

Are You Worshiping Jehovah Acceptably?

When we read about Aaron and the golden calf he made, we wonder what could have made those Israelites reject Jehovah and worship the image of an animal instead. (Ex 32:1-6) Jehovah had just led them up out of the land of Egypt, out of slavery. Had they forgotten so quickly? No, they didn't forget. We know this because the reason that they had Aaron make the golden calf was so they could have "*a festival to Jehovah*" using the calf. (Ex 32:5) Yes, they wanted to offer sacrifices of thanks to Jehovah and rejoice in His releasing them from slavery. (Ex 32:5, 6)

They selected the image of a young bull because that was the most powerful beast they knew of. They probably thought the comparison would please Jehovah, the most powerful God.

So why did this make Jehovah angry? (Ex 32:10) Because they were worshipping Him in a way that was unacceptable to Him. (Ex 20:4) When Moses lingered up on the mountain the Israelites asked Aaron to make for them something tangible, something they could see in their worship of Jehovah. (Ex 32:1) In their minds they were still worshipping Jehovah.

No doubt the Israelites didn't think they were doing anything wrong. They even had the approval of Aaron, their spiritual man in charge while Moses was away. They had just heard the word of God, that He did not approve of the use of images in worship. (Ex 20:4, 5) Ignoring God's instructions they acted according to their own reasoning, and did what they thought was right.

Let's not make the same mistake that they did. Instead of relying on what we think is right, let's look at the word of God ourselves and see if our worship is in compliance with scripture and therefore acceptable by God. Here are some scriptures that you should consider:

(1 Timothy 2:5) For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

(Matthew 23:10) Neither be called leaders, for your Leader is **one**, the Christ.

(John 14:6) Jesus said to him: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

(Matthew 23:8) But you, do not you be called Rabbi, for one is your Teacher, and all of you are brothers.

(2 Corinthians 1:24) Not that we are the masters over your faith, but we are fellow workers for your joy, for it is by your faith that you are standing.

(Matthew 7:15) "Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves.

(Luke 21:8) He said: “Look out that you are not misled, for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The due time is near.’ Do not go after them.

(Matthew 24:23-25) “Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘There!’ do not believe it.²⁴ For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will perform great signs and wonders so as to mislead, if possible, even the chosen ones.²⁵ Look! I have forewarned you.

(Mark 13:21-23) “Then, too, if anyone says to you, ‘See! Here is the Christ,’ or, ‘See! There he is,’ do not believe it.²² For false Christs and false prophets will arise and will perform signs and wonders to lead astray, if possible, the chosen ones.²³ You, then, watch out. I have told you all things beforehand.

(Luke 17:23) And people will say to you, ‘See there!’ or, ‘See here!’ Do not go out or chase after them.

(2 Peter 2:1-3) However, there also came to be false prophets among the people, as there will also be false teachers among you. These will quietly bring in destructive sects, and they will even disown the owner who bought them, bringing speedy destruction upon themselves.² Furthermore, many will follow their brazen conduct, and because of them the way of the truth will be spoken of abusively.³ Also, they will greedily exploit you with counterfeit words. But their judgment, decided long ago, is not moving slowly, and their destruction is not sleeping.

(Deuteronomy 18:20-22) “If any prophet presumptuously speaks a word in my name that I did not command him to speak or speaks in the name of other gods, that prophet must die.²¹ However, you may say in your heart: “How will we know that Jehovah has not spoken the word?”²² When the prophet speaks in the name of Jehovah and the word is not fulfilled or does not come true, then Jehovah did not speak that word. The prophet spoke it presumptuously. You should not fear him.’

(Isaiah 2:22) For your own sakes, quit trusting in mere man, Who is only the breath in his nostrils. Why should he be taken into account?

(Psalm 146:3, 4) Do not put your trust in princes Nor in a son of man, who cannot bring salvation.⁴ His spirit goes out, he returns to the ground; On that very day his thoughts perish.

(Jeremiah 17:5a) This is what Jehovah says: “Cursed is the man who puts his trust in mere humans,

(Colossians 3:23) Whatever you are doing, work at it whole-souled as for Jehovah, and not for men,

(2 Timothy 3:16, 17) All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight, for disciplining in righteousness, ¹⁷ so that the man of God may be fully competent, **completely equipped** for every good work.

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Do you, as a Jehovah's Witness, say: "Those scriptures are all fine and good, but Jehovah's witnesses are nothing like those Israelites, so what do those verses have to do with me? "

Is that what you think? Well let's compare. (Ex 32:1-6)

The Israelites Loved Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses Love Jehovah their God.

The Israelites gave up their precious gold earrings for Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses give up their time and finances for Jehovah their God.

The Israelites gathered for a Festival to honor Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses gather together in conventions for Jehovah their God.

The Israelites sang songs of praise to Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses sing songs of praise to Jehovah their God.

The Israelites had a forbidden object in the center of their worship of Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses have a forbidden object in the center of their worship of Jehovah their God.

What? Do you say that last one is not true? But is it? Let's add one more comparison:

The Israelites thought they were doing nothing wrong in their worship of Jehovah their God.
Jehovah's Witnesses think they are doing nothing wrong in their worship of Jehovah their God.

The Israelites had just been told that the use of idols for worship was forbidden, so they had to know that what they were doing was wrong, right?

Look at all of those quoted scriptures above. Jehovah's Witnesses have been reading those verses the entire time they have been Jehovah's Witnesses. They are very familiar with them. But just as the Israelites did not think that the directive about images applied to them, Jehovah's Witnesses do not think that those scriptures about false Christs and false prophets apply to them.

Are they correct? Are the Governing Body (GB) of Jehovah's Witnesses (JW) different from those false prophets described in those verses? Are the GB not God's representatives here on earth? They claim to be, and they seem to truly believe that they are. But consider these words of Jesus Christ:

(Matthew 7:22, 23) Many will say to me in that day: 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and expel demons in your name, and perform many powerful works in your name?' ²³ And then I will declare to them: '**I never knew you!** Get away from me, you workers of lawlessness!'

Those men will call out to Christ with complete sincerity in their hearts. And they will point out the many fine and powerful works that they have performed in his name.

Christ does not deny their works. Nor does he deny their claim to come in his name. They truly have performed many powerful works. Just look at jw.org for the many examples they provide. And they have performed those works while claiming to represent him. But Jesus still tells them "*I never knew you.*"

Why does he say "*never*" to those "*in that day*"? Because from their very beginning they were "*false Christs and false prophets.*" (Mt 24:24)

How are they "*false Christs*"? They claim to be filling the position of Christ, just as the scribes and the Pharisees claimed the position of Moses. (Mt 23:2). And what is the position of Christ? "*Leader*" and "*Mediator between God and men.*" (Mt 23:10; 1Ti 2:5) Yes, they have assumed for themselves the position of mediator and religious leader. But Christ tells us that he is our one and only mediator and leader. (Mt 23:10; Jn 14:6)

How are they "*false prophets*"? For 150 years they have been saying "*the due time is near*", at times even providing dates (1874, 1878, 1914, 1918, 1925, 1975) for their predictions (Lu 21:8)

If their claims at Matthew 7:22 are true, why does Jesus reject them? Because just as Jehovah rejected the worship of the Israelites for disobeying Him, those men are rejected because they are disobeying Christ.

I have no doubt that the Israelites reasoned that the ban on carved images applied only to worshipping false gods, therefore it did not apply to them since they were worshipping the true God.

They were wrong.

Christians today who follow a human religious leader think that Christ's ban on doing so does not apply to them because their religious leader comes in the name of Christ, and leads them to Christ.

They are also wrong.

True, there are shepherds who "*take the lead*" (He 13:7), but they are strictly commanded to lead "*by example*" (Php 3:17; Titus 2:7; 1Pe 5:3), not by claiming authority.

Jesus gives clear directions to those who wish to hold positions of authority:

(Matthew 20:25-28) But Jesus called them to him and said: "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them. ²⁶ **This must not be the way among you**; but whoever wants to become great among you must be your minister, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must be your slave. ²⁸ Just as the Son of man came, not to be ministered to, but to minister and to give his life as a ransom in exchange for many."

What does "*lord it over*" mean? The Greek word Christ used (katakryrieuousin) merely means to exercise authority over others, to govern others. It does not refer to ruling harshly or oppressing others. The same goes for the Greek word (katexousiazousin), translated there as "*wield authority over*." No negativity is associated with those Greek words. (Mr 10:42-45) In fact, at Luke 22:25 Christ referred to those rulers as "*Benefactors*." The Greek word for benefactor is euergetés and means a *doer of good, a well-doer*. Other Bible translations render it *gracious lords, friends of the people, and everyone's friends*, showing the positive view of their benevolent rulership.

If what Jesus meant was that the apostles should not rule harshly, as current GB teaching on the matter claims, then he would have told them to do the opposite of that, which would be to rule gently and lovingly, to be "*Benefactors*". But he did not.

So if Jesus was not talking about harsh rulership, what was "*the way*" that he was referring to? He was referring to the mere act of exercising authority. And what is the opposite of that? **To not rule at all**. Yes, he said that "*whoever wants to be first (great) among you*" (Mt 20:21; Lu 22:30), must instead be your minister and slave. Instead of presenting themselves as authority figures, he directed them to take the opposite position of a slave and perform the lowly act of ministering to others.

Peter reiterates Christ's view on the matter:

(1 Peter 5:2, 3) Shepherd the flock of God under your care, serving as overseers, not under compulsion, but willingly before God; not for love of dishonest gain, but eagerly; ³ not lording it over those who are God's inheritance, but becoming **examples** to the flock.

Peter points out that the flock are "*God's inheritance*". The flock do not belong to the shepherds and therefore they do not possess the authority of ownership for them to be able to exercise it over the flock, just as they did not exercise authority over another man's slave. (Ro 14:4)

Taking the lead does not mean giving directions (orders). It means to walk out in front and lead by example. As Peter points out, those shepherding the flock are to lead by "*becoming examples to the flock*." (1Pe 5:2, 3; He 13:7; Php 3:17)

That is why Christ refers to those taking the lead as "shepherds". They are to "*shepherd the flock of God*" (1Pe 5:2) as a shepherd of sheep does. A true shepherd does not walk behind the flock and

drive it forward. He walks in front of the congregation by "*becoming examples to the flock*", and the sheep follow that example of their own accord, not under compulsion. (2Co 9:7; Phm 14)

Let's consider the term "Governing Body" for a moment. What is a governing body? Answer: A group of men who govern, who exercise continuous sovereign authority. (I would provide the Greek definition, but nowhere is a Christian "governing body" referred to in the Bible.)

You do not get to choose whether or not you obey a governor. You must obey. In contrast Paul tells us in Hebrews 13:7 that "*as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.*" Yes, it is up to us to decide. After we have contemplated how the conduct of those taking the lead turns out, that is to say, if after scrutiny we decide that their conduct is acceptable, only then should we "*imitate their faith.*"

Note that he does not say that if we judge their directions (orders) to be acceptable, to then obey them. No, but we are to examine their conduct. Why? Because those taking the lead are directed to use the example of their own conduct to lead the congregation. (1Pe 5:3) That actually works well in our everyday life as well, because the best way to teach someone is not to tell them, but to show them. As the old saying goes: "Actions speak louder than words." (Mt 5:16; 7:20) If we judge those taking the lead to be setting a good example, only then should we emulate their conduct, because attempting to govern others is forbidden.

(Matthew 20:25, 26) ... "You know that the rulers of the nations lord it over them and the great men wield authority over them." ²⁶ **This must not be the way among you;** ...

Well if Christ forbade them from exercising authority over others, what did Paul mean at Hebrews 13:17?

(Hebrews 13:17) Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over you as those who will render an account, so that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.

How is it that you are to be obedient and submissive to someone if they do not exercise authority over you? By following the example they set. Governing Body member Geoffrey W. Jackson expresses it well in his video: *Elders Take The Lead!* There he says: "We're not leaders, but we set the right example." "So, obviously, to take the lead means to do the work, to be a minister, to be a servant, to serve others." "...setting the right example, and then others following." (The full transcript is in my Transcripts folder) Yes, Hebrews 13:17 is an extension of Hebrews 13:7. First we must judge whether or not their conduct is acceptable, and if it is, we submit ourselves to imitating their good example.

Paul gives us an example of the good conduct we should imitate.

(Titus 2:7, 8) showing yourself to be an example of fine works in every way. Teach what is pure

with all seriousness, ⁸ using wholesome speech that cannot be criticized, so that those who oppose may be put to shame, having nothing negative to say about us.

No, setting a good example does not mean being a spiritual leader. Christ is our one and only spiritual leader. (Mt 23:10)

The GB members deny that they position themselves as spiritual leaders, and yet they direct and determine every aspect of JW's worship and belief. They have also said that they are neither inspired nor infallible. [w16.01 p. 23 par. 6] But then they send out directives to the congregations around the world and claim that their knowledge and insight comes from God. Their actions contradict their words. The following verses were written with such ones in mind:

(Ephesians 5:6) Let no man deceive you with empty words, for because of such things the wrath of God is coming upon the sons of disobedience.

(2 Peter 2:3) Also, they will greedily exploit you with counterfeit words. But their judgment, decided long ago, is not moving slowly, and their destruction is not sleeping.

Those taking the lead are not to "*preside*" over the congregation. (1Ti 3:5) Note the difference in the words used at 1 Timothy 3:5.

(1 Timothy 3:5) for if any man does not know how to preside over his own household, how will he care for the congregation of God?

To "*preside*" (prostēnai) over, means to manage, to rule. Timothy says that is what a man does in his own home.

To "*care*" (epimelēsetai) for, means to take care of, to attend to. Christ used that same Greek word in his illustration of the Samaritan who "*took care of*" the man beaten by robbers. (Lu 10:34)

(1 Timothy 2:2-5) concerning kings and all those who are in high positions, so that we may go on leading a calm and quiet life with complete godly devotion and seriousness. ³ This is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God, ⁴ whose will is that all sorts of people should be saved and come to an accurate knowledge of truth. ⁵ For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

Yes, regarding those men who have placed themselves in high positions (such as the GB), it "*is fine and acceptable in the sight of our Savior, God,*" for us to have come to the "*accurate knowledge of truth*" that there is only "*one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus.*" But the GB have placed themselves "*between God and men.*"

(John 14:6) Jesus said to him: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the

Father except through me.

The GB tell us that we should only believe what they tell us is "truth".

(John 18:37) For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is on the side of the truth listens to my voice."

Christ tells us to listen to his voice, while the GB tell us to listen to them. If we discover "Bible truths" on our own that conflict with what the GB teach, or point out a flaw in their teaching, we are marked as apostate.

(Romans 1:18) For God's wrath is being revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who are suppressing the truth in an unrighteous way,

If you would bring a "truth" to your elders (one that contradicts the GB), even though you had clear and unquestionable scriptural proof, you would get into serious trouble because you dared to contradict the GB. And they would threaten you with judicial action if you were to discuss your findings with others in the congregation. That is the very definition of "*suppressing the truth*." But that is how the elders are instructed to act by the GB.

(Romans 2:8) however, for those who are contentious and who disobey the truth but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and anger.

Those elders are guilty of '*disobeying the truth*' and '*obeying unrighteousness*,'

(1 Corinthians 13:4, 6) Love..., rejoices with the truth.

Yes, elders should rejoice with the truth, but they do not.

(2 Corinthians 4:2) But we have renounced the shameful, underhanded things, not walking with cunning or adulterating the word of God; but by making the truth manifest, we recommend ourselves to every human conscience in the sight of God.

The GB and their enforcers (the elders), are "*adulterating the word of God*" through their actions. But those who '*make the truth manifest*' even if it contradicts the GB have a good "*conscience in the sight of God*."

(John 8:45-47) Because I, on the other hand, tell you the truth, you do not believe me. ⁴⁶ Who of you convicts me of sin? If I speak truth, why is it that you do not believe me? ⁴⁷ The one who is from God listens to the sayings of God. This is why you do not listen, because you are not from God."

The elders listen to the instructions from the GB, even if it contradicts the Bible, because they are taught that being "*united in the same mind and in the same line of thought*" (that is to say, their line of thought) is more important than accurate knowledge. (1Co 1:10)

(John 8:31, 32) Then Jesus went on to say to the Jews who had believed him: "If you remain in my word, you are really my disciples,³² and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free."

The elders should value his words over the words of the GB.

(2 Thessalonians 2:11, 12) That is why God lets a deluding influence mislead them so that they may come to believe the lie,¹² in order that they all may be judged because they did not believe the truth but took pleasure in unrighteousness.

They are misled, and do not want to hear the truth from the Bible. They only want to hear what the GB tells them is "truth." They value their position as elder more than they do Bible truth.

(2 Timothy 3:8, 9) these also go on opposing the truth. Such men are completely corrupted in mind, disapproved as regards the faith.⁹ Nevertheless, they will make no further progress, for their folly will be very plain to all, as it was with those two men.

They do not want to hear the truths that you have found in the Bible.

(2 Timothy 4:4) They will turn away from listening to the truth and give attention to false stories.

So why do **The Governing Body** of Jehovah's Witnesses refer to themselves as such? Because they have set themselves up to **govern** Christ's sheep.

That is in direct violation of Christ's clear directions at Matthew 20:26.

Their very title identifies them as being disobedient to Christ.

The GB have even said that they believe that they are going to receive instructions from God, and when they pass on those instructions, although those instruction may "*seem strange, impractical, or illogical*", they say: "*that will hardly be the time to second-guess the direction or to view it with skepticism*." [w22.02 p. 6 ¶15, see also ws13 11/15 p. 20 ¶17]

That categorically and unequivocally contradicts the directions given to us in the Bible, which tell us to "*make sure*" (Php 1:10) and to "*test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God*." (1Jo 4:1; 1Th 5:21) We are NOT to unquestionably accept directions! That is how followers of false prophets are misled. We should follow the advice at Hebrews 13:9.

(Hebrews 13:9) Do not be led astray by various and strange teachings,

If you point this out, or dare contradict or challenge them in any way, they label you as an apostate who is going against God Himself, because they see themselves as your spiritual leaders and God's means of direction on earth. They clearly do claim the position of Christ. (Mt 23:10; Jn 10:8)

Now did Christ give the apostles a task to fulfill? Yes. They are to feed Christ's "*lambs*" and "*little sheep*." (Jn 21:15-17) "*Lambs*" are baby sheep. "*Little sheep*" are a bit older, but are not yet adults. These new ones to the teachings of Christ are fed the appropriate spiritual food for their spiritual age, that is to say, the proper food at "*the proper time*." (Mt 24:45)

Those who are new to the Bible need "*milk, not solid food*" (1Co 3:2), and the chosen ones of today♦ (Mt 24:31) have been given the task of serving that food to the lambs and little sheep. But once a sheep has matured they move beyond milk and feed themselves solid food. (He 5:11-6:2)

(♦ see my article "Anointed")

The directions Christ gave his apostles were to make disciples and baptize them. (Mt 28:19) He did not tell them to set up a governing body to tell his sheep what to do, how to think, and to direct every aspect of their worship. In that situation the sheep would be the followers of that governing body, but Christ wants them to be his followers. (Mt 23:10)

The problem is that once the lambs have matured and are ready to feed themselves solid food, the GB refuse to give up that position. Their actions are fulfilled in Christ's illustration of the cultivators. (Mt 21:33-41; Mr 12:1-9; Lu 20:9-16) Were those cultivators given the job of cultivating the landowner's crop? Yes. Did they cultivate the landowner's crop? Yes. Does that mean that the landowner is happy with them? No. What will the owner of the vineyard do? "*He will come and kill those cultivators*." (Lu 20:16; 2Pe 2:3)

Just as the cultivators wanted to keep the vineyard for themselves once the crops had matured, the GB want to keep the sheep under their control even after they have become mature Christians and no longer need their milk. But only one person should be between Jehovah and ourselves.

(1 Timothy 2:5) For there is... one mediator between God and men, a man, Christ Jesus,

Jesus warned us about such ones.

(John 10:8) All those who have come in place of me are thieves and plunderers;

If you want proof that they claim the position of Christ, all you have to do is go to the elders (as many have done) and tell them that you are no longer going to follow the teachings of the GB. Their response usually includes quoting John 6:68.

(John 6:68) Simon Peter answered him: "Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.

The elders are implying that leaving the GB is leaving Christ.

No doubt any of you who have considered leaving have even asked yourself 'Whom shall I go away to?' or 'Where shall I go?' And why is that? Because the GB have thoroughly conditioned their followers to believe that they are the "*mediator between God and men*" (1Ti 2:5) and that you need them to direct you in all spiritual matters. The minds of long-time JW's have been shaped and molded so successfully that they fear the idea of being in a position where no one is telling them what to do. Their indoctrination causes them to fear the freedom that true Christianity provides, like long-term prisoners who fear being released from a life of control and forced structure into a life where they make their own choices. (Ga 5:1; 1Pe 2:16)

The GB even insert themselves into your baptism. Paul asked this question:

(1 Corinthians 1:13) Is the Christ divided? Paul was not executed on the stake for you, was he? Or were you baptized in the name of Paul?

No, our baptism should be to none other than Christ and Jehovah. Yet JW Baptismal candidates must answer in the affirmative to the following question before being allowed to be baptized:

"Do you understand that your baptism identifies you as one of Jehovah's Witnesses in association with Jehovah's organization?" [od p. 206]

Our baptism should be pure, and only about our belief in God and Christ. It should not involve The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York.

Yes, the GB, and their obedient servants (the local elders in each congregation), have put themselves "*between God and men.*" They tell the congregation that they must follow their directions if they are to please God. They tell them that disobeying them is disobeying Jehovah. "*Brazen conduct*" indeed! (2Pe 2:2)

The GB point to examples of the apostles directing the Christians in the first century and claim the same status for themselves. But those apostles had direct communication with the holy spirit.

(John 14:26) But the helper, the holy spirit, which the Father will send in my name, that one will teach you all things and bring back to your minds all the things I told you.

(John 15:26, 27) When the helper comes that I will send you from the Father, the spirit of the truth, which comes from the Father, that one will bear witness about me; ²⁷ and you, in turn, are to bear witness, because you have been with me from the beginning.

(1 Corinthians 2:10) For it is to us (the apostles) God has revealed them through his spirit, for the spirit searches into all things, even the deep things of God.

The apostles had the helper, the holy spirit, and it was working through those apostles till their death.

(1 Corinthians 13:8) Love never fails. But if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away with; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away with.

Yes, direct communication with the holy spirit ended. But fortunately for us the information the holy spirit gave them was written down, creating the Greek Scriptures and ending the need for direct guidance by the holy spirit. But the Christians of the day did not have the Greek Scriptures written and assembled for them to be able to follow Christ's written words, so they **had** to rely on those men to pass on the information from the holy spirit.

Today, as 2 Timothy 3:17 says, we are "*completely equipped*" because we have those writings. But that does not stop the GB from telling their followers that they must also follow their directions. Yes, the GB brazenly position themselves between God and men:

"We also need to trust in the only channel that Jehovah is using today." [w20.7 p. 24]

"Some may feel that they can interpret the Bible on their own. However, Jesus has appointed the 'faithful slave' to be the only channel for dispensing spiritual food." [w16.11 p. 16]

"Just as anointed Christians do, alert members of the great crowd are sticking close to God's appointed channel for dispensing spiritual food." [w12 9/15 p. 26]

"Theocratic appointments come from Jehovah through his Son and God's visible earthly channel, "the faithful and discreet slave" and its Governing Body." [w01 1/15 p. 16]

They ignore Jesus' own words:

(John 14:6) Jesus said to him: "I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me."

Another scripture that the GB try to use to prop up the position of authority that they have stolen is Matthew 24:45.

(Matthew 24:45) "Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics, to give them their food at the proper time?"

That verse is part of a four point illustration that consists of a householder, a faithful and discreet

slave, ten virgins, and three slaves whom their master gave talents to. Jesus begins the illustrations by saying "*know one thing*." (Mt 24:43) Yes, those four illustrations were to make a single point. And what was that point made in four different ways? That the householder will not keep awake and his house will be broken into. That some of those who make up the faithful and discreet slave, the steward of the house, will beat their fellow slaves, and will be punished for it when the master comes. That some of the virgins will not bring enough oil, and they will not be allowed in. That those slaves who do not increase their talents will be thrown out into the darkness outside.

(see my article "Know One Thing")

No, those illustrations are not there to provide a group of men with proof that they have authority and must be obeyed. Jesus provided those illustrations to warn the "*chosen ones*" of what will happen to them if they overstep their assignment to feed the lambs and young sheep the spiritual milk they need to help them become mature Christians. (Jn 21:15-17)—(see my article "Presence")

What the GB are doing with verses such as Matthew 24:45 is similar to what the American government is doing with the Constitution of the United States. It was written to keep the government in check, but the government tries to turn it around and use it to control the people instead.

As pointed out above, the "*proper time*" to feed Christ's sheep (Mt 24:45) is when they are spiritually young and new to the teachings of Christ. And since there is a "*proper time*", that means that there is also an '**improper time**'. And when is that '**improper time**'? Answer: After the lambs and little sheep become mature Christians and can feed themselves solid food without interference from others.

(1 Peter 4:15) However, let none of you suffer as a murderer or a thief or a wrongdoer or a busybody in other people's matters.

(Romans 5:1) Therefore, now that we have been declared righteous as a result of faith, let us enjoy peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ,

(Acts 4:12) Furthermore, there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved."

(1 Corinthians 3:1, 2) So, brothers, I was not able to speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to fleshly men, as to infants in Christ. ² I fed you milk, not solid food, for you were not yet strong enough. In fact, neither are you strong enough now,

(Hebrews 5:14-6:1) But solid food belongs to mature people, to those who through use have their powers of discernment **trained to distinguish both right and wrong**. Therefore, now that we have moved beyond the primary doctrine about the Christ, let us press on to maturity

Did you notice there in Hebrews how Paul refers to mature Christians as "we" and "us"? Yes, Paul acknowledges that mature Christians are on the same level as he is. (Mt 23:8) Note what the previous verses say:

(Hebrews 5:11-13) We have much to say about him, and it is difficult to explain, because you have become dull in your hearing.¹² For although by now you should be teachers, you again need someone to teach you from the beginning the elementary things of the sacred pronouncements of God, and you have gone back to needing milk, not solid food.¹³ For everyone who continues to feed on milk is unacquainted with the word of righteousness, for he is a young child.

There Paul refers to those who are taught by teachers as young children feeding on milk. He also said that "*solid food*" is for the mature. Note that he does not say that the "*solid food*" is only for a select ruling class, giving them the authority to interpret it and distribute it as they see fit. No, "*solid food*" is for all mature Christians, and they are mature because they are no longer "*dull in (their) hearing*" (ability to understand). They "*have their powers of discernment trained*", so they no longer "*need someone to teach*" them. Their trained discernment gives them the ability to feed directly on the "*solid food*" from the Bible.

Conversely, JW's are conditioned to perpetually rely on the GB to feed them spiritual food. They are never allowed to "*press on to maturity*" and rely on their own "*powers of discernment*."

What about you? Do you rely on teachers to explain the Bible to you? Or have you become the teacher who feeds directly on the "*solid food*" of the Bible?

Do you say: "*I am one of the teachers 'of the sacred pronouncements of God' that Paul spoke about in verse 12. I even have Bible students.*" Is that so? The GB have laid out in detail what you will study and when, the questions you will ask, and the answers that are acceptable. So do you really teach "*the sacred pronouncements of God*", or do you teach the pronouncements of the GB? If you were to break from their script and teach directly from the Bible, you would get into serious trouble for contradicting the teachings of the GB, be accused of forming a sect, and get disfellowshipped.

More and more JW's are coming to the realization that they no longer want to be fed as "*young children*". They want to step out from under the rule of a teacher so they can "*press on to maturity*" and feed directly on the "*solid food (that) belongs to mature people*." Are you such a person?

If you are reading this you are no doubt not a little lamb who is new to the teachings of Christ and need someone to lead you by the hand and feed you milk. You don't need someone to tell you how to worship Jehovah. You can sit at the adult table and eat solid food from the Bible yourself without someone spoon-feeding it to you. You can listen to Christ's voice directly, that is to say, you are spiritually mature enough to read and understand the Bible on your own without a human middleman. Christ should now be your one and only mediator between yourself and Jehovah. (1Ti 2:5)

Do you say that you don't understand everything in the Bible so you still need others to tell you what to think? Well note that Hebrews 5:14 describes a mature Christian as someone whose powers of discernment have been trained to know the difference between right and wrong. That's all. Complete understanding of the Bible is not a requirement. In fact, it is not attainable this side of Armageddon:

(1 Corinthians 13:12) For now we see in hazy outline by means of a metal mirror, but then it will be face-to-face. At present I know partially, but then I will know accurately, just as I am accurately known.

It is our heart condition that we will be judged on, not the amount of scriptural understanding that we have.

(Ezekiel 9:4) Jehovah said to him: "Go through the city, through Jerusalem, and put a mark on the foreheads of the men who are sighing and groaning over all the detestable things that are being done in the city."

That verse lists only one thing that makes one eligible for being marked for survival: a heart condition that causes one to sigh and groan over detestable things. Those people know the difference between right and wrong, and have chosen the side of "*right*".

(Luke 8:15) As for that on the fine soil, these are the ones who, after hearing the word with a fine and good heart, retain it and bear fruit with endurance.

Some people have convinced themselves that if they think and act the way others tell them to that they won't be held responsible for believing or doing anything wrong. But that is a wrong action in itself, and they will reap what they sow. (Mt 15:14) You are responsible for yourself. Entrusting your spiritual decisions to others does not remove that responsibility from you. In fact, it adds to your culpability. (2Pe 2:2)

Another lie that the GB promote is that they are the source of "new light" from Jehovah.

(Proverbs 4:18) But the path of the righteous is like the bright morning light That grows brighter and brighter until full daylight.

Light from Jehovah grows brighter, building on the previous light, like a dimmer switch on a lamp that makes the light brighter as you add to the power. But that is not what the GB do. They are constantly replacing previous light that they say came from Jehovah, with new light that they say also came from Jehovah. True light from Jehovah would never be replaced, because it is never wrong. True light from Jehovah is a foundation of understanding that is built upon and added to, not replaced, proving that the "new light" from the GB does not come from Jehovah.

So where do we get light from if not from a group of men in New York?

(Psalm 119:105) Your word is a lamp to my foot, And a light for my path.

(Romans 15:4) For all the things that were written beforehand were written for our instruction, so that through our endurance and through the comfort from the Scriptures we might have hope.

(2 Peter 1:19) So we have the prophetic word made more sure, and you are doing well in paying attention to it as to a lamp shining in a dark place (until day dawns and a daystar rises) in your hearts.

Yes, the GB have twisted the scriptures to '*misled many*'. (Mt 24:5)

Jesus provides a two-part description of those we should not follow:

(Luke 21:8) He said: "Look out that you are not misled, for many will come on the basis of my name, saying, 'I am he,' **and**, 'The due time is near.' Do not go after them.

The GB come on the basis of his name saying "*I am he*" in that they claim that following their teachings and rules is the only way to be acceptable to God. (Jn 14:6; 1Ti 2:5) And they have been saying that the due time for Armageddon is imminent since the late 1800's. So they fit that two-part description. And what does Christ command us to do? **"Do not go after them!"** (Ex 20:4)

Of course Paul recommended that we continue to meet together, but for what purpose?

(Hebrews 10:24, 25) And let us consider one another so as to incite to love and fine works,²⁵ not forsaking our meeting together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you see the day drawing near.

That's right, to incite to love and fine works, and to encourage one another. (Ro 1:12; 1Th 5:11) Not to be directed by a man, or group of men, who tell mature Christians what to think and how to worship. We have the Bible for that. (2Ti 3:17)

Now Jesus' commandment at Matthew 20:25-28 that those taking the lead (by setting a good example) are not to exercise authority over others goes both ways. They are commanded not to exercise authority over you, but that also means that you are commanded not to allow men to exercise authority over you in your relationship to Jehovah. (1Ti 2:5)

Now that you have read all of this i ask you: Is Jesus Christ your one and only mediator between you and Jehovah, or like the Israelites are you doing what you think is right and allow men to govern you in your relationship with God?

Please, my Christian brothers and sisters, do not react to this article like those who heard Jesus speak in the synagogue:

(Luke 4:28) Now all those hearing these things in the synagogue became filled with anger,

Or like those that considered Paul their enemy because he spoke unpopular truths:

(Galatians 4:16) So, then, have I become your enemy because I tell you the truth?

Please believe what those scriptures say, even though they contradict the teachings of the GB:

(John 8:45) Because I, on the other hand, tell you the truth, you do not believe me.

For your own sakes, please choose what the Bible says over what the GB say:

(Ephesians 4:15) But speaking the truth, let us by love grow up in all things into him who is the head, Christ.

yb
:^)
Dave

da.getmyip@gmail.com <http://da.getmyip.com/PDF/Ramblings>

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