

and serve God as part of it.”⁴ There is no salvation or life apart from the **WTS**, according to these clear teachings. Likewise, the organization requires unquestioning obedience from its followers—obedience such as is due only to the Lord himself. **JW’s** are to “Avoid independent thinking...questioning the counsel that is provided by God’s visible organization.”⁵ Any who fail to obey are put on trial, expelled, and cut off from family and friends.

By thus inserting itself into God’s plan of salvation, presenting itself as the essential means of salvation and the final authority to be obeyed, the **WTS** usurps the position of Christ as Lord and Savior. This actually borders on idolatry, since the organization is portrayed in terms that rightly apply only to Deity.

Strangely enough, the Society itself has acknowledged in the past the possibility of people becoming “idolatrous worshipers of a man-made organization”⁶ (writing in regard to some other organization, of course, not their own). How does this happen? How does one become an organization-worshiper? Note the Society’s own answer: “If one renders obedient service to someone or some organization, whether willingly or under compulsion, looking up to such as possessing a position of superior rulership and great authority, then that one can scripturally be said to be a worshiper.”⁷

What more perfect description could there be of the relationship of **JW’s** to their own organization? Their definition of “idolatrous worshipers of a man-made organization” fits no one better than themselves. Yes, by looking to it for salvation and by obeying it as their lord and master, **JW’s** in effect deify their organization. While pointing the finger of accusation at others, they themselves have fallen into the snare of idolatry.

No One Can Understand The Bible Outside The Watchtower Organization

You can see for yourself from the following Watchtower quotes that this organization claims without reservation that **the Bible** is exclusively “a Watchtower book.”

Thus the Bible is *an organizational book* and belongs to the Christian congregation as an organization, *not to individuals*, regardless of how sincerely they may believe that they can interpret the Bible. For this reason the Bible *cannot be properly understood without Jehovah’s visible organization*...[The **WTS**] is serving as [God’s] *sole visible channel*, through whom alone spiritual instruction was to come. Those who recognize Jehovah’s visible theocratic organization, therefore, must recognize and accept this appointment of the “faithful and discreet slave” *and be submissive to it*.⁸

We all need help to understand the Bible, and we *cannot* find the Scriptural guidance we need *outside* the ‘faithful and discreet slave’ organization.⁹ [An individual] *must have The Watchtower* to understand the Bible.¹⁰ Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using [the **WTS**], we will not progress along the road to life, *no matter how much Bible reading we do*.¹¹

This is, in fact, saying, No one on earth can properly understand the Bible unless they are submissive to the men of the Watchtower’s Governing Body up there in Brooklyn, New York! That’s right! and straight from their own mouth—“The Witnesses gladly look [*not to the Bible, but*] to the mature brothers of the Governing Body for direction and guidance in matters of worship.”¹²

No One Can Be Saved Outside The Watchtower Organization

Do not conclude that there are different roads, or ways, that you can follow to gain life in God’s new system. There is only one. There was just one ark that survived the Flood...And there will be only one organization—God’s visible organization—that will survive the fast-approaching “great tribulation”... *You must be part of Jehovah’s organization*, doing God’s will, *in order to receive his blessing of everlasting life*.”¹³ Outside the true Christian congregation [the **WTS**] what alternative organization is there? Only Satan’s organization.¹⁴ We will be impelled to serve Jehovah loyally with his organization if we remember that *there is nowhere else to go for life eternal*.”¹⁵

Salvation is a “Reward” for your “Works” According to The Watchtower Organization

The **JW’s** give “lip service” to the idea of *salvation by grace through faith in Christ*. But in reality, they believe in a *works-oriented* salvation. Salvation for a **JW** is impossible apart from total obedience to the **WTS** and vigorous participation in its various programs. By such obedience, they are “working out” their salvation (*Phil 2:12*). The importance of doing “works” for salvation is evident throughout the Society’s literature:

To get one’s name written in that Book of Life will *depend upon one’s works*.¹⁶ It is for the *reward of eternal life* that every last person on earth should now be *working*.¹⁷ What things are involved in getting “saved”? (*Acts 16:30*) The prime requirement is: “Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved” (*Acts 16:31*). This involves taking in accurate knowledge of God’s purposes and his way of salvation. Then faith has to be exercised in Jesus Christ as the Chief Agent of salvation (*John 3:16; Titus 2:14*). This places the Christian in a saved condition, **BUT** he must now persevere in doing God’s will and *continue to adhere to all of God’s requirements for the rest of his life*. Only **THEN** will he be *saved to eternal life* (*Mat 24:13*).¹⁸

They admit that their “gospel” is not the same gospel that has historically been preached in Christian history down through the ages: “Compare...the gospel of the Kingdom done by the religious systems of Christendom during all the centuries with that done by Jehovah’s Witnesses... They are not one and the same kind.”¹⁹ The Society’s “gospel” is a gospel of *faith plus works*. They teach that there are *four* requirements for salvation: **(1)** “taking in knowledge...of God and of Jesus Christ.” **(2)** “obey God’s laws...conform one’s life to the moral requirements set out in the Bible.” **(3)** “be associated with God’s channel, his organization...we *must* identify that organization and serve God as part of it.” **(4)** and be “connected [to the organization] with loyalty.”²⁰

Salvation by Faith Alone in Christ Alone

The **WTS** directs its followers to “**Put faith in a victorious organization!**”²¹ But salvation is not in an organization, it’s in a **person—the Lord Jesus Christ!** “There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are **in Christ Jesus**” (*Rom 8:1*). “If any man be **in Christ**, he is a new creature” (*2 Cor 5:17*). And salvation is not a merited “**reward**” that we somehow deserve because of our “works”; it’s a priceless “**gift**” given freely to sinners by a gracious God! “The **gift** God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord...a **free gift...without money and without price**” (*Rom 3:24; 6:23; Isa 55:1 NW*). “For **by grace** are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the **gift of God: not of works**, lest any man should boast” (*Eph 2:8,9*).

What we have here is two entirely different messages, which lead souls to two entirely different destinations. One is a *false* gospel; one is the *true* gospel. Why is the **WT** “gospel” a *false* gospel? The Bible teaches **justification by faith alone**, and is thus a proclamation of “*salvation by faith*.” The **WTS** teaches **justification by faith plus obedience**, and is thus a proclamation of “*salvation by works*.” Now they will insist that this is not so—that their message is not “salvation by works”; but the Bible teaches that it certainly is.

Justification is *by faith alone*; it is specifically said to be *without works* (see *John 6:47; Acts 13:39; 16:31; Rom 3:21,22; 9:30-33; 10:1-13; Gal 2:16; 3:1-14; Phil 3:8,9; 1 Peter 2:6-8; 1 John 5:1, etc.*). In fact, faith must be alone, or it’s not “faith” in the biblical sense of the word. The very idea of *believing* in Christ means that we trust him as the One who finished the *work* of salvation, so there’s nothing left for us to do. David even spake of those “unto whom God imputeth righteousness *without works*” (*Rom 4:6*).

When the “Judaizers” at Galatia taught justification by “**faith plus obedience to the law of Moses**,” Paul condemned them as “false brethren,” teaching “another gospel,” that is, a false gospel, and uttered the strongest of curses upon them:

I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed (*Gal 1:6-8*).

Strong words indeed! A divine curse was pronounced upon these false teachers. Why such severity? because the issues at stake in the purity of the gospel have to do with the glory of God and the eternal destinies of men. If that gospel is in any way distorted or perverted, it results in souls being eternally damned and it robs God of his glory.

Who were these people that Paul denounced so strongly? And what was the essence of their “gospel” that made it a distortion of the true gospel? They taught that a person must believe in Jesus, but *in addition* they taught that he also had to be circumcised—“See! I, Paul, am telling you that if you become circumcised, **Christ will be of no benefit to you**” (*5:2 NW*). To *add* “works” to “faith” in any measure—regardless of what those “works” look like—according to the Bible, is

to believe in “salvation by works” and to place oneself under a curse. The “gospel” of these false teachers is essentially identical with the “gospel” of the **WTS**.

These Judaizers taught that you not only had to believe in Jesus for salvation, but that you had to be *faithful to all the requirements of the law of Moses* as well! The **WTS** teaches that you not only have to believe in Jesus for salvation, but that you have to be *faithful to all the requirements of the WTS* as well! You must *add* something that you *do* to what Christ has *done*. Paul denounces this in no uncertain terms because it’s adding human merit to the merit of Christ. It’s faith in Christ **plus** human works. Paul says this is perverting the gospel of the grace of God. Consequently a divine curse, an anathema, was called down upon these Judaizers and their “gospel.” By contrast, the true gospel is the gospel of the **grace of God**, whereby a man is justified before God and accepted by him solely on the merits of the life and death of Jesus Christ alone, apart from any human works of merit.

By adding works to faith, JW’s destroy the very essence of grace! “If by grace, then is it no more of works: otherwise grace is no more grace. But if it be of works, then is it no more grace: otherwise work is no more work” (*Rom 11:6*). These two principles are mutually exclusive! Works receive a merited reward, but grace is poured out upon those who are undeserving! The whole **WT** philosophy opposes the gospel of *God’s grace*. Listen again to the driving force behind all of their door-knocking activity—“**It is for the reward of eternal life that [we] should now be working**.”¹⁷ No one has ever been accepted by God in such a way! “Now to him that *worketh* is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of *debt*. But to him that *worketh not*, but *believeth* on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness” (*Rom 4:4,5*).

Paul sets forth the truth of the gospel in Galatians 2:11-16. What is this truth? It is the good news that sinners, guilty and under the judgment of God, may be pardoned and accepted by his grace alone, his free and unmerited favor, on the basis of the death of Christ, and not for any works or merits of their own. The Judaizers, however, were totally perverting this teaching of grace by adding something man could do.

They were teaching **Jesus plus obedience to Moses**, not Jesus alone. The **WTS** teaches **Jesus plus obedience to the organization**, not Jesus alone. The Judaizers could not accept the principle of “faith alone.” They insisted that we contribute something to our salvation!

THE GOSPEL OF THE JUDAISERS

Faith in Christ plus obedience to Moses = Salvation

THE GOSPEL OF THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

Faith in Christ plus obedience to the WTS = Salvation

Both of these are *false gospels* that are denounced by the Word of God! Both of them come from *false teachers* who present a totally different “gospel” than that which God has given—a

“gospel” that perverts the teaching of **grace** by adding something that we can do. And any person who believes either of these false gospels is believing a lie, brings down a curse upon himself, and will thus eternally perish. Paul stated clearly and directly—“If you become circumcised [the way they’re telling you to be circumcised], **Christ will be of no benefit to you!**” (*Gal 5:2 NW*). Why? because what these false teachers required them to do was **added** to faith in Christ for their acceptance with God! The **WTS** likewise adds its “requirements” to faith in Christ for the **JW’s** acceptance with God! And those who adhere to the **WT** “conditions” in order to be saved will most assuredly have these same words of condemnation thundered down upon them—“**Christ will be of no benefit to you!**”

Someone may object by saying, “Yes, but Paul was speaking here only of the works of the Mosaic law, not works of obedience to Jehovah. It’s true that we can’t be justified by faith plus keeping the law of Moses, but we can be justified by faith plus obedience to the commands of Jehovah.” Nothing could be further from the truth! When Paul contrasted “salvation by faith” with “salvation by works,” he was not for one moment limiting himself to the works of the law of Moses. He often singled out the law because it was the particular “religious hang-up” of the people of his day. But when Paul says that justification is by faith and that “works” can have no part in it, he is speaking of **all human activity or goodness whatsoever**.

Consider, for example, Romans 9:11, “For the children being not yet born, neither having **done any good or evil**, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, **not of works**, but of him that calleth.” What does Paul mean by the term “works”? doing “any good or evil.” Or again, God “hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, **not according to our works**, but according to his own purpose and grace” (*2 Tim 1:9*). Here “works” are contrasted with God’s own “purpose and grace.” What are “works” then? Not the deeds of the law of Moses only, but **anything whatsoever from the realm of human activity and initiative**. Even truly righteous deeds are ruled out. “**Not by works of righteousness** which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us” (*Titus 3:5*). It’s obvious that Paul intended his words to mean any and all religious duties or requirements that men might set forth alongside of faith as a “condition” of justification, not just the ones that happened to be a problem in his own day.

Someone else may say, “But James teaches that faith without works is dead” (*James 2:14-26*). Very true! But we need to understand that Paul is dealing with the **nature of justification** and James is dealing with the **nature of faith**. James is telling professing Christians, who show no evidence in their lives of a likeness to Christ, to show him their faith (*James 2:18*). But faith cannot be seen; thus the best way for us to prove our faith is to be “doers of the word, and not hearers only” (*James 1:22*). Those who do the word of God will live a righteous life in loving obedience to God (*Matt 7:21; 1 John 2:17*). In other words, their “faith will work by love” (*Gal 5:6*). That’s why James said: “I will shew thee my faith by my works” (*James 2:18*).

Faith alone justifies, but the faith that justifies **is never alone!** It’s always accompanied by good works and seen by a righteous life of godliness and holiness. James is concerned for professing believers who are not truly saved; they’re not justified. They have faith, but their faith is “dead.” It’s useless, idle and unfruitful (*James 2:17,20*). Only that faith that bears fruit is alive and genuine. Jesus taught that a tree is known by its fruit (*Matt 7:16-20*). Just as works do not produce justification, the fruit does not bring the tree into existence. The fruit only reveals what type of tree it is and whether it’s alive or dead.

When James says that Abraham was “justified by works when he offered up Isaac” (*2:21*), he doesn’t mean that Abraham’s sins were not forgiven until that time. Abraham was justified some 35 years before! (*see Rom 4:9-11*). James is simply saying that justifying faith always manifests itself through works. Our **persons** are justified before **God** by faith; our **faith** is justified before **men** by works. “He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him” (*1 John 2:4*). The true believer will desire to obey Christ’s commands; but good works are the **outcome** (*Eph 2:10*), not the **cause** (*Eph 2:8,9*), of salvation in Christ.

Paul and James are defending two different errors—**two deadly kinds of faith**. They are not antagonists facing each other with crossed swords; **they stand back to back, confronting different foes of the gospel**. James was warning of the wrong kind of faith—that is, **mere intellectual assent or belief in facts**. Even if these facts are true, this type of faith cannot save. Paul’s concern is over a different error—**faith with the wrong object**. Paul was addressing those who were trusting in their own works or obedience rather than trusting Christ alone for salvation. This kind of faith (faith in works) does produce a changed life. Like the Pharisees, people who believe that works are necessary for salvation are zealous to perform these works. But neither **faith in facts** nor **faith in works** saves. For both Paul and James, true salvation is found in believing, trusting, and having faith in the finished work of Christ alone for salvation. This type of faith, true faith, will result in two things: eternal life and a desire to do good works.

Someone may say again, “But even if you say that men are saved by ‘faith alone,’ still ‘believing’ itself is just another type of ‘work’—something men do in obedience to Christ which obtains the favor of God.” Absolutely not! When God pronounces sinners to be “just” in his sight, he’s looking to the blood and merits of Christ, not the faith of man! The gospel is not a “new law,” a series of steps “1, 2, 3, 4” that men confidently obey in order to “get saved.” On the contrary, the very idea of “believing in Christ” involves giving up entirely on all of our own “doing” and ability. Justifying faith, in its very essence, is reliance upon another. It’s the attitude of one who has given up all hope of anything virtuous he can ever do. The sinner who trusts in Christ is like the poor swimmer who finally realizes that left to his own efforts he’ll drown, ceases to struggle against the lifeguard, and completely relaxes in his care. Whoever claims that faith is just the beginning of salvation,

and that you must do this and that struggling to keep afloat the rest of your life, has not trusted in Christ.

Our Lord gives a fine illustration of this in John’s gospel when he explains saving faith in terms of the serpent in the wilderness (*Num 21:4-9*). Just as the serpent was lifted up by Moses that men might **look upon it** and be saved, so Jesus would be lifted up on the tree that whosoever **believes** (“looks”) upon him might have eternal life. How were men saved in relation to the serpent? by “looking plus works”? No! **by “looking” alone!** “When he looketh upon it, he shall live” (*Num 21:8*). And since saving faith is the gaze of the soul upon Christ, it’s impossible to exercise biblical faith and at the same time be looking to something else—our morality, our faithfulness, our best efforts, or loyalty to an organization! Those who put confidence in anything but Christ are still trusting in their own works and must surely perish.

When Moses lifted up the serpent of brass on the pole, those Israelites were to **cease completely** from doing anything; their eyes were to be totally directed **away** from themselves. The promise was, “Every one that is bitten, when he looketh upon it, shall live” (*Num 21:8*). That was their sole instruction: **just look!** Nothing else. There was nothing for them but just to believe God, and cease from all their doing, and all their efforts, and all their anxieties, and **look away!**

Our eyes are to be fastened upon Christ alone, lifted up as our Substitute at Calvary. “If a serpent had bitten any man, when he beheld...he lived” (*Num 21:9*). “And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life” (*John 3:14-15*). Salvation reaches us just where we are and just as we are—sinners, guilty, helpless and needy. □

*Not saved are we by trying, from self can come no aid;
Tis on the blood relying, once for our ransom paid.
Tis looking unto Jesus, the holy One and Just;
Tis his great work that saves us; it is not try, but trust.
No deeds of ours are needed, to make Christ’s merit more;
No flames of mind or feelings, can add to his great store;
Tis simply to receive him, the holy One and Just,
Tis only to believe him, it is not try, but trust.*

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The Watchtower Society as Lord & Savior

Christianity has been defined as a relationship with the person of Jesus Christ. We become Christians as we see ourselves “sinners” in God’s sight, and come to Christ in need of salvation. We come into a new relationship with Christ, receiving him as Lord and Savior. He becomes our Master, our Teacher, our Shepherd—the One we obey. For **Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW’s)**, however, the rightful position of Jesus Christ has been usurped by **The Watchtower Society (WTS)**. This organization is in effect the one they are taught to look to as lord and savior.

One can become a Christian by receiving Christ by faith before ever entering or joining an organized church. It’s a spiritual relationship, not dependent upon human relationships. Individuals have been known to become Christians after reading the Bible all alone. But becoming a **JW** is not that simple. One must first study Watchtower (**WT**) literature in order to “properly” understand the Bible. There must be a formal study program conducted by a **JW** in good standing with the organization. Then the newcomer must begin attending organizational meetings and participate in “field service”—knocking on doors with **WT** literature. Finally, after undergoing a doctrinal quiz,¹ he is acceptable for baptism and recognition as a **JW**.

Unlike Christian baptism, which is performed in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, **JW** candidates for baptism must answer “yes” to the following two questions: (1) “On the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, have you repented of your sins and dedicated yourself to Jehovah to do his will?” (2) “Do you understand that your dedication and baptism identify you as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in association with God’s spirit-directed organization?”² Somehow, the organization has inserted itself into the baptismal formula. And the organization continues to insert itself into the life of the **JW**, taking the place of Jesus Christ.

For example, people are invited to “**come to Jehovah’s organization for salvation.**”³ The organization is portrayed as their savior. Moreover, followers are told: “Jehovah is using only one organization today to accomplish his will. To receive life in the earthly Paradise we must identify that organization