

# Why the Jehovah's Witnesses are wrong teaching that only 144,000 go to heaven, and much more.

## Outline

**Introduction:** Prying open the trap door; is disseminating some of the Society's literature an unforgivable sin?; critical flaws in the Jehovah's Witnesses' methods of analysis; and, who really authors the Society's literature?

**I. Summary of the Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings as they relate to the contents of this paper.**

- A) The revolving door of ever-changing doctrine
- B) The New Testament was written primarily for the 144,000 who alone go to heaven to ultimately rule over all remaining Jehovah's Witnesses and the resurrected on earth
- C) The Great Crowd on earth will engage in perfecting resurrected flesh-and-blood humans to a sinless condition
- D) The Great Crowd must pass a final test to gain eternal life
- E) The New Covenant applies only to God, Christ and the 144,000; it shall expire shortly. Only the 144,000 have their sins forgiven from Calvary to the 1,000-year reign
- F) Pre-incarnate Christ was just a created angel, not eternal, and while on earth nothing more than a man, a human. Jesus returned to earth in 1914 (the *parousia*)
- G) The Jehovah's Witnesses were taught they're separating the sheep from the goats in their door-to-door ministry
- H) Only the Great Crowd survives Armageddon. The Great Crowd will restore the earth to a paradise and educate resurrected sinners to a state of perfection subject to even more laws and regulations; those to be re-educated include the patriarchs, Moses, etc.
- I) The Great Crowd and resurrected humans are not judged for any sins committed in this life, but only for sins committed during the 1,000-year reign, and after

J) Salvation can be gained only by passing a final test

**II. Assuming that the 144,000 are in heaven, the number 144,000 representing the sealed servants of God mentioned in chapters 7 and 14 in the book of Revelation cannot be taken literally. Like many other signs in Revelation it is merely symbolic.**

A) Because the earth shall be destroyed, the resurrected, and the Great Crowd, cannot be ruled over by the 144,000 from heaven

**III. The Great Crowd of Revelation 7:9 standing before God's throne in heaven and before the Lamb is not standing on earth in an 'approved condition,' but in heaven.**

**IV. The return of Jesus Christ to earth, his Second Coming, did not occur in 1914, nor did Jesus begin to rule God's kingdom in 1914; he began his rule in the first century A.D. and received more than a subsidiary share of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the first judgment day did not begin in 1914 and the Jehovah's Witnesses have never separated the sheep (the Great Crowd) from the goats on behalf of God Almighty.**

A) The Jehovah's Witnesses limit the "eternal New Covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31-34 to Christ and the 144,000; this New Covenant kingdom lasts approximately 2,000 years. This is not a Bible teaching.

B) The Jehovah's Witnesses teach, incorrectly, that the real kingdom of God, the 1914 kingdom, began in 1914, but Jesus received only a "subsidiary share" of this kingdom. However, these two kingdoms are not separate kingdoms, and such distinctions are mere fabrications

1) The 1914 kingdom is premised on a faulty date because Jerusalem was not destroyed in 607 B.C.

2) The Jehovah's Witnesses' 1914 date is biblically unsupportable

3) The Second Coming of Christ is a future event

4) Christ had all authority when he ascended; he did not receive a subsidiary share 1,900 years later

5) Christ began to rule God's kingdom in the first century, not 1914

6) The book of Revelation does not only "deal with events then future" which is a mere ploy to shift the Lord's Day to 1914

7) Christ's *parousia*, or Second Coming, occurs after the Great Tribulation has begun, not before, not in 1914. Neither was

the New Covenant priesthood established in 1918, but during the first century

**A) The Covenants:** The Jehovah's Witnesses' other Achilles' Heel and the key to bringing God's alleged 1914 kingdom, and the 20th century New Covenant arrangement back to the first century where they belong.

**B) The Davidic Covenant**

a) The invention of new covenants and abrogation of existing covenants: In order to place the inception of God's kingdom in 1914, the Jehovah's Witnesses have wrongfully stripped the Davidic covenant of a priesthood, severed the Davidic covenant from the New Covenant, and limit the New Covenant to a temporary 2,000-year period

i) A first century priesthood undermines the JW's "1914 kingdom" theory and the "first resurrection of the 144,000" theory

ii) An everlasting New Covenant would destroy the Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation plan during the millennial reign.

iii) An everlasting New Covenant would prevent the JW's from education man to a state of perfection and repeatedly judging him

iv) The Jehovah's Witnesses are unable to eliminate Jesus after the 1,000-year reign if the New Covenant, for which he is the mediator forever, is everlasting

b) The Jehovah's Witnesses' approach deprives the high priest Jesus of his priesthood, a problem they attempt to solve by inventing a separate "Melchizedek covenant." However, the so-called Melchizedek covenant is the New Covenant and therefore must last forever and include a priesthood of all Christian believers

c) All of the Jehovah's Witnesses' benefits under their temporary new covenant terminate when their new Covenant expires, shortly

d) The Jehovah's Witnesses' "covenant with Christ's followers" is a fabrication; it is not a valid separate covenant for yet another kingdom, but an administrative appointment with respect to the kingdom

**C) Summary of Covenants**

**V. It is impossible for the Great Crowd and resurrected humans on earth to be “perfected” or justified by an educational program, strict adherence to external laws or decrees, and the passing of tests. Such works-based salvation can never reconcile man to God and renders the blood sacrifice of Jesus worthless. All saved people must be parties to the New Covenant. Without Christ’s blood sacrifice under the New Covenant there can be no redemption and forgiveness of sin, or benefit of the gift of life everlasting by grace for anyone in the Christian era.**

- A) The Jehovah's Witnesses' education-based salvation plan recapped
- B) No man can be justified or perfected by an educational program
- C) Only the sins of the 144,000 are forgiven under the The Jehovah's Witnesses' New Covenant, which is clearly not a Bible teaching
- D) Only true believers who are parties to the New Covenant can receive forgiveness of sins and other attendant benefits
- E) The Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching that resurrected man, including billions of non-believers, will not be judged for sins committed in this life is not biblical
- F) All men are judged for their conduct in this life; true believers are passed over in the condemnation
- G) The Jehovah's Witnesses' millennial scrolls are actually recordings of man's deeds in this life, not additional rules and regulations

**VI. The first resurrection did not begin in 1918 with the commencement of the resurrection of the 144,000 to heaven.**

**VII. The patriarchs and prophets of old and the Great Crowd go to heaven because a) their names are written in the Lamb’s scroll, b) resurrected flesh-and-blood humans cannot be immortal, and because death will be vanquished forever they must experience immortality in heaven as spirit humans with their glorified flesh-and-blood bodies transformed, not as earthly flesh, and c) physiologically and morally corrupt mortals who enter into the kingdom are not raised corrupt, but rather incorrupt, incorruptible and immortal, the only condition which allows them to inherit the kingdom of heaven, which is in heaven.**

**VIII. Jesus Christ, as helper with respect to propitiation and as legal intermediary, is not discarded at the end of the thousand year reign; as the propitiation, the sacrificed Lamb and mediator of the New Covenant he is present forever, to intercede on man’s behalf, without which man cannot have access to God, be reconciled to the Almighty or have his name written permanently in the Book of Life.**

**IX. Conclusion: All Christian believers must be parties to the New Covenant which is everlasting, not temporary; otherwise, there is no hope for salvation.**

---

## Introduction

This lengthy paper is written primarily for the benefit of those Jehovah's Witnesses who feel trapped by the Society's legalistic arguments and want out. Many are fearful of even glancing at these pages believing that something bad will happen to them, but what they really should be afraid of is not paying heed and the risk of committing an unforgivable sin. When the Pharisees attributed the source of Jesus' power to heal and drive out demons to Satan rather than the Holy Spirit they blasphemed the Holy Spirit and committed what some argue is the only unforgivable sin (Matt. 12:22-32).

It is no great secret that the Jehovah's Witnesses attribute the Catholic and Protestant churches' authority to heal, exorcize and minister to the power of Satan. But if the Jehovah's Witnesses are wrong, which they are, they are blaspheming the Holy Spirit; this includes all Jehovah's Witnesses who advocate these beliefs through the dissemination of Watchtower Bible and Tract Society literature related to these issues. Rather than dissuading continuous inquiry into the nature and scope of truth, the Bible encourages it for as the apostle Paul cautioned, "be sure of all things," (1 Thessalonians 5:21; "Test everything ... NAB).

The Jehovah's Witnesses are hindered in their ability to see their way through the morass of Society literature by four things related to the method employed in analyzing Scripture. First, rather than weighing all of the evidence there is a strong tendency to be satisfied with any answer, argument or supporting fact no matter how weak. But anyone can come up with an answer or opposing argument; lawyers do it all the time. What really matters is whether it is the correct answer, the most valid argument. One must weigh all the evidence, not just some of it.

Secondly, the Society's theories are laced with hair-splitting and often inconsequential distinctions. Just because the walls in the bedroom are painted green, it doesn't automatically follow that the thief buried the treasure in the backyard. Related to this is a third tool used to shore up their doctrine, namely, they too often read things too narrowly which makes it easier for them to deflect criticism. And lastly, one is left with the unmistakable impression that they don't want their own people to really know what the Society is teaching because core doctrine is constantly changing and is scattered all over the place resulting in a literary shell game. Great lengths have been taken to muddy the intellectual waters. This creates confusion and contradictions which compels the reader to rely on the Society's "understanding." Consequently, what might appear to be the work of some lofty, divine will is in all probability the work of some very crafty lawyers, among others.

### **I. Summary of the Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings as they relate to the contents of this paper.**

#### **A) The revolving door of ever-changing doctrine**

Every now and then the Jehovah's Witnesses make significant changes to their doctrine that reach to the very core of their belief system. As such, it can be a real challenge to pinpoint exactly what they believe from one year to the next. The changes they make are to be expected given the weaknesses in

their dogma and the need to accommodate mountains of theological criticism. Invariably these changes bump up against other tenets of Society doctrine resulting in an ever-growing tangled mass of contradictions. Due to the nature of these shifting sands one should take their asserted beliefs with a grain of salt.

**B) The New Testament was written primarily for the 144,000 who alone go to heaven to ultimately rule over all remaining Jehovah's Witnesses and the resurrected on earth**

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that only 144,000 people go to heaven (*Reasoning from the Scriptures (Reasoning)* [New York, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1985], 166). These are the bride of Christ, God's children, the elect, and often referred to as the "anointed" of Christ (*Insight on the Scriptures (Insight)*, 2 vols. [New York, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1988], 786). The New Testament Greek Scriptures (New Testament) were written primarily for these brothers of Christ. They are specially chosen because they live especially good lives while on earth (*Insight*, 786-788). Once resurrected to heaven, a process which began in 1918 and will soon be concluded (the first resurrection) (*Revelation - Its Grand Climax at Hand (Revelation Climax)*, [New York, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 19\_\_] 103, 277) they will become a kingdom of priests and kings who will rule with Christ for one thousand years over humans on earth (*Insight*, 170, 524, 525).

**C) The Great Crowd on earth will engage in perfecting resurrected flesh-and-blood humans to a sinless condition**

This reign will involve their judging resurrected humans during the thousand year reign, and after the thousand year reign when resurrected mankind will undergo a final decisive test before being destroyed forever, or having their names written permanently in God's book, or scroll, of life (*Insight*, 251, 788). Whereas the 144,000 are resurrected to heaven as spirit creatures, all other billions of humans worthy of the resurrection during the thousand year reign will be resurrected as corrupt flesh and blood humans with the possibility of immortality on earth (*Reasoning*, 333-336; *Insight*, 251). During the thousand year reign the Great Crowd will engage in "perfecting" resurrected humans to a sinless condition enjoyed by Adam and Eve before the fall (*Reasoning*, 337, 338).

**D) The Great Crowd must pass a final test to gain eternal life**

The Great Crowd (or large multitude) is a term found at Revelation 7:9. The Great Crowd are those Jehovah's Witnesses who survive the Great Tribulation. They do not die, do not need to be resurrected and are declared righteous through faith (*Insight*, 788) although it appears as though they also must pass a final, decisive test to gain eternal life (*Insight.*, 251). Most Jehovah's Witnesses today consider themselves to be members of the Great Crowd and according to their interpretation of Revelation 7:9-17 they will always be earthly, not heavenly, subjects of the kingdom of heaven (or kingdom of God). As to those Jehovah's Witnesses who are not of the 144,000 and do not survive the Great Tribulation, it is believed they will be resurrected in God's due time (*Insight*, 788).

**E) The New Covenant applies only to God, Christ and the 144,000; it shall expire shortly. Only the 144,000 have their sins forgiven from Calvary to the 1,000-year reign**

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that when Jesus Christ died and rose to heaven to sit on God's throne he began to reign only as king over his congregation of 144,000 followers who at the time were still earthly subjects of this spiritual kingdom (*Insight*, 524). This rule began with Christ's blood sacrifice

which was initiated pursuant to the much-anticipated New Covenant which replaced the old Mosaic Law covenant (Law covenant). This New Covenant, to which only God, Christ and the 144,000 are parties, will expire shortly after the last of the 144,000 are resurrected to heaven (*Insight*, 524). The only people who have their sins forgiven through Christ's blood sacrifice from the time of Adam until the beginning of the thousand year reign are the 144,000 (*Insight*, 736).

**F) Pre-incarnate Christ was just a created angel, not eternal, and while on earth nothing more than a man, a human. Jesus returned to earth in 1914 (the *parousia*)**

The real kingdom of God, a much larger, expansive and lengthier kingdom, began in 1914 (the 1914 kingdom) when Christ supposedly sat on the throne to begin his rule over mankind (*Insight*, 169). Jesus, being a mere angel (*Reasoning*, 218) created hundreds of millions of years ago, only receives a subsidiary share of this kingdom of God (*Insight*, 169). 1914 A.D. is arguably the most important date in the Jehovah's Witnesses' belief system because it is the year that Jesus returned, or arrived (*Great Man*, ch. 133, 2; *Reasoning*, 344), to earth. This was the invisible Second Coming of Christ, or "*parousia*." It also heralded the beginning of the first of three judgment days.

**G) The Jehovah's Witnesses were taught they're separating the sheep from the goats in their door-to-door ministry**

We are currently in the first judgment day period. Under the guidance of the remaining earthly anointed 144,000, the Great Crowd of Jehovah's Witnesses were taught that they were separating the earth's sheep and goats through their door-to-door ministry (*The Greatest Man Who Ever Lived*) (*Great Man*) [New York, Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1991] chapter 111, 12-15). This fundamental doctrine, however, changed in 1995. The separation of sheep and goats has been postponed, for now, until a time after the Great Tribulation begins (*The Watchtower*, Oct. 15, 1995, pg. 23). The sheep join God's one and only earthly organization, thus becoming members of the Great Crowd (if they survive the Great Tribulation) and earn the opportunity to live life everlasting; all the goats, those who do not heed their invitation, will be destroyed forever during the Great Tribulation and Armageddon with no prospect of resurrection (*Ibid.*).

**H. Only the Great Crowd survives Armageddon. The Great Crowd will restore the earth to a paradise and educate resurrected sinners to a state of perfection subject to even more laws and regulations; those to be re-educated include the patriarchs, Moses, etc.**

The only humans who survive the Great Tribulation and Armageddon, where all the enemies of God are destroyed, are members of the Great Crowd of Jehovah's Witnesses (*Ibid.*); no one else. Then begins the thousand year reign of Christ and the 144,000 over the earth's Great Crowd and the righteous and unrighteous - at least those who merit the resurrection during the thousand years (*Reasoning*, 339-340). This general resurrection during the millennium is the second resurrection according to the Jehovah's Witnesses. One of the tasks of the Great Crowd during this peaceful thousand year reign is to restore post-apocalyptic earth to a paradise-like condition. The Great Crowd also assists in educating the 20 billion resurrected dead to the will of God, to get to know Jesus, and to live in accordance with new laws and regulations revealed through the Law Scrolls of God opened at Revelation 20:12 (*Insight*, 788). The purpose of educating the resurrected is to lift them to a state of perfection on par with Adam and Eve's sinless state of perfection they enjoyed before rebelling against Jehovah God (*Ibid.*).

**I) The Great Crowd and resurrected humans are not judged for any sins committed in this life,**

**but only for sins committed during the 1,000-year reign, and after**

The second judgment day period occurs during the thousand year reign. “Perfected” humans, now only corruptible rather than corrupt when resurrected, are tested and judged based not on their deeds and works in their previous lives (the one we experience today) but on their deeds during the thousand year reign (Ibid.). They believe this because all men are allegedly acquitted of sin in this life and pay for their sins with the wages of death (*Insight*, 788; *Reasoning*, 338). Therefore, the only deeds or sins for which they can be put on judgment for are those committed during the thousand year reign, and their conduct during the final test after the thousand years.

**J. Salvation can be gained only by passing a final test**

The final test of their fidelity begins after the thousand year reign, the third judgment day, when those remaining perfected humans are confronted with the unleashing of Satan from the abyss and all which that entails. If they pass the test successfully they will have their names permanently written in the scroll, or book, of life. If they fail they are cast into the Lake of Fire, which is the Second Death, that is, eternal destruction (*Insight*, 251).

Thereafter, the services of Christ, the angel, are no longer required. He is no longer needed as a helper in terms of a propitiatory sacrifice, nor as a legal intermediary between God and man. Accordingly, he is dispensed with in this regard (*Insight*, 170).

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe with all sincerity that they "have the truth" and "are in the truth." However given the very significant repudiation of past doctrines that have formed the essential core of their beliefs for over one hundred years it is doubtful they can make that claim. If their "truth" is not the "truth" by their own admission, then their theories were false.

**II. Assuming that the 144,000 are in heaven, the number 144,000 representing the sealed servants of God mentioned in chapters 7 and 14 in the book of Revelation cannot be taken literally. Like many other signs in Revelation it is merely symbolic.**

That the messages in the book of Revelation were conveyed primarily in signs or symbols and not meant to be interpreted literally is evident in the opening chapter: “A revelation by Jesus Christ, which God gave him, to show his slaves the things that must shortly take place. And he sent forth his angel and presented [it] in signs through him to his slave John .... (Rev. 1:1,2 [New World Translation (NWT)]. As any Bible reader can attest, Revelation is filled with symbolic imagery, such as a “red dragon with seven heads and ten horns,” (Rev. 12:3), and numeric symbolism: “the number of the beast ... is six-hundred and sixty-six” (Rev. 13:18).

Given the prevalence of this symbolism one must be careful interpreting numbers or images literally, such as the 144,000 sealed servants of God in chapters 7 and 14. Though the Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that only 144,000 go to heaven, a deeper analysis of Scripture shows that this number cannot be a literal representation and that the book’s author purposed a symbolic or figurative meaning.

Much criticism has been leveled against the Jehovah’s Witnesses in this regard because the underlying components of the 144,000, that is, the nature and identity of the individuals who make up the 144,000



are clearly symbolic. It makes little sense to premise a literal number on symbolic numbers and individuals. If you build a house made of wood one would expect that you end up with a wooden house, not a plastic one. In chapter 7 John writes of hearing the number of the sealed 144,000 and then seeing the Great Crowd.

1 After this I saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding tight the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow upon the earth or upon the sea or upon any tree. 2 And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrising, having a seal of [the] living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying: “Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.”

4 And I **heard** the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty- four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel:

5 Out of the tribe of Judah twelve thousand sealed;  
out of the tribe of Reu´ben twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Gad twelve thousand;

6 out of the tribe of Ash´er twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Naph´ta-li twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Ma·nas´seh twelve thousand;

7 out of the tribe of Sim´e-on twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Le´vi twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Is´sa-char twelve thousand;

8 out of the tribe of Zeb´u-lun twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Joseph twelve thousand;  
out of the tribe of Benjamin twelve thousand sealed.

9 After these things **I saw**, and, look! a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, dressed in white robes; and there were palm branches in their hands. 10 And they keep on crying with a loud voice, saying: “Salvation [we owe] to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb.”

11 And all the angels were standing around the throne and the elders and the four living creatures, and they fell upon their faces before the throne and worshiped God, 12 saying: “Amen! The blessing and the glory and the wisdom and the thanksgiving and the honor and the power and the strength [be] to our God forever and ever. Amen.”

13 And in response one of the elders said to me: “These who are dressed in the white robes, who are they and where did they come from?” 14 So right away I said to him: “My lord, you are the one that knows.” And he said to me: “These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. 15 That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. 16 They will hunger no more nor thirst anymore, neither will the sun beat down upon them nor any scorching heat, 17 because the Lamb, who is in the midst of the throne, will shepherd them, and will guide them to fountains of waters of life. And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes.” (Revelation 7:1-17 NWT)

In Revelation 14:1-5 the 144,000 are seen on Mount Zion, but the Great Crowd is not in sight.

1 And I saw, and, look! the Lamb standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his Father written on their foreheads. 2 And I heard a sound out of heaven as the sound of many waters and as the sound of loud thunder; and the sound that I heard was as of singers who accompany themselves on the harp playing on their harps. 3 And they are singing as if a new song before the throne and before the four living creatures and the elders; and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. 4 These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women; in fact, they are virgins. These are the ones that keep following the Lamb no matter where he goes. These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb, 5 and no falsehood was found in their mouths; they are without blemish.

The underlying symbolic components are numerous. First, Rev. 7:4-8 states that the 144,000 came from every tribe of the Israelites and then lists the names of what appear to be the original twelve tribes, but are not. As the Jehovah’s Witnesses point out, “there never was a tribe of Joseph, the tribes of Ephraim and Dan are not included in the list here, and the Levites were set aside for service in connection with the temple but were not reckoned as one of the twelve tribes. See Numbers 1:4-16” (*Reasoning* 166, 167). As such, the Jehovah’s Witnesses view the twelve tribes of the 144,000 symbolically.

Secondly, the sealed 144,000 listed are Jews, yet the Jehovah’s Witnesses regard this as symbolic as well for they believe they are comprised of both Jews and gentiles (*Reasoning*, 166, 167).

Third, whereas the listed 144,000 are made up of twelve distinct groups of twelve thousand members each, the Jehovah’s Witnesses also regard these numbers as symbolic. They have never classified or categorized those who go to heaven in twelve groups of 12,000 yet are quick to calculate them literally

to arrive at 144,000 (12 x 12,000 = 144,000).

Fourth, the “seal on the foreheads of the servants” (Rev. 7:3), and the Lamb and His Father’s names which are written on the foreheads of the 144,000 (Rev. 14:1) represent figuratively, for the Jehovah’s Witnesses, God’s final approval. In their words, “God’s holy spirit serves as a seal that gives those sealed a token in advance of their inheritance, a heavenly one” (*Insight*, 253, 254). It is symbolic.

Fifth, Revelation 7:4 literally states that the 144,000 elect are virgin men: “These are the ones that did not defile themselves with women; in fact they are virgins.” But as anyone familiar with the Jehovah’s Witnesses knows, the 144,000 are comprised of men and women, married and single; they regard these provisions symbolically as well.

Sixth, additional evidence that the 144,000 number is not to be taken literally is found at Galatians 3:26-29 and Romans 9:6-8 where the apostle Paul makes clear that those who are rewarded with heaven due so in part as a consequence of God’s promise to the patriarch Abraham, and that the 144,000 heirs to the heavenly promise by virtue of faith are countless, without number, as numerous as the stars in the sky.

26 YOU are all, in fact, sons of God through YOUR faith in Christ Jesus. 27 For all of YOU who were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor freeman, there is neither male nor female; for YOU are all one [person] in union with Christ Jesus. 29 Moreover, if YOU belong to Christ, YOU are really Abraham’s seed, heirs with reference to a promise. (Galatians 3:26-29 NWT).

Abraham’s seed - descendant heirs according to the promise - are also identified at Romans 9:6-8 where Paul makes clear that the heirs to the heavenly promise are not limited to fleshly Israel.

6 However, it is not as though the word of God had failed. For not all who [spring] from Israel are really “Israel.” 7 Neither because they are Abraham’s seed are they all children, but: “What will be called ‘your seed’ will be through Isaac.” 8 That is, the children in the flesh are not really the children of God, but the children by the promise are counted as the seed. (Rom. 9:6-8 NWT).

Paul is referring to Genesis 15:5 where God promised Abraham that he would make his descendants like the stars of the sky, a promise that would eventually extend beyond fleshly Israel and encompass Christians.

5 He now brought him outside and said: “Look up, please, to the heavens and count the stars, if you are possibly able to count them.” And he went on to say to him: “So your seed will become.” (Gen. 15:5 NWT).

This Abrahamic promise was reaffirmed and recounted by Abraham’s grandson Jacob while praying to God for deliverance from his brother Esau.

“Unquestionably I shall deal well with you and will constitute your seed like the grains of sand of the sea which cannot be numbered for multitude.” (Gen. 32:12 NWT).

Given these verses it is difficult to imagine how the heirs to the heavenly promise number a mere 144,000. They do not. They will be countless, vast; large in actual numbers yet small in proportion to the billions who have ever inhabited earth. Never-the-less, the Jehovah's Witnesses counter that those countless heaven-bound individuals are countless because they could not be counted at that time.

“God revealed the purpose and accomplishments of the Abrahamic covenant, saying that through Abraham the seed of promise would come; this seed would possess the gate of his enemies; Abraham's seed through Isaac would number many, uncountable to man at that time.” (*Insight*, 522).

Well, I suppose they are correct in the sense that the heirs to the promise could not be counted so many thousands of years ago because they had not yet been born, and therefore there was nobody to count, but that's not what the Almighty meant. Regardless of the ultimate count it seems evident that the heirs to the promise will eventually dwarf a mere 144,000. Even the Israelites who numbered in the millions were referred to as being as numerous as the stars (Deut. 1:10).

Seventh, that the 144,000 is not an exact number is made manifest by Jesus' statement that the patriarchs Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will also be in heaven:

11 But I tell YOU that many from eastern parts and western parts will come and recline at the table with Abraham and Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of the heavens; ... (Matt. 8:11 NWT).

Central to the Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs is the doctrine that the “Kingdom is in heaven, not earth” (NWT at 1653) and that neither the patriarchs, ancient prophets or anyone before the time of Christ goes to heaven. Yet somehow, in an effort to dislodge the patriarchs from heaven and disavow the words of Christ they theorize that this banquet in the kingdom of heaven is actually on earth.

The inspired writer of Hebrews also stated that the patriarchs and other men of old sought a heavenly reward, not earthly, and that this heavenly destination was achieved on the basis of their faith.

In faith died all these, not having received the promises, but from afar having seen them, and having been persuaded, and having saluted [them], and having confessed that strangers and sojourners they are upon the earth, 14 for those saying such things make manifest that they seek a country; 15 and if, indeed, they had been mindful of that from which they came forth, they might have had an opportunity to return, 16 **but now they long for a better, that is, an heavenly, wherefore God is not ashamed of them, to be called their God, for He did prepare for them a city ...** [Heb. 11:13-16 Young's Literal Translation; also NIV (a better country—a heavenly one), NAS (a better country, that is, a heavenly one), NLT (heavenly homeland), KJV (a better country, that is, an heavenly), ESV (a better country, that is, a heavenly one), ASV (a better country, that is, a heavenly)].

None-the-less, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach, incorrectly, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will not go, and never wanted to go, to heaven. This is understandable because to concede otherwise would

completely erode their 144,000 theory.

Who are the “righteous” that are to be resurrected? These will include faithful servants of God who lived before Jesus Christ came to earth. Many of these persons are mentioned by name in Hebrews chapter 11. They did not hope to go to heaven, but hoped to live again on earth (Live Forever, 1989, Resurrection - for Whom? And Where? 172, 20).

If they had kept remembering and longing for the place they had left, they would have had an opportunity to return. But they were reaching out for a better place - ultimately life on paradise earth under God’s heavenly kingdom. - Hebrews 11:15,16. (W94 5/15 30, Coping With Homesickness in God’s Service).

And there is no question about the spiritual strength of those men and women of faith listed in Hebrews chapter 11. None of those were “born again.” All of them looked forward to “a better resurrection [to life under God’s kingdom] right here on this earth. - Hebrews 11:35. (W82 2/1c 29 “Born Again” - Man’s Part and God’s Part).

It is difficult to believe that millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses, perhaps unwittingly, believe this without blinking an eye and completely ignore the clear words of Scripture; but they do. Never-the-less, because at a minimum Abraham, Isaac and Jacob will go to heaven, the 144,000 is symbolic and numbers at least 144,003. The final number cannot be ascertained, but is countless in the sense that it will be in the millions.

Eighth, the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ congregation of 144,000 who were and are on earth included Jesus as one of their spiritual brothers. He is the high priest and like any high priest or pastor, deacon or bishop, is a fellow member of that community. The Jehovah’s Witnesses recognize as much:

The inspired application of David’s words recorded at Psalm 22:22 to Jesus Christ at Hebrews 2:12 shows that the term “congregation” can be applied to include the head thereof, Jesus Christ. Partly quoting David, the writer to the Hebrews stated: “For both he who is sanctifying and those who are being sanctified all stem from one, and for this cause he [Jesus Christ] is not ashamed to call them ‘brothers,’ as he says: I will declare your name to my brothers; in the middle of the congregation I will praise you with song” (Heb. 2:11, 12). (*Insight*, 498).

But if only 144,000 go to heaven, then the spiritually anointed while on earth would number only 143,999, and in heaven they would number 144,001 due to the inclusion and then exclusion of Christ in that congregation, who as the Lamb in heaven at Revelation 14:1 is seen as standing apart from his brothers. The 144,000 cannot be taken literally. Their congregation cannot be one body on earth and another in heaven.

Christians have recognized the symbolic nature of the 144,000 for decades. It is “... the square of

twelve a thousand fold, a symbol of the completeness of God's People" (N. Turner, *Peake's Commentary on the Bible* [London: Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1964], 1050) (*Peake's Commentary*).

Ninth, the Jehovah's Witnesses make essentially five arguments in support of distinguishing the 144,000 from the Great Crowd, an issue which goes beyond the scope of this paper because we are concerned here not so much with whether the 144,000 and the Great Crowd are the same or not, but whether the Great Crowd is standing on earth pursuant to an earthly salvation plan, or in heaven before God's throne. The Jehovah's Witnesses' argument that the 144,000 and Great Crowd are not the same can be found at pp. 996-997 of their *Insight into the Holy Scriptures* for those interested. They go to great length to keep these two groups separate and go so far as to greatly mischaracterize Scripture in this regard.

Rev. 7:9, 10: "After these things [after the apostle John saw the full number of "sealed" ones who had been "bought from the earth" to be with Christ on heavenly Mount Zion; see Revelation 7:3, 4; 14:1-3] I saw, and, look! A great crowd, ..." (*Reasoning*, 166).

This is false because at no time does John ever see the 144,000 and Great Crowd together at the same time or on the same page. In Revelation chapter 7 he only hears the number of the sealed 144,000 in an earthly vision as four angels stand at the four corners of the earth, and then sees the Great Crowd. In chapter 14 where John sees the 144,000 on Mount Zion he does not see the Great Crowd. These two sightings are separated by six chapters and numerous apocalyptic events, and for many other reasons, a strong argument can be made that the 144,000 and the Great Crowd are the same.

But the main issue here is not whether the 144,000 and Great Crowd in heaven are distinct groups or the same entity, but whether the Great Crowd which "stood before the throne in heaven" is actually standing on earth in an "approved condition." As will be expanded upon below, the Great Crowd standing on earth rather than in heaven is core to the Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation doctrine; without it they have no claim to legitimacy, no religion. For 99.99999% of the world's population - as a member of the surviving Great Crowd or the 20 billion resurrected - salvation is an earthly, fleshly aspiration, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses.

Tenth, in admonishing the scribes and Pharisees, Jesus said:

...you hypocrites. You lock the kingdom of heaven before human beings. You do not enter yourselves, nor do you allow entrance to those trying to enter. (Matthew 23:13 NAB)

### **A) Because the earth shall be destroyed, the resurrected, and the Great Crowd, cannot be ruled over by the 144,000 from heaven**

Eleventh, the Greek word *basileuo* "to reign," does not only mean to "rule over a people." It is often used as metaphor, such as to "reign in life" (Rom. 5:17) where 'shall reign in life' indicates the activity of life in fellowship with Christ in His sovereign power, reaching its fullness hereafter; 1 Cor. 4:8..." (Vine's, 52). One can also reign over sin (Rom. 6:12). Grace can also reign (Rom. 5:21). With this in mind it does not automatically or logically follow that there must be someone over whom the 144,000 reign on earth in the same way that contemporary governments rule over a people in today's world.

As a matter of fact, even though the Jehovah's Witnesses claim that the Bible does not tell us what the

144,000 will do after the thousand year reign is over, Revelation 22:3,4 informs us that God's servants will worship him and "shall reign forever and ever." But reign over who? They claim that at that time no one will stand between God and man, most certainly not Jesus (*Insight*, 170); the kingdom will have been handed over, death will be no more and man will be forever perfect.

But if that is true the word "reign" cannot mean to rule over humans on earth, especially on an earth destined for fire and complete destruction which is made clear by 2 Peter 3:10,11: "But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a mighty roar and the elements will be dissolved by fire and the earth and everything in it will be found out. ... everything is to be dissolved this way," (NAB; "Total destruction is assumed (11)," notes 3,10). "...the heavens will be destroyed by burning, and the elements will melt with intense heat" (2 Peter 3:12). "But by His word the present heavens and earth are being reserved for fire, kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men" (2 Peter 3:7). Peter's warning reemphasized Zephaniah's warning, where the ancient prophet transmitted the Almighty's words, "I will utterly consume all things from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah. I will consume man and beast; I will consume the birds of the heavens, and the fishes of the sea, and the stumbling blocks with the wicked; and I will cut off man from off the face of the ground, saith Jehovah" (Zephaniah 1:2,3)

Complete destruction of man on earth is intended. " Their blood will be poured out like dust and their entrails like dung. 18 Neither their silver nor their gold will be able to save them on the day of the LORD's wrath." In the fire of his jealousy the whole earth will be consumed, for he will make a sudden end of all who live on the earth (Zephaniah 1:17, 18). The Jehovah's Witnesses theory that they alone, their great crowd, will survive Armageddon and be ruled from heaven by the 144,000 is simply not in accord with Scripture.

Granted, the Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe the earth will be destroyed and base this teaching in large part on Psalm 37:29 where the psalmist wrote, "The just will possess the land (earth) and live in it forever." However, the earth "wears out like a garment (Isa. 51:6), so the word "forever" is hyperbole, and nothing here indicates that there won't be a hiatus, or break, in the earth's habitation. Psalm 37:29 does not say man will inherit the earth continuously without interruption, and Revelation 21:10,27 suggests that reconstituted, glorified man, without the warts, will come back down out of heaven sometime in the future: "He took me in spirit to a great high mountain and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God." "Only those will enter whose names are written in the Lamb's book of life."

Actually, the earth has experienced significant disruptions evidenced by the annihilation of the dinosaurs and great flood of Noah's day. Remember, we are dealing with geologic time, and cycling through another ice age that would wipe off the post-apocalyptic mess left in the wake of Armageddon is entirely within reason; it is more reasonable than handing the Great Crowd brooms and haz-mat suits and ordering them to restore the earth into a paradise.

More to the point is Peter's comparison of the earth's pending fiery destruction to the great flood which is a real, not metaphorical, example of earth's fate as detailed at 2 Peter 3:5-13: "They deliberately ignore the fact that the heavens existed of old and earth was formed out of water and through water by the word of God; through these the world that then existed was destroyed, deluged with water. The present heavens and earth have been reserved by the same word of fire kept for the day of judgment and of destruction of the godless." Jesus likewise made it known that ultimate destruction will be

modeled after the destruction of Sodom and Gomorrah, where Luke 17:29 makes it abundantly clear God destroyed them all. That man's governments are changed in the process goes without saying. Remember, "...he was seated on the throne and said, "Behold, I am making **all things new**. (Rev. 21:5). To "reign," then, must mean to reign in life or over sin, and old-world government models such as king David's rule over God's people do not necessarily apply to a new world, a new earth and a new creation. As a point of interest, this is the meaning ascribed to the concept of "reign" by the Catholic church.

Like other numerical values in this book, the thousand years are not to be taken literally; they symbolize the long period of time between the chaining up of Satan (a symbol for Christ's resurrection victory over death and the forces of evil) and the end of the world. During this time God's people share in the glorious reign of God that is present to them by virtue of their baptismal victory over death and sin; cf Rom 6, 1-8; Jn 5, 24-25; 16, 33; 1 Jn 3,14; Eph 2,1. (NAB, note Rev. 20:1-6)

Finally, if the Great Crowd is in heaven and not on earth as the Jehovah's Witnesses claim, the 144,000 cannot rule over them as earthly subjects.

### **III. The Great Crowd of Revelation 7:9 standing before God's throne in heaven and before the Lamb is not standing on earth merely in an 'approved condition' but is in heaven contrary to the Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings.**

First, Revelation 7:9 provides: "After these things I saw, and, look, a great crowd which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb ...." As with the Great Crowd, Revelation 14:1 also has the 144,000 standing in heaven with the Lamb, Jesus Christ. "And I saw, and, look! The Lamb standing upon Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand."

The Greek verb *histemi* - to stand or standing - is used for both groups of individuals, but whereas the 144,000 are regarded as physically (as spiritual creatures) standing in the direct presence of the Lamb in heaven, the Jehovah's Witnesses believe the Great Crowd on the other hand are actually on earth and stand only metaphorically before God; they are standing in an approved condition, or position, in the sight of God only. The Jehovah's Witnesses are aware of their conundrum.

This poses the question: if the "great crowd" are persons who gain salvation and remain on earth, how could they be said to be 'standing before God's throne and before the Lamb'? (Re 7:9) The position of 'standing' is sometimes used in the Bible to indicate the holding of a favored or approved position in the eyes of one in whose presence the individual or group stands. (Ps 1:5; 5:5; Pr 22:29, AT; Lu 1:19). In fact, in the previous chapter of Revelation, "the kings of the earth and the top-ranking ones and the military commanders and the rich and the strong ones and every slave and every free person" are depicted as seeking to hide themselves "from



the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" Re 6:15-17; compare Lu 21:36). It thus appears that the "great crowd" is formed of those persons who have been preserved during that time of wrath and who have been able to "stand" as approved by God and the Lamb. (Insight, 997).

However, it is noteworthy that the definition of *histemi* (standing or to stand) does not contain the notion of a 'favored or approved position' or condition according to the entry for *histemi* or a derivative *paristemi*, in *Vine's Complete Expository Dictionary of Old and New Testament Words (Vine's Greek Dictionary)*. And as to its application at Revelation 6:15-17, which they cite, those depicted as hiding themselves are about to be destroyed, so they can hardly be said to be standing or seeking to stand in an "approved condition" before God. Other translations render the word "withstand." (NAB).

Secondly, the Great Crowd cannot be standing in an approved condition on earth because Revelation 9:1-6 details the account of the Fifth Trumpet where locusts, given the power of scorpions, are instructed to torment and harm all those on earth who do not have the "seal of God on their foreheads."

1 And the fifth angel blew his trumpet. And I saw a star that had fallen from heaven to the earth, and the key of the pit of the abyss was given him. 2 And he opened the pit of the abyss, and smoke ascended out of the pit as the smoke of a great furnace, and the sun was darkened, also the air, by the smoke of the pit. 3 And out of the smoke locusts came forth upon the earth; and authority was given them, the same authority as the scorpions of the earth have. 4 And they were told to harm no vegetation of the earth nor any green thing nor any tree, but only those men who do not have the seal of God on their foreheads. 5 And it was granted the [locusts], not to kill them, but that these should be tormented five months, and the torment upon them was as torment by a scorpion when it strikes a man. 6 And in those days the men will seek death but will by no means find it, and they will desire to die but death keeps fleeing from them. (Rev. 9:1-6 NWT).

According to the Jehovah's Witnesses only the 144,000 have the seal of God on their foreheads, not the Great Crowd or anyone else.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the sunrising, having a seal of [the] living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, 3 saying: "Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads." 4 And I heard the number of those who were sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand, sealed out of every tribe of the sons of Israel:.... (Rev. 7:2-4 NWT)

Because the torment on the Great Crowd and others is to be so great that they will seek death it is difficult to imagine that the Great Crowd is standing on earth in an approved condition before God.

Third, one of the twenty-four elders in heaven upon seeing the Great Crowd comments “where did they come from?” (Rev. 7:13), which suggests they arrived from someplace else, namely earth.

Fourth, the Jehovah’s Witnesses deny the Great Crowd’s presence in heaven because “Revelation does not say of them, as it does of the 144,000 that they are bought from the earth” to be with Christ on heavenly Mount Zion. Rev 14:1-3.” (*Reasoning*, 167) But the Jehovah’s Witnesses are reading Scripture too narrowly and assume that the Great Crowd and 144,000 are separate. If, as mentioned above, a strong argument can be made that the 144,000 and the Great Crowd are the same - a qualitative identification of that large multitude - then the Great Crowd has indeed been bought from the earth because they are the 144,000 and represent all Christian people, which is the view taken by the Roman Catholic Church (Revelation 14:4, notes NAB).

Furthermore, it is not the 144,000 alone who were ransomed or bought by Jesus’ blood. The Jehovah’s Witnesses distinguish the Great Crowd from the 144,000 by the fact that the Great Crowd were of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues. But according to Revelation 5:9 this includes the 144,000 who also are of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues. (*Reasoning*, 168).

9 And they sing a new song, saying: “You are worthy to take the scroll and open its seals, because you were slaughtered and with your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, 10 and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God, and they are to rule as kings over the earth.” (Rev. 5:9 NWT).

Lastly, Revelation 7:15 makes it abundantly clear that the Great Crowd, their robes also washed by the blood of Christ, is in heaven because that is where God’s temple and his throne are; the Great Crowd is seen in His temple where they worship Him day and night.

15 That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple; and the One seated on the throne will spread his tent over them. (Rev. 7:15 NWT).

The psalmist at Psalm 11:4 tells us where God’s temple is and where his throne is, and by virtue of Revelation 7:15 we know where the Great Crowd stands worshipping the Almighty, namely, in heaven.

“Jehovah is in his temple,  
Jehovah - in the heavens is his throne.”

**IV. The return of Jesus Christ to earth, his Second Coming, did not occur in 1914; nor did Jesus begin to rule God’s kingdom in 1914; He began his rule in the first century A.D. and received more than a subsidiary share of the kingdom of God. Furthermore, the first judgment day did not begin in 1914 and the Jehovah’s Witnesses have never separated the sheep (the Great Crowd) from the goats on behalf of God Almighty.**

**A) The Jehovah's Witnesses limit the "eternal New Covenant" of Jeremiah 31:31-**

**34 to Christ and the 144,000; this New Covenant kingdom lasts approximately 2,000 years. This is not a Bible teaching.**

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that there are two kingdoms over which Christ rules. The first kingdom is called the "kingdom of the son of his love" (the New Covenant kingdom) and is a spiritual kingdom with Christ as head over the 144,000 only. This kingdom was brought into existence through the shed blood of Christ under the New Covenant God spoke of through Jeremiah at Jeremiah 31:31-34 and inaugurated at Pentecost. Only the 144,000, Christ and God are parties to the New Covenant with Christ acting as mediator for a short while.

The New Covenant, and presumably that kingdom, expires when "... all of the 'Israel of God' (the 144,000) are resurrected to immortality in the heavens" (Insight, 524; parenthesis added). This means that the eternal New Covenant, in furtherance of and pursuant to which Jesus gave his life, lasts approximately two thousand years because the resurrection of the 144,000 began in 1918 and will conclude shortly (*Climax Book*, 103, 277). The following is their description of the New Covenant kingdom.

**"The Kingdom of the Son of His Love."** Ten days after Jesus' ascension to heaven, on Pentecost of 33 C.E., his disciples had evidence that he had been "exalted to the right hand of God" when Jesus poured out holy spirit upon them. (Ac 1:8,9; 2:1-4, 29-33) The "new covenant" thus became operative toward them, and they became the nucleus of a new "holy nation," spiritual Israel. - Heb 12:22-24; 1 Pet 2:9, 10; Ga 6:16.

Christ was now sitting at his Father's right hand and was the Head over this congregation. (Eph 5:23; Heb 1:3; Php 2:9-11) The Scriptures show that from Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, a spiritual kingdom was set up over his disciples. When writing to the first-century Christians at Colossae, the apostle Paul referred to Jesus Christ as already having a kingdom: "[God] delivered us from the authority of the darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of the Son of his love." Col 1:13; compare Ac 17:6, 7.

Christ's kingdom from Pentecost of 33 C.E. onward has been a spiritual one ruling over spiritual Israel, Christians who have been begotten by God's spirit to become the spiritual children of God. (Joh 3:3, 5, 6) When such spirit-begotten Christians receive their heavenly reward, they will no longer be earthly subjects of the spiritual kingdom of Christ, but they will be kings with Christ in heaven. - Re 5:9, 10. (*Insight*, 169).

These spirit-begotten, anointed brothers of Christ become underpriests of the High Priest, "a royal priesthood." (1 Pe 2:9; Re 5:9, 10; 20:6) These do a priestly work, a "public service" (Php 2:17), and are called "ministers of a new covenant." (2 Cor 3:6) These

called ones must follow Christ's steps closely, faithfully, until laying down their lives in death; Jehovah will then make them a kingdom of priests, making them sharers in divine nature and will reward them with immortality and incorruption as joint heirs in the heavens with Christ. (1 Pe 2:21; Ro 6:3, 4; 1 Cor 15:53; 1 Pet 1:4; 2 Pet 1:4) The purpose of the covenant is to take out a people for Jehovah's name as a part of Abraham's "seed." (Ac 15:14) They become the "bride" of Christ, and are the body of persons whom Christ takes into a covenant for the Kingdom to rule with Him. (Joh 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Re 21:9; Lu 22:29; Re 1:4-6; 5:9, 10; 20:6) The purpose of the new covenant requires that it continue in operation until all of the "Israel of God" are resurrected to immortality in the heavens. (*Insight*, 524).

**B) The Jehovah's Witnesses teach, incorrectly, that the real kingdom of God, the 1914 kingdom, began in 1914, but Jesus received only a "subsidiary share" of this kingdom. However, these two kingdoms are not separate kingdoms, and such distinctions are mere fabrications**

The second kingdom, the real kingdom of God, is the "kingdom of our lord and of his Christ" (the 1914 kingdom). It began in 1914 at "the end of the "appointed times of the nations" and is over all mankind on earth" (*Insight*, 169; *Reasoning*, 95-97). The 1914 kingdom lasts forever. The 1914 kingdom, or "God's kingdom" over which Jesus began to rule, is of "greater proportions and bigger dimensions..." than the New Covenant kingdom, but Jesus received only a "subsidiary share" in the 1914 kingdom of God.

**"Kingdom of Our Lord and of His Christ."** The apostle John, writing toward the close of the first century C.E., foresaw through a divine revelation the future time when Jehovah God, by means of his Son, would make a new expression of divine rulership. At that time, as in the time of David's bringing the Ark up to Jerusalem, it would be said that Jehovah 'has taken his great power and begun ruling as king. This would be the time for loud voices in heaven to proclaim: "The kingdom of the world did become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he will rule as king forever and ever." - Re 11:15, 17; 1 Ch 16:1, 31.

It is "our Lord," the Sovereign Lord Jehovah, who asserts his authority over "the kingdom of the world," setting up a new expression of his sovereignty toward our earth. He gives to his son, Jesus Christ, a subsidiary share in that Kingdom, so that it is termed "the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ." This Kingdom is of greater proportions and bigger dimensions than "the kingdom of the Son of his love," spoken of at Colossians 1:13. "The Kingdom of the Son of his love" began at Pentecost 33 C.E. and has been over Christ's anointed disciples; "the kingdom of our Lord and of his

Christ” is brought forth at the end of the “appointed times of the nations” and is over all mankind on earth. - Lu 21:24. (Insight, 169).

This return of Christ in 1914 is the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ version of the Second Coming of Christ, or advent of his presence (Greek *parousia*), and ushers in the first of three judgment days mentioned at Matthew 25:31-46 where Jehovah’s Witnesses until 1995 were taught that they were, through their door-to-door ministry, separating the earth’s sheep and goats for judgment and destruction.

Upon closer examination of Scripture, however, it is evident that Christ did not return in 1914 to establish and preside over God’s kingdom; Christ began his rule of God’s kingdom, over the entire universe for that matter, in the first century A.D. The 1914 kingdom cannot be separated from the New Covenant kingdom established by Christ’s blood in the first century. And any valid authority or relationship, or attributes of the 1914 kingdom were granted or realized in the first century and derived from and are grounded in the New Covenant and the real kingdom of God related thereto.

Consequently, the Jehovah’s Witnesses were gravely mistaken in believing that they were separating the sheep from the goats on behalf of God because the judgment day of Mathew 25:31-46 lies in the future.

### **1) The 1914 kingdom is premised on a faulty date because Jerusalem was not destroyed in 607 B.C.**

First, incontrovertible archeological, historical and scriptural evidence proves that Jesus Christ could not have returned in 1914. The Jehovah’s Witnesses derive the year 1914 by counting forward 2,520 years from the date Babylon allegedly destroyed Jerusalem in 607 B.C. Jerusalem, however, was not destroyed in 607 B.C. but in 587/586 B.C. and the Jehovah’s Witnesses are unable to provide a single shred of evidence to the contrary. The issues are numerous and beyond the scope of this paper, but serious students are encouraged to read the accompanying online article “Why the Jehovah’s Witnesses are wrong believing that Jerusalem was destroyed in 607 B.C.E.” at <http://144000.110mb.com/607/index.html>

### **2) The Jehovah's Witnesses' 1914 date is biblically unsupportable**

Second, Revelation 11:15 (ESV), which the Jehovah’s Witnesses base the establishment of their 1914 kingdom on, is chronologically unsustainable. It provides in part “The kingdom of the world has become the kingdom of our Lord and of his Christ, and he shall reign forever and ever,” but the events in this verse happen after the beginning of the Great Tribulation, not ninety years before. It is heralded by the seventh trumpet, after the six seals are opened, the 144,000 are sealed, the six trumpets are blown and second woe has passed, all of which still lies in the future. Then the seventh angel blows his trumpet. Furthermore, Revelation 11:15-18 occurs after the two witnesses at 11:1-12 are commissioned and taken up to heaven which the Jehovah’s Witnesses claim happened in the 1930s, after 1914.

### **3) The Second Coming of Christ is a future event**

Third, the true Second Coming of Christ (*parousia*) takes place after the Great Tribulation, not years before as the Jehovah’s Witnesses contend.

21 for then there will be great tribulation such as has not occurred since the world’s beginning until now, no, nor will occur again.

(Matt. 24:21)

Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light, and the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. (Matt. 24:29)

This reference to Christ's return "immediately" (Greek *eutheos* meaning directly, i.e., at once or soon, straightaway, forthwith [*Vine's*]), follows the pending Great Tribulation, not the tribulation Jerusalem experienced when it was destroyed by Rome in 70 A.D because the pending Great Tribulation shall be the worst that will ever be. Since the slaughter of the 20th century world wars makes Jerusalem's destruction pale in comparison, Christ's Second Coming still awaits mankind.

#### **4) Christ had all authority when he ascended; he did not receive a subsidiary share 1,900 years later**

Fourth, Christ did not wait 1,900 years to receive a mere "subsidiary share" of God's kingdom. He received it all when he rose from the dead and ascended to the throne in heaven to sit at God's right hand.

18 And Jesus approached and spoke to them, saying: "All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. (Matt. 28:18 NWT)

10 And so YOU are possessed of a fullness by means of him, who is the head of all government and authority. (Col. 2:10 NWT)

The Jehovah's Witnesses' version of the temporary New Covenant kingdom and their 1914 subsidiary kingdom which are not separate kingdoms at all, pursuant to Ephesians 1:20, 22.

... which he worked in Christ, raising him from the dead and seating him at his right hand in the heavens, far above every principality, authority, power and dominion, and every name that is named not only in this age but also in the one to come. And he put all things beneath his feet, ... (NAB)

This Scripture renders their temporary New Covenant invalid because it clearly states that Christ's kingdom authority and power applies to the next age and covers more than the 144,000. And, Christ's share in the 1914 kingdom is total, not partial, and that rule began in the first century after he ascended and was seated at God's right hand, not 1914.

#### **5) Christ began to rule God's kingdom in the first century, not 1914**

Fifth, Colossians 2:10 clearly indicates that Jesus did not wait until 1914 to become head of every principality and power, but assumed that role in the first century, and therefore the Jehovah's Witnesses' reliance on Revelation 12:7-12 is misplaced because these verses make no reference to when Christ began to rule, or that it began in 1914.

7 And war broke out in heaven: Mi'cha-el and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled 8 but it did

not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. 9 So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God! 11 And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death. 12 On this account be glad, YOU heavens and YOU who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to YOU, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time. (Rev. 12:7-12 NWT).

Associating these verses with the hurling of Satan out of heaven allegedly in 1914 (*Reasoning*, 96-97) only begs the question of when Christ began to rule and when Satan was dislodged. Daniel indicates that Christ began to rule God's kingdom in the first century when he rose to heaven, on the clouds.

13 "I kept on beholding in the visions of the night, and, see there! with ("on" NAB) the clouds of the heavens someone like a son of man happened to be coming; and to the Ancient of Days he gained access, and they brought him up close even before that One. 14 And to him there were given rulership and dignity and kingdom, that the peoples, national groups and languages should all serve even him. His rulership is an indefinitely lasting rulership that will not pass away, and his kingdom one that will not be brought to ruin. (Dan. 7:13, 14 NWT)

Christ began to rule God's kingdom when he ascended to heaven after his crucifixion in the first century. He did not wait to rule until 1914 right before he supposedly descended to earth invisibly. This is made all the more evident by John when he referred to the resurrected Jesus as the then "Ruler of the kings of the earth," that is, during the first century (Rev. 1:5 NWT). Accordingly, the Jehovah's Witnesses' claim that "... in 1914 Christ began ruling as King," is incorrect (*Great Man*, ch. 132, 3).

Without any scriptural support the Jehovah's Witnesses also assume Satan was not hurled out of heaven until 1914 and attempt to attach the establishment of God's kingdom to this event as well.

The establishment of God's kingdom is here associated with the hurling of Satan out of heaven. This had not occurred at the time of rebellion in Eden, as is shown in Job chapters 1, 2. Revelation was recorded in 96 C.E., and Revelation 1:1 shows that it deals with events then future. (*Reasoning*, 233)

However, it appears they have failed to identify the proper issues. We are dealing with the New

Testament, not the Old Testament, and any references to the book of Job are irrelevant. And even though Revelation might have been recorded in 96 A.D., their claim that Revelation deals only with then-future events is very mistaken. Chapter 12 is obviously a flashback in time referring to Christ's birth, death, resurrection and ascension to heaven. And, that he took the throne of God's kingdom in verses 10 and 11 in the first century and not the 20th century is clear by the description of the persecution of the woman who gave birth to Christ, and the woman's offspring - the Church of Christian believers.

3 And another sign was seen in heaven, and, look! a great fiery-colored dragon, with seven heads and ten horns and upon its heads seven diadems; 4 and its tail drags a third of the stars of heaven, and it hurled them down to the earth. And the dragon kept standing before the woman who was about to give birth, that, when she did give birth, it might devour her child.

5 And she gave birth to a son, a male, who is to shepherd all the nations with an iron rod. And her child was caught away to God and to his throne. 6 And the woman fled into the wilderness, where she has a place prepared by God, that they should feed her there a thousand two hundred and sixty days.

7 And war broke out in heaven: Mi'cha-el and his angels battled with the dragon, and the dragon and its angels battled 8 but it did not prevail, neither was a place found for them any longer in heaven. 9 So down the great dragon was hurled, the original serpent, the one called Devil and Satan, who is misleading the entire inhabited earth; he was hurled down to the earth, and his angels were hurled down with him. 10 And I heard a loud voice in heaven say:

“Now have come to pass the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ, because the accuser of our brothers has been hurled down, who accuses them day and night before our God! 11 And they conquered him because of the blood of the Lamb and because of the word of their witnessing, and they did not love their souls even in the face of death. 12 On this account be glad, YOU heavens and YOU who reside in them! Woe for the earth and for the sea, because the Devil has come down to YOU, having great anger, knowing he has a short period of time.”

13 Now when the dragon saw that it was hurled down to the earth, it persecuted the woman that gave birth to the male child. 14 But the two wings of the great eagle were given the woman, that she might fly into the wilderness to her place; there is where she is fed for a time and times and half a time away from the face of the serpent.



15 And the serpent disgorged water like a river from its mouth after the woman, to cause her to be drowned by the river. 16 But the earth came to the woman's help, and the earth opened its mouth and swallowed up the river that the dragon disgorged from its mouth. 17 And the dragon grew wrathful at the woman, and went off to wage war with the remaining ones of her seed, who observe the commandments of God and have the work of bearing witness to Jesus. (Rev. 12:3-17 NWT)

Satan and the Roman empire did not wait until 1914 to wage war against Christians but did so, viciously, beginning in the first century. Accordingly, not only did salvation, power, God's kingdom and Christ's authority come before Christian persecution began, but the hurling of Satan to earth associated with the so-called 1914 kingdom happened at Christ's ascension or thereabouts before the onslaught of Christian persecution, not 1,900 years later.

**6) The book of Revelation does not only "deal with events then future" which is a mere ploy to shift the Lord's Day to 1914**

Sixth, the Jehovah's Witnesses have gone to great lengths to push God's kingdom and the kingdom's priesthood, and the events of Revelation 11:15, 12:10, and others, into the 20th and 21st centuries. As stated, they believe, "Revelation was recorded in 96 B.C.E. and Rev 1:1 shows it deals with events then future" (*Reasoning*, 233), but this is simply not true. Revelation by no means speaks exclusively of future events but includes past and then-current events. And, as just mentioned, Revelation 12:4, 5 recounts the birth of Christ and his ascension to God and His throne, all of which occurred more than 50 years prior to the book's writing.

Illustrative of another attempt to "post-date" the book of Revelation were the instructions to John at Revelation 1:19. John was instructed: "write what things you saw, and what things are, and what things are about to occur after these things" (Rev. 1:19, *Green's Literal Translation*). These are not exclusively future events.

Furthermore, the Jehovah's Witnesses' Bible states of John: "By inspiration I came to be in the Lord's day ..." (Rev. 1:10). Elsewhere they claim that the "Lord's day" was 1914: then came to pass "the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ," and "that 'by inspiration' he was transported forward in time to the 'Lord's day'" in 1914 (*Great Man*, ch. 132, 2,3).

But the Bible does not say that. A literal reading provides, "I came to be in the Spirit on the Lord's day ..." (*Green's Literal*). He was not transported to the Lord's day. The Lord's day was Sunday (NAB n. 1, 10. See also N. Turner, *Peake's Commentary*, 1046), the day he was caught up in the Spirit and began to see visions.

**7) Christ's *parousia*, or Second Coming, occurs after the Great Tribulation has begun, not before, not in 1914. Neither was the New Covenant priesthood established in 1918, but during the first century**

This is brought out by the concurrent and following chapters of Revelation. John's immediate vision was of Christ who instructed him as to what he should write down (Rev. 1:5-29) beginning with letters to the seven churches in the first century (Rev. chapters 2-4). Afterward he envisions the Great Tribulation and only much later events surrounding Christ's Second Coming or *parousia*, which could

not, therefore, have occurred in 1914. Jesus said as much at Matthew 24:29,30, that his *parousia*, or Second Coming, would happen after the Great Tribulation, not before.

This is a very significant point. It is understandable why the Jehovah's Witnesses insist that the events of Revelation take place after 96 A.D.; if not, it would undermine their attempt to push the New Covenant priesthood 1,900 years forward, claiming that the priesthood was not established until their first resurrection of the 144,000 began in 1918. But it didn't. The New Covenant priesthood was established in the first century (But you are a "chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own ..." 1 Peter 2:9).

Pushing every event or claim in Revelation into the future is so important to the Jehovah's Witnesses' "1914 kingdom" and "New Covenant priesthood" theories that they apparently interpreted Scripture in their New World Translation to cast other then-past and current events forward in time. To illustrate, a literal translation by Green of Revelation 1:5,6 provides that Jesus "...made us into a kingdom, priests for his God and Father ...." This means that the first century Christians were already part of God's kingdom which included a priesthood, the real New Covenant kingdom. All Christian believers were, and are, priests of this priesthood. And it is this kingdom into which they were transferred at Colossians 1:13: "...he transferred us to the kingdom of the son of his love."

As mentioned earlier, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that this latter New Covenant kingdom at verse 1:13 is a completely separate, temporary kingdom for only the 144,000, but Revelation 1:5, 6 associates, or ties, both kingdoms together and regards them as the same, in effect pulling the so-called 1914 kingdom and its associated kingdom of priests back to the first century where it belongs, thereby correctly including it in the New Covenant kingdom because they are the same. What the Jehovah's Witnesses have actually done is incorrectly move God's kingdom up to 1914, move the Second Coming back to 1914, and combined them. This is not true Christian doctrine.

To counter what the Bible really says, the Jehovah's Witnesses changed the words "made us," past tense, to mean a future event: "made us to be a kingdom, priests ..." (Rev. 1:6 NWT). They did the same in Revelation 5:10, changing "you made us kings and priests..." (*Green's Literal*) to read "... and you made them to be a kingdom of priests to our God." Peter disagrees with their interpretation at 1 Peter 2:9: "But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people of his own ..." (NAB). He did not recognize two kingdom priesthoods separated by 1,900 years. They were not to become a royal priesthood many centuries later.

By reading these verses relating to the kingdom priesthood together it is evident that the Jehovah's Witnesses' New Covenant kingdom priesthood and events associated with the so-called "1914 kingdom of God" actually began in the first century; they are not separate kingdoms, which is exactly what God Almighty purposed when he entered into a covenant relationship with King David.

**A) The Covenants: The Jehovah's Witnesses' other Achilles' Heel and the key to bringing God's alleged 1914 kingdom and the 20th century New Covenant arrangement back to the first century where they belong.**

Understanding the Davidic covenant, especially as it relates to the priesthood, is key to bringing the 1914 kingdom and the Jehovah's Witnesses' priesthood back to the first century, extending the New Covenant into the everlasting future where it belongs, and including all Christian believers, not just the 144,000, under the New Covenant arrangement with all its attendant benefits, such as eternal life, forgiveness of sins and reconciliation with YHWH God. But to understand the broad scope of the

Davidic covenant it is essential to see how it is inseparably intertwined with the Abrahamic covenant and the New Covenant.

“The term ‘covenant’ in general refers to a solemn agreement between two or more parties” (*Oxford Dictionary* [U.S.A. Oxford University Press, 1998], 288). “The Christian tradition of dividing the Bible into two “testaments” (“old” and “new”) indicates that Christianity has seen “covenant” as the organizing principle providing meaning and coherence to the whole of Scripture.... To study the biblical notion of “covenant” is thus to study what is arguably the central or core concept of the entire Bible” (Ibid., 292).

The organizing principles of related covenant relationships which provide the structure and avenue for God’s salvation plan for fallen mankind stretch from Genesis to Revelation in a grand, sweeping, interlocking arch. As early as Genesis 3:15 the idea that redemption would come through the seed, Christ Jesus, was revealed. Later, the covenant promise to Abraham ensured the creation of God’s people, the nation of Israel in the flesh; but the promise did not stop there as it encompassed the succeeding generations of spiritual Israel, Christianity, heirs to the promise (Gal. 3:26-29).

The covenant of blood circumcision was a sign of, and sealed, the Abrahamic covenant. The covenant of circumcision remained operative until Christ’s death when it (physical circumcision) and the Mosaic Law covenant (Law covenant) became obsolete and were replaced by the New Covenant. The Law covenant was an extension of, and addition to, the Abrahamic covenant, and was instituted in succeeding manifestations between YHWH and natural born Israel. Statutes, decrees and ordinances - a religious code - the Law covenant provided an orderly arrangement for God’s people, the Jews. It made sin and transgression manifest (Gal. 3:19) and was supposed to lead the Jews to Christ the messiah (Gal. 3:24). It also served to guarantee the physical line of descent from Abraham through the tribe of Judah and from King David to the promised seed, Jesus.

God’s promise to David - the Davidic covenant - established a line of descent for David’s throne, or rulership, which culminated with Christ’s ascension to this heavenly throne in the first century to rule as king of the universe and beyond, and high priest. Jesus became both king and priest forever on the order of king/priest Melchizedek of Abraham’s day (Heb. chapters 5-8). The Davidic covenant lasts into perpetuity, forever, and contrary to what the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach, includes a priesthood comprised of Christ and his house of all Christian believers who are a kingdom of priests, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God’s people (1 Pet. 2:9).

The taking out of God’s people in furtherance of the Davidic covenant is accomplished through the New Covenant created and memorialized by Christ’s blood sacrifice. However, God’s people under the New Covenant are not limited to the 144,000 but embrace all Christian believers. Through grace, faith, and the forgiveness of their sins by virtue of Christ’s sacrifice, fallen man is reconciled to the creator. Christ’s death and resurrection provide the gift of eternal life for God’s people. Christ is forever mediator between God and His people and without his continued intercession between humans and God, access to God in heaven is not possible and continued redemption unattainable, as explained in further detail below.

As repeatedly stated throughout the Bible, and contrary to the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ teachings, the New Covenant, by necessity and design, is everlasting, not temporary or of a fixed determinate length.

## **B) The Davidic Covenant**

For reasons that will be explored in detail later, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach, incorrectly, that God's covenant with David was for a throne only; that it included no priesthood.

Covenant with King David. The covenant with David was made at some time during David's reign in Jerusalem (1070 - 1038 B.C.E.), the parties being Jehovah and David as representative of his family. (2Sa 7:11-16) The terms of this covenant were that a son from David's line would possess the throne forever, and that this son would build a house for Jehovah's name. God's purpose in this covenant was to provide a kingly dynasty for the Jews; to give Jesus, as David's heir, the legal right to the throne of David, "Jehovah's throne" (1 Ch 29:23; Lu 1:32); and to provide identification for Jesus as the Messiah. (Eze 21:25-27; Mt 1:6-16; Lu 3:23-31) This covenant included no priesthood; the Levitical priesthood served in conjunction with kings of David's line; priesthood and kingship were strictly separate under the Law. Since Jehovah acknowledges this kingship and works through it forever, the covenant has everlasting duration. - Isa 9:7; 2 Pet 1:11. (*Insight*, 524)

This convoluted paragraph begs for clarity and is self-contradicting because the kingship and priesthood cannot be strictly separate under the Law yet serve in conjunction with each other. Furthermore, the fact that priesthood and kingship might have been separate under the Law misses the point entirely because the focus should be on the kingship of Christ under the Davidic and New covenants, not the expired Mosaic Law, and in that role Christ's kingship most definitely includes a priesthood. And, kings of David's time routinely performed priestly functions. The Davidic covenant provides:

12 When your days come to the full, and you must lie down with your forefathers, then I shall certainly raise up your seed after you, which will come out of your inward parts; and I shall indeed firmly establish his kingdom. 13 He is the one that will build a house for my name, and I shall certainly establish the throne of his kingdom firmly to time indefinite. 14 I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son. When he does wrong, I will also reprove him with the rod of men and with the strokes of the sons of Adam. 15 As for my loving-kindness, it will not depart from him the way I removed it from Saul, whom I removed on account of you. 16 And your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite. (2 Sam. 7:12-16 NWT)

The Davidic covenant was not limited to only a throne but included a kingdom as well. (Davidic covenant was for an everlasting kingdom (2 Chron. 13:5; also *Insight*, 164). The throne of David (throne of Israel) cannot be severed from the kingdom. In the Old Testament, kingdom, or mamlakah, is defined in part as "expressions of the royal "rule" of all things associated with the king: 8(c)(1) the throne..." (*Vine's Dictionary*, 161). The covenant was also for a house, which is God's spiritual house,

over which Christ presides, the church or congregation of Christian believers.

“...Christ was faithful as a son placed over his house. We are his house if [only] we hold fast to our confidence and pride in our hope.” (Heb. 3:6)

The promised house is a holy priesthood. Peter testified “... let yourselves be built up into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood to offer spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ” (1 Pet. 2:5). “But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood” (1 Pet. 2:9). Paul explained that Christ is great priest over this house.

19 Therefore, brothers, since we have boldness for the way of entry into the holy place by the blood of Jesus, 20 which he inaugurated for us as a new and living way through the curtain, that is, his flesh, 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach with true hearts in the full assurance of faith, having had our hearts sprinkled from a wicked conscience and our bodies bathed with clean water. (Heb. 10:19- 22 NWT)

Without Jesus as high priest there is no priesthood; his role in this capacity sustains the church or congregation: “Through him the whole structure is held together and grows into a temple sacred in the Lord” (Eph. 2:21, 22). Jeremiah drew an unmistakable connection between the everlasting Davidic covenant and the New Covenant with God’s people, his house. He emphasized the inclusion of a continuous line of priests that reached far into the future beyond the Levitical priesthood.

Never shall David lack a successor on the throne of the house of Israel nor shall priests ever be lacking. (Jer. 33:17, 18)

This does not refer to the Levitical priesthood under the Mosaic Law which ended in the first century but refers to the Christian priesthood because these priests will never be lacking, and in accordance with Jeremiah 33:22 will be countless.

Like the host of heaven which cannot be numbered, and the sands of the sea which cannot be counted, I will multiply the descendants of my servant David and the Levites who minister to me. (Jer. 33:22)

Finally, the prophet Isaiah made the most succinct connection between the New Covenant and the benefits assured to David under the Davidic covenant. They are inseparable.

Come to me heedfully,  
listen that you may have life,  
I will renew with you the everlasting covenant,  
the benefits assured to David.” (Isa. 55:3 NAB;  
see also Isa. 55:1; John 7:37)

**a) The invention of new covenants and abrogation of existing covenants: In order to place the inception of God's kingdom in 1914, the Jehovah's Witnesses have wrongfully stripped the Davidic covenant of a priesthood, severed the Davidic covenant from the New Covenant, and**

### **limit the New Covenant to a temporary 2,000-year period**

In light of this strong scriptural evidence several questions emerge:

- (1) If the Davidic covenant obviously included a priesthood why do the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that it does not and that the covenant only included David's throne?
- (2) Why do the Jehovah's Witnesses sever the Davidic covenant from the New Covenant even though the New Covenant effectuates, and is the fulfillment of, the Davidic covenant?
- (3) Why do the Jehovah's Witnesses terminate the New Covenant after two thousand years but concede the Davidic covenant lasts forever even though the former reflects the fulfillment of, and amplifies, the latter Davidic covenant and both covenants are repeatedly said to be everlasting, and they are the same where they overlap?

#### **i) A first century priesthood undermines the Jehovah's Witnesses' "1914 kingdom" theory and the "first resurrection of the 144,000" theory**

**ANSWER:** First, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the Davidic covenant includes no priesthood because the only priesthood the Jehovah's Witnesses recognize is the 144,000 with Christ as their high priest, for a while. As explained earlier, they believe they do not become a kingdom of priests until they are resurrected beginning in 1918, the so-called first resurrection (*Climax Book*, 103, 277).

Only then do they become a kingdom of heavenly priests who rule over man on earth during the thousand year reign (*Insight*, 524, 525). They are resurrected in 1918 because this resurrection must follow on the heels of the 1914 return, or Second Coming, of Christ (*parousia*) in conformity with Matthew 24:29-31. These two events, Christ's return and the gathering of the elect, are chronologically inseparable.

The problem is, if the 144,000 become a kingdom of priests when Christ ascended David's throne it drags the 1914 kingdom of God back to the first century as well, where events related thereto rightfully belong. Consequently, the Second Coming could not have happened in 1914, and since it did not happen in the first century, the return of Christ still awaits us and 1914 is false prophecy, among other things.

In other words, the Davidic covenant that includes the Christian kingdom priesthood - his house of Christian believers established in the first century - fatally undermines their 1914 kingdom theory and the first resurrection of the 144,000 theory.

#### **ii) An everlasting New Covenant would destroy the Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation plan during the millennial reign.**

**ANSWER:** Second, the Jehovah's Witnesses sever the forever-lasting Davidic covenant from their temporary New Covenant because a long-lasting New Covenant would destroy their salvation plan during and after the thousand year reign, as explained in detail below. Whereas the Davidic/New Covenant is everlasting, their version of the New Covenant lasts a mere two thousand years.

The purpose of the new covenant requires that it continue in operation until all of the "Israel of God" are resurrected to immortality in the heavens. (*Insight*, 524)

The benefits of the Davidic covenant include a priesthood and Christ's rule as king in God's kingdom over the universe and all believers, but the Jehovah's Witnesses' New Covenant is only for a kingdom of 144,000 with Christ as associate king over them. These two concepts are diametrically opposed to each other when they should harmonize.

**iii) An everlasting New Covenant would prevent the Jehovah's Witnesses from education man to a state of perfection and repeatedly judging him**

**ANSWER:** Third, the Jehovah's Witnesses concede that the Davidic covenant lasts forever (*Insight*, 524), but since the New Covenant is inseparable from the Davidic covenant it must also be everlasting. This is problematic for the Jehovah's Witnesses because if the New Covenant is everlasting, which it is, the Jehovah's Witnesses would not be able to educate resurrected man to perfection; this is their plan for salvation.

Consequently, the "Law Scrolls" of God - the Jehovah's Witnesses' new rules and regulations revealed during the millennium - would not be new expressions of God's law but would be, in the Christian view rather, a record of man's deeds done in this life, and not those committed during the thousand years as they wrongly teach. The Bible teaches us that these so-called millennial Law scrolls are actually a record of man's deeds in this life which form the basis for their names being included in the book of life (Rev. 20:12). But without the millennial Law scrolls, the Jehovah's Witnesses cannot subject man to judgment again and again, which is precisely the Jehovah's Witnesses' intent.

Man will not, and cannot, be "educated" to perfection (justified or declared righteous, without sin: *Vine's*) through adherence to any set of externally imposed laws. He is only justified, or "perfected" through the grace of God and Christ, Christ's death sacrifice, and faith. This is the essence of God's power of transformation, the explicit alternative to the Mosaic Law, and the means by which God takes out a people as his own and forgives their sins. The New Covenant is the quintessential arrangement between the Almighty and all Christian believers, not merely a select 144,000.

33 "For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the house of Israel after those days," is the utterance of Jehovah. "I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people."

34 "And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, 'KNOW Jehovah!'" for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them," is the utterance of Jehovah. "For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more." (Jer. 31:33, 34)

It is the Great Crowd of Jehovah's Witnesses' stated purpose to teach the resurrected during the thousand years how to know God and Jesus based on written decrees, but this is at direct odds with the New Covenant where the Almighty is changing hearts from the inside out through the power of the Holy Spirit, not through the imposition of more externally imposed Mosaic-like laws and decrees. Through the sacrificed blood of his son, Jesus, God forgives sin and redeems man by virtue of grace through their faith in Christ and his sacrifice. He does not teach man to be sinless or perfect, nor does he forgive sins in the Christian era based on their successfully passing tests in another life. Forgiveness through Christ's sacrifice under the everlasting New Covenant supplants the Jehovah's Witnesses'

“educational” route and renders it useless with respect to their stated purpose.

**iv) The Jehovah's Witnesses are unable to eliminate Jesus after the 1,000-year reign if the New Covenant, for which he is the mediator forever, is everlasting**

Furthermore, an everlasting New Covenant means that Jesus the sacrificed Lamb will forever mediate the New Covenant, whereas the Jehovah's Witnesses dispense with Christ the angel as legal intermediary, his services no longer needed after the final human has been put on judgment again (*Insight*, 170). With an everlasting New Covenant, they are unable to eliminate Jesus as the legal intermediary and helper, explained in further detail below. With all of this inconvenient excess baggage it is understandable why the Jehovah's Witnesses need to remove the New Covenant so quickly. However, in doing so they have created a host of additional problems for their theology.

**b) The Jehovah's Witnesses' approach deprives the high priest Jesus of his priesthood, a problem they attempt to solve by inventing a separate "Melchizedek covenant." However, the so-called Melchizedek covenant is the New Covenant and therefore must last forever and include a priesthood of all Christian believers**

If the Davidic covenant lacks a priesthood and the New Covenant terminates near the beginning of the thousand year reign there is no vehicle, you might say, or covenant, to provide a priesthood for the high priest Jesus. Recognizing this shortcoming the Jehovah's Witnesses have apparently crafted another covenant called the “Covenant to be a Priest like Melchizedek” (the Melchizedek covenant) which is no covenant at all. They explain their novel approach this way:

**Covenant to Be a Priest Like Melchizedek.** This covenant is expressed at Psalm 110:4, and the writer of the Bible book of Hebrews applies it to Christ at Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17. It is a covenant made by Jehovah with Jesus Christ alone. Jesus apparently referred to it when making a covenant for a kingdom with his followers. (Lu 22:29) By Jehovah's oath Jesus Christ, the heavenly Son of God, would be a priest according to the manner of Melchizedek. Melchizedek was king and priest of God on earth. Jesus Christ would hold both offices of King and High Priest, not on earth, but in heaven. He was installed permanently into office after his ascension to heaven. (Heb 6:20; 7:26, 28; 8:1) The covenant is forever in operation, since Jesus will act under Jehovah's direction as King and High Priest forever. - Heb 7:3. (*Insight* p. 524)

Because this so-called Melchizedek covenant provides that Jesus would serve as king and high priest it avoids the Davidic covenant's problem of not having a priesthood, and of a temporary New Covenant, and it gives them the millennial "education-to-perfection program," the Law scrolls and judgment days, because the alleged Melchizedek covenant comes without restraints.

The problem, of course, is that the Melchizedek covenant is not a separate covenant at all. The verses they quote in support merely extol Christ's role under the Davidic and New covenants. The inspired writer of Hebrews made this perfectly clear in chapters 5-8. God declared Jesus to be a high priest according to the order of Melchizedek pursuant to his oath to David; he was not entering into yet another separate covenant relationship for yet another kingdom with Jesus as king and high priest. The



context of the entire discourse in Hebrews chapters 5-8 revolves around Christ as king and priest forever on the order of Melchizedek under the New Covenant. Although too long to quote them all here, these four chapters should be read. As high priest he became the surety, or guarantee, or pledge of the New Covenant in furtherance of the oath to David. The New Covenant takes out a people, or Christian house, for the heir to David's throne, Christ, who rules as king and high priest.

17 for in witness it is said: "You are a priest forever according to the manner of Mel·chiz'e-dek."

18 Certainly, then, there occurs a setting aside of the preceding commandment on account of its weakness and ineffectiveness. 19 For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in besides of a better hope did, through which we are drawing near to God. 20 Also, to the extent that it was not without a sworn oath, 21 (for there are indeed men that have become priests without a sworn oath, but there is one with an oath sworn by the One who said respecting him: "Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret), 'You are a priest forever.'") 22 to that extent also Jesus has become the one given in pledge of a better covenant. 23 Furthermore, many had to become priests [in succession] because of being prevented by death from continuing as such, 24 but he because of continuing alive forever has his priesthood without any successors. (Heb 7:17-24 NWT)

1 Now as to the things being discussed this is the main point: We have such a high priest as this, and he has sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens, 2 a public servant of the holy place and of the true tent, which Jehovah put up, and not man. 3 For every high priest is appointed to offer both gifts and sacrifices; wherefore it was necessary for this one also to have something to offer. 4 If, now, he were upon earth, he would not be a priest, there being [men] who offer the gifts according to the Law, 5 but which [men] are rendering sacred service in a typical representation and a shadow of the heavenly things; just as Moses, when about to make the tent in completion, was given the divine command: For says he: "See that you make all things after [their] pattern that was shown to you in the mountain." 6 But now [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent public service, so that he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises.

7 For if that first covenant had been faultless, no place would have been sought for a second; 8 for he does find fault with the people when he says: "'Look! There are days coming,' says Jehovah, 'and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant;' 9 not according to the covenant that I made with their forefathers in [the] day of my taking hold of their hand to

bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, because they did not continue in my covenant, so that I stopped caring for them,' says Jehovah.”

10 “‘For this is the covenant that I shall covenant with the house of Israel after those days,’ says Jehovah. ‘I will put my laws in their mind, and in their hearts I shall write them. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.

11 “‘And they will by no means teach each one his fellow citizen and each one his brother, saying: “Know Jehovah!” For they will all know me, from [the] least one to [the] greatest one of them. 12 For I shall be merciful to their unrighteous deeds, and I shall by no means call their sins to mind anymore.’”

13 In his saying “a new [covenant]” he has made the former one obsolete. Now that which is made obsolete and growing old is near to vanishing away. (Hebrews 8:1-3 NWT)

Psalm 110 places Jesus as king and priest squarely on David’s throne under the Davidic covenant, not a separate throne under the so-called Melchizedek covenant which would be redundant. The only throne which Jesus ascends as a Melchizedek-type king and priest is the Davidic throne pursuant to the Davidic covenant and under the New Covenant, which therefore must be everlasting and not temporary because Jesus rules forever.

We know this refers to Christ's priestly function under the New Covenant because Jesus was not priest while on earth as he was not of the tribe of Levi and became priest only at his death and ascension (Heb. 8:4). Like other prophetic statements, Isaiah 110:4 was projecting forward in time to that day. The only covenant inaugurated and invoked by his blood sacrifice is the New Covenant of his blood (Matt. 26:28). Jesus Christ, as high priest on the order of Melchizedek, could only ascribe to that role by and through the New Covenant. The so-called Melchizedek covenant is not a covenant separate from the New Covenant.

The Lord says to you, my lord:  
 “**Take your throne** at my right hand,  
 While I make our enemies our footstool.”  
**The scepter of your sovereign might**  
 The Lord will extend from Zion.  
 The Lord says: Rule over our enemies!  
 Yours is princely power from the day of your birth.  
 In holy splendor before the daystar,  
 Like the dew I begot you.  
 The Lord has sworn and will not waver:  
 “**Like Melchizedek you are a priest forever.**” (Psa. 110:1-4)

29 “Men, brothers, it is allowable to speak with freeness of speech to YOU concerning the family head David, that he both deceased

and was buried and his tomb is among us to this day. 30 Therefore, because he was a prophet and knew that God had sworn to him with an oath that he would seat one from the fruitage of his loins upon his throne, 31 he saw beforehand and spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that neither was he forsaken in Ha'des nor did his flesh see corruption. (Acts 2:29-31)

That the Davidic covenant included the priesthood of Jesus Christ as high priest under and in furtherance of the New Covenant is shown at Hebrews 10:11-17. Paul had just concluded a lengthy discourse explaining that Jesus presented himself as the ultimate sacrifice in his role as high priest. And as high priest (and king) Jesus took his seat on David's throne and through his death made the consecrated perfect through forgiveness of sins under the New Covenant.

11 Also, every priest takes his station from day to day to render public service and to offer the same sacrifices often, as these are at no time able to take sins away completely. 12 But this [man] offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet. 14 For it is by one [sacrificial] offering that he has made those who are being sanctified perfect perpetually. 15 Moreover, the holy spirit also bears witness to us, for after it has said: 16 "This is the covenant that I shall covenant toward them after those days," says Jehovah. "I will put my laws in their hearts, and in their minds I shall write them," 17 [it says afterwards:] "And I shall by no means call their sins and their lawless deeds to mind anymore." 18 Now where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer an offering for sin. (Heb. 10:11-18 NWT)

**c) All of the Jehovah's Witnesses' benefits under their temporary New Covenant terminate when their new covenant expires, shortly**

Because the Jehovah's Witnesses' New Covenant ends very soon they also lack a covenant vehicle to carry the 144,000 beyond their resurrection and through the thousand year reign. They cannot simply apply the benefits of the terminated New Covenant to the next life without its continued existence any more than one can obtain forgiveness of sin today under the obsolete and ineffectual Mosaic Law covenant, but that is precisely what they are attempting to do:

...others [earthly subjects of God's kingdom] are to benefit from his ransom sacrifice and gain everlasting life through the removal of their sins and accompanying imperfection. Rev 14:4; 1 John 2:1,2.  
(*Insight*, 736)

**d) The Jehovah's Witnesses' "covenant with Christ's followers" is a fabrication; it is not a valid separate covenant for yet another kingdom, but an administrative appointment with respect to the kingdom**

Without a replacement covenant they lack a basis, or authority, for ruling during the thousand years. You could say they lack enabling legislation. Their answer to this dilemma is Jesus' so-called 'covenant

with Christ's followers,' but this so-called "covenant with Christ's followers" is not a covenant for yet another kingdom, but rather an appointment of authority to run, or continue to administer, the fledgling church, Christ's kingdom of priests pursuant to the Davidic and New Covenant.

**Jesus' Covenant With His Followers.** On the night of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., after celebrating the Lord's Evening Meal Jesus made this covenant with his faithful apostles. To the 11 faithful apostles he promised that they would sit on thrones (Lu 22:28-30; compare 2 Ti 2:12.) Later, he showed that this promise extended to all spirit-begotten 'conquerors.' (Re 3:21; see also Re 1:4-6; 5:9, 10; 20:6.) On the day of Pentecost he inaugurated this covenant toward them by the anointing with holy spirit those disciples present in the upper room in Jerusalem. (Ac 2:1-4, 33) Those who would stick with him through trials dying his kind of death (Php 3:10; Col 1:24), would reign with him, sharing his Kingdom rule. The covenant remains operative between Jesus Christ and these associate kings forever. - Re 22:5 (*Insight*, 524, 525)

As a covenant it is ineffectual and intrinsically unable to bring about the forgiveness of sin and human perfection, redeem man or grant everlasting life. Neither was it intended as a means of rule over earthly subjects. The kingdom which the Jehovah's Witnesses claim is the object of their covenant is set out at Luke 22:28-30 and Matthew 19:27-30.

28 "However, YOU are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; 29 and I make a covenant ("confer" NAB; "assign" ESV; "appoint" Green's Literal) with YOU, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, 30 that YOU may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel. (Luke 22:28-30 NWT).

27 Then Peter said to him in reply: "Look! We have left all things and followed you; what actually will there be for us?" 28 Jesus said to them: "Truly I say to YOU, In the re-creation, when the Son of man sits down upon his glorious throne, YOU who have followed me will also yourselves sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. 29 And everyone that has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands for the sake of my name will receive many times more (a "hundredfold" Green's Literal) and will inherit everlasting life. (Matt. 19:27-30 NWT).

The Jehovah's Witnesses populate this covenant with the "bride" taken out during under the temporary New Covenant.

The purpose of the covenant is to take out a people for Jehovah's name as a part of Abraham's "seed." (Ac 15:14) They become the "bride" of Christ, and are the body of persons whom Christ takes into a covenant for the Kingdom to rule with Him. (Joh 3:29; 2 Cor 11:2; Re 21:9; Luke 22:29; Re 1:4-6; 5:9, 10; 20:6) The purpose of

the new covenant requires that it continue in operation until all of the “Israel of God” are resurrected to immortality in the heavens. (*Insight*, 524)

First, Jesus’ use of the Greek word *diathemai* means foremost to put apart, dispose (by assignment, compact or bequest [*Vine*’s]). And even though it can mean ‘covenant,’ in this particular context, with respect to this specific verse, Luke 22:29 means to arrange, dispose or appoint.

*Diathemi*, a verb ... (2)... means to arrange, dispose of, one’s own affairs (2a) of something that belongs to one: The Lord used it of His disciples with reference to the kingdom which is to be theirs hereafter, and of Himself in the same respect, as that which has been “appointed” for him by His Father: “And I appoint (*diathemi*) unto you a kingdom, as My Father hath appointed (*diathemi*) unto me” Lk 22:29;” (*Vine*’s, 67)

Other commentators are in accord, that the kingdom was to be his disciples’ thereafter. He was not creating another kingdom for the 144,000 to rule over earthly subjects in the next life. “As (the kingdom’s) administrators they are to share in it; hence they are to join with Jesus in the eschatological feast when he has come into His kingdom...” (G.W.H. Lampe, *Peake’s Commentary*, 840). Jesus was departing and left the apostles in charge.

The granting of the right to sit on thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel was specific to the apostles, not a general grant of power for the 144,000 to rule over earthly subjects under Revelation 20:4-6 during the thousand year reign.

Furthermore, the specific nature of the grant to the apostles to "judge" is clarified at Matthew 19:27-30. Everyone (not just the 144,000) who give up many things will receive a hundred times more and will inherit eternal life; but not everyone sits on twelve thrones judging the twelve tribes of Israel. That extra privilege of judging is reserved to the apostles, not the 144,000.

Secondly, a seemingly odd inauguration of this “covenant with Christ’s followers” has the Jehovah’s Witnesses borrowing and sharing the same Holy Spirit poured out at Pentecost that inaugurated the New Covenant, over the same group of people, (*Insight*, 524) even though the New Covenant is, according to them, severely limited in duration and scope, and this covenant was never ratified with Christ’s blood.

That aside, the scriptural support for extending the specific grant of authority to the apostles to include the future 144,000 is weak, if that. They teach that, “Those who would stick with him through trials dying his kind of death (Phil 3:10; Col 1:24) would reign with him sharing his kingdom rule” (*Insight*, 525). But that is also in error because a) many of the 144,000 have not died horrible, painful, tortuous deaths like Christ’s, b) Phil 3:10 refers to Paul’s “sharing of his sufferings in order to “attain the resurrection of the dead.” It says nothing about suffering in order to reign or judge over man during the thousand years, and Christ’s appointment was not because of their suffering, but because they stuck with him through his trials, and c) in Col 1:24 all Paul is rejoicing in is his own suffering, with no mention of how that places him on a throne during the millennial reign.

Third, those who reign at Revelation 20:4-6, the souls of those beheaded, are not the same as those on thrones entrusted with judgment, as the Jehovah’s Witnesses propose; so they can’t be “judging” the resurrected under these provisions as the claim.

Then I saw thrones; those who sat on them were entrusted with judgment. I also saw the souls of those who had been beheaded for their witness to Jesus and for the world of God and who had not worshipped the beast or its image nor had accepted its mark on their foreheads or hands. They came to life and they reigned with Christ for a thousand years. The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were over. This is the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is the one who shares in the first resurrection. The second death has no power over these; they will be priests of God and Christ, and they will reign with him [for] the thousand years. (Rev. 20:4-6 NAB) (also: I saw, ESV; And I saw the souls, NASB; I also saw the souls, CEV)

A literal translation does not read “Yes, I saw the soul ...” at Revelation 20:4 as the Jehovah’s Witnesses have interpreted it in order to associate these two groups of people as being the same, and place the 144,000 on judgment seats.

Furthermore, the 144,000 would have to share the reign with the Great Crowd who, like those who reign, have “not worshiped the beast or its image nor accepted its mark on their foreheads or hands.” This places the Great Crowd up in heaven, not on earth.

Fourth, since the Jehovah’s Witnesses believe the twelve tribes of Israel at Revelation 7:1-8 are the anointed 144,000 and they are to judge the twelve tribes of Israel pursuant to Luke 22:28-30 and Matthew 19:28, they end up judging themselves.

Fifth, Christ’s so-called “covenant with his followers,” as a redemptive covenant, is void and ineffective because it was never ratified with blood: “For where a covenant is, the death of him covenanting must be offered” (Heb. 9:16 *Green’s Literal*; see also Heb. 9:15-21). “... Without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness,” (Heb 9:22 NAB), and if there is no forgiveness of sin there can be no reconciliation, no “perfection.

Only Christ’s blood can form the basis of reconciliation (Eph. 2:13-16), redemption (Rom. 3:24-25), justification and salvation (Rom. 5:9), sanctification (Heb. 10:29), and life itself (John 6:53-56). Without Christ’s shed blood ratifying the so-called “covenant with Christ’s followers,” none of this is attainable. But it is under the New Covenant.

### **C) Summary of the Covenants and the Jehovah's Witnesses' Insurmountable Obstacles**

The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ numerous shortcomings with respect to these covenants critically undermines their theology. The so-called "covenant of Christ with his 144,000 followers" is ineffective and void, and cannot serve as a legitimate basis for their rule over man during the thousand year reign. Nor can “perfection,” forgiveness of sin and redemption for mankind come through this administrative appointment over Christ’s kingdom of priests, the church. The so-called "covenant to be a king like Melchizedek" is not a separate covenant at all, but part-and-parcel of the Davidic covenant and New Covenant - it exemplifies Christ’s role as king and priest when he ascended to David’s throne in the

first century, not 1914, where he rules over all things, including his kingdom and house of priests, the priesthood - all believing Christians under the everlasting New Covenant. These two so-called covenants were invented in order to place Jesus and the 144,000 in the thousand year reign without resorting to the Davidic and New Covenants and to justify or allow the Jehovah's Witnesses' works-based salvation plan.

Consequently, because the Jehovah's Witnesses' version of the Davidic covenant is for a throne only and includes no priesthood, and their Melchizedek covenant, which was supposed to make up for this shortcoming, is no separate covenant at all, they lack a priesthood for Christ to carry God's salvation plan forward under their scenario.

The only lawful means of accomplishing the Bible's stated purpose is via the Davidic covenant which, correctly interpreted, recognizes Christ's priesthood, and via the New Covenant which the Jehovah's Witnesses unfortunately cut short after two thousand years. As such it is impossible for Christ to rule as priest under their temporary version of the New Covenant through the millennial reign or to apply the benefits of forgiveness of sin, reconciliation and redemption (perfection) and life everlasting to any person during the thousand year reign or afterward.

The 144,000 have a similar problem. Because Christ's so-called "covenant with his followers" was only an administrative delegation of authority for the existing church and not a separate blood covenant, and because the apostles and not all 144,000 are to sit on thrones judging "Israel," or anyone else for that matter, and because no blood ratified this covenant, the 144,000 lack authority - they lack a legislative vehicle - for their priesthood to rule during the thousand year reign, or the means of "applying" the benefits of Christ's death to mankind. And, they can't use their New Covenant because it does not run through the thousand year reign.

The Jehovah's Witnesses' problems are compounded by the fact that the New Covenant in reality is not temporary and of limited duration, as they claim, but everlasting, eternal. And since it runs through the thousand year reign and covers all Christian believers, not only the 144,000, they are prohibited logistically and legally, by the clear language of the New Covenant from "perfecting," man, education him to this so-called state of perfection, placing him on judgment again, and testing him and putting him to death again based on deeds or acts they commit during the thousand year reign. There is a salvation plan apart from God and his Christ, unattainable, scripturally flawed and lacking in divine approval. These latter issues will be explored in detail in the next section.

**V. It is impossible for the Great Crowd and resurrected humans on earth to be "perfected" or justified by an educational program, strict adherence to external laws or decrees, and the passing of tests. Such works-based salvation by the Jehovah's Witnesses can never reconcile man to God and renders the blood sacrifice of Jesus worthless. All saved people must be parties to the New Covenant. Without Christ's blood sacrifice under the New Covenant there can be no redemptive forgiveness of sin, or benefit of the gift of life everlasting by grace for anyone in the Christian era.**

**A) The Jehovah's Witnesses' education-based salvation plan recapped**

One of the more interesting aspects of the Jehovah's Witnesses' belief system revolves around the thousand year reign and available avenues for man's reconciliation with God. To recap, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the second, or general, resurrection, occurs during the thousand year reign when the righteous like Abraham and Moses, and most of the earth's unrighteous are resurrected. When the Great Crowd is not busy restoring a radioactive apocalyptic earth to paradise, the Jehovah's Witnesses who survive the Great Tribulation embark on an educational program to elevate the unrighteous to a state of Adam-like "perfection." Because the New Covenant will have expired by then, and does not apply to the resurrected, the benefits of Christ's ransom blood sacrifice under the New Covenant cannot be used to lift these people up to perfection. If that were the case, many would already be "perfect" and there would be no need to enlighten them to that state. These enlightened individuals undergo judgment, the second judgment day period, during the thousand year reign (*Insight*, 788).

The opening of scrolls [of Rev 20:12, 13] evidently points to a time of education in the divine will, in harmony with Isaiah 26:9. The fact that "the scroll of life" is opened indicates that there is opportunity for those who heed that education to have their names written in that scroll. Ahead of them will be the prospect of eternal life in human perfection. (*Reasoning*, 337)

By the end of the thousand years, people on earth will have reached human perfection, being in the condition that Adam and Ever were in before they sinned. (*Insight*, 249)

In what sense do they not "come to life" until the end of the thousand years? This does not mean their resurrection. This 'coming to life' involves much more than merely existing as humans. It means attaining to human perfection. (*Reasoning*, 339)

Not to prophesy, but merely for the purpose of illustration ... Since a yearly increase of three percent, compounded, doubles the number about every 24 years, the entire 20 billion (20,000,000,000) could be resurrected before 300 years of Christ's Thousand Year Reign had elapsed, giving ample time for training and judging the resurrected ones without disturbing harmony and order on earth. (*Insight*, 793)

So, at John 5:28, 29a, Jesus was pointing ahead to the resurrection; then, in the remainder of verse 29, he was expressing the outcome after they had been uplifted to human perfection and been put on judgment. (*Reasoning*, 337)

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that after the thousand year reign all those educated through their training program are put through a final test and a third judgment day period; this includes the likes of Abraham, Moses and Isaiah. If they pass this test of faith they have their names permanently written in the book of life and are rewarded with everlasting life on earth. And in a world where death will be no more, that means immortality.

Accordingly, the heaven-bound 144,000 receive eternal life through faith, whereas mankind, all those



in line for an earthy reward, must obediently perform deeds that are in harmony with the new books, or so-called scrolls of instruction mentioned at Revelation 20:11-15. They are judged based on deeds performed during and after the thousand year reign, not those of today or this life. They state:

**Time of the earthly resurrection.** We note that this judgment is placed in the Bible in the account of events occurring during Christ's Thousand Year Reign with his associate kings and priests. These, the apostle Paul said, "will judge the world." (1Co 6:2) "The great and the small," persons from all walks of life, will be there to be judged impartially. They are "judged out of those things written in the scrolls" that will be opened then. This could not mean a record of their past lives nor a set of rules that judges them on the basis of their past lives. For since "the wages sin pays is death," these by their death have received the wages of their sin in the past. (Ro 6:7, 23) Now they are resurrected that they might demonstrate their attitude toward God and whether they wish to take hold of the ransom sacrifice of Jesus Christ that was given for all. (Mt 20:28; Joh 3:16) Though their past sins are not accounted to them, they need the ransom to lift them up to perfection. They must make their minds over from their former way of life and thought in harmony with God's will and regulations for the earth and its population. Accordingly, "the scrolls" evidently set forth the will and law of God for them during that Judgment Day, their faith and their obedience to these things being the basis for judgment and for writing their names indelibly, at last, into the "scroll of life." (*Insight*, 788)

In the judgment scene at Revelation 20:11-15, during Christ's Millennial Reign "the scroll of life" is shown as opened to receive additional names; scrolls of instruction are also opened. Those who come back in the 'resurrection of the unrighteous' will thus have the opportunity of having their names written on "the scroll of life," provided they obediently perform deeds that are in harmony with the scrolls of instruction (Ac 24:15) Of course, faithful servants of God who come back in the resurrection of the righteous will already have their names in the "scroll of life." By their loyal obedience to the divine instructions, they will keep their names in it.

How does a person get his name permanently retained in the "book of life"? For those who are in line to receive heavenly life, it is by conquering this world through faith, proving themselves faithful even to death." Re 2:10; 3:5) For those who are in line to receive life on earth, it is by proving loyal to Jehovah through a final, decisive test at the end of Christ's Millennial Reign. (Re 20:7, 8) Those who maintain integrity through that final test will have their names retained permanently by God in the "book of life." (*Insight*, 251)

**B) No man can be justified or perfected by an educational program.**

The Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation doctrine is flawed for numerous reasons. First, even assuming for a moment that God's plan has always been to revert man back to the naked, innocent condition enjoyed by Adam and Eve on earth before they ate of the tree of the knowledge of the good and bad, or that they were "perfect" to the same extent that Christ was, the idea that perfection can ever be taught or people justified through an educational program flies contrary to the Bible's predominant message and negates the reason why God sent his Christ down to be crucified. The Law, any law, is ineffective to redeem or perfect man.

In this context as it relates to reconciliation with the Almighty the word "perfect" refers to a condition free of sin, a permanent condition which could only be achieved through the blood of Christ. Paul went to great length explaining this. No law or decree, especially the Mosaic Law, brings anything to perfection.

18 Certainly, then, there occurs a setting aside of the preceding commandment on account of its weakness and ineffectiveness. 19 For the Law made nothing perfect, but the bringing in besides of a better hope did, through which we are drawing near to God. (Heb. 7:18,19 NWT)

11 If, then, perfection were really through the Levitical priesthood, (for with it as a feature the people were given the Law,) what further need would there be for another priest to arise according to the manner of Mel-chiz'e-dek and not said to be according to the manner of Aaron? (Heb. 7:11 NWT)

Paul specifically referred to law or decrees besides the Mosaic Law, any laws; in fact it would be silly to merely replace the Mosaic Law with another set of written laws (i.e., the Jehovah's Witnesses' Law scrolls of the millennium). Jesus Christ nailed all externally imposed laws and decrees to the cross; they are ineffective as a means of achieving redemption and perfection.

21 Is the Law, therefore, against the promises of God? May that never happen! For if a law had been given that was able to give life, righteousness would actually have been by means of law. 22 But the Scripture delivered up all things together to the custody of sin, that the promise resulting from faith toward Jesus Christ might be given to those exercising faith. (Gal. 3:21,22 NWT)

13 Furthermore, though YOU were dead in YOUR trespasses and in the uncircumcised state of YOUR flesh, [God] made YOU alive together with him. He kindly forgave us all our trespasses 14 and blotted out the handwritten document against us, which consisted of decrees and which was in opposition to us; and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the torture stake. (Col. 2:13,14 NWT)

Perfection means, among other things, removal of sin through the blood sacrifice of Christ.

12 But this [man] offered one sacrifice for sins perpetually and sat down at the right hand of God, 13 from then on awaiting until his enemies should be placed as a stool for his feet. 14 For it is by one [sacrificial] offering that he has made those who are being sanctified perfect perpetually. (Heb. 10:12-14 NWT)

14. By a single offering he has perfected for all time those who are sanctified: While the Levitical sacrifices, after hundreds of years, were no nearer the attainment of their aim than they had been at the beginning, the sacrifice of Christ has purified his people from sin (cf, 2:11) and assured them of permanent maintenance in a right relation with God. This complete removal and forgiveness of sin, we are reminded, was promised in Jeremiah's prophecy of the new covenant, already quoted in 8:8-12. (F.F. Bruce, *Peake's Commentaries*, 1016)

Therefore, those who would be perfected (justified) under the Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation plan pursuant to the so-called Law scrolls of Revelation 20:12 will have fallen from grace, as Paul clearly said.

4 YOU are parted from Christ, whoever YOU are that try to be declared righteous by means of law; YOU have fallen away from his undeserved kindness. (Gal. 5:4 NWT)

To put it another way, you cannot teach perfection; you can read the entire Bible but its mastery will not justify you; only God's grace and Christ's death through the blood of the New Covenant will accomplish this. Enlightenment comes through internalized spirituality, by the Holy Spirit, a change of heart, not strict legalistic adherence to externally imposed Law scrolls. Jesus quoted the prophets at John 6:45 who said, "They shall all be taught by God," and "Everyone who listens to my Father and learns from him comes to me," meaning they will be taught to come and know Jesus in this age, to learn about the only means of salvation, faith in Christ and justification or perfection pursuant to his death, and the wonderful grace of the Almighty. Only God's gift brings acquittal.

16 Also, it is not with the free gift as it was with the way things worked through the one [man] that sinned. For the judgment resulted from one trespass in condemnation, but the gift resulted from many trespasses in a declaration of righteousness ("acquittal" NAB). (Rom. 5:16)

**C) Only the sins of the 144,000 are forgiven under the Jehovah's Witnesses' new covenant, which is clearly not a Bible teaching**

Secondly, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that only God and the 144,000 are parties to the New Covenant of Jeremiah 31:31-34, and therefore no one else besides the 144,000 can achieve perfection because under their New Covenant only the sins of the 144,000 are forgiven.

34 "And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, 'KNOW Jehovah!' for they will all of them

know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them," is the utterance of Jehovah. "For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more." (Jer. 31:34 NWT)

This is another important point to remember, and difficult for the average Christian to comprehend, but the only people whose sins are forgiven pursuant to Jesus' sacrifice in this life - from Adam to the beginning of the thousand year reign - are the 144,000. Furthermore, the benefit of the forgiveness of sin by Christ's sacrifice is only available to earthly subjects of Christ's thousand year kingdom in the next life. Sins of this life are not forgiven because the Jehovah's Witnesses teach, incorrectly, that the wages of sin for men is death - death is punishment for man's sins. They state:

This could not mean the record of their past lives nor a set of rules that judges them on the basis of their past lives. For since the "wages sin pays is death," these by their death have received the wages of their sin in the past. (Ro 6:7, 23)

[Jesus] repurchased them so that they could become **his family**, doing this by presenting the full value of his ransom sacrifice to the God of absolute justice in heaven. (Heb 9:24) He thereby gains a Bride, a heavenly congregation formed of his followers. (compare Eph 5:23-27; Re 1:5,6; 5:9,10; 14:3,4). Messianic prophecies also show he will have "**offspring**" as an "Eternal Father." (Isa 53:10-12; 9:6,7) To be such, his ransom must embrace more than those of his Bride. In addition to those "bought from among mankind as firstfruits" to form that heavenly congregation, therefore, others are to benefit from his ransom sacrifice and gain everlasting life through the removal of their sins and accompanying imperfection. (Re 14:4; 1 Jo 2:1,2) Since those of the heavenly congregation serve with Christ as priests and "kings over the earth," **such other recipients of the ransom benefits must be earthly subjects of Christ's kingdom and as children of an "eternal Father" they attain everlasting life.** (*Insight*, 736)

It is understandable why the Jehovah's Witnesses don't want mankind's sins forgiven in this life because it would deprive them of the ability to "educate them to perfection" during the thousand year reign. Otherwise, those who merit the resurrection would not have been resurrected as sin-laden mortals in need of perfection through the removal of sin through their sin-removal program. Or stated another way, the Jehovah's Witnesses need sinners to re-educate during the millennial reign. This would ostensibly include those Jehovah's Witnesses who are not of the 144,000 who would have been part of the Great Crowd had they lived long enough.

But even if the Jehovah's Witnesses' theory denying Christ's sacrifice for mankind in this life were true, they can't simply apply the benefits from one lifetime derived from one person to other people in a completely different life. Yet this transfer of forgiveness of sin by osmosis is precisely what they teach: The descendants, or "family," receive salvation by virtue of their descent. But Scripture teaches otherwise and emphasizes the importance of individual responsibility. Each individual is saved based on their righteousness, beliefs and conduct. YHWH God made this clear in the book of Ezekiel.

... when a land sins against me by breaking faith, I stretch out my hand against it and break its staff of bread, I let famine loose upon it and cut off from it both man and beast; and even if these three men were in it, Noah, Daniel and Job, they could save only themselves by their virtue ... I swear they could save neither sons nor daughters; they alone would be saved. (Ezek. 15:13, 14, 16)

**D) Only true believers who are parties to the New Covenant can receive forgiveness of sins and other attendant benefits**

Aside from the obvious, that Christ's death brought forgiveness of sins for all true believers committed in this life, those who obtain this benefit, God's people, must be parties to the New Covenant.

Any man not a party to the New Covenant cannot obtain its benefits anymore than a Baal-worshipping Assyrian could obtain benefits under the Mosaic Law not being a circumcised member of the nation of Israel. And no one can have their robes washed in the blood of the Lamb Jesus, have their sins permanently forgiven in the Christian era and be perfected or justified (declared righteous) during the thousand year reign under an expired New Covenant anymore than a Christian today can have his or her sins forgiven under the obsolete Mosaic law.

Make no mistake about this one fact: it is absolutely impossible, logically or scripturally, for the Jehovah's Witnesses to educate the resurrected to perfection (justification, a declaration of righteousness and reconciliation with God; a state of sinlessness) under any set of laws, especially the so-called Law scrolls of Revelation 20:12. The gift of reconciliation, redemption, sanctification, justification and forgiveness of sins through the exercise of faith and God's gift of grace is only possible by and through the New Covenant of Christ's blood.

**E) The Jehovah's Witnesses' teaching that resurrected man, including billions of non-believers, will not be judged for sins committed in this life is not biblical**

Third, as difficult as it might be to wrap one's mind around, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that resurrected mankind, roughly 20 billion, are judged based on their deeds or conduct during the thousand year reign, not this life today. For all practical purposes they are starting all over again. They reason that because man is supposedly acquitted of sin at death and that he paid for his sins with the wages of death he cannot be put on judgment for evil deeds committed in this life, only the next life during the thousand year reign. He will be judged based on his obedience to future millennial Law scrolls, divine instruction or laws and regulations (the Watchtower magazine, etc.?) which are intended to educate or enlighten him to perfection.

Both those who formerly did good things and those who formerly practiced bad things will be "judged individually according to their deeds." What deeds? **If we were to take the view that people were going to be condemned on the basis of deeds in their past life, that would be inconsistent with Romans 6:7: "He who has died has been acquitted from his sin."** It would also be unreasonable to resurrect people simply for them to be destroyed. So, at John 5:28, 29a, Jesus was pointing ahead to the resurrection; then, in the remainder of verse 29, he was expressing the outcome after they

had been uplifted to human perfection and been put on judgment.  
(*Reasoning*, 337)

**Time of the earthly resurrection.** We note that this judgment is placed in the Bible in the account of events occurring during Christ's Thousand Year Reign with his associate kings and priests. These, the apostle Paul said, "will judge the world." (1Co 6:2) "The great and the small," persons from all walks of life, will be there to be judged impartially. They are "judged out of those things written in the scrolls" that will be opened then. This could not mean a record of their past lives nor a set of rules that judges them on the basis of their past lives. For since "the wages sin pays is death," these by their death have received the wages of their sin in the past. (Ro 6:7, 23) (*Insight* p. 788)

Since these discussions of Romans 6:7 and Romans 6:23 were placed side-by-side the contradiction should have been self-evident. The manner in which the Jehovah's Witnesses interpret these verses renders them mutually exclusive. If one is acquitted of sin he is declared not guilty and avoids punishment. As such he would not then be punished with death, the wages of sin. Furthermore, it is curious why they apply Romans 6:7 ("for he who has died has been acquitted from [his] sin") to the resurrected unrighteous when the surrounding paragraphs are directed to only the so-called 144,000 who alone are supposedly baptized into Christ's death (Rom. 6:1-11) under their doctrine. It makes absolutely no sense.

That aside, the Greek word *dikaioo* means 'acquittal' (NWT) or 'absolved' (NAB) 'justified' (*Green's Literal*), or primarily 'deemed to be right' (*Vine's*, 69). But if you look closely at its use in Romans 6:7 you will notice that the Jehovah's Witnesses have plucked it out of context as they frequently do and fail to understand the unambiguous meaning of Paul's discourse. He was referring to a spiritual death to sin for the Christian believer, not the physical, mortal death of all men.

1 Consequently, what shall we say? Shall we continue in sin, that undeserved kindness may abound? 2 Never may that happen! Seeing that we died with reference to sin, how shall we keep on living any longer in it? 3 Or do YOU not know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we were buried with him through our baptism into his death, in order that, just as Christ was raised up from the dead through the glory of the Father, we also should likewise walk in a newness of life. 5 For if we have become united with him in the likeness of his death, we shall certainly also be [united with him in the likeness] of his resurrection; 6 because we know that our old personality was impaled with [him], that our sinful body might be made inactive, that we should no longer go on being slaves to sin. 7 For he who has died has been acquitted from [his] sin.

8 Moreover, if we have died with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him. 9 For we know that Christ, now that he has been raised up from the dead, dies no more; death is master over him no

more. 10 For [the death] that he died, he died with reference to sin once for all time; but [the life] that he lives, he lives with reference to God. 11 Likewise also YOU: reckon yourselves to be dead indeed with reference to sin but living with reference to God by Christ Jesus.

12 Therefore do not let sin continue to rule as king in YOUR mortal bodies that YOU should obey their desires. 13 Neither go on presenting YOUR members to sin as weapons of unrighteousness, but present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, also YOUR members to God as weapons of righteousness. 14 For sin must not be master over YOU, seeing that YOU are not under law but under undeserved kindness. (Rom. 6:1-14 NWT)

Paul is defending “the gospel against the charge that it promotes moral laxity” (NAB note 6, 1-11). He refers to having ‘died to sin,’ and that those baptized were baptized into Christ’s death and buried with him. The symbolic death leads to life with Christ. And true believers must think of themselves as being dead to sin. Nothing in those verses can be interpreted to imply a physical death, or that all evil people are acquitted of their sins at death because Paul made it very clear that “...it is reserved for men to die once for all time and after this a judgment” (Heb. 9:27 NWT). The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ misinterpretation would actually encourage moral laxity.

Furthermore, Christ died only once for sin and will never again return to die for forgiveness of sins so the resurrected sinful billions could never obtain the benefit of his sacrifice which he made under the so-called expired New Covenant (Romans 6:10). Christ died once (Heb. 9:27,28).

And Hebrews 6:23 cannot mean that all men are punished with death for their sins. This too is taken out of context because Jesus said “... whoever hears my word and believes in the one who sent me has eternal life and will not come to condemnation but has passed from death to life” (John 5:24). The wages of sin, death, is not everyone’s punishment or reward.

21 What, then, was the fruit that YOU used to have at that time? Things of which YOU are now ashamed. For the end of those things is death. 22 However, now, because YOU were set free from sin but became slaves to God, YOU are having YOUR fruit in the way of holiness, and the end everlasting life. 23 For the wages sin pays is death, but the gift God gives is everlasting life by Christ Jesus our Lord. (Rom. 6:21-23 NWT)

The Christian path leads to eternal life even though one dies physically, with one limited exception at 1 Corinthians 15:51,52. For others there is spiritual death followed by physical death and judgment; nothing here even remotely suggests that they will not be judged on Judgment Day for deeds committed in this life.

**F) All men are judged for their conduct in this life; true believers are passed over in the condemnation**

Fourth, Paul stated that man is judged on the basis of deeds committed while in the present physical body, not the resurrected body of the next age.

We know that while we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord, for we walk by faith, not by sight ... we would rather be away from the body and at home with the Lord. So whether we are at home or away, we make it our aim to please him. **For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil.** (2 Cor 5:6-10, NAB)

Since we are all judged for our conduct in this life, whether good or evil, Paul was speaking not only to the 144,000 as the Jehovah's Witnesses routinely claim, but to all men. The implications of this are enormous because first century Christians were therefore comprised not only of the 144,000 and the New Testament was not directed in most instances to only the 144,000. Of course, the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that since Paul's words here refer only to the anointed 144,000, it still allows for resurrected man to be judged for deeds committed in the next physical body. But if that is the case, not only are some of the 144,000 committing evil deeds today, the 144,000 anointed are judged like the rest of us. And since some of the 144,000 are evil-doers because they don't live up to their own high ethical standards they can't be part of the 144,000. Therefore it is impossible to use that number 144,000 as a benchmark for counting down to the end times, for identifying who of the anointed remain on earth. No one knows who they are until they have been sifted through the judgment process.

The Jehovah's Witnesses counter this by modifying verse 10 to conform to their doctrine by claiming the anointed are "awarded," not judged, implying that they all will receive something good, but such an interpretation flies contrary to the "evil" conduct of some of their members which shall be punished, not awarded. Furthermore, a literal interpretation does not say they will be "awarded."

### **G) The Jehovah's Witnesses' millennial scrolls are actually recordings of man's deeds in this life, not additional rules and regulations**

Fifth, in light of the above it is not possible for the scrolls of Revelation 20:12 to be additional "divine instructions" that will educate man to "perfection" which would be a blatant contradiction of God's New Covenant at Jeremiah 31:31-34. They are, to the contrary, a record of this life's deeds, and based on these deeds man might have his name entered in God's scroll, or book, of life. We know this because the Bible says so.

I saw the dead, the great and lowly, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. Then another scroll was opened, the book of life. The dead were judged according to their deeds, by what was written in the scrolls. (Rev. 20:12 NAB) ("... according to what they had done as recorded in the books" NIV; same NLT; "judged by what those books said they had done" CEV; "according to what they had done as recorded in the books" TAIV)

"... books were opened: ... These contained deeds, not names ... another book ... which is the book of life: this is a register and contains names, not deeds." (N. Turner, *Peake's Commentaries*, 1058)



To regard the scrolls as containing laws to abide by is to resurrect the Mosaic Law or similar decrees which are ineffective and useless for purposes of lasting justification, that is, perfection. They were nailed to the cross and God purposed to write his laws in Christians' hearts (Jeremiah 31:32-34). Therefore the scrolls must be a record of deeds.

Lastly, the Jehovah's Witnesses' so-called Law scrolls of Revelation 20:12 could not be used to educate, or be complied with, by anyone during the thousand year reign because they aren't even opened until after the thousand years.

**VI. The first resurrection did not begin in 1918 with the resurrection of the 144,000 to heaven, and salvation is not granted based on deeds performed in accordance with new rules and regulations during the 1,000-year reign.**

The Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the first resurrection, for the 144,000 only, began in 1918 and will conclude shortly (*Revelation Climax*, 103, 277), a theory at drastic odds with Revelation 20:4-6.

4 And I saw thrones, and there were those who sat down on them, and power of judging was given them. Yes, I saw the souls of those executed with the ax for the witness they bore to Jesus and for speaking about God, and those who had worshiped neither the wild beast nor its image and who had not received the mark upon their forehead and upon their hand. And they came to life and ruled as kings with the Christ for a thousand years. 5 (The rest of the dead did not come to life until the thousand years were ended.) This is the first resurrection. 6 Happy and holy is anyone having part in the first resurrection; over these the second death has no authority, but they will be priests of God and of the Christ, and will rule as kings with him for the thousand years. (Rev. 20:4-6 NWT)

Admittedly confusing, these verses have been debated by religious scholars for centuries with respect to which "coming to life" event is the first resurrection. It is obviously not 1918 before the Great Tribulation, before the entire book of Revelation for that matter. Rather, the first resurrection will be associated with a) the first "coming to life" event, b) the second "coming to life" event, c) both events, d) during the thousand year reign, or e) after the thousand year reign. It leaves no room for a 1918 first resurrection.

The Jehovah's Witnesses reject these 'coming to life' events as being the first resurrection, especially the second event where the rest of the dead do not come to life until the thousand years are over.

As clearly stated, it is not "the rest of the dead" who share in the first resurrection. That resurrection is for those who rule with Christ for the thousand years. (Reasoning, 338.) Who, then, are "the rest of the dead?" They are all those of mankind who died as a result of Adamic sin and those who, though survivors of the great tribulation or those who may be born during the Millennium, need to be relieved of the death-dealing effects of such sin. - Compare

Ephesians 2:1. In what sense do they not “come to life” until the end of the thousand years? This does not mean their resurrection. This ‘coming to life’ involves much more than merely existing as humans. It means attaining to human perfection, free from all effects of Adamic sin. Notice that the reference to this in verse 5 occurs immediately after the preceding verse says that those who will be in heaven “came to life.” In their case it means life free from all effects of sin; they are even specially favored with immortality. (1 Cor 15:54) For the rest of the dead,” then it must mean the fullness of life in human perfection. (*Reasoning*, 339) (emphasis added)

For them, the first ‘coming to life’ event only refers to the spiritual condition of those sharing in the 1918 first resurrection of the 144,000, but on closer inspection their interpretation is neither scriptural nor possible. Earlier it was established that the 1914 kingdom date was unsustainable and events associated with that date belonged in the first century, that the Second Coming of Christ did not happen in 1914 but lies ahead, and consequently the first resurrection of 1 Thessalonians 4:16, 17, and 1 Corinthians 15:22, 23 which follows closely and is tightly bound to the return or Second Coming, must also lie in the future, not 1918.

Never-the-less, the Jehovah’s Witnesses make an effort to place the beginning of the first resurrection of the 144,000 in 1918, and even go so far as to base their theory of an “earlier” resurrection in Philippians 3:11 on the fact that the Greek word *exanastasis* can mean getting out of bed in the morning; thus it is an early resurrection, a very weak argument, at best. They claim:

First resurrection. Revelation 20:5, 6 refers to the resurrection of those who will reign with Christ as "the first resurrection." The apostle Paul speaks of this first resurrection also as "the earlier resurrection from the dead [literally, the out-resurrection the out of dead (ones)]." Php 3:11, NW, Ro Int) ... Paul is not denying a general resurrection by this language, but emphasizing that of believers." Charles Ellicott's Commentaries (1865, Vol. II, p. 87) remarks on Philippians 3:11: "' The resurrection from the dead;' i.e., as the context suggests, the first resurrection (Rev. xx. 5), when at the Lord's coming the dead in Him shall rise first (1 Thessalon. iv. 16), and the quick be caught up to meet Him in the clouds (1 Thess. iv. 17); compare Luke xx. 35. The first resurrection will include only true believers, and will apparently precedes the second, that of non-believers and disbelievers, in point of time ... Any reference here to a merely ethical resurrection (Cocceius) is wholly out of the question." One of the basic meanings of the word *exanastasis* is getting up from bed in the morning; thus it can well represent a resurrection occurring early, otherwise called "the first resurrection." Rotherham's translation of Philippians 3:11 reads: "If by any means I may advance to the earlier resurrection which is from the dead." (*Insight*, 787)

But this is not true. A literal translation makes no reference to an earlier resurrection but simply reads

“... if somehow I may attain to the resurrection from the dead” (Phil. 3:11) (Same NAB and KJV.) The Jehovah’s Witnesses’ reliance on an 1865 commentary by Charles Ellicott does not advance their cause. Even though he sees two resurrections, he ties the first to the Second Coming and places no date on either event, let alone 1918.

If Ellicott is not a Jehovah’s Witness it is doubtful that he believes the Second Coming happened in 1914 and the first resurrection began in 1918. And if that is the case he would place the first resurrection of believers during the thousand year reign and the second of non-believers after the thousand year reign which is at direct odds with the Jehovah’s Witnesses. Furthermore, since Ellicott’s second resurrection only includes non-believers and disbelievers, that will include by necessity resurrected members of the Great Crowd who do not survive the Great Tribulation, and Abraham, Moses and Isaiah etc. N. Turner on the other hand comments “Elsewhere the NT does not envisage two resurrections, which are an invention of this (another) author (*Peake’s Commentaries*, 1057).

And just because Rotherham inserted the word ‘earlier’ into Philippians 3:11 in his amplified Bible, that is not enough to overcome the overwhelming weight of scriptural authority to the contrary. Philippians 3:11 does not say there is an earlier resurrection. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are merely using one other person’s error as precedent. One is reminded of Jesus’ warning at Matthew 15:14: “If a blind person leads a blind person, both will fall into the pit.”

The Jehovah’s Witnesses also attempt to shoehorn the general resurrection into the thousand year reign, which would enable the generally resurrected to be judged then during the so-called second judgment day period, teaching that the one sitting on the white throne judges during the thousand year reign and not after. But this is also a false interpretation.

Also, there are many "unrighteous" persons buried in Sheol (Hades), mankind's common grave, or in the "sea," watery graves. The judgment of these along with "the righteous" resurrected on earth is described in Revelation 20:12, 13; "And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in it, and death and Hades gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds.

Time of the earthly resurrection. We note that this judgment is placed in the Bible in the account of events occurring during Christ's Thousand Year Reign with his associate kings and priests. These, the apostle Paul said, "will judge the world." (1Co 6:2) "The great and the small," persons from all walks of life, will be there to be judged impartially. (*Insight*, 788)

However, Revelation 20:11 only refers to one throne, the white one, not multiple thrones, that is, the thrones of 20:5, 6 which the 144,000 allegedly occupy. This act of judgment from the white throne follows the thousand year reign; it is not during that reign, but after Satan’s release from prison, after the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city are surrounded, after the evil ones are consumed by fire, and after the Devil is thrown into the pool of fire and sulfur.

7 Now as soon as the thousand years have been ended, Satan will be let loose out of his prison, 8 and he will go out to mislead those nations in the four corners of the earth, Gog and Ma'gog, to gather them together for the war. The number of these is as the sand of the sea. 9 And they advanced over the breadth of the earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and devoured them. 10 And the Devil who was misleading them was hurled into the lake of fire and sulphur, where both the wild beast and the false prophet [already were]; and they will be tormented day and night forever and ever.

11 And I saw ("Next I saw" NAB; "Then I saw" RSV, TNIV, NIV, NASB, AB, WENT) a great white throne and the one seated on it. From before him the earth and the heaven fled away, and no place was found for them. 12 And I saw the dead, the great and the small, standing before the throne, and scrolls were opened. But another scroll was opened; it is the scroll of life. And the dead were judged out of those things written in the scrolls according to their deeds. 13 And the sea gave up those dead in it, and death and Ha'des gave up those dead in them, and they were judged individually according to their deeds. 14 And death and Ha'des were hurled into the lake of fire. This means the second death, the lake of fire. 15 Furthermore, whoever was not found written in the book of life was hurled into the lake of fire. (Rev. 20:7-15 NWT) (emphasis added)

The Jehovah's Witnesses' theory creates a problem for themselves because moving the white throne judgment back into the thousand year reign means their 'perfected' man cannot be judged as they claim at the final test after the thousand year reign, a test by the way which is not mentioned at all in Revelation 20:9, but only assumed.

9 And they advanced over the breadth of the earth and encircled the camp of the holy ones and the beloved city. But fire came down out of heaven and devoured them. (Rev. 20:9)

All it says is that the camp and city of the holy ones become surrounded by Satan's quislings Gog and Magog and their ilk who are then surreptitiously destroyed with no mention that the holy ones are subjected to yet another test. Remember, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses this test is administered to Abraham, Moses and Isaiah, etc. who have been enlightened and lifted up to human perfection by the Great Crowd, and learn of Jesus, which is unlikely to say the least. (Moses? Of Matthew 17:3?). Although the Jehovah's Witnesses have been known to deny it, this really is "works-based" salvation.

In the judgment scene at Revelation 20:11-15, during Christ's Millennial Reign "the scroll of life" is shown as opened to receive additional names; scrolls of instruction are also opened. Those who come back in the 'resurrection of the unrighteous' will thus have the opportunity of having their names written on "the scroll of life," provided they obediently perform deeds that are in harmony with the scrolls of instruction (Ac 24:15) Of course, faithful servants of

God who come back in the resurrection of the righteous will already have their names in the "scroll of life." By their loyal obedience to the divine instructions, they will keep their names in it.

How does a person get his name permanently retained in the "book of life"? For those who are in line to receive heavenly life, it is by conquering this world through faith, proving themselves faithful even to death." Re 2:10; 3:5 For those who are in line to receive life on earth, it is by proving loyal to Jehovah through a final, decisive test at the end of Christ's Millennial Reign. (Re 20:7, 8) Those who maintain integrity through that final test will have their names retained permanently by God in the "book of life." (*Insight*, 251)

The Jehovah's Witnesses are cautioned to read Ephesians 2:8,9: "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not from you; it is the gift of God; it is not from works so no one may boast." Furthermore, a final test is not necessary by the Jehovah's Witnesses' own admission since they also state that the issue pertaining to man's obedience has been already settled, that the issue of God's sovereignty "has been judicially settled by the court of heaven," (*Insight*, 170). But if that is the case there would be no reason to keep putting 'perfected' man on judgment.

In the end, the so-called 1918 first resurrection of the 144,000 must be moved forward near the inception or into the thousand year reign because it can't stay where it is and has no other place to go since the first resurrection can't take place after the thousand year reign because they flatly reject that option (*Reasoning*, 338). Consequently, the Jehovah's Witnesses are stuck in a conundrum or two, another vexing set of problems:

- (1) The resurrected 144,000 are merged with the resurrected members of the Great Crowd and the unrighteous during the thousand year reign, all of whom are therefore part of the first resurrection. But since those of the first resurrection, which would actually be the general resurrection, do not die again in the Second Death (Rev. 20:6), educating them to perfection and putting them on judgment would be pointless.
- (2) If returning the 144,000's first resurrection to the thousand year reign shifts, or bumps, the generally resurrected to after the thousand year reign, there is no one to educate to perfection and put on judgment during the millennial period.

**VII. The patriarchs and prophets of old and the Great Crowd go to heaven because a) their names are written in the Lamb's scroll, b) resurrected flesh and blood humans cannot be immortal, and because death will be vanquished forever they must experience immortality in heaven as spirit humans with their glorified flesh and blood bodies transformed, not as earthly flesh, and c) physiologically and morally corrupt mortals who enter into the kingdom are not raised corrupt, but rather incorrupt, incorruptible and immortal, the only condition which allows them to inherit the kingdom of heaven which is in heaven.**

First, the Jehovah's Witnesses commit another significant error teaching that only the 144,000 are

entered in the “Lamb’s scroll of life” and they alone enter the holy city of Jerusalem in heaven.

“The Lamb’s scroll.” “The scroll of life of the Lamb” is a separate scroll; apparently containing only the names of those with whom the lamb, Jesus Christ, shares his Kingdom rule, including those still on earth who are in line to receive heavenly life (Re 13:8; compare Re 14:1, 4.) Those enrolled in “the Lamb’s scroll” are spoken of as entering the holy city, New Jerusalem, thus becoming part of the heavenly messianic Kingdom. (Re 21:2, 22-27) Their names are written both in “the Lamb’s scroll” and in the other scroll, God’s “book of life.” Php 4:3; Re 3:5. (*Insight*, 251)

They overlook the fact that the Lamb’s scroll contains the names of all those from the foundation of the world who have not worshiped the beast.

All the inhabitants of the earth will worship it (the beast), all whose names were not written from the foundation of the world in the book of life, which belongs to the Lamb who was slain. (Rev. 13:8 NAB).

The patriarchs and prophets of old, the so-called 144,000 and the Great Crowd who have not worshipped the beast must be included in the Lamb’s scroll (because if not they all worship the beast) and it is these people who go to heaven and enter the city of New Jerusalem at Revelation 21:10, 27.

10 So he carried me away in [the power of the] spirit to a great and lofty mountain, and he showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God ... 27 But anything not sacred and anyone that carries on a disgusting thing and a lie will in no way enter into it; only those written in the Lamb’s scroll of life [will]. (Rev. 21:10,27)

The Lamb, Jesus Christ, was not slain or crucified from the foundation of the world but two thousand years ago. Therefore, this verse refers to those slain, or persecuted, literally or figuratively, from the foundation of the world, whose names are entered into the Lamb’s scroll; much longer than 2,000 years.

Paul knew that Jesus was not slain or suffered from the “foundation of the world”; he stated the opposite when he compared and distinguished the temporal repeated sacrifices of high priests under the Law with Christ the high priest’s offer of himself one time, not since the foundation of the world, but two thousand years ago at his death.

Otherwise he would have to suffer often from the foundation of the world. But now he has manifested himself once for all time at the conclusion of the system of things to put sin away through the sacrifice of himself. (Heb. 9:24-26 NWT)

As such, heaven is open to more than 144,000 people. That number is not to be taken literally. This conforms to what Jesus said, that many will recline at the banquet with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob in the kingdom of heaven (Matt. 8:11), which the Jehovah’s Witnesses concede is “in heaven, not earth,”

(New World Translation, 1653). Paul drove this point home, stating that the ancients of faith are reaching out for a better place, a heavenly land where God “prepared a city for them” (Heb. 11:16). This city is the holy city, New Jerusalem, in heaven.

Secondly, the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that “perfected” resurrected man will be like the allegedly “perfect” Adam, but Adam by their account was corruptible, and became corrupt. He was not immortal or incorruptible but could, and did, die.

By the end of the thousand years, people on earth will have reached human perfection, being in the condition that Adam and Ever were in before they sinned. (*Insight*, 249)

While Adam even in his perfection, had a corruptible body, it was only because of his rebellion against God that he came into “enslavement to corruption” and passed this condition on to all of his offspring, the human race. (Ro 8:20-22). (*Insight*, 1197)

However, the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ resurrected man who passes the final test will have his or her name permanently written in God’s book of life (*Insight*, 251). It is permanent because death is no more, swallowed up forever and ever (Rev. 20:14; 1 Cor. 15:26,54). And a life without death is deathlessness, immortality. As such, the so-called “perfected” resurrected man would be nothing like the so-called “perfect” Adam because Adam could die but the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ perfected and tested man cannot.

Whether they realize it or not, the Jehovah’s Witnesses resurrect mankind as physiologically and morally corrupt, yet immortal flesh and blood human beings, which is an oxymoron: one can be “corrupt” or “incorrupt/incorruptible and immortal,” but not both. Corruption (Greek *phthora*) is defined as decay, i.e., ruin, either physically or ethically, with a moral significance (*Vine’s*, 263). Corruptible (Greek *phthartos*) used of man, being mortal, as liable to decay (*Vine’s*, 263).

Immortality (Greek *euthanasia*) means deathlessness and the swallowing up of mortality (1 Cor. 15:53, 54). Hence, one cannot be corrupt or corruptible flesh subject to death yet not subject to death at the same time since immortality swallows up mortality and corruption.

More to the point is the impossibility of such resurrected immortals living a flesh and blood existence on earth. The Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that immortality is reserved for the 144,000 glorified spirit bodies in the kingdom of heaven which is in heaven (NWT, 1653; *Insight*, 786, 1189, 1190). But if that’s true, the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ Great Crowd of sheep who inherit the kingdom of heaven (*Great Man*, ch. 111, 11, 12) must do so as glorified spirit bodies in heaven because flesh and blood (corrupt yet “perfectible” fleshly humans) cannot inherit the kingdom of heaven. Jesus said, “It is the spirit that gives life, while the flesh is of no avail” (John 6:23). Accordingly, the Great Crowd of Revelation 7:9 must be standing in heaven, not on earth (*Reasoning*, 336, and 1 Cor. 15:50).

In other words, only immortals inherit the kingdom of heaven, so the Great Crowd which inherits this kingdom, the sheep of Matthew 25:31-46, must do so as immortals in heaven. They are not simply confined to being “earthly subjects” of the future inherited kingdom. Inheritance (Greek *kleronomeo*) means to be an heir, obtain by inheritance, receive by lot, to possess, “to receive as one’s own, to obtain” (*Vine’s*, 139). It is used as a birth right, or gift, but nowhere in its definition does it state or can it

be implied that those who inherit are mere subjects of that kingdom. In fact, the definition specifically rejects the idea of earthly, corrupt human inheritance of the kingdom of God/heaven.

(7) the kingdom of God, which the morally corrupt cannot “inherit,” 1 Cor 6:9,10, the “inheritance of which is likewise impossible to the present physical constitution of man, 1 Cor 15:50; (8) incorruption, impossible of “inheritance” by corruption, 1 Cor 15:50. (*Vine’s*, 140)

Whereas “perfect” Adam might have been only corruptible, their resurrected man would be corrupt as he will not have been, and cannot be, educated to perfection. The surviving Great Crowd would likewise be corrupt because they are supposedly not parties to the New Covenant and have no access to the tree(s) of life during the thousand year reign.

Third, as stated, the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach that those resurrected during the thousand year reign, the general resurrection, are raised corrupt, sinful. They must be. Otherwise there would be no need to raise them to human perfection. They teach that corrupt man is raised corrupt; this natural man (all of mankind for all practical purposes) is raised a natural flesh and blood man. Thus, they argue there are two types of resurrected bodies: The heaven-bound 144,000 are raised immortal and incorruptible, and their 20 billion earthly subjects are raised mortal and corrupt with the possibility of eventual immortality. But this is not what the Bible teaches.

The Christianity espoused by Paul at 1 Corinthians chapter 15 sees only one type of resurrected body, from the natural to the spiritual, mortal to immortal, corrupt to incorruptible; the regeneration or transformation sequence from one type of body to another. C.S.C. Williams sums up the Christian perspective nicely.

... the gist of the argument is that the actual physical particles of the earthly body are not raised up but that a spiritual body or expression of the man’s whole self, continuous with his earthly body but different from it, will be provided him on the heavenly plane. (*Peake’s Commentary*, 964)

A careful reading of 1 Corinthians 15:36-54 shows that Paul spoke of one type of resurrection body, not two. We go from one to the other. Nowhere does he state that natural, corrupt man will be raised in the future as a natural and corrupt man, but rather, “the dead will be raised incorruptible”; from the natural to the spiritual. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are improperly reading their theory into these verses without reference to what Paul was saying. Paul’s reference to natural and spiritual bodies in verse 44 and the then-existence of earthly and heavenly bodies at verse 48 cannot be interpreted out of context to refer to the future fleshly condition of 20 billion humans on earth. He was merely pointing out that there are two types of bodies, the natural earthly and the spiritual in heaven, that’s all, just like the fact that the moon and fish have different types of bodies, for he then goes on at great length to explain how the resurrected are changed from one to the other.

36 You unreasonable person! What you sow is not made alive unless first it dies; 37 and as for what you sow, you sow, not the body that will develop, but a bare grain, it may be, of wheat or any one of the rest; 38 but God gives it a body just as it has pleased him, and to each of the seeds its own body. 39 Not all flesh is the same



flesh, but there is one of mankind, and there is another flesh of cattle, and another flesh of birds, and another of fish. 40 And there are heavenly bodies, and earthly bodies; but the glory of the heavenly bodies is one sort, and that of the earthly bodies is a different sort. 41 The glory of the sun is one sort, and the glory of the moon is another, and the glory of the stars is another; in fact, star differs from star in glory.

42 So also is the resurrection of the dead. It is sown in corruption, it is raised up in incorruption. 43 It is sown in dishonor, it is raised up in glory. It is sown in weakness, it is raised up in power. 44 It is sown a physical body, it is raised up a spiritual body. If there is a physical body, there is also a spiritual one. 45 It is even so written: "The first man Adam became a living soul." The last Adam became a life-giving spirit. 46 Nevertheless, the first is, not that which is spiritual, but that which is physical, afterward that which is spiritual. 47 The first man is out of the earth and made of dust; the second man is out of heaven. 48 As the one made of dust [is], so those made of dust [are] also; and as the heavenly one [is], so those who are heavenly [are] also. 49 And just as we have borne the image of the one made of dust, we shall bear also the image of the heavenly one.

50 However, this I say, brothers, that flesh and blood cannot inherit God's kingdom, neither does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Look! I tell YOU a sacred secret: We shall not all fall asleep [in death], but we shall all be changed, 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality. 54 But when [this which is corruptible puts on incorruption and] this which is mortal puts on immortality, then the saying will take place that is written: "Death is swallowed up forever." (1 Cor. 15:36-54 NWT).

Under their theory, during the thousand year reign the Jehovah's Witnesses' resurrected man (and the Great Crowd) will always remain corrupt because, as pointed out earlier, they cannot be educated to incorruptible "perfection" and they can't be declared righteous or justified and reconciled to God under the only viable covenant, the New Covenant, through forgiveness of sins because (they claim) they are not, or cannot be, parties to it, and, it will have expired by then. And, because Jesus only gave his life once for forgiveness of sins and will never return for that purpose, the earthly Great Crowd and resurrected billions will forever be corrupt flesh, natural and earthly, and can therefore never inherit the future kingdom of God. Their theory is simply not feasible because death is swallowed up forever and that can only result in a state of immortality, a spiritual reality, in heaven. Paul said it best:

52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, during the last trumpet.  
For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised up

incorruptible, and we shall be changed. 53 For this which is corruptible must put on incorruption, and this which is mortal must put on immortality. (1 Cor. 15:52-53 NWT)

At Hebrews 11:39, 40, Paul emphasized the heavenly calling of the ancients reminding us that their perfection would not take place apart from the believers of the Christian era.

And having obtained witness through the faith, these all did not obtain the promise. God having foreseen something better concerning us, that they should not be perfected apart from us. (Heb. 11:39,40, *Green's Literal*)

In a bizarre twist of logic the Jehovah's Witnesses interpret these verses to mean that the perfecting of the ancients happens after the heavenly perfection of the 144,000, and that the "perfection" of Abraham, Moses and Isaiah, etc., is completed on earth, not heaven like the 144,000. But that can't be. They state:

Then the Bible calls faithful men of old such as Abraham righteous. (Ge 15:6; Jas 2:21) Many of these men are listed at Hebrews chapter 11, and of them the writer says: "And yet all these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise as God foresaw something better for us [spirit-begotten, anointed Christians like Paul], in order that they might not be made perfect apart from us," (Heb 11:39, 40) so, the perfecting of them will take place after that of the ones having part in "the first resurrection." (*Insight*, 788)

After listing many pre-Christian persons of faith, Hebrews 11:39, 40 says: "All these, although they had witness borne to them through their faith, did not get the fulfillment of the promise, as God foresaw something better for us, in order that they might not be made perfect apart from us." (Who are here meant by "us"? Hebrews 3:1 shows that they are "partakers of the heavenly calling." The pre-Christian persons who had faith, then, must have a hope for perfect life somewhere other than in heaven.) (*Reasoning*, 78)

Again, they miss the point and the focus of what is being said about the ancients not being perfected apart from Christians, even if it's only the heaven-bound 144,000. If men of old and the so-called 144,000 are perfected in different times and different places they are perfected apart from each other, obviously. If the 144,000 are perfected by faith but all others by education and testing and the performance of deeds as the Jehovah's Witnesses teach, then they are perfected apart from each other, the opposite of what God intends. But since they are not to be perfected apart from each other and the so-called resurrected 144,000 gain ultimate perfection, like Christ did in heaven (Heb. 5:9, 7:28), the ancients must be perfected in heaven also, not earth.

Because the two groups are not to be perfected apart from each other, the 144,000 do not receive a better reward than the men of ancient times. Prior to both groups' ultimate heavenly perfection,

Christians realized the saving grace of Christ that the ancients could only dream of, and in that sense God foresaw something better concerning Christians, not that they receive a better and higher reward than Abraham or Moses.

The Jehovah's Witnesses counter otherwise, arguing that the ancients or anyone before Christ receives a lesser reward and don't go to heaven based on a cursory glance at Matthew 11:11,12 which says:

When John heard in prison of the works of the Messiah, he sent his disciples to him with this question, "Are you the one who is to come, or should we look for another?" ... Amen, I say to you, among those born of women there has been none greater than John the Baptist; yet the least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he." (Mt 11:1-3, 11, 12 NAB)

They teach that the ancients don't go to heaven, "Because John will not be in the heavens" either, based on the above verses," (Reasoning, 78,79). But again they read these verses out of context. John was alive when this question was posed to Jesus who answered in the present tense, saying "... a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is." At that time, before the time when John would receive his resurrected glorified body, he was, as corrupt flesh, lesser than one in the kingdom of heaven. These verses say nothing about his future condition and any extrapolation to the contrary is unwarranted.

The Jehovah's Witnesses also refer to Christ's resurrecting of Lazarus as a demonstration of "what resurrection will mean for mankind in general" (*Insight*, 785; *Reasoning*, 336-337), implying they will be corrupt flesh on earth. But if that is the case the 144,000 would not go to heaven at all. Lazarus, as a first century Christian, was one of the anointed 144,000 and their resurrection, according to the Jehovah's Witnesses, is invisible to the human eye (*Insight*, 787). So it couldn't be an example of the generally resurrected corrupt body, and if it was it disproves their "invisible 1918 first resurrection of the 144,000" theory (*Reasoning*, 336-337). And if Lazarus was not one of the anointed it proves wrong their theory that all first century Christians were of the anointed class of 144,000, which only leaves open the possibility that Lazarus, resurrected Lazarus, quit following Christ, but that seems unlikely.

Jesus didn't say that he resurrected Lazarus to show what resurrection meant for mankind in general. He did it for love, because he had pity. He resurrected his friend "...so that the Son of God may be glorified through it," (John 11:4) and "so that (they) may believe" (John 11:15).

**VIII. Jesus Christ, as helper with respect to propitiation and legal intermediary, is not discarded at the end of the thousand year reign; as the propitiation, the sacrificed Lamb and mediator of the New Covenant he is present forever to intercede on man's behalf, without which man cannot have access to God, be reconciled to the Almighty or have his name written permanently in the Book of Life.**

Not only do the Jehovah's Witnesses teach that Jesus Christ is a mere angel (*Reasoning*, 218) but they discard him and his services as an intermediary and helper with respect to his role as propitiation, his sacrificial death.

Since sin and death are to be completely removed from earth's inhabitants, this also brings to an end the need for Jesus' serving as

“a helper with the Father” in the sense of providing propitiation for the sins of imperfect humans. (1Jo 2:1, 2) That brings mankind back to the original status enjoyed when the perfect man Adam was in Eden. **Adam, while perfect, needed no one to stand between him and God to make propitiation. So, too, at the termination of Jesus’ Thousand Year Reign rule, earth’s inhabitants will be both in position and under responsibility to answer for their course of action before Jehovah God as the Supreme Judge, without recourse to anyone as legal intermediary, or helper.** (*Insight*, 170)

This is false teaching, and assumes man is meant to revert back to a state of innocents and nakedness, a condition before Adam, before he partook of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and bad, when he was susceptible to death. Mankind has grown beyond that, and the gift envisioned is a new creation, where death is no more, where man cannot die and thus will be in a condition unlike what Adam and Eve enjoyed.

More importantly, the sacrificial Lamb, Jesus, is the expiation for our sins (1 John 2:1), and without his continuous eternal presence as the propitiation there can be no continued reconciliation with God. Unlike the high priest under the Mosaic Law who yearly and repeatedly offered animal blood sacrifice for temporary remission of sins on behalf of the people, Jesus, as high priest forever on the order of Melchizedek intercedes as high priest with the propitiation of his body forever. That this sacrificial Lamb will not be discarded is visually evident by his eternal presence on the throne. After the holy city Jerusalem comes down out of heaven in the concluding chapters of Revelation, John sees the propitiatory sacrificed Lamb on God’s throne, twice.

1 And he showed me a river of water of life, clear as crystal, flowing out from the throne of God and of the Lamb 2 down the middle of its broad way. And on this side of the river and on that side [there were] trees of life producing twelve crops of fruit, yielding their fruits each month. And the leaves of the trees [were] for the curing of the nations. 3 And no more will there be any curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in [the city], and his slaves will render him sacred service; ... (Rev. 22:1-3)

The Lamb serves eternally as the propitiatory once-sacrificed Lamb and as intercessor, legal intermediary, between God and resurrected, glorified man. If Christ were thrown out, all men would lose access to YHWH God.

21 (for there are indeed men that have become priests without a sworn oath, but there is one with an oath sworn by the One who said respecting him: “Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret), ‘You are a priest forever,’”) 22 to that extent also Jesus has become the one given in pledge of a better covenant. 23 Furthermore, many had to become priests [in succession] because of being prevented by death from continuing as such, 24 but he because of continuing alive forever has his priesthood without any successors. 25 Consequently he is able also to save completely

those who are approaching God through him, because he is always alive to plead (make intercession NAB, ESV) for them. (Heb. 7:21-25 NWT) (emphasis added)

Jesus as high priest represents redeemed man before God under the New Covenant which embraces all Christian believers, not just the 144,000. He is intercessor, he mediates, he is the legal mediator of the everlasting eternal New Covenant, without which there can be no forgiveness of sins, no reconciliation.

6 But now [Jesus] has obtained a more excellent public service, so that he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises. (Heb. 8:6 NWT)

15 So that is why he is a mediator of a new covenant, in order that, because a death has occurred for [their] release by ransom from the transgressions under the former covenant, the ones who have been called might receive the promise of the everlasting inheritance. (Heb. 9:15 NWT)

Jesus served, and serves, in several capacities. He is the expiation or propitiation for our sins. He was more than an “offering for” propitiation; he offered himself. He was the propitiation (Rom. 3:25; 1John 2:2, 4:10). Jesus also is the New Covenant (Isaiah 42:6) of which he is mediator, or legal intermediary, and intercessor on man’s behalf forever. Jesus is high priest forever on the order of Melchizedek under the New Covenant and Davidic covenant over the Christian house of God (Heb. 10:19-21). As everlasting high priest he is the propitiation as high priest, and accordingly, the propitiation, the Lamb’s capacity, lasts forever.

Jesus took his seat forever as high priest under the New Covenant and will rule forever over the house of God (Heb. 10:19-21). Jesus, as high priest forever on the order of Melchizedek mediates the New Covenant which must last forever (Heb. 7:21-8:12). Jesus is mediator of the New Covenant in heavenly Jerusalem, the holy city (Heb. 12:22-24; Rev. 21:9-22:5). Accordingly, Jesus Christ the high priest over God’s people of the New Covenant and legal intermediary of the New Covenant, as the propitiation itself and being the only blood-ratified and valid covenant and the surety of that covenant, performs all of these functions as high priest forever. To deny Christ’s continuous role in this regard is to deny Christ.

**IX. Conclusion: All Christian believers must be parties to the New Covenant which is everlasting, not temporary; otherwise, there is no hope for salvation in this life or the next.**

One of the most profound mistakes the Jehovah’s Witnesses make is limiting the New Covenant in time and scope; it lasts approximately two thousand years (*Insight*, 524) and applies only to the 144,000. The Jehovah’s Witnesses are the rare exception when they refer to the New Covenant as being an “indefinitely lasting” covenant. “Indefinite” is a term they tend to overuse and misapply because a two thousand year covenant which ends very soon with the resurrection of the last of the 144,000 to

immortality is far from being “indefinite” but is most definitely definite and not what Old and New Testament writers had in mind when referring to the New Covenant.

The Hebrew word used repeatedly with reference to the New Covenant is *olam*, meaning i.e., the vanishing point; time out of mind (past or future) i.e. (practically) eternity; always, ever, everlasting, perpetual, evermore (*Vine's*, 205). “*Olam* means “eternity; remotest time; perpetuity,” (Ibid.). With the prepositions *ad* or *le* it can sometimes mean into the indefinite future, a grammatical construct lacking with respect to the New Covenant. So it is for good reason that the overwhelming, pervasive weight of scriptural authority recognizes the eternal, everlasting and endless nature of the New Covenant which God said will never be broken.

The book of Jeremiah specifically identifies an eternal, everlasting covenant: “And I will cut an everlasting covenant with them, to do good to them” (Jer. 32:40, *Green's Literal*; “eternal,” NAB, KJV). “... I will raise up to you an everlasting covenant.” (Ezek. 16:60, *Green's Literal*). “And my servant, David, shall be a ruler to them forever. And I will cut a covenant of peace with them; it shall be an everlasting covenant with them (Ezek. 37:25,26, *Green's Literal*). “I will renew with you the everlasting covenant, the benefits assured to David” (Isa. 55:3, NAB). Even Paul referred to “... the blood of the eternal covenant, ...” (Heb. 13:20, NAB, ESV). And as explained in detail above, an everlasting or eternal New Covenant, or one that even lasts through the thousand year reign, is fatal to the Jehovah's Witnesses' salvation program.

It also strains reason to believe that God Almighty sacrificed his son for only 144,000 people, and that only their sins are forgiven under the New Covenant, and only their hearts are changed by the power of the Holy Spirit and only these 144,000 are born again, or from above. That is the thrust of the Jehovah's Witnesses' arguments, but this too is simply not true. Again, the New Covenant:

31 “Look! There are days coming,” is the utterance of Jehovah, “and I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; 32 not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers in the day of my taking hold of their hand to bring them forth out of the land of Egypt, ‘which covenant of mine they themselves broke, although I myself had husbandly ownership of them,’ is the utterance of Jehovah.” 33 “For this is the covenant that I shall conclude with the **house of Israel** after those days,” is the utterance of Jehovah. “I will put my law within **them**, and in **their heart** I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people.” 34 “And they will no more teach each one his companion and each one his brother, saying, ‘KNOW Jehovah!’ for they will all of them know me, from the least one of them even to the greatest one of them,” is the utterance of Jehovah. “For I shall forgive **their** error, and **their sin** I shall remember no more.” (Jer. 31:31-34).

Common sense alone will tell you that God's people are not limited to the tiniest fraction of all those whom he gathers to himself; that the priestly "rulers" of a people (144,000) are not the “people.” The Levitical priesthood was never regarded as the “people” or the “nation” of Israel, but were members of the “people,” members of the “nation,” although the inverse does allow for the entire nation of Israel to

be referred to as “priests” (Ex. 19:6), just as all Christian believers are a “priesthood” (1 Pet 2:9). It bears repeating: if you are not a party to the New Covenant, salvation and reconciliation with God is beyond reach under the Jehovah’s Witnesses’ invalid salvation and reconciliation plan.

It is a common refrain, but all too often the Jehovah’s Witnesses point to passages in the New Testament and say “that doesn’t apply to me, it only applies to the 144,000 anointed,” but this view is utterly illogical. Don’t think for one minute that the New Testament was written primarily for the benefit of a mere 144,000. Just look at the expansive, all-embracing language and you will see that the message of the gospels was directed to millions, not a few thousand; and it was repeated many, many times. For example:

"For God so loved the world that he gave His only-begotten Son, that **everyone** believing into Him should not perish, but have everlasting life” (John 3:16); “But I say to you, that **everyone** who may confess me before men, the Son of man will also confess him before the angels of God ...” (Luke 12:8); “For **whoever** shall do the will of my Father in Heaven, that one is My brother and sister and mother” (Matt. 12:50); “And **everyone** living and believing into Me, though he die, he shall live” (John 11:26); “**Everyone** who believes that Jesus is the Christ has been born of God (1 John 5:1); “To this One all the prophets witness, so that through His name **everyone** believing into Him will receive forgiveness of sins;” (Acts 10:43); “For Christ is the end of law for righteousness to **everyone** that believes” (Rom. 10:4) (all *Green’s Literal Translation*).

Remember, the heirs to the Abrahamic promise, all believing Christians, are to be countless; this is the spiritual “house of Israel” which the Jehovah’s Witnesses wrongly teach number only 144,000 and who alone go to heaven. God, speaking through Ezekiel, identified the future sheep separated from the goats of Matthew 25:31-46 as being the “house of Israel, his people.

As for you, my sheep, says the Lord God, I will judge between one sheep and another, between rams and goats. ... I will make a covenant of peace with them ... Thus they shall know that I, the Lord, am their God, and they are my people, the house of Israel, says the Lord God. [You, my sheep, you are the sheep of my pasture, and I am your God, says the Lord God.] (Ezek. 34:17, 25, 30, NAB)

These same sheep, the Jehovah’s Witnesses teach, are the Great Crowd who supposedly inherit the kingdom of God as earthly subjects. But if that is true, it actually places the Great Crowd in the house of Israel along with the so-called 144,000 up in heaven, once again. And according to these verses the Great Crowd of sheep are also parties to the "covenant of peace," which is the New Covenant, and which accordingly positions them up in heaven.

Hopefully, in the final analysis, two facts have been made clear in the course of this paper. The Great Crowd of Revelation 7:9, whether identical as the 144,000 or as a separate group of people, is not standing on earth in an “approved condition” before God, but in heaven, before God’s throne, their

robes washed white in the blood of the New Covenant Jesus Christ, forever. And the 144,000 is a number that was never meant to be taken literally.

Jesus answered and said to him, “Amen, amen, I say to you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above . . . . no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water **and spirit**. . . . And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the desert, so must the Son of man be lifted up, so that **everyone** who believes in him may have eternal life. (John 3:3, 7, 14, 15)

Jesus is Lord!  
Ezekiel 13:18-21