

1874 – Christ’s Second Coming according to Russell

Christ came in the character of a Bridegroom in 1874.⁵ The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ began in AD 1874.⁶ Surely there is not the slightest room for doubt in the mind of a truly consecrated child of God that the Lord Jesus is present and has been since 1874.⁷

After Russell and Rutherford’s death, the Watchtower Society changed the date of Jesus’ return from 1874 to **1914**.

1914 & 1915 – “The Kingdoms of this World Destroyed, and the Kingdom of God Established”

The following quote is a prophecy of the end of a war which would replace the governments of men with the government of God, and not a prediction of the First World War which began in 1914 and ended in 1918. What actually did happen in 1914, in spite of its importance, seems to have been entirely unforeseen by the Watchtower “prophets.” Since something important did happen in 1914, people today sometimes try to infer that the prophecy was fulfilled. At the time, however, the Watchtower leadership did not promote that interpretation. On the contrary, they *changed the date* to 1915, showing that the 1914 prophecies were wrong and they understood that the things prophesied for 1914 had not happened.

Within the coming twenty-six years all present governments will be overthrown and dissolved...In view of this strong Bible evidence concerning the Times of the Gentiles, we consider it an established truth that the final end of the kingdoms of this world, and the full establishment of the kingdom of God, will be accomplished at the end of **AD 1914**⁸ (1909 edition).

The 1915 edition is exactly the same as the 1909 edition above with one change: “**AD 1915**.”⁹ In the 1919 reprint of the 1915 edition, the Watchtower leaders admitted in the introduction, “We drew a false conclusion, however, not authorized by the Word of the Lord.”

The 1914 Prophecies were Declared Wrong

The Watchtower, and its companion publications of the Society, for forty years emphasized the fact that 1914 would witness the establishment of God’s kingdom and the complete glorification of the church. During that period of forty years God’s people on earth were carrying on a witness work, which work was foreshadowed by Elijah and John the Baptist. All of the Lord’s people looked forward to 1914 with joyful expectation. When that time came and passed there was much disappointment, chagrin and mourning, and the Lord’s people were greatly in reproach. They were ridiculed by the clergy and their allies in particular, and pointed to with scorn, because they had said so much about 1914, and what would come to pass, and their “prophecies” had not been fulfilled.¹⁰

Sometimes when their prophesies proved false, as in the quote above, Watchtower leaders later admitted it. Other times, as in the quote below, they tried to escape blame, inferring that *the followers* rather than *the leaders* had made the mistake.

Many of such had been looking for the Lord to come and take them to heaven, and had particularly fixed the year 1914 as when this should be done...but these had merely contemplated something to happen which did not come to pass.¹¹

1918 – Churches & Church Members to be Destroyed

In the year 1918, when God destroys the churches wholesale and the church members by the millions...¹²

All of Christendom was to be wiped out in 1918 and Jehovah’s Witnesses glorified. But the Society later had to admit:

Suddenly, there came an end to World War I. It did not lead on, as Bible students expected, into world revolution and anarchy, or the battle of Armageddon; and the sincere worshipers of Jehovah...found themselves still in the flesh on the earth.¹³

1925 – Kingdom Established in Palestine, Faithful Men of the Old Testament Return

We may confidently expect that 1925 will mark the return of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and faithful prophets of old.¹⁴ There is evidence that the establishment of the kingdom in Palestine will probably be in 1925, ten years later than we once calculated.¹⁵ There will be no slip-up...Abraham should enter upon the actual possession of his promised inheritance in 1925.¹⁶

The 1914, 1918 & 1925 Prophecies Declared Wrong

God’s faithful people on the earth emphasized the importance of the dates 1914 and 1918 and 1925. They had much to say about these dates and what would come to pass, but all they predicted did not come to pass.¹⁷

1929 – A House was Built for the Return of the Old Testament Faithful

At San Diego, California...in the year 1929, there was built a house, known as Beth-Sarim. The Hebrew words *Beth Sarim* mean “House of the Princes”; and the purpose of...building the house was that there might be some tangible proof that there are those on earth today who fully believe God and Christ Jesus, and who believe that the faithful men of old will soon be resurrected by the Lord, be back on earth, and take charge of the visible affairs of earth.¹⁸

When it became obvious that the Watchtower’s prediction would not be fulfilled, the house became an embarrassing monument to a false prophecy. It was sold in 1948!

1932 – The Overthrow of Christendom

They had preached that in an early time God would overthrow “Christendom.” Many had emphasized the year 1925 as the date [as well as 1918], and then when that date did not materialize the date was moved up to 1932. Again, 1932 came and “Christendom” was not destroyed.¹⁹

Other Dates/Events Taught by Russell & Rutherford that Did Not Come to Pass

1799: Beginning of “the last days” or “time of the end”
1829: Beginning to understand “the mysteries of prophecy”
1844: Wise virgins went forth to meet the Bridegroom
1846: God’s sanctuary was cleansed
1873: End of 6000 years of human existence
1874: Beginning of the 40-year “harvest” or preaching work
1874: Second cry, “Behold the Bridegroom”
1874: Beginning of the Battle of Armageddon
1878: God’s Kingdom was “set up” in heaven
1878: Beginning of Christ’s Kingdom Rule
1878: The fall of “Babylon the Great” (false religion)

1878: Beginning of “the Times of Restitution”
1881: Close of “the heavenly calling” (spiritual Israel)
1881: Resurrection of all the “dead in Christ”
1914: Anointed Christians will be taken to heaven before 1914
1914: The end of the “harvest” or preaching work
1914: God’s Kingdom would be firmly established in the earth
1914: Jesus would be present as earth’s new Ruler
1914: God will destroy all Gentile nations by the end of 1914
1914: Jerusalem begins to rise from divine disfavor to honor
1914: Israel’s blindness would begin to be turned away
1914: The farthest limit of the rule of imperfect man is 1914
1914: The Battle of Armageddon would end
1914: Peaceful blessings to begin to be recognized on earth
1914: “Babylon the Great” destroyed (all other religions)
1914: The “last days” would end in 1914
1915: God’s Kingdom fully established near the end of 1915
1915: Anointed Christians taken to heaven soon after 1914
1918: God’s “fire” from heaven would fall on Christendom
1918: Christendom would go down to oblivion as a system
1920: There would be worldwide all-embracing anarchy
1920: All earthly governments will pass away
1920: All republics will disappear in the fall of 1920
1925: Anointed Christians would be taken to heaven
2914: End of the 1000-year Reign of Christ

The references to all the above can be found at <http://www.freeminds.org/history/part1.htm> under the heading, “Spiritual Food at the Proper Time.” Russell’s *Studies in the Scriptures* and Rutherford’s *The Finished Mystery* are available at <http://www.freeminds.org/sales/tempsale.htm>. In the July 1894 *Watchtower* Russell stated, “We see no reason for changing the figures—nor could we change them if we would. They are, we believe, **God’s dates**, not ours.” Rutherford said his date of 1925 was “**indisputable**.” All of the above dates/events were said to be in fulfillment of *Bible* prophecies, but they all turned out to be unfulfilled *Watchtower* prophecies.

The Watchtower Society has No False Teachings or False Prophecies! — Why Not?

The Society has published the organization’s history in their book—*Jehovah’s Witnesses: Proclaimers of God’s Kingdom (1993)*. According to the *Proclaimers* book, the Society has *never* had one single false teaching or false prophecy! How is this possible? Well, in order to be “God’s organization” (as they claim), they know that they have to eliminate every trace of Russell and Rutherford’s teachings that were false. Here is how they accomplish this seemingly impossible feat.

(1) Remove the word “FALSE”—They simply eliminate the word “false” in connection with anything the Society has ever taught no matter how false it was! In place of the word “false,” such teachings are referred to as “past **truths**”—thereby not only avoiding the word “false” but using the word “truth” in its place! The word “false” is reserved for all *other* religions which just happened to be full of “false teachers” and “false prophets” and therefore are “false religions.” On the other hand, according to the Society, they themselves have

never had a single one of any of these and therefore it is “the true religion,” or as they so often refer to it, “the only true religion.” Jehovah’s Witnesses have been so conditioned by this line of reasoning that they look forward to “new truths.”

(2) Remove the word “PROPHECY”—They also remove the word “prophecy” in connection with their prophecies once it becomes evident that they are “false.” All during the time Russell and Rutherford’s dates/events were being proclaimed they were said to be “in fulfillment of Bible prophecy.” This has been true of every prophecy that has ever come from the Watchtower Society. That’s why Jehovah’s Witnesses have believed them. But once their prophecies are discarded, the word “prophecy” is also discarded.

The leaders of the Watchtower will not allow the Bible to tell them that Russell and Rutherford were false teachers or false prophets. Notice how they respond in the *Watchtower (March 15, 1986)* when these things are pointed out to them:

Some opposers claim that [Russell and Rutherford were] false prophets. These opponents say that dates have been set, but nothing has happened. Yes, we have had to revise *expectations* from time to time...but the need to revise *our understanding* somewhat does not make us false prophets...[Such revisions were just for] *expectations needing some adjustment*.

Here they not only avoid the word “false,” they change their prophecies into “expectations.” Notice carefully below what they call their teachings and prophecies *during the time* that they are proclaiming them:

the truth, rich truths, Bible truths, great truths, revealed truths, precious truths, jewels of truth, unsealed truths, Scriptural truths, established truths, liberating truths, pure language, Bible teachings, Bible prophecies, Scriptural beliefs, unfulfilling prophecy, extraordinary prophecy, the Creator’s promise, the teachings of Jehovah, Jehovah’s prophetic word, the sure word of prophecy, true teachings of the Bible, revealed truths of Jehovah.

They reinforce these expressions in the *Watchtower (June 15, 1964, p 365)* by saying *God* is responsible for all their “prophesying”:

Through [the Watchtower Society, Jehovah] is carrying out prophesying on an intensified and unparalleled scale. All this activity is not an accident. *Jehovah is the one behind all of it*.

But once they realize that Jehovah was *not* behind what they had been prophesying and it was false, they are very careful in their wording from then on *not* to use “false” or “prophecy” in connection with them. They *now* call these prophecies:

errors, mistakes, misplaced zeal, unrealized hopes, previous failures, misinterpretations, misunderstandings, our understanding, misplaced optimism, wrong expectations, hopes and expectations, premature expectations, misplaced expectations, disappointed expectations, errors in their teachings, incomplete concepts, inaccurate concepts, serious disappointments, formerly cherished views, mistakes in their understanding, views in need of refinement, an expressed opinion, cherished errors, wrong beliefs, old truths, past truths, expectations needing some adjustment, matters on which corrections of viewpoint have been needed.²⁰

This *substitution technique* allows them to openly discuss their failed prophecies. Years after Rutherford's prophecy that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be resurrected in 1925, he referred to this previous teaching, not as "false," but as only "an expressed opinion." Their willingness to admit their "mistakes" is presented as a sign of their humility and therefore further evidence that "this is truly God's organization." But they have never admitted to what they have *really* been guilty of doing. To be truly "candid" (as they claim in the *Proclaimers* book) they would have to admit to having produced numerous false teachings and false prophecies. But that would make them a false teacher and a false prophet which would then disqualify them from being "God's organization" which in turn would bring an end to the Watchtower religion. To date they have been unable to face such a reality.

The word "false" is only used when the Watchtower refers to *other religions* and *their teachings* that they say are not true:

falsehoods, false stories, false teachers, false teachings, false doctrines, false prophets, false prophecies, false religious views, false religious teachings, false religious philosophies, doctrines with pagan religious roots, God-dishonoring doctrines of Babylon the Great, the disfiguring of God, nauseating teachings, pagan doctrines, godless myths.

The leaders of the Watchtower insists that what Russell and Rutherford did does not come under *the Bible's definition* of a false prophet (*Deut 18:20-22*), yet it needs to be seen that both of these men do come under *the Society's definition* of a false prophet. The *Watchtower*, April 15, 1995 defines "prophecies" as "information written in advance about what definitely would occur in the future" (p 4). And their own definition of a false prophet in *Reasoning from the Scriptures* (p 132) is:

False Prophets: Individuals and organizations (1) proclaiming messages that they attribute to a superhuman source but that (2) do not originate with the true God and (3) are not in harmony with his revealed will.

Both Russell and Rutherford (1) attributed their messages to a superhuman source, (2) none of their messages that we have listed here originated with God, and (3) they were not in harmony with his revealed will. Therefore they were *not* false prophets? According to the Society's own definition they were.

It's evident that these two men *did not interpret the Scriptures correctly*. Yet the interpretations of these men are the basis for almost all of the doctrines that Jehovah's Witnesses believe and teach today! Therefore, when one of their followers suggest to you that you should not read the Bible by itself, apart from their interpretations, or that you should not read explanations other than those of the Watchtower, don't give in to such advice. The person who made that suggestion will not take your punishment if you lose your soul through believing false doctrine. You are responsible for your own decisions and actions. The Bible instructs you to check out what others tell you. Why would you blindly entrust the salvation of your soul to men who were so clearly wrong?

Jehovah's Witness leaders for over 100 years have claimed to be God's only living "prophet" on the face of the earth. They have stated that they are "**The Prophet of God.**"²¹ But their record proves otherwise. Documented evidence shows them to be "false prophets." Most Jehovah's Witnesses have no clue about the true history of their organization. Jesus said, "Many false prophets shall arise, and shall deceive many" (*Matt 24:11*). He told us to beware of those who say "THE TIME IS AT HAND" (*Luke 21:8 NASV*). How fitting a warning from our Lord himself against the organization founded by Russell who specifically entitled a book, "THE TIME IS AT HAND."²²

The prophet, which shall presume to speak a word in my name, which I have not commanded him to speak...even that prophet shall die. And if thou say in thine heart, How shall we know the word which the LORD hath not spoken? When a prophet speaketh in the name of the LORD, if the thing follow not, nor come to pass, that is the thing which the LORD hath not spoken, but the prophet hath spoken it presumptuously: thou shalt not be afraid of him (*Deut 18:20-22*).

In that famous April 1, 1972 *Watchtower* where the Society sings its own praises about being God's only true prophet, they say, "Of course, it is easy to say that this group acts as a 'prophet' of God. It is another thing to *prove* it. The only way this can be done is to *review the record*" (p 197). Well, we've done just that—*review the record*—and the final verdict is...

"True, there have been those in times past who predicted an 'end' to the world, even announcing a specific date. Yet nothing happened. The 'end' did not come. They were guilty of false prophesying. Why? What was missing? Missing from such people were God's truths and the evidence that He was using and guiding them."

—Awake! magazine, Oct. 8, 1968, p.23

"For by your own words you will be justified, and by your own words you will be condemned"

Matthew 12:37

References:

(1) *Paradise Restored to Mankind by Theocracy*, 1972, pp 353,354 (2) *Insight on the Scriptures*, vol 2, 1988, p 696 (3) C. T. Russell, *Studies in the Scriptures*, vol 2 (*The Time is at Hand*), 1889, p 40 (4) *Life Everlasting in Freedom of the Sons of God*, 1966, p 29 (date listed in chart, p 35); *The Watchtower*, Oct 15, 1969, p 623; *The Approaching Peace of a Thousand Years*, pp 26,27; *Kingdom Ministry*, March, 1968, p 4 (5) Russell, *The Watchtower*, Oct 1879, p 4 (6) J. F. Rutherford, *Prophecy*, 1929, p 65; *Thy Kingdom Come*, 1891, 1923, p 235; *The Battle of Armageddon*, 1897, 1913, p 621; *Studies*, vol 7 (*The Finished Mystery*), p 58 (7) *The Watchtower*, Jan 1, 1924, p 5 (8) *Studies*, vol 2, 1889, 1909, p 99 (also pp 76,77,101,245) (9) *Ibid.*, 1919 reprint of 1915 ed, p 99 (10) Rutherford, *Light, Book 1*, 1930, p 194 (also pp 136,194,195) (11) *Prophecy*, p 89 (12) *The Finished Mystery*, 1917 ed., pp 404,485 (13) *Man's Salvation out of World Distress at Hand*, 1975, p 98 (also p 136) (14) *Millions Now Living Will Never Die*, 1918, p 89 (also pp 90,97); *Golden Age*, Jan 4, 1922, p 217 (15) *The Finished Mystery*, 1917, p 128 (16) *The Watchtower*, Oct 15, 1917, p 6157 (17) Rutherford, *Vindication, Book 1*, 1931, p 146; *Yearbook*, 1975, p 146; *The Watchtower*, Nov 1, 1993, p 12 (18) Rutherford, *Salvation*, 1939, pp 311,312; *The New World*, 1942, pp 104,105 (19) *The Watchtower*, Feb 15, 1938, p 54 (20) Most of the above two sets of Watchtower expressions are scattered throughout the *Proclaimers* book. The last one comes from *Reasoning from the Scriptures*, p 136 (21) *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1972, p 197 (22) *Studies*, vol 2

WHAT IS THE GOSPEL?

The gospel of Christ is good news of pardon to the guilty, addressing all as equally guilty before God. It reveals an atonement sufficient for all; and every sinner is commanded to receive it as a faithful saying, that "Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners" (*1 Tim 1:15*). The gospel is addressed to those who are "far from righteousness" (*Isa 46:12*); who are poor, and blind, and naked; who have no money to purchase salvation, no merit to recommend them to the favor of God (*Isa 55:1; Luke 7:42*).

Christ came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance (*Matt 9:13*). If we are not sinners, we have nothing to do with the gospel; and if we are sinners, let us not reject the counsel of God against ourselves, by vainly supposing that anything about us gives us a peculiar claim to his favor, or by imagining that our sins are too great to be forgiven. The thief upon the cross was saved by faith in Jesus, and none shall enter heaven in any other way. Our only plea is this—"God be merciful to me a sinner."

Although the Scriptures are so clear on this subject, it is a stumbling-block and foolishness to the great body of those who hear the gospel. It offends their pride to be put upon a level with the outcasts of society; surely, they think, some difference will be made; but they err, not knowing the Scriptures, nor understanding the malignity of sin or the grace of God.

They view salvation as a kind of bargain which God proposes to make with his creatures, that on certain conditions he will accept them; while in fact it is the message of reconciliation, equally addressed to all mankind, declaring that a full atonement for sin has been made upon the cross, and inviting every sinner of Adam's race instantly to approach God through Christ.

When Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, it was a remedy equally adapted for all who had been bitten (*Num 21:8; John 3:14-15*). By looking to the serpent the patient was healed; and in reference to this emblem, Christ, indiscriminately addressing all mankind, says, "Look unto me, and be ye saved, all the ends of the earth; for I am God, and there is none else" (*Isa 45:21-22*).

While the gospel is preached freely to all, it is "the power of God unto salvation" only to those who believe (*Rom 1:16*). But it is vain to talk of being justified by Christ's righteousness, unless our hearts are "purified by faith" (*Aets 15:9*). We may profess faith in Jesus while we are slaves to sin; we may deceive ourselves, and affirm that we are trusting in Christ while we are living after the flesh; but every branch in the vine that beareth not fruit shall be cast into the fire (*Matt 3:10; John 15:2*).

If we believe Christ's gospel, it will effectually work in our hearts (*1 Thess 2:13*), and teach us that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, we should live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world (*Titus 2:11-12*); and if what we believe does not produce this effect, it is not the true grace of God in which we stand. We are deceived. "They that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts" (*Gal 5:24*). □

FALSE PROPHECIES AND THE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

"If the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch" —Matt 15:14

Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916), first president and founder of the Jehovah's Witnesses, stated more than once that God would put false prophets to shame by not fulfilling their predictions, and that we would be able to tell who the false prophets were because their prophecies would not come true.

Jehovah, the God of the true prophets, will put all false prophets to shame either by not fulfilling the false prediction of such self-assuming prophets or by having his own prophecies fulfilled in a way opposite to that predicted by the false prophets. False prophets will try to hide their reason for feeling shame by denying who they really are.¹

The Watchtower Society also sets forth several ways of distinguishing true prophets from false ones:

The three essentials for establishing the credentials of a true prophet, as given through Moses, were: The true prophet would speak in Jehovah's name; the things foretold would come to pass (*Deut 18:20-22*); and his prophesying must promote true worship.²

The emphasis in this Deuteronomy passage is on the second of these essentials, that of the things foretold coming to pass. If a prophecy does not come true, the person speaking is a false prophet. The majority of the teachings the Jehovah's Witnesses still follow today were developed by Russell and J. F. "Judge" Rutherford. These men made major predictions complete with dates at the same time they were developing Watchtower doctrine. Since these dates have passed, we can see whether these prophecies were true or false, and just how accurate these men were in interpreting the Scriptures.

1873 – The Beginning of "the Millennium"

If, then, the seventh thousand-year period of earth's history be an epoch specially noted as the period of Christ's reign, we shall be showing that it began in 1873, and be proving that we are already in it.³

Russell declared that Christ's 1000-year reign began in 1873, but when time had passed, it became obvious he was wrong, and later Watchtower publications changed the date to 1975.

According to this trustworthy Bible chronology six thousand years from man's creation will end in 1975, and the seventh period of a thousand years of human history will begin in the fall of 1975.⁴