

# The Truth Changes:

## *The Watchtower,* July 15, 2013

**WATCHTOWER**  
ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

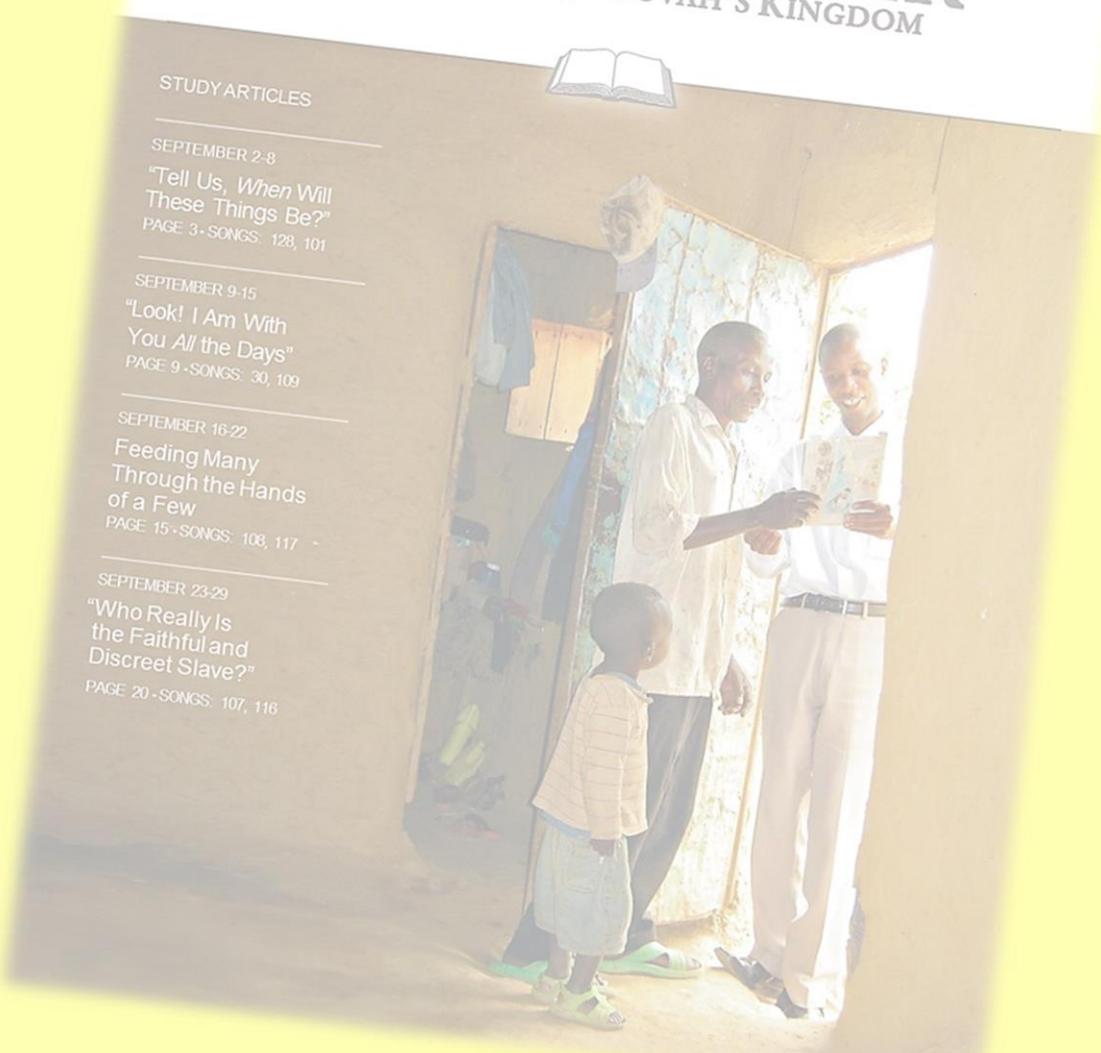
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"Tell Us, *When Will*  
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**Doug Mason**

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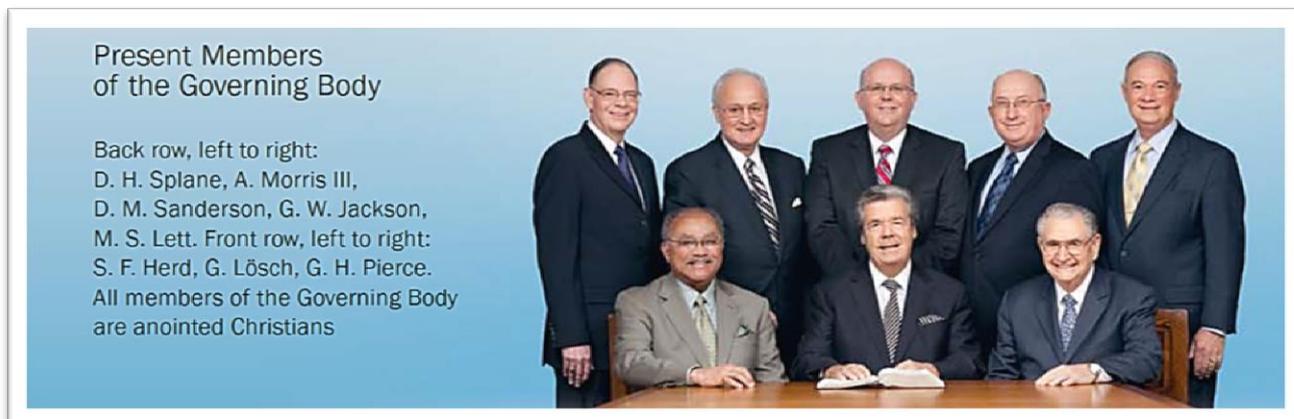
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## THE TRUTH CHANGES: *THE WATCHTOWER*, JULY 15, 2013

With *The Watchtower* [WT] magazine of July 15, 2013, the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses [GB] introduced changes to their teachings. These are the men who demand total loyalty and unquestioned acceptance by every Jehovah's Witness [JW].



*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 26

### A significant *The Watchtower* magazine

There can be no doubt that this issue of *The Watchtower* magazine introduces significant changes by the GB. In restructuring its eschatology (study of the “Last Days”), the GB cuts away from its past, distancing itself from previously held beliefs which up to now had to be vigorously defended by Jehovah's Witnesses. With this magazine, the GB changes several key teachings, and in the process remodels its past, its attitude towards Russell, the Bible Students, and to 1914. The GB is moving its focus from past dates to an anticipated future – without making commitments to dates. The centenary of October 1914 looms, and the events of those times slip ever further away.

Their changes are not unanticipated aberrations. A few months earlier, the GB wrote in *The Watchtower* of January 1, 2013 that it was changing its stance on significant matters:

#### HAVE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES GIVEN INCORRECT DATES FOR THE END?

Jehovah's Witnesses have had wrong expectations about when the end would come. Like Jesus' first-century disciples, we have sometimes looked forward to the fulfillment of prophecy ahead of God's timetable. (Luke 19:11; Acts 1:6; 2 Thessalonians 2:1, 2) We agree with the sentiment of longtime Witness A. H. Macmillan, who said: “I learned that we should admit our mistakes and continue searching God's Word for more enlightenment.”

Why, then, do we continue to highlight the nearness of the end? Because we take

seriously Jesus' words: “Keep looking, keep awake.” The alternative, to be found “sleeping” by Jesus, would prevent us from gaining his favor. (Mark 13:33, 36) Why?

Consider this example: A lookout in a fire tower might see what he thinks is a wisp of smoke on the horizon and sound what proves to be a false alarm. Later, though, his alertness could save lives.

Likewise, we have had some wrong expectations about the end. But we are more concerned with obeying Jesus and saving lives than with avoiding criticism. Jesus' command to

“give a thorough witness” compels us to warn others about the end.—Acts 10:42.

We believe that even more important than focusing on *when* the end will come, we must be confident that it *will* come, and we must act accordingly. We take seriously the words of Habakkuk 2:3, which says: “Even if [the end] should delay [compared to what you thought], keep in expectation of it; for it will without fail come true. It will not be late.”

*The Watchtower*, January 1, 2013, page 8

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## Underlying assumptions

The positions put forward in The Watchtower of July 15, 2013 rely on unproven and unprovable assumptions, which include: (1) The derivation of 1914 for its starting point; (2) Jesus and his Father actually came to inspect the Earth during the Great War and they performed a “cleansing; (3) They actually appointed Rutherford.

## Their continual corrections

The changes introduced by the GB through The Watchtower of July 15, 2013 continue its practice of continually changing its Truth. The following are examples of the organisation’s changes:

- They thought they could be transported to heaven in 1910. (see page 32 of this Study)

<sup>8</sup> In late 1914, some Bible Students were disheartened because they had not gone to heaven.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 12<sup>1</sup>

- 1914 would introduce unprecedented peace under the auspices of the Zionists. (See page 31 of this Study). When this did not happen, the organisation amended the offending words in their books, such as replacing “before 1914” with “after 1914”, and they kept selling the books.<sup>2</sup>
- The Watchtower expected the end to come as an outbreak of peace in October 1914. They saw the outbreak of hostilities in August of that year in that context. So it is not surprising they were “disheartened” when their expectations were shown to be false.
- Pronouncement in 1920 that millions then living will never die.
- Preparations made for the resurrection of ancient princes in 1925. Rutherford lived in the house that was prepared for them.
- During the 1920s, Rutherford dropped the organisation’s reliance on the dimensions of the pyramids<sup>3</sup>. When Rutherford made that move, he lost the majority of followers.
- About 1930, Rutherford moved the “Parousia” from 1874 to 1914. He made this change about 16 years after the supposed Parousia had taken place.
- Rutherford changed the structure from democratic to autocratic. 1935 is a key date in this transition.
- Introduction of a “governing body”.
- Several changes to the meaning of “this generation”.<sup>4</sup>
- With the passing of time and its failure to deliver on any of its predictions, in 2013 the GB has changed its positions on key indicators. These changes include what it predicts will happen in the future and its teachings on the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” class.<sup>5</sup>
- Statements and predictions made earlier than the 1970s have not been made available for research and reading on the Watchtower Library CD.

## When will they teach the Truth?

Replacing past Truth with new Truth means that what was once true is no longer true. Little if anything that was promoted by Rutherford in 1919 or by Russell before him is taught today. Those former leaders and those promoting their views today would be treated as heretics.

The GB makes excuses for its need to keep making changing its Truth:

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<sup>1</sup> Note that all underlining has been added throughout. Also note that shading is used to remove unrelated text.

<sup>2</sup> Evidence is provided at [http://www.jwstudies.com/Changed\\_MD\\_and\\_SS\\_words.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/Changed_MD_and_SS_words.pdf)

<sup>3</sup> Russell’s grave marker is in the form of a pyramid.

<sup>4</sup> An example of one teaching of “this generation” is illustrated at [http://www.jwstudies.com/1984\\_Watchtower\\_Cover\\_1914\\_Generation.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/1984_Watchtower_Cover_1914_Generation.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> Analysis of its prior position on the FDS is provided at [http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS\\_and\\_its\\_GB.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS_and_its_GB.pdf)

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Some have called Jehovah's witnesses "false prophets" because, in times past, they have viewed things a certain way and, later, have made a change through their official publications. ...

Later they have ... made the necessary corrections. False prophets do not correct themselves. God's people do.<sup>6</sup>

Do God's prophets need to correct themselves? Are the official publications the utterances of "God's prophets"?

The GB's ability to change beliefs and practices raises issues:

- Since their "new light" is now Truth, how could anyone know when the GB is finally telling the real Truth? How can truth become a falsehood?
- Is truth determined by *who* is speaking rather than by *what* they are saying? Does a loyalty to changed Truth indicate that obedience to the WTS is more important than Truth? Is the only immovable dictum "unquestioning obedience" to the GB? Is what matters WHOM the GB claims to be regardless of WHAT it teaches?
- How can the GB complain about errors in the beliefs of other organisations when they are prepared to admit that they have been (and probably still are) teaching matters that were not true and needed to be changed?
- How can the organisation complain about any of its followers when they voice questions or doubts? If a JW taught these new teachings before they were introduced, the JW would have been summarily dismissed. Yet someone was clearly able to question previously held Truth, otherwise these new ideas could not have come to pass. How was this achieved without any judicial actions being taken against them? What was true in the past can no longer be allowed to enter a JW's mind – until the next change is imposed.
- What impact will there be on followers when they find that suddenly and instantaneously they have to reverse positions they had been told to hold dear? How many lives and families have been wrecked because a member voiced doubts about positions that the GB has now discarded?

## A Society of classes

The WT organisation is made up of classes. The magazine employs terms such as the "wheat class" (meaning the 144,000 Anointed JWs<sup>7</sup>), the "Domestics" (all JWs) and "weed class" (non-Witnesses). The most frequent reference in the magazine is to the "anointed" class.

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<sup>6</sup> *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1967, page 331

Class	Meaning
Faithful and Discreet Slave (mentioned 30 times in this magazine); Faithful slave (38) Governing Body (12) [Total of 80 times]	
Wheat/wheatlike (40) Anointed (56) 144,000 (5) Little Sheep (3) Royal priesthood (2) [Total of 106 times]	Those who consider they have “holy spirit” and will rule in God’s government from heaven.
Great Crowd (1) Great crowd of other sheep (1) Other sheep (4) [Total of 6 times]	The rest
Domestics (23)	Everyone in all of the above classes

### No mention of the Religious Order

Rather than relying on the spirit-anointed for its development of doctrine, writing, teaching, preaching and similar responsibilities, the GB operates a Religious Order originally known as the “Order of Special Full-Time Servants”. Although termed “ordained ministers” by the GB, virtually no member of this religious Order is of the Anointed Class.

To reflect the worldwide range of the Order’s activities, from 2003 it became known as the “Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.” At the time of the name change, the GB wrote:

Worldwide, a total of 19,823 ordained ministers staff such branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>8</sup>

As with other religious Orders, its members vow to follow a life of poverty and obedience.

<sup>7</sup> *The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 18

<sup>8</sup> *2003 Yearbook*, page 30

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## LOYALTY TO THE NEW TRUTH

<sup>2</sup> Through the years, Jehovah's servants have prayerfully studied Jesus' prophecy about the last days. They have sought to get a clearer understanding of the timing of the fulfillment of Jesus' words.

To illustrate how our understanding has been clarified, let us consider three "when" questions. When does the "great tribulation" begin? When does Jesus judge "the sheep" and "the goats"? When does Jesus 'arrive,' or come?—Matt. 24:21; 25:31-33.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 3

The magazine says that in the 1990's, the GB questioned their Truth to determine whether it was correct. Any JW, however, who at the time expressed such questions, would have been dealt with.

<sup>11</sup> In the mid-1990's, *The Watchtower* reexamined Matthew 25:31 [REDACTED]

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 6

The GB states that the domestics have to be determined to depend on them for all their spiritual provisions. It is a demand for loyalty to a handful of men, not a loyalty to what is true.

[REDACTED] Let us be determined to show our appreciation by giving our loyal support to the anointed brothers who make up that faithful and discreet slave.—Heb. 13:7, 17.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 25

[REDACTED] The domestics depend on all the spiritual provisions dispensed by the composite slave.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 23

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## “APOSTASY TOOK ROOT AND FLOURISHED”

The GB says “weeds appeared” as early as 101 CE<sup>9</sup>. The influence of the “weeds” grew to the stage where they were in the majority.

At the dawn of the second century C.E., “the weeds appeared” when imitation Christians became visible in the world field. (Matt. 13:26) By the fourth century, weedlike Christians had greatly outnumbered anointed Christians.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, pages 9-10

This meant, says the GB, that the Church could no longer dispense “spiritual food”.

<sup>14</sup> The apostasy made some inroads in the first century, but Jesus’ faithful apostles acted “as a restraint,” holding back the contamination and influence of false teachings. (2 Thess. 2:3, 6, 7) However, once the last of the apostles died, the apostasy took root and flourished during a long growing season that lasted for many centuries. Additionally, during that time, the weeds became many and the blades of wheat were few. There was no consistent, organized channel for dispensing spiritual food. That would eventually change. But the question is, When?

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 18

The decisions on which writings would make up the Christian Scriptures were not agreed upon until the 4th century CE. The decisions were made by the majority of Fathers of the dominant sector of the Church.<sup>10</sup>

The WTS accepts as Scripture the list of books that the majority state Church and their supporters decided on. The dominant 4th century Church and supporters made their selections from a wide range of documents. Naturally they selected those documents that supported their views. Does the WT say that these people were spirit-anointed when they made their decision? Or does the GB go by their dictum that: “once the last of the apostles died, the apostasy took root and flourished”?

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<sup>9</sup> The second century CE commenced in 101 CE.

<sup>10</sup> It is now known that these 4th century Fathers made mistakes, as several of the writings that they accepted were prepared long after the purported Apostle had died.

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What does the GB say of those Jews who decided on their list of Hebrew writings that would be considered to be Scripture? That process took many centuries, not finishing earlier than the first century and most likely several centuries later. Were these Jews also spirit-anointed members of a “consistent, organized channel for dispensing spiritual food”? If not, why does the WTS accept the outcomes of their centuries of deliberations?

Will the GB be consistent and resurrect all the known writings from that period and then make its own decisions on which writings to accept as Scripture?

Will the GB reject those writings in the NT which the 4th century Church Fathers incorrectly attributed to an Apostle which they therefore erroneously included?

### **The GB says that the hiatus continued**

Having said that there was no “organized channel” from the beginning of the second century CE, the GB says this hiatus continued through to at least 1914.

Were the Bible Students in the years that led up to 1914 the appointed channel through which Christ would feed his sheep? No. They were still in the growing season, and the arrangement for a channel to provide spiritual food was still taking shape. The time had not yet come for the weedlike imitation Christians to be separated from the true Christian wheat.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 19

<sup>4</sup> The context of the illustration of the faithful and discreet slave shows that it began to be fulfilled, not at Pentecost 33 C.E., but in this time of the end.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 21

The first portion of the prophecy, recorded at Matthew 24:4-22, has two fulfillments—first, in the years from 33 C.E. through 70 C.E., and second, in a more far-reaching way in our day. Does this mean that Jesus’ words about the faithful slave would also have two fulfillments? No.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 21

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## THE “INSPECTION AND CLEANSING” (1914-EARLY 1919)

### Previous Truth

 Previously, we thought that Jesus' inspection took place in 1918.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 14

### New Truth

The GB now says the “inspection and cleansing” took place from 1914 (presumably October 1), when the “harvest season” began, through to early 1919.

Was there an “inspection and cleansing”? Did Jesus and his Father really come to earth during that period to conduct this process? These unsubstantiated assumptions form part of the GB’s foundation.

So a crucial question needed to be answered: Who among those groups were the wheat? To settle that question, Jesus began to inspect the spiritual temple in 1914. That inspection and cleansing work involved a period of time—from 1914 to the early part of 1919.<sup>[3]</sup>

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 11

 the harvest season began in 1914. In that year, a number of important developments began to unfold. Jesus was enthroned as King, and the last days began. (Rev. 11:15) From 1914 to the early part of 1919, Jesus accompanied his Father to the spiritual temple to do a much-needed inspection and cleansing work.<sup>[6]</sup>

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 19

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From which group would Jesus select and appoint the faithful slave? That question was answered after he and his Father came and inspected the temple, or spiritual arrangement for worship, from 1914 to the early part of 1919.<sup>[3]</sup>

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 22

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## MISAPPLICATION OF PARABLES

The GB recognises that the *parable* of the “faithful and discreet slave” is an *illustration*. But it has no justification for treating an illustrative story as a specific prediction, as the GB continually does with this and other narratives.<sup>11</sup>

A parable is a vehicle for carrying a single lesson and that lesson is normally contained within the narrative of the parable. There is great danger in trying to make a parable walk on all four legs as many of its elements are provided simply to create a narrative.

parables, or illustrations, of Jesus that are being fulfilled during this time of the end

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

For example, the reference to “midnight” in the Parable of the Virgins means *at an unexpected time*, and that is the sole point of the parable. The Jews begin and end the day at sunset, not at midnight. The parable of the Good Samaritan teaches a significant principle, especially when the relationship between the Jews and the Samaritans is taken into account. But they are not prophetic utterances.

**Parable:** A short allegorical story designed to illustrate or teach some truth, religious principle, or moral lesson.<sup>12</sup>

An *allegory* is not a prediction.

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<sup>11</sup> A refutation of the GB’s misapplication of parables is provided at [http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS\\_and\\_its\\_GB.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS_and_its_GB.pdf) pages 23-24, 28-31, 32-35.

<sup>12</sup> <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/parable>

## THE “FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”

### The previous Truth on the “Faithful and Discreet” slave class

The GB acknowledges in *The Watchtower* magazine that until now it had said that the GB stood as the representative of the anointed Christian group. Up to this moment, all anointed Christians had been under the umbrella title of *Faithful and Discreet Slave*. The GB was the *representative* of the larger FDS body.

<sup>3</sup> How, then, are we to understand Jesus’ illustration about the faithful slave? In the past, our publications have said the following: At Pentecost 33 C.E., Jesus appointed the faithful slave over his domestics. The slave represents all anointed Christians on earth as a group at any one time since then. The domestics refer to the same anointed ones as individuals. In 1919, Jesus appointed the faithful slave “over all his belongings”—all his earthly Kingdom interests. However, further careful study and prayerful meditation indicate that our understanding of Jesus’ words about the faithful and discreet slave needs to be clarified.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 20

The following diagram from 1971 shows the GB as *one part* of the anointed FDS class.

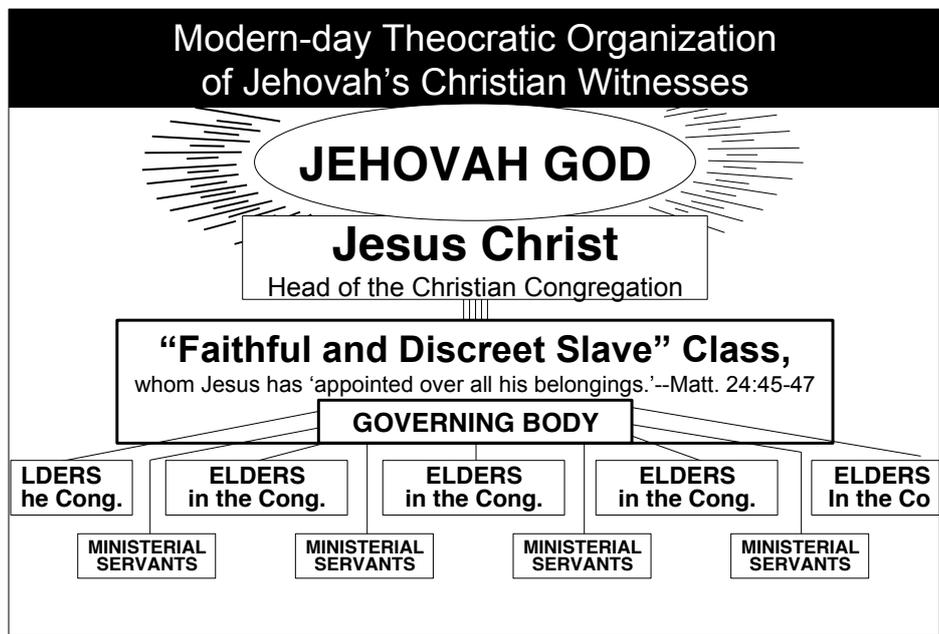


Chart from *The Watchtower* December 15, 1971, page 749

Their idea was that Jesus and the members of FDS, including who were already in heaven (known as *The Kingdom of God*), provided information to earth through its earthly representative, the Governing Body.

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Until *The Watchtower* of July 15, 2013, the GB taught that *all* of the 144,000 “Anointed Ones” made up the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” class<sup>13</sup>. The GB said that it was the *representative* on earth of the FDS,<sup>14</sup> that the GB was *part of the FDS* and presided over it.

The governing body is part of the “faithful and discreet slave” class and presides over it as spiritual shepherds and overseers.<sup>15</sup>

A small group of qualified men from among the anointed overseers now serve as the Governing Body, representing the composite faithful and discreet slave.<sup>16</sup>

The governing body as representing the “faithful and discreet slave” class.<sup>17</sup>

A small group of qualified overseers from among the composite “faithful and discreet slave” form the Governing Body, serving as the representative of the slave class.<sup>18</sup>

Kingdom interests on the earth have been entrusted to “the faithful and discreet slave,” which is represented by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Matthew 24:45-47)<sup>19</sup>

It was the “GB of the FDS”.

The governing body of the “slave” class. The governing body has the strictly spiritual field for its operation.<sup>20</sup>

Recognition of that governing body and its place in God’s theocratic arrangement of things is necessary for submission to the headship of God’s Son.<sup>21</sup>

## **New Truth on the “Faithful and Discreet” slave class**

With this magazine, the GB removed the other spirit-anointed from the “Slave” class.

**9 Do all anointed ones on earth make up the faithful slave? No.**

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 22

The GB ostracised the anointed and it has taken exclusively to itself the title of “Faithful and Discreet Slave”. While the “spirit-anointed” had no active role in the determination of doctrine or administration, the number represented a part of the GB’s religious structure. For example, only an Anointed was permitted to partake of the emblems at the annual Memorial.

Most, if not all of the articles and books published by the Organisation are created by people who are not spirit-anointed.

With this issue of the magazine, the GB limits the meaning of “Faithful and Discreet Slave” to itself. It presumably knows that it is the FDS because it says that it is.

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<sup>13</sup> This figure of 144,000 includes those already governing from God’s kingdom in heaven.

<sup>14</sup> I discuss this in my Study: *The Faithful and Discreet Slave and its Governing Body*.

[http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS\\_and\\_its\\_GB.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS_and_its_GB.pdf)

<sup>15</sup> *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 758, “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”

<sup>16</sup> *The Watchtower* March 15 2002 page 14 “Christ Leads His Congregation”

<sup>17</sup> *The Watchtower* December 15 1971 page 760 “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”;

Also: *Isaiah’s Prophecy – Light for All Mankind* 2 chapter 21 page 317 “True Worship Expands Worldwide”

<sup>18</sup> *The Watchtower* September 15 2005, page 22 “Go On Walking as Jesus Christ Walked”

<sup>19</sup> *The Watchtower* January 15 2001 page 21 “Keep in Step With Jehovah’s Organization”

<sup>20</sup> *The Watchtower* December 15 1971 page 762 “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”.

*The Watchtower* January 15 2001 page 29 “How the Governing Body Differs From a Legal Corporation”

<sup>21</sup> *The Watchtower* December 15 1972 page 755, “Do You Submit to Christ’s Headship Today?”

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<sup>10</sup> Who, then, is the faithful and discreet slave?

that slave is made up of a small group of anointed brothers who are directly involved in preparing and dispensing spiritual food during Christ's presence. Throughout the last days, the anointed brothers who make up the faithful slave have served together at headquarters. In recent decades, that slave has been closely identified with the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 22

This marginalises further those JWs who class themselves as belonging to the “Anointed” Class. They belong to the only Class permitted to partake of the emblems at the annual Memorial Meal.

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## APPOINTMENT “OVER THE DOMESTICS”

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so! Truly I say to YOU, He will appoint him over all his belongings. (Matthew 24:45-47 NWT)

The GB claims that:

- The *illustration* concerning the slave is also a *prophecy*.<sup>22</sup>
- It is a prophecy concerning the time after 1914.
- The slave’s master makes two appointments at two different times:
  - Verse 45: the first appointment takes place in 1919. At that time the slave was appointed “over the domestics” to give them “food at the proper time”<sup>23</sup>.
  - Verses 46-47: the second appointment takes place at the Master’s “arriving”. At that time the slave will be appointed “over all” the master’s belongings.

The way that the GB applies these three verses forms another part of its foundation. They know their meaning is correct because they are the appointed.

11 It is noteworthy that in Jesus’ illustration, the faithful and discreet slave receives two distinct appointments. The first is over the domestics; the second is over all the master’s belongings. Since the illustration is fulfilled only in this time of the end, both appointments would have to come after Jesus’ presence in kingly power began in 1914.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 22

██████████ In 1919, ██████████  
██████████ Jesus selected capable anointed brothers from among them to be the faithful and discreet slave and appointed them over his domestics.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 23

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<sup>22</sup> A refutation is provided at [http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS\\_and\\_its\\_GB.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/FDS_and_its_GB.pdf) pages 23-24, 28-31, 32-35.

<sup>23</sup> ἐν καιρῶν, “in appointed time” (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation of the Greek Scriptures*)

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## IDENTIFYING THE DOMESTICS

### Previous Truth

████████████████████ Ear-  
ly in the last days, the domestics were  
all anointed ones. ██████████████████

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 23

### New Truth

████████████████████ Later, *the domestics*  
*came to include the great crowd of oth-*  
*er sheep.* ██████████████████

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 23

Previously, the term “domestics” only meant the spirit-anointed. This meant that the Governing Body was responsible for feeding just the members of the 144,000 who were living on earth.

The GB has now expanded the “domestics” to include the “great crowd” class. This further diminishes any uniqueness of those claiming to be of the anointed (those who plan to rule earth from the government in heaven). This is the only mention of the “great crowd” in this magazine. They do not appear in the diagrams at pages 4-5 or 10-11.

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## THE GREAT TRIBULATION

### Previous Truth on the great tribulation

The GB says that it had been teaching that 1914 was the pivotal marker which identified the start of the “Great Tribulation”. They had taught that the Great Tribulation would end at Armageddon.

<sup>3</sup> For a number of years, we thought that the great tribulation began in 1914 with World War I and that “those days were cut short” by Jehovah in 1918 when the war ended so that the remnant would have the opportunity to preach the good news to all nations. (Matt. 24:21, 22) After the completion of that preaching work, Satan’s empire would be destroyed. Thus, the great tribulation was thought to have three phases: There would be a beginning (1914-1918), the tribulation would be interrupted (from 1918 onward), and it would conclude at Armageddon.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, pages 3-4

### New Truth on the great tribulation

The GB decided it had to move the timing of their primary event, the “Great Tribulation”.

<sup>5</sup> We also discerned that the first part of the great tribulation did not begin in 1914.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 4

Thus, instead of seeing 1914 as marking the start of the great tribulation, in this issue of *The Watchtower* the GB moves the great tribulation to a future time “when the United Nations ... attacks Christendom ... and the rest of Babylon the Great.” (Pages 4-5)

Russell taught that the “great tribulation” would *end* in 1914. (See page 32 of this Study).

Should people trust their lives to such shifting foundations? What will the GB next say is the Truth?

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6 What will signal the start of the great tribulation?

when the United Nations (the modern-day “disgusting thing”) attacks Christendom

and the rest of Babylon the Great.

That event will be the beginning of the great tribulation.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, pages 4-5

It is generally understood that when the GB says “the UN will attack Christendom” that it would be a non-violent attempt to curtail and eliminate all religious activities throughout the world.

Jehovah's Witnesses don't use the word "Christendom" in the dictionary sense of the term, which commonly refers to the countries where Christianity is the dominant religion, i.e. mainly Europe and the former colonies. Instead they use it simply to refer to all the Christian denominations grouped together. So they envisage an attack by the UN on all the religious organisations that call themselves Christian rather than on Christian nations, or Christendom as such.<sup>24</sup>

In WT terminology, "Christendom" = All [false] Christian religions other than the [true] Christian Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>25</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Post by “slimboyfat” at <http://www.jehovahs-witness.net/watchtower/bible/250597/1/The-United-Nations-will-attack-Christendom>

<sup>25</sup> Post by EdenOne at <http://www.jehovahs-witness.net/watchtower/bible/250597/1/The-United-Nations-will-attack-Christendom>

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## “THE PRESENCE” HAS HAPPENED AND “THE COMING” IS FUTURE

### A two-stage “presence-then-coming”

Since its creation by the Conley and Russell families<sup>26</sup>, the Watchtower Society has held to the two-stage: “a presence [parousia] to be followed by a coming” scenario. This position is maintained by the GB in this issue of *The Watchtower*.

**Paragraph 6: [2] Christ’s “coming” (Greek, *er’kho-mai*) is different from his “presence” (*pa-rou-si’a*). His invisible presence begins before his coming to execute judgment.**

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 25

**Paragraph 15: [5] The words “coming” and “arriving” translate forms of the same Greek verb, *er’kho-mai*.**

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

The two-stage “Coming” of the Conley and Russell families was similar to the Rapture being promoted by Darby and Schofield at the time. Russell had been convinced of this two-stage process by Nelson Barbour.

Russell taught that the secret *parousia* (“presence”) had taken place in 1874 which was to be followed by a 40-year period of harvest. Russell taught that when this harvest terminates in 1914 an unprecedented peace would descend on earth under the auspices of the Zionists. That explains the name he gave to his magazine: “Herald of Christ’s Presence<sup>27</sup> and Zion’s Watchtower<sup>28</sup>”.

From about 1930, the organisation has claimed that the *parousia* (“presence”) took place in 1914. As it has always done, the organisation keeps repeating its mantra that the “arrival-coming-appearing” (*erchomai*) will take place in the very near future.

Even though the GB says the *parousia* is a secret invisible past event, at 2 Thess 2:8-9, the Bible says that the *parousia* will be so bright and powerful that it will destroy the “lawless one”.

The lawless one will be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus will do away with by the spirit of his mouth and bring to nothing by the *manifestation* of his *presence* [parousia].<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>26</sup> Since the Conley family put up the major share of money, William Conley was the Watch Tower Society’s first President: [http://www.jwstudies.com/People\\_important\\_to\\_Russell.pdf](http://www.jwstudies.com/People_important_to_Russell.pdf) page 38ff

<sup>27</sup> Since the Parousia had already take place in 1874.

<sup>28</sup> Because it stood as a lookout beacon for the Zionists

<sup>29</sup> 2 Thess 2:8-9, NWT

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## THE PARABLES OF THE VIRGINS AND OF THE TALENTS

### Previous Truth on these parables

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the faithful and discreet slave, Jesus says: "Happy is that slave if his master on arriving ["having come," ftn.] finds him doing so." In the parable of the virgins, Jesus states: "While they were going off to buy, the bridegroom arrived ["came," *Kingdom Interlinear*]." In the parable of the talents, Jesus relates: "After a long time the master of those slaves came." In the same parable, the master says: "On my arrival ["having come," *Int*] I would be receiving what is mine." (Matt. 24:46; 25:10, 19, 27) To what time do these four instances of Jesus' coming refer?

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 7

The GB says that previously it taught that the parables of the Virgins and of the Talents relate to Jesus' past "coming" in 1918.

<sup>17</sup> In the past, we have stated in our publications that these last four references apply to Jesus' arriving, or coming, in 1918.

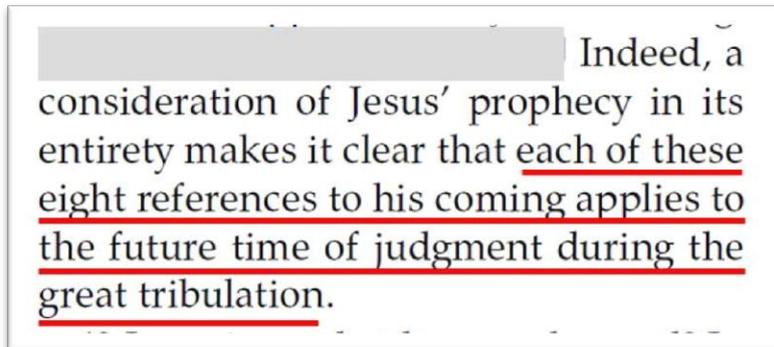
However, a further consideration of Jesus' prophecy indicates that an adjustment in our understanding of the timing of certain aspects of Jesus' prophecy is needed.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

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## New Truth on these parables

In light of its “need” to “adjust”, the GB announces in *The Watchtower* magazine of July 15, 2013 that it has moved events from 1918 to a point in the future. This movement includes the positions of the Parable of the Virgins and the Parable of the Talents.



Indeed, a consideration of Jesus' prophecy in its entirety makes it clear that each of these eight references to his coming applies to the future time of judgment during the great tribulation.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

The GB's new Truth says that the parables of the Virgins and the parable of the Talents relate to Jesus' future judgment during the future Great Tribulation, which is associated with Jesus' future “coming-arrival”.

The GB is thus saying that since its Truth is no longer Truth, it has to switch lights off and it has to switch on different lights. It calls this switching a series of “adjustments”. The lights are not getting brighter; they are being replaced because they not working.

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## “THE COMING” RELATIVE TO THE “GREAT TRIBULATION”

Having moved the “Great Tribulation” into the future, the GB links it with the future literal visible “coming-appearing” of Jesus.

Regarding the great tribulation, he states: “They will see the Son of man coming on the clouds.” “You do not know on what day your Lord is coming.” “At an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming.” And in his parable of the sheep and the goats, Jesus states: “The Son of man arrives in his glory.” (Matt. 24:30, 42, 44; 25:31) Each of these four references applies to Christ’s future coming as Judge.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 7

<sup>18</sup> In the verses that lead up to Matthew 24:46, the word “coming” refers consistently to the time when Jesus comes to pronounce and execute judgment during the great tribulation. (Matt. 24:30, 42, 44) Also, as we considered in paragraph 12, Jesus’ ‘arriving’ mentioned at Matthew 25:31 refers to that same future time of judgment.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

The GB now says that it is at *this* time that the Slave (the GB) will be happy if they are found to be doing the right things. The GB affirms that it now teaches that Matthew 24:30, 42, 44, 46, 47 and 25:31 refer to the future time of judgment during the future Great Tribulation.

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<sup>6</sup> Starting with the words recorded at Matthew 24:29, Jesus focused primarily on events that would happen in our day. (*Read Matthew 24:30, 42, 44.*) Speaking about what will happen during the great tribulation, he said that people “will see the Son of man coming on the clouds of heaven.” Then, in words meant for those living during the last days, he urged vigilance, saying: “You do not know on what day your Lord is coming” and, “At an hour that you do not think to be it, the Son of man is coming.”<sup>[2]</sup> In this context—when speaking about events that would take place in the last days—Jesus related the illustration of the faithful slave. Therefore, we may conclude that his words about that faithful slave began to be fulfilled only after the last days began in 1914.

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## JESUS' "COMING" RELATIVE TO THE SLAVE

<sup>16</sup> Regarding the faithful and discreet slave, Jesus says: "Happy is that slave if his master on arriving ["having come," ftn.] finds him doing so." [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] "After a long time the master of those slaves came." In the same parable, the master says: "On my arrival ["having come," *Int*] I would be receiving what is mine." (Matt. 24:46; 25:10, 19, 27) To what time do these four instances of Jesus' coming refer?

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 7

### Previous Truth

Previously, the GB linked the "coming-arrival" to the inspection in 1918 and to the appointment of the slave over all things in 1919.

<sup>17</sup> In the past, we have stated in our publications that these last four references apply to Jesus' arriving, or coming, in 1918. As an example, take Jesus' statement about "the faithful and discreet slave." (*Read Matthew 24:45-47.*) We understood that the "arriving" mentioned in verse 46 was linked to the time when Jesus came to inspect the spiritual condition of the anointed in 1918 and that the appointment of the slave over all the Master's belongings occurred in 1919. (Mal. 3:1) However, a further consideration of Jesus' prophecy indicates that an adjustment in our understanding of the timing of certain aspects of Jesus' prophecy is needed. [REDACTED]

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

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## New Truth

Je-  
sus' "arriving," or "coming," mentioned  
in the illustration of the faithful slave  
takes place during the great tribulation.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 24

The GB has moved those elements from 1918 and 1919 into the future great tribulation

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## JUDGMENT

### Previous Truth

The GB writes that the organisation had previously thought and taught that the judging by Jesus took place “during the entire period of the last days from 1914”.

Previously, we thought that the judging of people as sheep or goats would take place during the entire period of the last days from 1914 onward.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 6

### New Truth

The GB now places the judgment totally in the future, linking it to their future start of the “great tribulation”.

<sup>13</sup> So, then, what can we conclude? Jesus will judge people of all nations as sheep or goats when he comes during the great tribulation. Then, at Armageddon, the climax of the great tribulation, the goatlike ones will be ‘cut off’ forever.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 6

The GB has not thought this through. There are at least three stages in any judicial process, investigation, decision, and the carrying out of that decision. The execution of judgment upon the sheep and goats indicates there has been a prior judicial process.

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## ARMAGEDDON

it appears that all anointed ones who still remain on earth after the initial part of the great tribulation has passed will at some point be raised to heaven before the outbreak of the battle of Armageddon. This adjusts what was stated on this subject in "Questions From Readers" in *The Watchtower* of August 15, 1990, page 30.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

The GB thus says that it "appears" all anointed ones will go to heaven before Armageddon breaks out. They say that this adjusts the answer given in *The Watchtower* magazine of August 15, 1990. In that Answer, the GB had said they did not know whether some will survive the great tribulation and live on earth. The relevant parts of that answer shown below

### Questions From Readers:

- **Will some anointed Christians survive the "great tribulation" to live on earth in the new world before being taken to heaven?**

Pointedly, the Bible does not say.

... *The Watch Tower* of December 15, 1928, discussed Micah 5:2-15. ... *The Watch Tower* commented: "This may be taken as an indication that some of the remnant will be on earth even after Armageddon is fought and will then have some more work to do in the name of the Lord and to his praise and glory." Notice the modest, reasonable language used to introduce this possibility: "This *may be taken* as an indication." ...

Comments about the possibility that some of the anointed might survive into the new world are made with good intentions and in the light of Biblical precedents for trying to understand prophecies or patterns that could have later parallels. If it turns out that none of the anointed are left on earth, there will be no reason for dissatisfaction. ...

It could be reasoned that some of the bride class will survive the great tribulation ... If they are thus preserved on earth, they could remain here until God chooses to take them to heaven.

... We cannot and should not be dogmatic about particulars.

[Compare: *You May Survive Armageddon Into God's New World*, pages 61, 292, 351; "Your Will Be Done on Earth," page 347; *The Watchtower* of May 1, 1942, page 133.]

(*The Watchtower*, August 15, 1990, page 30)

This means that in its 2013 magazine the GB says it "appears" all anointed ones will go to heaven before Armageddon breaks out. That 2013 article refers to a Watchtower in 1990. That 1990 article says: "we cannot and should not be dogmatic". In support of its inability to give a definite answer, the 1990 article wrote that when a 1928 Watchtower used "may" that it was using modest, reasonable language.

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The 1990 article also referred readers to a 1942 *Watchtower*. In that 1942, article *The Watchtower* unequivocally states that the anointed (remnant of his 'little flock') will definitely survive Armageddon and spend some time on earth following its conclusion. Part of that 1942 *Watchtower* is reproduced here:

it appears reasonable, and the prophecy indicates strongly, that Jehovah by his Good Shepherd will preserve the remnant of his "little flock" through the battle of Armageddon and they shall see the terrific destruction of the "Assyrian" forces down to the last creature thereof. This preservation is not that the remnant of spirit-begotten children of God may live on earth in the flesh during the whole thousand-year reign of Christ Jesus that shall follow. Their stay on earth after Armageddon is merely for a brief time, serving as a vindication of Jehovah's promise and his almighty power to preserve the faithful in their direst extremity.

*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1942, page 133

<sup>12</sup> What shall be the work of the remnant after that battle? The prophecy beautifully pictures it: "And the remnant of Jacob shall be in the midst of many people, as dew from the LORD, as the showers upon the grass, that tarrieth not for man, nor waiteth for the sons of men." (Mic. 5:7)

*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1942, page 133

<sup>13</sup> Armageddon, symbolically represented as the destruction of Satan's world by fire, will be a scorching time. (2 Pet. 3:7-12) Thereafter the remnant will be retained on earth by the Lord to bring timely refreshment to the "great multitude" of the "other sheep" as symbolized by dew in the morning of that "new world", "wherein dwelleth righteousness." With the remnant shall be associated in the work the "faithful men of old", who shall have a "better resurrection" to life as perfect men. They shall be made "princes in all the earth", the permanent visible representatives of the heavenly THEOCRACY. (Ps. 45:16; Heb. 11:35, 39, 40)

*The Watchtower*, May 1, 1942, page 133

These show how Truth continually changes. What was once true is now heresy. They were wrong and they could easily continue to be wrong now. Who knows? How can anyone tell? Does Truth matter, or is Loyalty paramount?

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## APPOINTMENT “OVER ALL THINGS”

The GB says there are two “appointments” for the Slave; the first is “over the domestics” in 1919, the second is future during the great tribulation at judgment time.

Somehow, the GB manages to extract two separate appointments from this passage:

Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so! Truly I say to YOU, He will appoint him over all his belongings. (Matthew 24:45-47 NWT)

██████████ To understand how and when Jesus appoints the slave over all his belongings, we need to know two things: when he arrives and what his belongings include.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 24

██████████ Jesus’ arrival to appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings, mentioned at Matthew 24: 46, 47, also applies to his future coming, during the great tribulation.<sup>[6]</sup> Indeed, a consideration of Jesus’ prophecy in its entirety makes it clear that each of these eight references to his coming applies to the future time of judgment during the great tribulation.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

██████████ When Jesus comes for judgment during the great tribulation,  
██████████  
██████████ Jesus will then delight in making the second appointment—over all his belongings. ██████████

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 25

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## THE GB SUMMARISES ITS LATEST TRUTH

Previously, the GB had taught that the Great Tribulation started in the early part of the 20th century. It now says this event lies in the future at an unspecified time. This means that all of the events it had associated with a Great Tribulation in the past are also shifted into the future; these include the judgment by Jesus and the appointment of the Faithful Slave. These are events that lie in the future.

19 In review, what have we learned? In the beginning of this article, we raised three “when” questions. We first considered that the great tribulation did not begin in 1914 but will start when the United Nations attacks Babylon the Great. Then, we reviewed why Jesus’ judgment of the sheep and the goats did not begin in 1914 but will occur during the great tribulation. Finally, we examined why Jesus’ arrival to appoint the faithful slave over all his belongings did not occur in 1919 but will take place during the great tribulation. So, then, all three “whens” apply to the same future time period—the great tribulation.

*The Watchtower*, July 15, 2013, page 8

The GB’s arguments depend on its assumption that the FDS story is a prophecy, not a Parable, and that it is about them.

In previous times, the organisation focused on physical events such as wars and events in the natural world (earthquakes but not volcanoes). Now however, it is expecting its followers to swallow stories about Jesus and his Father coming down to earth in the early part of the 20th century to check on people’s spiritual condition and further that upon doing so that they appointed Rutherford to be their sole representative on earth.

Acceptance of the GB’s claims demands enormous faith and gullibility. Maybe for these men it represents delusions of self-appointed grandeur.



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## SUMMARY

### **The Truth Changes (pages 1-4 of this Study)**

In restructuring its eschatology (study of the “Last Days”), the GB cuts away from its past, distancing itself from previously held beliefs which up to now had to be vigorously defended by Jehovah’s Witnesses. With this magazine, the GB completely changes several key teachings, and in the process remodels its past, its attitude towards Russell, the Bible Students, and to 1914.

The changes introduced by the GB through The Watchtower of July 15, 2013 continue its practice of continually changing its Truth.

### **Loyalty to the new truth (page 5)**

The Governing Body states that the domestics have to be determined to depend on them for all their spiritual provisions.

### **“Apostasy took root and flourished” (pages 6-7)**

The GB says “weeds appeared” as early as 101 CE, which meant that the Church could no longer dispense “spiritual food”. However, the GB accepts the writings that the 4th century Church decided were its Scripture.

The GB says there was no “organized channel” from 101 CE to at least 1914.

### **The “Inspection and Cleansing” (pages 8-9)**

Previously the GB thought that the “inspection and cleansing” by Jesus took place in 1918. They now say it took more than 3 years, from late 1914 (likely October 1) until early 1918.

During that period, Jesus and his Father came to earth while they conducted the processes.

### **Misapplication of parables (page 10)**

The GB has no justification for treating a parable as a specific prediction. A parable is an allegory employed to illustrate a lesson.

### **The “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (pages 11-13)**

Previously, the GB said that it was the *representative* of the anointed Christian group. This meant that all anointed Christians had been under the umbrella title of *Faithful and Discreet Slave* with the GB being only the *representative* of the larger FDS body.

With this magazine, the GB removed the other spirit-anointed from the “Slave” class.

### **Appointment “over the Domestics” (page 14)**

The GB says they are the slave at Matthew 24:45-46. They were appointed by the master in 1919 to provide food to the domestics. This event was the first of two appointments. The second lies in the future.

### **Identifying the Domestics (page 15)**

Previously, the term “domestics” only meant the spirit-anointed. This meant that the Governing Body was responsible for feeding just the members of the 144,000 who were living on earth.

The GB has now expanded the “domestics” to include the “great crowd” class. This further diminishes any uniqueness of those claiming to be of the anointed (those who plan to rule earth from the government in heaven). This is the only mention of the “great crowd” in this magazine. They do not appear in the diagrams at pages 4-5 or 10-11.

### **The great tribulation (pages 16-17)**

Previously the GB had taught that the Great Tribulation would end at Armageddon. In this issue of *The Watchtower* the GB moves the great tribulation to a future time “when the United Nations ... attacks Christendom ... and the rest of Babylon the Great.”

### **“The Presence” has happened and “The Coming” is future (pages 18)**

The Watchtower Society has always held to a two-stage “presence [parousia] then coming” scenario. For about 56 years, the WTS taught that the Parousia had taken place in 1874.

The GB now claims that the *parousia* (“presence”) took place in 1914 and that the “arrival/coming” (*erchomai*) will take place some time in the near future. In *The Watchtower* magazine of July 15, 2013, the GB announces

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changes to events associated with each of these two events. It switched off the old light and switched on a new light. It calls this switching an “adjustment”.

**The parables of the Virgins and of the Talents (pages 19-20)**

The GB says that previously it taught that the parables of the Virgins and of the Talents relate to Jesus’ past “coming” in 1918. In *The Watchtower* magazine of July 15, 2013, the GB announces that it has moved events from 1918 to a point in the future, including the Parables of the Virgins and of the Talents.

**“Coming” relative to the “Great Tribulation” (page 21-22)**

Having moved the “Great Tribulation” into the future, the GB now links it with the future literal visible “coming-appearing” of Jesus.

**“The Coming” relative to the Slave (pages 23-24)**

Previously, the GB linked the “coming-arrival” to the inspection in 1918 and to the appointment of the slave over all things in 1919. The GB moved those elements from 1918 and 1919 into the future great tribulation

**Judgment (page 25)**

The GB writes that the organisation had previously thought and taught that the judging by Jesus took place “during the entire period of the last days from 1914”. The GB now places the judgment totally in the future, linking it to their future start of the “great tribulation”.

**Armageddon (pages 26-27)**

In its 2013 magazine, the GB says that it “appears” all anointed ones will go to heaven before Armageddon breaks out. That article points to a *Watchtower* in 1990. That article writes: “we cannot and should not be dogmatic”. In support, it notes that when a 1928 *Watchtower* uses “may” that it was using modest, reasonable language. It refers readers to a 1942 article. That article unequivocally states that the anointed (remnant of his “little flock”) will definitely survive Armageddon and spend some time on earth following its conclusion.

**Appointment over “all things” (page 28)**

The GB says there are two “appointments” for the Slave; the first is “over the domestics” in 1919, the second is future during the great tribulation at judgment time.

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THEY EXPECTED THE "GREAT TIME OF TROUBLE" WOULD END IN 1914

the Bible evidence proving that the full end of the times of the Gentiles, *i. e.*, the full end of their lease of dominion, will be reached in A. D. 1914; and that that date will be the farthest limit of the rule of imperfect men.

at that date the Kingdom of God, for which our Lord taught us to pray, saying, "Thy Kingdom come," will have obtained full, universal control, and that it will then be "set up," or firmly established, in the earth.

some time before the end of A. D. 1914 the last member of the divinely recognized Church of Christ, the "royal priesthood," "the body of Christ," will be glorified with the Head; because every member is to reign with Christ, being a joint-heir with him of the Kingdom, and it cannot be fully "set up" without every member.

the great "time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation," will reach its culmination and will end at that date; and then men will have learned to be still, and to know that Jehovah is God and that he will be exalted in the earth. (Psa. 46: 10.)

*Millennial Dawn*, Volume 2 (1889), pages 76-78

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## THEY EXPECTED TO BE IN HEAVEN BY 1910

\_\_\_\_\_ this date, 1910, indicated by the Pyramid, seems to harmonize well with the dates furnished by the Bible. It is but four years before the full close of the time of trouble which ends the Gentile times; and when we remember the Lord's words—that the overcomers shall be accounted worthy to escape the severest of the trouble coming upon the world, we may well accept as correct the testimony of the Great Pyramid, that the last members of the “body” or “bride” of Christ will have been tested and accepted and will have passed beyond the vail before the close of A. D. 1910.

Is not this a most remarkable agreement between this stone “Witness” and the Bible? The dates, October, 1874, and October, 1881, are exact, while the date 1910, though not furnished in the Scriptures, seems more than a reasonable one. Though the Bible gives us no exact date for the end of this trial of the Church, it does give us, as we have seen, a date limit previous to which it must certainly be concluded. And in this connection let us remember that this date limit—A. D. 1914—must not only witness the completion of the selection and trial and glorification of the entire body of Christ, but it must also witness the purifying of that larger company of consecrated believers \_\_\_\_\_

*Millennial Dawn, Volume 3 (1891), pages 363-364*

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## “FALSE PROPHETS DO NOT CORRECT THEMSELVES”

The following is from the book on Jehovah’s Witnesses written by Alan Rogerson in 1969, during the period when the organisation was ramping up expectations regarding 1975.

It is possible for the Society to teach these misleading historical generalisations because the Witnesses accept without question what is taught by the Society; in any case the Society discourages independent investigation of the historical facts. Most Witnesses would accept the Society dogmas even in the face of contradictory documentary evidence — they simply think up some ‘explanation’ for the ‘apparent discrepancy’.

Until recently the Society did not admit that any mistakes were made by Russell or Rutherford — just that the light of truth was getting stronger. It is possible that the Society is now changing its attitude slightly: admitting that some mistakes were made in the past while remaining certain that they are God’s chosen organisation. This is succinctly summed up in a statement by A. H. Macmillan: ‘With the passing of the years I have had many trials and have had to make a number of adjustments in my understanding of God’s Word, but I saw no reason to permit such things to disturb my faith.’<sup>30</sup> This attitude is typical of the Witnesses; somewhere in the back of their minds is the certainty that the Society is right — whatever doctrinal contradictions (Macmillan calls them ‘adjustments’) or unfulfilled prophecies or inconvenient facts, the Witnesses remain certain that the Society is right, and they are proud of this unshakable faith! I quote extensively from the 1st June 1967 *Watchtower* to illustrate the current Society line:

Today on earth there is a people numbering more than one million who are in complete unity. ... All the more amazing is it that these people are located in 199 lands, are of all colors and nationalities and speak different tongues. ... We see changes taking place in the organisation to make it at all times more clean. ...

Some have called Jehovah’s witnesses ‘false prophets’ because, in times past, they have viewed things a certain way and, later, have made a change through the official publications. Or, there may have been practices by some members in the organisation that have been permitted to continue for a time for lack of knowledge as to how to handle these things, but later they have learned from God’s Word what his will is and have gone ahead and made the necessary corrections. False prophets do not correct themselves. God’s people do. ... Since 1938 there have been further refinements as the theocratic organisation continues to grow toward perfection.

The above explanations are clearly preferable to the previous Society line that they had always been right. Nevertheless the Society is still not telling the whole truth. They do not say that up to now they have not admitted their mistakes, no wonder they were called ‘false prophets’. They are also very coy about how much they confess; my impression is that they only admit to errors that are blatant and liable to cause individual Witnesses to fall away; if possible they sweep most of their past errors under the carpet of soothing historical generalisations.

It is typical of the Society to use even their errors as evidence that they are right: ‘False prophets do not correct themselves’. They are making a virtue out of their repentance, forgetting about the fact that they were *wrong!* Of course it is better to repent of error than not to repent, but I should have thought it was more typical of God’s organisation not to make errors at all. The Witnesses’ reply to this is that human beings are fallible and even those in God’s organisation are not immune from error. It seems to me, however, that this makes it difficult to decide *which is* God’s organisation if that too is prone to error, and the New World Society has made so many errors in the past that they do not appear to be the likely candidates.<sup>31</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> *The Watchtower*, 1966, p.510

<sup>31</sup> *Millions now living will never die: A study of Jehovah’s Witnesses*, Alan Rogerson, pages 81-83. Constable (London), 1969