israel to Christ, only a remnant of that nation escaped the wiles of the adversary. God had promised a seed through which all the families of the earth should be blessed. Satan developed an opposing seed. The seed of promise is the Christ. The seed of the evil one consists of his emissaries visible and invisible, warring against the seed of promise. The seed of promise is made up of the truly consecrated and anointed Christians on this side of the veil and of the Lord and the glorified saints on the other side of the veil. The seed visible of Satan organized into a body is designated as the "beast." The "beast" is composed of the three elements; big business, big politicians and big preachers. Satan's purpose is to control mankind and keep them subjected to wickedness. The purpose of the Messianic kingdom is to relieve mankind, to lift them up and bless them with life everlasting. This benevolent work must be done by the kingdom class.

Satan's kingdom must be overthrown by the Messianic kingdom. Therefore there could be no kingdom without a king; and the King must be present and acting before the overthrow could take place.

The development of the kingdom class began at the consecration of Jesus at the Jordan. As a new creature he was there assigned to the office of king; hence it was proper for John and Jesus to say: "The kingdom of heaven is at hand," because the King was present. But Jesus must die and arise from the dead before he could become the King of glory.

God ordained that there should be associated with the King of glory as a part of the kingdom class the members of his body, designated his bride, the church. After Jesus had announced his kingship he said to his disciples: "I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also." (John 14:2,3) From the time of his ascension into heaven forward, Christians have looked for his return as the great event of all time. After his resurrection Jesus began to make known the mystery of God. He brought forth the true and faithful religion, of which he was the true and faithful Witness. Satan then organized the mystery of iniquity, bringing to the fore a faithless religion, a religion that claims to worship God but that in truth and in fact worships the devil and obeys his commandments.

HE IS HERE!

All the prophecies focused upon the coming of the King of glory. Not only did Jesus promise the disciples that he would come, but he taught them to pray: "Thy kingdom come." The apostles looked with eagerness for his coming, and declared that there would be a special blessing to those who would be preaching and loving his appearing at the time of his coming. The prophet Daniel, looking to that time, exclaimed: "Oh, the blessedness of him who lives and comes unto that time!" It is the all-important time, because it is the climax of the world's history.

The Scriptures show that Satan's empire will conclude with a deadly battle between Satan and his seed on the one side and the Lord and his seed on the other; and that the King of glory will triumph, resulting in the deliverance of the church and the world of mankind. The Scriptures further show that at that time Satan's kingdoms would have control of the earth, and Satan's representatives in earth would be subjecting the people to oppressive measures. But God through his prophet says: "In the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms, and it shall stand for ever." (Daniel 2:44) For this reason Christians have eagerly looked and waited for the coming of the Lord and his kingdom.

Bible prophecy shows that the Lord was due to appear for the second time in the year 1874. Fulfilled prophecy shows beyond a doubt that he did appear in 1874. Fulfilled prophecy is otherwise designated the physical facts; and these facts are indisputable. All true watchers are familiar with these facts, as set forth in the Scriptures and explained in the interpretation by the Lord's special servant.

Jesus himself declared that in the time of his presence he would conduct a harvest of his people, during which he would gather unto himself the true and loyal ones. For some years this work has been in operation and is nearing completion. He stated that during his presence he would have one who would fill the office of a faithful and wise servant, through whom the Lord would bring to his people meat in due season. All the facts show that these prophecies have been fulfilled.

DAY OF PREPARATION

Why has the King come? To set up his kingdom and reign as King. But he had a work to do before his reign began, and that is a preparatory work. Since there are to be associated with him in his reign his body members, these must be gathered together and prepared for the beginning of the reign. The gentle times under the supervision of the god of this world ended August 1, 1914. Before that date it would not have been consistent for the Lord, the King of glory, to take unto himself his great power and reign. (Ezekiel 21:27) Since he has been present from 1874, it follows, from the facts as we now see them, that the period from 1874 to 1914 is the day of preparation. This in no wise militates against the thought that "the time of the end" is from 1799 until 1914. The period from 1799 to 1874 could not be said to be a day of preparation, but a day of increasing light. It is not reasonable to think that the King began to make preparations until he was present.

The Lord foreknew, of course, that Satan would not peaceably yield the kingdoms of earth. He knew that there would be a great conflict, and hence he must prepare for that conflict. The prophet Nahum, speaking with reference to the time of the second presence of the Lord, shows that this was a preparatory period. He says: "He that dasheth

this message of the kingdom until their earthly career is ended. They must be his faithful witnesses until Babylon's walls crumble to the ground.

For six thousand years God has been preparing for this kingdom. For nineteen hundred years he has been gathering out the kingdom class from amongst men. Since 1874 the King of glory has been present; and during that time he has conducted a harvest and has gathered unto himself the temple class. Since 1914 the King of glory has taken his power and reigns. He has cleansed the lips of the temple class and sends them forth with the message. The importance of the message of the kingdom cannot be overstated. It is the message of all messages. It is the message of the hour. It is incumbent upon those who are the Lord's to declare it. The kingdom of heaven is at hand; the King reigns; Satan's empire is falling; millions now living will never die.

Do you believe it? Do you believe that the King of glory

This was followed at 11 o'clock by a discourse delivered by Brother Sullivan, who reviewed the fact of the King's presence—that his presence had dated since 1874 and that in 1914 he took unto himself his great power and now reigns. He emphasized the fact that all the fulfillment of prophecy shows that the Lord is exercising his great power as King, that the nations are being dashed to pieces, that the saints are being tested, that his kingdom is being set up, and that this should be the greatest encouragement to the brethren.

At 2 o'clock a praise and testimony meeting was participated in by the friends, many standing and waiting for their turn to testify. It was a happy season indeed. Joy was expressed by every one who testified of the privilege of living in the time of the presence of the King and of having the opportunity of partici-

is present, and has been since 1874? Do you believe that during that time he has conducted his harvest work? Do you believe that he has had during that time a faithful and wise servant through whom he directed his work and the feeding of the household of faith? Do you believe that the Lord is now in his temple, judging the nations of earth? Do you believe that the King of glory has begun his reign?

Then back to the field, O ye sons of the most high God! Gird on your armor! Be sober, be vigilant, be active, be brave. Be faithful and true witnesses for the Lord. Go forward in the fight until every vestige of Babylon lies desolate. Herald the message far and wide. The world must know that Jehovah is God and that Jesus Christ is King of kings and Lord of lords. This is the day of all days. Behold, the King reigns! You are his publicity agents. Therefore advertise, advertise, advertise, the King and his kingdom.

pating in announcing that his kingdom is being set up.

Brother Hemery, of London, who for many years has been the Society's representative for Great Britain, attended the convention throughout. In addition to representing the Society, he came as the representative particularly of the British friends, bringing the love and greetings of the dear friends in that land to the brethren in America. Several other friends from England also attended the convention. Many of the American friends remembered Brother Hemery's former visit in 1910, and were delighted to renew their acquaintance with him and he with them. At 3 o'clock in the afternoon of Friday Brother Hemery spoke on the subject, "The Day." His discourse was very helpful and encouraging to the brethren. We give an outline of the salient points of his discourse as follows:

DISCOURSE BY BROTHER J. HEMERY

"This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."—Psalm 118:24.

THIS text is striking and unique. There are many special days mentioned in the Bible; much is said about "The Lord's Day" and the "Day of Jehovah," but in no other place is there such a pointed statement as here.

Inquiry will surely prove profitable. We ask: What day is this and who are they that rejoice? It may be said that this must be the Lord's day so frequently mentioned, the long day of 1,000 years of Messianic rule, the day in which he will deliver the earth from its bondage, and men from their oppressors; when he will enlighten and bless men—the day in which righteousness will rule. But that is a day of settled government, while here is a cry, a prayer for further deliverance, and for God's blessing—prayer mingled with praise.

The context seems to refer to a more definite day; and we suggest that direct reference is made to a special day when "the stone which the builders rejected is made the head of the corner"; a day in which God's faithful people are made to rejoice because they realize God's work, a marvelous work, is being accomplished before their eyes. It is a day of direct manifestation of God's power and favor, and therefore for the church one of gladness of heart; but one in which the prayer must ascend: "Save now, I beseech thee, O Lord . . . send now prosperity."—Psalm 118:25.

We believe the Psalm refers particularly to the present day, and to the church's present experiences. It sets forth the triumph of faith. The adverbs "now" in the second and third verses indicate its setting; they tell of victory won. The Psalm becomes easily understandable if we consider the speaker of verse 5 and onward to be our Lord.

In Psalm 116 the sore trouble of our Lord in Gethsemane is set forth. The pains of *sheol* got hold upon him, and his soul was troubled; but he found rest in God, and declared he would pay his vows in the presence of God's people. The present Psalm (118) gives the expression of our Lord's faith after that severe time of testing. He knows he will go on to the end completing his sacrifice. He says, "The Lord is my strength and song, and is become my salvation. [Verse 14] . . . I shall not die [remain in death] but live, and declare the works of the Lord." (Verse 17) These expressions correspond with the grand high-priestly words of John 17. The gates of hades would not prevail against him; he sees himself as the corner stone which God had provided, and which had been rejected by the builders. He will soon be exalted to power. The purposes of God are being accomplished.

But, while our Lord's experience is, in a measure, a fulfillment of the Psalm, the context shows that it was not so altogether. There is another day when Jesus' disciples, his true followers, will take up the words. So in

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THE FIRST RESURRECTION

"Behold, I shew you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed."—1 Corinthians 15: 51, 52.

IN THIS text the apostle discussed the first resurrection. In Revelation 20:6 it is called "the first resurrection" because it is the resurrection of The Christ, both Head and body members thereof. None other will ever receive immortality and be immune from the second death. This resurrection therefore is the first in that it is of primary importance, and first in that it is the earliest in time.

² No one can have a part in that first resurrection except Christ Jesus and his body members. Hence every one else must be excluded from consideration. The great company class of course has no part in it, because not a part of The Christ. The inspired apostle limits that resurrection to The Christ when he says: "This mortal must put on immortality." (1 Corinthians 15: 54) The reference is to that class of Christians who patiently continue in well doing, seeking for glory, honor and immortality, and who are faithful even unto death.—Romans 2: 7; Revelation 2: 10.

³ Not all the members of the body of Christ will be resurrected at the same time. That conclusion is warranted by the words of the apostle when he says: "Behold, I shew you a secret: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed." This language shows two separate divisions of the same class; that is to say, one part of those who participate in the first resurrection sleep and are awakened out of the sleep of death, and another part or division of those who have part in the first resurrection do not sleep in death but are changed instantly from human to divine nature.

⁴ In our text the apostle indicates that those who have slept in death shall be raised first, and that thereafter comes the change of those who are on the earth at the time of the Lord's presence. In this same epistle he has shown that the resurrection of the sleeping saints does not take place until the coming of the Lord. The word "coming" here used means at or during his presence. To here consider some texts relating to the second coming of the Lord may throw some light upon the time of the resurrection.

HIS COMING

⁵ The presence of the Lord has been difficult to explain and to clearly understand. Many have labored under the impression that the Lord Jesus must be bodily in the very vicinity of the earth in order to be present. Such a conclusion is unreasonable. Distance is no hindrance to the Lord. He could be in the Pleiades and at the same time direct the affairs of earth as well as he could if he were on the immediate surface of the earth.

⁶ We understand that the presence of the Lord began to be made manifest about 1874, that he took his great power and began his reign in 1914, and that he came to his temple in 1918. Some one in his confusion has inquired: "Did the Lord come to the earth in 1874 and then go back and come again in 1914, and then go back to heaven and come again in 1918, and then go back to heaven to come again at the final overthrow of Satan's organization?" Surely not. There would be no necessity for such a procedure.

⁷ The Scriptures bear out the following conclusion, to wit: that Jesus Christ, when he had finished his sacrifice and ascended on high, sat down on the right hand of Jehovah God, and from that time forward waited until the time when the enemy should be made his footstool. (Hebrews 10:12, 13; Psalm 110:1) From the time of his resurrection the world belonged to the Lord Jesus Christ, but the time for him to take possession was a long time in the future. He must wait until God's due time, and that due time would be at the end of the Gentile Times or "end of the world".

⁸ Prior thereto it was the will of God that Jesus Christ should do a work of preparation. That work included gathering together the saints on earth who had made a covenant with Jehovah by sacrifice and restoring to them the fundamental truths which had long been hid from them. That marked the beginning of the time of restitution. (Psalm 50:5; Matthew 17:11) Now the Scriptures show that our Lord's presence began about 1874. That was when he began to give his attention

to preparing the saints and restoring to them the truth, and also preparing to oust the Devil. While doing this work the Lord Jesus is still at the right hand of Jehovah God, and at the same time he is present in the earth, because directing the things of his church on earth as above stated.

⁹ From the time shortly following 1874 forward the truly consecrated, begotten and anointed ones, could discern the presence of the Lord. The word translated "coming", from the Greek word *parousia*, means presence. His presence when once begun continues without interruption. It means that from that time forward he is giving his attention to things pertaining to his church and kingdom, as these things have to do with the saints on the earth.

¹⁰ The question which Jesus' disciples propounded to him was: "What shall be the sign of thy presence, and of the end of the world?" (Matthew 24:3) The end of the world came in 1914. Jesus was then present and had been present since 1874. The anointed had discerned his presence for several years prior to 1914, but with 1914 there began to transpire such things as manifested his presence to others aside from the anointed. The World War and attending circumstances enabled all who read the Scriptures and believed them to see the presence of the Lord. That time is represented by the Greek word *epiphania*, which is properly translated in the Scriptures "appearing". Thus from 1914 forward another and different class of people were able to understand his presence who had not previously, and who could not previously, understand.

¹¹ Stated in another way: Jesus was present but unobserved by all except the spiritually minded from 1874 forward. Later, to wit, 1914, his presence began to be made known or manifest, by the physical facts, to all who gave attention to prophecy, but not to scoffers and unbelievers. Then the outward manifestation of his presence continued to increase or progress, and will continue until the complete uncovering [*apokalupsis*], when all shall see him. That uncovering or complete revelation of his presence will take place during the great time of trouble.

¹² The title of the Book of Revelation is translated from the Greek *apokalupsis*, which means to reveal; and this revelation of the Lord to all mankind takes place in the great time of trouble, as it is written: "Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him."—Revelation 1:7.

¹³ It is during the presence [*parousia*], and during a wider manifestation of his presence or appearing [*epiphania*], that a greater number discern the Lord's presence; and it is during his *parousia* and *epiphania* that the Devil's organization is to be destroyed in the great time of trouble. This is clearly shown by the words of the apostle: "Then shall that Wicked [Devil's organization] be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume

with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness [*epiphania* or shining forth] of his coming [*parousia* or presence]." (2 Thessalonians 2:8) There are not three phases of the Lord's presence, as some have erroneously stated; but the presence of the Lord, beginning at a time certain, continues to be made known to other classes of people until all shall know it; and these progressive steps are as follows: *parousia*, *epiphania* and *apokalupsis*. It would not be necessary for the Lord to be actually near the earth during any of these manifestations.

¹⁴ Other scriptures heretofore examined on this subject show that the resurrection of the sleeping saints must take place during the presence of the Lord and after the Lord has taken his power and therefore during the time of his appearing [*epiphania*], or wider manifestation of his presence. This latter period began with the World War in 1914. It follows then that 1914 marks the beginning of the period of time which the Apostle Paul mentions as "that day". It does not mark, however, the end of that day. The Apostle Paul said: "There is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give to me at *that day*; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing." (2 Timothy 4:8) While "that day" began in 1914, it does not at all follow that the resurrection of the sleeping saints took place at the beginning or even during 1914.

FIRST IN ORDER

¹⁵ The Scriptures leave no doubt concerning the order of the resurrection. During the presence of the Lord some of the saints are asleep in Christ Jesus, while others remain alive on the earth. The sleeping or dead ones must be resurrected first, and then thereafter those who remain on the earth will be changed instantly into the likeness of the Lord. The apostle's words make it clear that this is the order of the resurrection, when he wrote: "For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we which are alive, and remain unto the coming of the Lord, shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first: then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord."—1 Thessalonians 4:15-17.

¹⁶ In the above text the word "descend" would not necessarily mean that Christ Jesus must take a flight from heaven to earth. The word, as shown by lexicographers, is often used in a figurative sense; and it appears to be used figuratively here. It can therefore properly be understood as meaning that at this particular time mentioned the Lord specially directs his actions to things on the earth, which is below heaven, and at the same time he himself may remain in heaven. This

am, standing among you, and I am the One anointed of Jehovah for the kingdom.' The Pharisees understood what Jesus meant, because they afterwards accused him of sedition by reason of his claim to be the King.

The counterparts of the Pharisees are found amongst the leaders in Christendom today. These not only have given a wrongful meaning to the words of Jesus, but have assumed the burden of converting the world, saying that the kingdom of God can never come until the denominational churches bring the people into the church and robe the earth in the moral achievements of man, and that then Christ himself will come and visit the earth. Again their conclusions are entirely wrong and very misleading. Christ Jesus has already come and the kingdom is now among you, and this can be said today with stronger force than ever before.

Shortly after Jesus spoke to the Pharisees he ascended into heaven. Since then his faithful followers have looked for his coming again. In 1914 the period of waiting ended, and then God set Jesus, his anointed King, upon his throne. The Scriptural proof thereof is given by the fact of the World War and incidents that quickly followed. In 1918 Jesus Christ, being present, began to gather unto himself his people who are wholly devoted to God and to his kingdom, and the judgment of all professed followers is now in progress.

The next great act of the anointed King of Jehovah will be to destroy Satan's organization in the battle of Armageddon, which is just ahead; therefore the people of the land need to be told over and over again this truth, because

of its great importance, that the kingdom of God is now among you. That is the reason men and women are going from house to house daily, and particularly on Sunday, delivering this message to the people and bringing to their attention the Scriptural proof in the form of books explaining the Bible. Never was it so important to preach the good news of the kingdom as just now, and when this is done Armageddon will immediately follow.

When Jesus was speaking to the Pharisees he said, in Luke 16:16: "The law and the prophets were until John; since that time the kingdom of God is preached." John was the forerunner of Christ. All the prophets had foretold the kingdom, but now Jesus began to preach the kingdom and tell them it was at hand. The apostles of Jesus Christ continued preaching concerning the kingdom, but shortly following their death other things were preached. About 1874 the Lord began to bring to the attention of his people the great fundamental truths that had been obscured by the many errors taught by men. From that time until 1914 the work of true Christians was foreshadowed by what John the Baptist did. In 1914 the Lord Jesus came the second time, and in 1918 began to gather together his faithful followers. It was then that his commandment was given and must be obeyed, to preach this good news to the nations of the earth as a witness, and for that reason it is now being done.

Prior to 1918 God's people on earth, like John the Baptist, were declaring that God's kingdom is to be set up. From and after 1918 God's people saw as never before that the King had been

heaven-sent messenger, his guide. The vision is a very intimate one of the Lord to his servant, but the remnant whom Ezekiel pictured are commanded to tell others of God's people about it. In obedience to this commandment the faithful have been telling others about the temple of Jehovah.

It was in the spring of 1918 that the Lord Jesus, as the representative of Jehovah, appeared at the temple, and from that time forward the glory of Jehovah has been there. "And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me." (43:6) When Ezekiel heard the Lord speaking to him the man stood by him. "The man" was the heavenly messenger, and this pictures the heavenly messengers or angels of the Lord now used by the Lord in behalf of the remnant. These angels are invisible to human eyes and are there to carry out the orders of the Lord. No doubt they first hear the instruction which the Lord issues to his remnant and then these invisible messengers pass such instruction on to the remnant. The facts show that the angels of the Lord with him at his temple have been thus rendering service unto the remnant since 1919. The Lord from his holy temple speaks: "Hear, all ye people; hearken, O earth, and all that therein is: and let the Lord God be witness against you, the Lord from his holy temple." (Mic. 1:2) The faithful remnant in 1922 began to hear and to respond: "Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And he said, Go and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not." —Isa. 6:8, 9.

The angels proceeded with the sounding of the trumpets. The facts seem to clearly show that it was in 1922 that the first angel began to sound his trumpet and God's consecrated people were given a part therein; and now after eight years have elapsed the Lord seems pleased to show his people how they had some part in the fulfilment of his prophecy because they were his devoted and willing instruments. His name be praised! All honor and glory be given to him!

On Sunday, September 10, 1922, more than 10,000 of God's people were assembled at Cedar Point, Ohio. A resolution was offered, supported by oral argument, and unanimously adopted. That resolution was a proclamation declaring that Jehovah is God and Christ is King and that his kingdom has come. It was a challenge to the rulers of the visible part of Satan's organization to prove that man has wisdom to rule the earth, or else admit the truth of God's Word that peace, prosperity, life and happiness can come only through Jehovah by and through Christ. Incidentally it is mentioned that a Magnavox was used to amplify the voice of the speaker and all present in that vast audience heard. Visible human creatures had to do with that message, yet, in fact, it was a message of the Lord sent through his invisible angels, because without a doubt these are clothed with authority to direct the course of earthly members of God's organization.

“RESOLUTION

“(Adopted by the International Bible Students Association in Convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, Sunday, September 10, 1922)

The entire picture shows that what is there described is fulfilled when the Lord Jesus is at the temple of Jehovah for judgment, and this fixes the time when the work of scattering the fire by the man in linen must be done. 'Jehovah is in his holy temple, Jehovah's throne is in heaven; his eyes behold, his eyelids try, the children of men. Jehovah trieth the righteous; but the wicked, and him that loveth violence, his soul hateth. Upon the wicked he shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, and an horrible tempest; this shall be the portion of their cup.' (Ps. 11:4-6; Jude 14, 15; Mal. 3:1-3) When the Lord is at the temple for judgment, the glory of Jehovah is over the house. 'When Jehovah shall build up Zion, he shall appear in his glory.' (Ps. 102:16) The vision of Ezekiel discloses the Lord Jesus Christ at the temple for judgment, accompanied by his corps of officers made up of cherubim, seraphim and angels, and employing both animate and inanimate parts of the great organization to carry forward God's purposes; and these are symbolized by wheels and the cherubim and other living creatures.

The foregoing scriptures lay the foundation for the conclusion that, following the year 1918, which marks the coming of the Lord to his temple, the prophetic vision of Ezekiel here described began to be fulfilled, and until that time the prophecy could not be understood.

The commandment to the man clothed in linen was to go in between the wheels, under the cherubim, thus showing that the "servant" class on earth is under the direction of the higher officers of God's organization and are to work with both animate and inanimate parts of the organization in obedience to the commandments. "And it came to pass, that when he had commanded the man clothed with linen, saying, Take fire from between the wheels, from between the cherubims; then he went in, and stood beside the wheels. And one cherub stretched forth his hand from between the cherubims unto the fire that was between the cherubims, and took thereof, and put it into the hands of him that was clothed with linen; who took it, and went out." (Ezek. 10:6, 7) This shows that God makes all provision necessary to carry out all his judgments of fiery indignation upon Satan's organization. It is thrilling and awesome for the "servant" class of Jehovah to realize that they are permitted to work under the guiding hand of God's great officers that are invisible to their eyes. This helps them to appreciate the fact that, the "servant" trusting implicitly in Jehovah and not following his own selfish course, but being always joyfully obedient to Jehovah, his ways are directed of Jehovah and therefore cannot fail. (Prov. 3:5, 6) "The steps of a good man [God's ideal man, the 'faithful servant'] are ordered by the Lord; and he delighteth in his way."—Ps. 37:23.

The actual burning or destruction by fire is done by the officers of Jehovah that are invisible to human

eyes, that is, the cherubim, seraphim and angels; but it seems clear that the cherubim have charge over fire or that which destroys. These invisible ones Jehovah uses to put in the hands of his "faithful servant" class, that is, the man clothed with linen, the fiery message from his Word, or judgments written, and which is to be used as directed. The resolutions adopted by conventions of God's anointed people, booklets, magazines, and books published by them, contain the message of God's truth and are from the Almighty God, Jehovah, and provided by him through Christ Jesus and his underofficers. This shows the grand and glorious organization working in exact harmony, as indeed it must work. These instruments being provided by Jehovah, and placed in the hand of the remnant, the remnant or "servant" class is commanded to use the same.

The interpretation of prophecy, therefore, is not from man, but is from Jehovah; and Jehovah causes events to come to pass in fulfillment of the prophecy in due time. It is his truth, and not man's; and when men attempt to give the honor and glory for the message of truth to a man or men, such make fools of themselves. Jehovah provides the machinery, the printing presses, and all material for the purpose of preparing his fiery message that must be poured out or scattered upon "Christendom", and this is done by his "faithful servant" class. The Devil tries to induce men to believe that the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is engaging in a bookselling scheme. Only the Devil is capable of manufacturing such a lie. God's "servant" class, pictured by the man in linen, is commanded to do the work of declaring the vengeance of Jehovah, and only those who obey this commandment can and will maintain their integrity toward God. The "servant", or remnant class, will not be deceived or discouraged by the slanderous statements of enemies that they are engaged in a bookselling scheme. They carry the message of truth to the people in printed form; and this is done under the commandment of Jehovah, and is the greatest privilege that has ever been granted the followers of Christ on earth. The remnant delights to do this work and continually sings the praises of Jehovah while doing it.

It is easy to be seen that the remnant must do a twofold work, as pictured by the work of Ezekiel, in this: They go from house to house, carrying the message of truth in printed form of books and magazines and by phonograph with discs; they first deliver an introductory message to the one whom they address; they do not open their testimony with a denunciation of the wicked, but first speak of the message of the goodness of God that gives hope to those who will hear, and comfort those that mourn. This is the commission of the remnant.

At the same time the remnant must declare or tell the people of God's judgment of fiery indignation

monizes with other truths already revealed; and if so, then you may know you are in the right way.

Some claiming to be fully devoted to Jehovah find it difficult to learn to be obedient to organization instructions. This is strong proof that such are not in the temple. It is not for us to judge other individuals, but each one must judge himself. If you find it difficult to be in harmony with the organization instructions, that is sufficient reason for a careful self-examination to see what is your standing before the Lord.

If one appreciates the capital organization of Jehovah, then he must have in mind at all times that Christ Jesus is the Head of that organization and it is always the head that directs the operations of the body. He stated that when he appeared for judgment he would be accompanied by his angels, which angels carry out his orders. Without doubt these angels are delegated by the Lord to convey his instructions to the members of his organization on earth. Just how this is done is not necessary for us to understand. Believing that Christ Jesus is directing the work on earth, then we must conclude that the visible ones put in certain positions in God's organization are there by his will and must render account to him; otherwise they would be removed. Over the entire organization is Jehovah; and as Jehovah and Christ Jesus are one, so likewise must all of the organization be one. Jehovah has answered the prayer of Christ Jesus and made all one who are of his organization. These things being true, then if one in the organization receives directions, and those directions come through the place designated to give instructions, then the instructions should be obeyed as unto the Lord.

The Lord has brought the remnant into the temple to teach them. What are some of the truths which the great Teacher has taught the temple company? Within the past few months the Lord has made clear the meaning of the cleansing of his sanctuary. He has shown his people how the time of the cleansing was specially marked out by him as 2,300 literal days from the date when two things existed together, to wit, the taking away of the continual sacrifice and the transgression that maketh desolate. The desolating abomination was first set up, and on the 25th day of May, 1926, the Lord caused his people, without their understanding at the time, to give notice, which marks the transgression of desolation. The 2,300 days began to count from that time and ended on October 15, 1932, which latter date marks the cleansing of the sanctuary. That means that it was then that the Lord showed his people that the office of "elective elder", and therefore human teachers, have no part in his capital organization. It is to be expected that the selfish ones amongst the elective elders would object to this truth, and this would

be further proof that such are not a part of the capital organization.

In complete harmony with this the Lord revealed to his people that the time has come when the church is at unity. Jehovah caused the apostle to authoritatively write that certain servants were given for the church for the work of the ministry and the edifying of the members of the body of Christ, 'till we come into the unity of the faith, . . . into the stature of the fulness of Christ, that we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro and carried about by every wind of doctrine.' (Eph. 4:11-14) Necessarily such must be the condition of the capital organization of Jehovah, because the teachers are Jehovah and Christ and everything therein must be in order and orderly and every one must delight to obey the instructions given. Hence all are in complete harmony.

Jehovah has revealed to his people at the temple that his great prophet is Christ Jesus, now at the temple for judgment, and concerning whom it is written: "And it shall come to pass, that every soul, which will not hear that prophet, shall be destroyed from among the people." (Acts 3:23) Formerly we understood this text to apply to the regeneration of the human race during the millennial reign of Christ; but now we see, by the Lord's grace, that its proper application is at the present time. Moses in Egypt was a type of Christ Jesus. The first duty of Moses was to instruct the Israelites. Now the Greater Moses has come to his people and instructs the temple company, and the obligation is laid upon them to be absolutely obedient to Christ Jesus. To be disobedient means destruction. To be obedient to that great Prophet means to be joyfully obeying Jehovah's commandments.

It is imperative that the remnant follow organization instructions, because the Lord is directing his own affairs. What, then, is our duty? That question is plainly answered by ascertaining what was the chief duty of Christ Jesus when on earth. He made it plain that he had nothing in common with Satan's world, but that he represented Jehovah's kingdom. To the then visible ruler he said: "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the truth. Every one that is of the truth heareth my voice." (John 18:37) All the remnant, therefore, must be witnesses for Jehovah.

It is wrong to conclude that Jehovah has been gathering a people out of the world to take them to heaven to assist in ruling. Now we clearly see that God graciously visited the nations to take out from them a people for his name. (Acts 15:14) At the temple we have learned that the vindication of Jehovah's name is the great and important question at issue and that he will vindicate his name in due time, and that he has taken out from the nations a people that they might bear testimony to others of his purposes and the meaning of his name.

vention that it might carry out the purpose of Jehovah. Later the attention of God's people (*Watch Tower*, Oct. 1, 1923, page 293) was called to the fact that the "oil" possessed by the "virgins" is a symbol of joy and gladness. The weeping of the Lord's devoted people had ceased, and they began to rejoice because God had shown them his favor and that there was much yet to do to his name's honor and glory.

In God's due time and by his grace attention was called to the fact that The Nation or Kingdom is born; that there had been war in heaven and Satan had been cast out; that the Lord had committed to his people a witness; that the Lord had come to his temple for judgment; that the robe of righteousness is provided for his people and is evidence that God has taken out a people for his name and approved them, and that now a great witness must be given to show forth his praises. The Lord used *The Watch Tower* to announce these truths. Doubtless he used his invisible deputies to have much to do with it. This is not what some may regard as spiritism, by any means; but it does mean that God in his own good way can direct his people without any audible communication with them. Those who have seen and appreciated these great truths from the Lord have rejoiced, while those who have not discerned the difference between the Elijah and Elisha work of the church, and the other blessed truths revealed in connection therewith, continue to complain, and many have entirely gone into outer darkness. The faithful weep not, but rejoice.

It is the Lord Jesus Christ, "the Lion of the tribe of Juda," who opens the seals, that is to say, through whom God reveals his purposes. The fact that there

ENLIGHTENMENT

(ZECHARIAH, CHAPTER 4)

Enlightenment proceeds from Jehovah by and through Christ Jesus and is given to the faithful anointed on earth at the temple, and brings great peace and consolation to them. Again Zechariah talked with the angel of the Lord, which shows that the remnant are instructed by the angels of the Lord. The remnant do not hear audible sounds, because such is not necessary. Jehovah has provided his own good way to convey thoughts to the minds of his anointed ones. To all on the outside of the organization of Jehovah his is a secret organization. To Zechariah, meaning the remnant, the angel of the Lord speaks: "AND SAID UNTO ME, WHAT SEEST THOU? AND I SAID, I HAVE LOOKED, AND BEHOLD A CANDLESTICK ALL OF GOLD, WITH A BOWL UPON THE TOP OF IT, AND HIS SEVEN LAMPS THEREON, AND SEVEN PIPES TO THE SEVEN LAMPS, WHICH ARE UPON THE TOP THEREOF; AND TWO OLIVE TREES BY IT, ONE UPON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE BOWL, AND THE OTHER UPON THE LEFT SIDE THEREOF." (4:2, 3) In this vision the remnant is shown as receiving further or cumulative evidence of the organization of Jehovah and their own work in connection therewith. God's covenant people 'did slumber and sleep' for a time, as indicated by verse one. (Zech. 4:1; Matt. 25:1-5; Rev. 8:1) In 1919 they began to wake up, and some three years later were wide awake; and from that time forward those fully devoted to Jehovah have been able to "see afar off", while others

That the temple company will have part in the vindication of Jehovah's name, and glorify his holy name, is shown by the words of Jehovah spoken to Ezekiel: "And he said unto me, Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever, and my holy name, shall the house of Israel no more defile, neither they, nor their kings, by their whoredom, nor by the carcasses of their kings in their high places [in their death (A.R.V., margin)]." (Ezek. 43:7) The temple of which Ezekiel had a vision is a representation of God's royal house, his kingly organization. Here at the temple Jehovah makes the faithful anointed members of his organization to be kings and priests with Christ. (Rev. 1:6) Jehovah's organization is the place of his rest. (Ps. 132:13, 14) It is therefore 'the place of the soles of his feet'. His entire organization is subject to him, as it is written:

"The head of Christ is God." (1 Cor. 11:3) His organization is his dwelling place. This corresponds with Revelation 21:3.

The prophetic house of Israel defiled the name of Jehovah, but the real or royal house after the spirit will never defile his holy name. "Christendom" by her ruling factors has greatly defiled the name of Jehovah God. That wicked organization has tried to make Christ to have concord with Satan's organization and to make the temple of God have agreement with idols. (2 Cor. 6:15, 16; Rev. 17:1, 2) The kings of the earth and their allies, the faithless "Christendom", have at all times of their existence been no better than dead carcasses, because they were dead in trespasses and in sins. (Eph. 2:1) The hypocritical claims of such that they represented God have greatly reproached and defamed his holy name, but they will never be permitted to do so again.

ENLIGHTENMENT

ENLIGHTENMENT proceeds from Jehovah by and through Christ Jesus and is given to the faithful anointed on earth at the temple, and brings great peace and consolation to them. Relative to this, note now the vision given to the prophet Zechariah and set forth in chapter four of his prophecy. He says: "And the angel that talked with me came again, and waked me, as a man that is wakened out of his sleep." (Vs. 1) This shows that the remnant of God are instructed by the angels of the Lord. The remnant do not hear audible sounds, because such is not necessary. Jehovah has provided his own good way to convey thoughts to the minds of his anointed ones on earth. To all on the outside of the organization of Jehovah his is a secret organization.

To Zechariah (meaning the remnant) the angel of the Lord speaks: "What seest thou? And I said, I have looked, and behold a candlestick all of gold, with a bowl upon the top of it, and his seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which are upon the top thereof; and two olive trees by it, one upon the right side of the bowl, and the other upon the left side thereof." (Vss. 2, 3) In this vision the remnant is shown as receiving further or cumulative evidence of the organization of Jehovah and their own work in connection therewith. God's covenant people 'did slumber and sleep' for a time, as indicated by verse one. (Matt. 25:1-5; Rev. 8:1) In A.D. 1919 they began to wake up, and some three years later were wide awake; and from that time forward those fully devoted to Jehovah have been able to "see afar off", while others have indulged in dreaming and have remained in darkness.—Rev. 3:18; 2 Pet. 1:9; Joel 2:28.

Zechariah saw a golden candlestick, a symbol of enlightenment and joy. The significant part of the

vision is that, at the time of its fulfillment, the temple of God has, as prophesied in Revelation 11:19, been opened in heaven for the enlightenment of those who are devoted to Jehovah. The bowl in the top of the candlestick contained the oil which produces the light and symbolizes the anointing by the spirit of God; and then those who had received the anointing could be enlightened concerning the "deep things" not before that time discernible. As it is written: "But God hath revealed them unto us by his spirit; for the spirit searcheth [revealeth] all things, yea, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2:10) "But the anointing which ye have received of him abideth in you, and ye need not that any man teach you: but as the same anointing teacheth you of all things, and is truth, and is no lie, and even as it hath taught you, ye shall abide in him." —1 John 2:27.

The "seven pipes to the seven lamps" is a symbol of the perfect channel of imparting the anointing and the enlightenment. The "seven lamps" impart complete spiritual light. The candlestick in its entirety pictures the organization and witness work for the enlightenment of all who devote themselves to Jehovah and learn of his purpose and his kingdom. The vision of the golden candlestick is a prophecy to Jehovah's witnesses at the present, and is now being fulfilled to their joy in the Lord.

The "two olive trees" on either side of the bowls picture Jehovah's remnant people, that is to say, the faithful witnesses. As explained at verse 14, "These are the two anointed ones that stand by the Lord of the whole earth." That these picture Jehovah's witnesses is corroborated by Revelation 11:3, 4. The facts show that there are two parts of Jehovah's witnesses receiving the anointing of Jehovah, to wit,

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operate for and in behalf of his spirit-begotten ones, to lead, guide, help, advocate for and comfort such. Elimelech was the head and leader of his household; and since he must have gone into Moab according to the will of God, Naomi must have been led there by him and also according to the will of God. Barnabas and Paul were sent forth by the holy spirit, as it is written: "And while they were serving the Lord and fasting, the holy spirit said, 'Separate to me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I called them.' Then having fasted and prayed, and laid their hands on them, they sent them forth. They, therefore, having been sent out by the holy spirit, went down to Seleucia; and from thence they sailed to Cyprus." (Acts 13:2-4, *Diag.*) This is proof of the leading or guiding of the holy spirit.

There is nothing in the record that would indicate that Elimelech or Naomi was doing or did anything displeasing to God; therefore they must have gone into Moab according to the will of the King Eternal, even as the name Elimelech signifies, "My God is King." Criticism of Elimelech's course would therefore be out of order. God's people found themselves in the midst of Satan's organization and oppressed by military power from the year 1914 to 1918, and surely they were not in that condition because of any displeasure on the part of God towards them, even though some thought so. The spirit of Jehovah God led them into that condition that his purposes might be accomplished. By his spirit, the holy spirit, Jehovah God guides

or leads his people up to a certain point of time, and thus he did until the time when "the comforter" was taken away, which would necessarily occur when Jesus, the Head of his organization, came to the temple and gathered unto himself those whom he found faithful when he, as the great Judge, began his judgment, in 1918.

The proper name "Naomi" is found only in the book of Ruth. It means "pleasant", that is to say, pleasing to Jehovah, as it is written: "A wise son maketh a glad father." (Prov. 10:1) "My son, be wise, and make my heart glad, that I may answer him that reproacheth me." (Prov. 27:11) 'God sets the members in the body of Christ according to his pleasure.' (1 Cor. 12:18) "The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot. The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places: yea, I have a goodly heritage." (Ps. 16:5, 6) Those who are devoted to God please him when dwelling together in peace. "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Ps. 133:1) "The thoughts of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord: but the words of the pure are pleasant words." (Prov. 15:26) "For whom the Lord loveth he correcteth, even as a father the son in whom he delighteth. Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace." (Prov. 3:12, 13, 17) "Be filled with the knowledge of his will, in all wisdom and spiritual understanding; that ye might walk worthy of the Lord unto all pleasing, being

the progress of the Lord's work in recent years can testify that the facts fully bear out this conclusion. The ones coming to the truth in more recent years may well be those described by the Prophet Isaiah, who with joy draw waters of truth out of the wells of salvation, praise the Lord and call upon his name, and proclaim his doings amongst the people, making mention that Jehovah's name is exalted. (Isa. 12:2-4) This they do unselfishly. Others have been favored with the truth but they have not shown such zeal for and devotion to the Lord. Therefore Esther pictures those who are diligent in hearing and obeying God's Word. "Her things for purification" symbolized the work and preparation of the prospective members of the bride class who are candidates for a place in God's kingdom as the bride of Christ.—Eph. 5:26, 27.

The spirit-begotten ones are represented as "the sons of Levi" who must be purified upon the coming of the Lord to his temple. (Mal. 3:3) He sits for that very purpose. The purified ones would therefore be foreshadowed by Esther at this stage of the drama. The seven maids given to Esther corresponded to the ministrations provided for and rendered to the consecrated by "the seven stars" or angels in the court of Jesus Christ who attend at the temple. "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father which is in heaven." (Matt. 18:10) After the holy spirit as an advocate or paraclete ceased to function in behalf of the consecrated, then the angels are employed in behalf of those who are being made ready for the kingdom. "For he

Is the present life—our farm—an asset or a liability? Troubles, trials, and besetments hinder us. In our perplexity we turn to Christ.

SINK A SHAFT OF FAITH

The Lord informs us that our trials, difficulties, and distresses are a valuable part of our possessions. He advises us to sink a shaft of faith into the stony, hilly part of our lives. We shall strike a mine of rich returns of joy—the very thing all long for but which the wealth of this world—if we had it all—cannot buy. The undesirable suddenly becomes the most valuable part of our lives. Our Lord desires us to have the best he has to give. "These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full."—John 15: 11.

The kingdom could not be a state of happiness were no joy to be had. Joy does not lie in wealth, health, beauty, honor, power, official position, or authority. These properly utilized are accessories to joy, but not joy itself. Many who have great possessions are unhappy. Some commit suicide in order to end their troubles. Lucifer has a kingdom, but has no joy.

Joy is a feeling arising from the expectation or real-

ization of some good. The highest joy arises from an understanding of God and his plan for bestowing good things upon those that love him. No lasting joy is ever attained otherwise, either in this life or in that which is to come. God has so decreed.

The Christian's joy may abound amid the greatest trials, adversities, and commotions of life. With the poet, the child of God can joyfully sing:

"Content with beholding his face,
My all to his pleasure resigned,
No changes of season or place
Can make any change in my mind:
While blest with a sense of his love,
A palace a toy would appear;
And prisons would palaces prove.
If Jesus still dwelt with me there."

The apostle Paul had this joy: "Great is my boldness of speech toward you, great is my glorying of you; I am filled with comfort, I am *exceeding joyful* in all my tribulation. For, when we were come into Macedonia, our flesh had no rest, but we were troubled on every side, without were fightings, within were fears." (2 Corinthians 7: 4, 5) Not joyful *because* of the troubles, but joyful *in* them, because he recognized God's overruling care and power and purpose in them all.

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

MINISTERING SPIRITS

QUESTION: I understand that there are guardian angels watching over the Lord's saints, helping them to make their calling and election sure. Is this the correct thought?

Answer: It is important that every Christian should have the eyes of his understanding opened, that he may see by faith that which was shown to Elisha and his servant literally. During this gospel age the Lord does not open our natural eyes to see the wonderful provisions he has made for us, and his power for our protection: but instead he gives us a still better knowledge of the subject through his Word of grace and truth, so that we are enabled to walk by faith and not by sight; to see the armies of the Lord encamped round about us and to recognize their protection of us without any miracle being performed upon our natural sight. None of us are sufficiently strong to pass through the fight of Christian warfare without just such assistances as these which the Lord has provided, and which faith beholds, accepts, lays hold of, rests upon, and is strengthened by.

The Bible speaks of good spirits, good angel beings in contradistinction to the evil spiritism which is of Satan and his fellows, the fallen angels, the wicked spirits in exalted positions. (Ephesians 6: 12) We believe that this is so, and spiritists admit that there are both good and evil spirits. They are sure that there

are evil spirits, because they know how these have ensnared them in evil, enticed them into sin. They know that they are what the Scriptures term "lying spirits", because they have been led to by the spirits which communicated with them: but they insist that there are good spirits, and they think that sometimes they have had communications with these. But this proposition we dispute: we hold that all the rappings, wonder-doing, and other manifestations of so-called spiritists are from the evil one and his consorts entirely.

A small amount of common sense should convince anyone that the holy angels must have something better, higher, nobler, to do than are the various practises of these so-called spirits who speak through mediums and by obsession. Indeed, we hold that the good spirits, the holy angels, make no communications with man now: that these communications belonged to a previous time, when they were appropriate and necessary as the channels of divine communication. We do not need their ministry through mediums today, and we are specially forbidden to seek communication or knowledge through such channels: this for the same reason that we do not need the testimony of any supposedly inspired seers and prophets today; for God has made abundant provision for us through the prophetic utterances of the past, to the intent that we of this gospel age should walk not by sight nor by communication with the angels, but by faith. We may realize no less