

(from N - 04-12-22)

Hi Dave,

I absolutely appreciate the time and effort you have put into your website. I've been a regular for a couple of years now. Have also read a few of your articles and it has broadened my thinking. Thanks.

Recently, I started looking into 1919. Why / how Jesus chose ours as the only true religion. I was intent on building up my faith and certainly did not expect that this is where I would end up. I cannot find any justifiable answer / evidence. I don't think I can turn to anyone I know. A few weeks ago, we had a talk about how we need to have unity of thought regarding spiritual matters and that we must follow the FDS. I guess that's why I'm writing and I hope you will share your thoughts.

Right now it's difficult to write down my thoughts because I'm so conflicted.

I do hope to hear from you.

Please keep up the good work. I'm sure it helps a lot of people.

Warmest regards,

N

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(from me - 04-12-22)

Hi N

I think you found your answer: ["I cannot find any justifiable answer / evidence"](#)

If there are no scriptures to back up a claim, then it is personal opinion.

["I'm so conflicted."](#)

What is your conflict?

:^)

Dave

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(from N - 04-13-22)

Hi Dave,

Thanks for replying.

I no longer believe that the FDS are God's channel of communication.

I agree that they are like Apollos (you had a article on that). They are imperfect men and are not inspired. But there is so much rhetoric on how we need to adhere to their every word.

See, I left my former religion many years ago because of the lies, hypocrisy, church history and politics. I thought I found the true religion 6 or 7 years ago. But now I realize that I never looked into the history of JW.

If the 1919 doctrine doesn't hold and FDS was not appointed in 1919, then how many other doctrines crumble? How can I go on taking part in the ministry if I do not believe in some of our basic tenets? What about the people, my son included, that I have led into the organization? How do I share the info with them without sounding like an apostate?

True, there are many truths I have learnt over the years. But right now I don't know how to separate the 'personal opinions' from Bible truths.

(from me 04-13-22)

Here is what i think about it:

The true belief is Christianity.

As per my article "Other Sheep", Christianity is the fold, but it contains multiple flocks. (Jn 10:1-16)

All of those flocks contain sheep that 'listen to his voice', that is to say, are Christians and are 'his sheep'. (Re 18:4)

The difference between the flocks in Christ's fold is that some flocks are led by "*hired men*" while others are led by true shepherds. (Jn 10:12, 13)

Identifying the "*hired men*" is easy: They get a salary and it is their job, that is to say, they are "*hired*".

That just leaves the true shepherds.

Their main identifying trait is that they care for the sheep and put their wellbeing above their own.

Take note that "*accurate knowledge*" is **not** listed as an identifying mark.

Even the apostle Paul acknowledged that their understanding was like looking at a reflection in a hazy mirror.

(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.

But the next verse says this:

(1 Corinthians 13:13) Now, however, these three remain: faith, hope, love; but the greatest of these is love.

So given that their (our) knowledge is not very accurate, what a true shepherd relies on is faith, hope, and love. To identify the true shepherds we do not look for accurate knowledge, we look for their faith, hope and love, and as Paul points out, the greatest (most important) is love.

Do the shepherds show love for their flock? If so, then they are true shepherds.

The same goes for us. The most important aspect of our spiritual life should be faith (in Christ and Jehovah), hope (in prophetic fulfillment), and love (for our fellow brothers and sisters).

I must leave for work now, but i hope this helped.

I may add more to it later, or if you have other questions, comments, or concerns, feel free to express them.

:^)

Dave

(more from me 04-15-22)

You said: "[I no longer believe that the FDS are God's channel of communication.](#)"

God has only one channel of communication: The Bible.

Here is what i wrote in my article "Missing Daily Text".

(begin quote)

You mention the channel that Jehovah uses, but the channel He uses to speak to mankind is the Bible, not 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.

He uses men, yes, but only to help spread His written word. He does not speak to or through any man.

The GB tell us that they are not inspired. [w17.02 p. 26 par. 12]

They do not claim to have any special knowledge or revelations. [w16.01 p. 23 par. 6]

Why is that? Because God does not talk to them or give them any information. He doesn't speak to anyone. Direct spiritual contact ended with the death of the last apostle. (1Co 13:8)

Has Jehovah's spirit worked through the GB? Yes it has, as it has with all of us.

[w16.01 p. 20 par. 15] "Jehovah's spirit works with equal force in those who have the hope of living forever on earth"

If the Bible interpretations, opinions, and other personal teachings from the GB were from Jehovah, or made with His guidance, then there would never need to be any corrections of understandings now would there? But there are corrections, all of the time.

Why is that? Because, as they themselves tell us, they are not passing on inspired information from God. They have the same source for information that Jehovah has provided to all of us: the Bible. And that is why the Bible tells us to check the scriptures for ourselves and "*make sure*". (Php 1:10; 1Th 5:21) If we don't make sure, and just accept what we are told without question, then we are followers of men, not of God.

When we check to make sure of something there can be one of three outcomes. Either we find it to be scripturally accurate, or scripturally inaccurate, or not in the Bible at all and therefore it is opinion. If it is scripturally accurate we are to accept it. If it is scripturally inaccurate we are to reject it. If it is merely opinion then it is up to us individually to decide if we wish to believe it or not.

Nowhere does the Bible tell us to accept what we hear without questioning it. It is the leaders in Christendom who tell their followers not to question what they are told, and that includes the GB. We should always make sure of what we are being taught. (Though most JW's don't do so.)

(end quote)

There is much more there if you wish to read it.

Here is what i wrote in my article "Have I become your enemy? - comments"

(begin quote)

The GB are supposed to only pass on the words of God and Christ given to us in the Bible.

(Hebrews 13:7) Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.

If we should not question those taking the lead, why would the Bible tell us to do so? (1Th 5:21) They may be "taking the lead" but that does not mean that we are to follow blindly though. As the 2017 Watchtower says: "Never be content passively or blindly to accept what you hear. (Proverbs 14:15) Use your God-given thinking abilities and power of reason to make the truth your own." (w17 7/15 p. 28 pars. 3, 4)

(Hebrews 13:7) Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.

Those taking the lead today are tasked with passing on the words of God found in the Bible to the lambs and little sheep. (see: Share Your Thoughts and Research + advice)

Those are the words we are to believe. Those are the words we are to act on. The words from the Bible. "*The word of God.*" Not the words of men. Like a waiter or a server in a restaurant, the job of the GB is not to make the food, or to cook it, but only to serve it. (Mr 8:6)

(Hebrews 13:7) Remember those who are taking the lead among you, who have spoken the word of God to you, and as you contemplate how their conduct turns out, imitate their faith.

That verse does not say that after we have contemplated how the conduct of those taking the lead turns out and find it acceptable, that we are to listen to and believe their own personal teachings, opinions, or interpretations, or even to obey them. No, but it tells us to "*remember*" them and "*imitate their faith*." The orders and commandments we are to obey come from the Bible.

(end quote)

:^)

Dave

(from N - 04-16-22)

Thanks for sharing! I love some of the things you highlighted. Haven't yet read some of the articles you mentioned ... got a huge workload at the moment, will let you know when I get a chance.

In regards to your statement: [In We should always make sure of what we are being taught. \(Though most JW's don't do so.\)](#)

Most JWs accept whatever FDS teaches because the lines get blurred so often. On the one hand the FDS are not inspired but on the other hand, Jehovah will "provide direction through his appointed representatives." I honestly don't know how I believed 2 contradictory things at the same time.

There are so many articles like the recent w22 February p. 6 par. 15 stating things like "we may receive instructions that seem strange, impractical, or illogical ... If you trust the direction we receive today and

readily obey, you will likely do the same during the great tribulation." This directly contradicts: "[They do not claim to have any special knowledge or revelations. \[w16.01 p. 23 par. 6\]](#)" A claim that only one person / group will receive direction that should be trusted by millions / direction that will lead to salvation, is a claim that they will receive a revelation.

I started seeing the contradictions a few months ago, so I started reading the Bible again (prayerfully went back to Genesis). But it feels as though I'm reading through Watchtower's lenses. I don't know if this makes sense, but I keep on reflecting on previous articles I've read, rather than reading the Bible itself.

Do I trust myself to separate the scripturally accurate from the scripturally inaccurate or from the personal opinions? No. How did you get to the point where you could do this?

You see, most of my Bible knowledge comes from the FDS. There have been failed prophecies and *Watchtower, May 15, 1955, Page 305 equated them to a "a collective prophetlike organization."* *Deuteronomy 18:20-22 tells us not to fear the prophet who spoke* presumptuously. Paul warned that anyone going beyond the good news should be accursed (Galatians 1:8, 9)

Here lies another conflict. how do you imitate their faith (Hebrews:7) when they should be accursed?

(from me - 04-16-22)

[I honestly don't know how I believed 2 contradictory things at the same time.](#)

I think it is like someone who recites the "Lord's Prayer" (Mt 6:9, 10) but thinks that everyone is going to heaven. When you point out that the prayer says His will take place on earth, they don't even realize that is what they have been saying all along. Often we say or read one thing, but think something else. I guess it is just human nature. I try to open people's eyes with my articles.

Yes, i took note of those statements when that Watchtower came out too. Of course, if you look closely, they say that God "may" or "will likely" talk to them, showing it is a belief they have that they will be contacted by God at some point in the future, which would mark a change in the status quo, that being the situation they are in now where God is not and has not '*instructed*' or '*provided direction*' to them.

[w22 p. 6] ¹⁵ As the end of this system of things draws near, we need to trust in Jehovah's way of doing things as never before. Why? During the great tribulation, we may receive instructions that seem strange, impractical, or illogical. Of course, Jehovah will not speak to us personally. He will likely provide direction through his appointed representatives. That will hardly be the time to second-guess the direction or to view it with skepticism, wondering, 'Is this really coming from Jehovah, or are the responsible brothers acting on their own?'

When i made the "Study Prep" pdf for that week (04-04-22) i added these scriptures to the border of that Watchtower article: Ac 17:11; Php 1:10; Ps 146:3, 4; Isa 2:22; Mt 15:14

I hope it helped some to have a little perspective.

They said "may" and "will likely" but gave no scriptural backing for such ideas. I can think of one scripture that could back up that idea, and it is in Joel.

(Joel 2:28, 29) After that I will pour out my spirit on every sort of flesh, And your sons and your daughters will prophesy, Your old men will dream dreams, And your young men will see visions.
²⁹ And even on my male slaves and female slaves I will pour out my spirit in those days.

That is talking about the time just before Armageddon when there will be "celestial phenomena". (Joel 2:30, 31; Mt 24:29; Re 6:12-14)

I think "*my male slaves and female slaves*" could include the GB. But for them to acknowledge that, they would also have to acknowledge that others would also have the same information, and i don't think they would admit to having to share with "*every sort of flesh*". (sons, daughters, old men, young men) :^) (see my article: The Prophecy of Joel)

Also, that quoted paragraph from the Watchtower article says: "*That will hardly be the time to second-guess the direction or to view it with skepticism, wondering...*" That categorically and unequivocally contradicts the directions given to us in the Bible, which tells us to "*make sure*" (Php 1:10) and to "*test the inspired statements to see whether they originate with God.*" (1Jo 4:1)

[It feels as though I'm reading through Watchtower's lenses](#)

I was raised as a JW. I remember standing on a little box so i would be tall enough to reach the microphone when on stage doing a Bible reading. So it was very difficult for me to see the scriptures for what they truly mean instead of what i was told they meant since all my life i looked to JW publications to explain the Bible.

What helped me a lot was listening to the Bible in audio. I drive a lot for my work, so i installed a radio that has a USB port so i could listen from that. At first i was constantly hearing things that would make me say to myself: "What?!?" I would make a note of it and when i got home i would look into it.

Today, even when i am listening to the audio for the 1,000th time, i still take notes to further research something. The more you learn, the more things open up to you. It builds up in layers.

Sometimes JW publications use partial or out of context Bible quotes, and put ideas in your mind before those quotes to set your thinking to how they want you to think, but the raw unadulterated Bible audio doesn't have such things.

[I keep on reflecting on previous articles I've read, rather than reading the Bible itself.](#)

That is another habit i had to break myself of. When i began letting the Bible explain itself, my understanding began to grow. One thing that helps me is to click on the verse number in WtLib and open it in the Reference Bible. That Bible has many more references than our current one does. And reading the original Hebrew and Greek text really helps too. (see my article: "Share Your Thoughts and Research + advice" on how i do it)

[Do I trust myself to separate the scripturally accurate from the scripturally inaccurate or from the personal opinions? No.](#)

You CAN do it. The Bible tells you to "*make sure*". It doesn't say to get someone else to tell you what is accurate and what is inaccurate. (Php 1:10) Use your "*power of reason*". (Ro 12:1) It's actually easy to do. In many cases they use words like possibly, or perhaps, or might, showing it is their opinion. Other times the lack of scriptural references shows that it is just their opinion. But you have to check the scriptural references too. Oftentimes the scripture doesn't back up the claim. My article "2017-07 QFR (firearms) - with scriptures and comments" exposes a lot of that.

[How did you get to the point where you could do this?](#)

It took concentration and self contemplation. At first, just like you, i kept falling back on what i was taught, instead of what the Bible said. I had to force myself to ask myself: Is this based on what a Watchtower article said, or the Bible? Is there a conflict between the two? If so, the easy choice is the Bible, of course. :^)

[There have been failed prophecies and Watchtower, May 15, 1955, Page 305 equated them to a "a collective prophetlike organization."](#)

Very true, which is why we are told to judge whether their conduct and teachings are acceptable.

[Paul warned that anyone going beyond the good news should be accursed \(Galatians 1:8, 9\)](#)

Since my investigation and writing of the article "All Scripture is inspired of God" i have learned to put what Paul says into the proper perspective. Is he telling us facts, or his opinion? Much of the time it is his opinion, just like with the GB. (Ga 1:8, 9 compare Mr 9:38-41)

And just like i don't dismiss everything that Paul said, i don't dismiss everything the GB say either. I check it out and "*make sure*". If it is accurate, i accept it. If not, i don't. No problem. :^)

I am really enjoying this conversation! I VERY rarely get to interact with someone like this. It seems that most of the brothers and sisters are plodding through life with blinders on.

:^)

Dave

(from N - 04-17-22)

Very interesting!

.. i don't think they would admit to having to share with "*every sort of flesh*" Neither do I. Ever noticed the artwork on the 144,000 usually depicts one kind of race, gender. age group? :) :) Perhaps there is a scriptural basis. I don't know ... Just remembered this article, g90 12/8 p. 7 - "There are blond, blue-eyed Jews in Sweden, black Jews in Ethiopia, and Mongoloid Jews in China."

I know i wouldn't want to be judged on what i said and did years ago if i have changed my thinking and actions since then. True and I'm trying to keep that in mind. We also want to remove the rafter from our eye, before we try to remove the straw from our brother's eye.

Shortly after saying that, Jesus talks of not giving what is holy to dogs or your pearls to swine. (Matthew 7:6) That calls for judgment, perhaps seemingly harsh judgement. Again at verse 15 we are called on to use our judgement (or discernment) to "Be on the watch for the false prophets who come to you in sheep's covering, but inside they are ravenous wolves."

Matthew 7:1, 2 reminds me to keep the motive in mind, like in John 7:24, "Stop judging by the outward appearance, but judge with righteous judgment." We cannot judge if we are motivated by self-righteousness, malice, jealousy, hatred etc. But we have to judge our associates - are they good or bad? We judge those taking the lead - are they true shepherds or ravenous wolves?

I ought to be judged harshly if I were actively trying to sugarcoat history. My people's history was sanitised and we lost our cultural identity as a result. Wp20 No. 1 pp. 4 notes, "Many people do not trust governments, businesses, or the media to tell them the truth. They find it difficult to distinguish facts from opinions, half-truths, and outright lies that are presented as reliable information." Page 6 draws the contrast: "Bible writers were very honest, often revealing their own mistakes and failings ... The honesty of all the Bible writers indicates their sincere concern for truth."

Take the example of the Harp of God. Today it is presented in a favourable light. Very few JWs will search for it and read it. When I did, I felt deceived. I was angry and disillusioned with the organisation. Thankfully I came across Psalm 118:8.

JW publications use partial Bible quotes, and put ideas in your mind before those quotes to set your thinking to how they want you to think, Thank you for pointing this out. It explains a lot.

(from me - 04-18-22)

(Psalm 118:8) It is better to take refuge in Jehovah Than to trust in humans.

That's another good one.

There are two kinds of judging. One is regarding ourselves, the other is regarding others.

For instance, we are to judge whether or not someone is bad association in order to decide how we will act. The act is implemented upon ourselves. We will stop associating with them if they are a bad associate. (1Co 15:33)

The other kind of judging is implemented upon the other person. Christ and his co-rulers will judge mankind. (Mt 19:28) It is not my place to take action against another if i judge them guilty of something. (Ro 12:19)

We hold authority over ourselves, not over others. That is what i was referring to when i quoted Matthew 7:1, 2. :^)

Though i have digital copies of the Harp of God, i haven't read them either.

I am just not that interested in what long dead, un-inspired men wrote 100 years ago when the light was a lot dimmer. (Pr 4:18)

Now if the current GB write or promote inaccuracies, i will point that out, as i have tried to do with my articles.

:^)

Dave

(from N - 04-18-22)

Yes :) old light ... or taking historical perspective on what we were teaching leading to / after Jesus' inspection in 1918.

We hold authority over ourselves, not over others. Absolutely. I wonder, if I had lived during that time and heard the pronouncements on Armageddon, or 1914 as it was understood back then; would I have stayed, or would I have disassociated myself? Some left. Anyway, that's a bit speculative.

I'm grateful for the beliefs clarified. Admittedly, we are imperfect and we have partial knowledge. Thankfully Jehovah remembers we're dust and the light keeps getting brighter. Still, I do have a decision to make. (2 Cor 13:5)

But I promised myself I would read the Bible another time, before making any decisions. This time I pray I'll be able to let the Scriptures explain themselves :)

Thanks for the great advice and oh I tried biblehub. It's awesome :)

(from me - 04-20-22)

We may expect a lot from the GB and hold them to a high standard, but perhaps remembering how Christ referred to the "*chosen ones*" (Mt 24:31) in his illustration will help put things into perspective:

(Matthew 22:9, 10) Therefore, go to the roads leading out of the city, and invite anyone you find to the marriage feast.' ¹⁰ Accordingly, those slaves went out to the roads and gathered all they found, both wicked and good; and the room for the wedding ceremonies was filled with those dining.

(Luke 14:21) So the slave came and reported these things to his master. Then the master of the house became angry and said to his slave, 'Go out quickly to the main streets and the alleys of the city, and bring in here the poor and crippled and blind and lame.'

:^)

Dave

(from M - 05-22-22)

Hey Dave,

I finally got some time to catch up on reading some stuff up on your site. The conflicted exchange piqued my interest.

Coincidentally, I recently had a relative who was having some, let's say, issues. They had gone back to some of the old publications, and they clearly (like I suspect N. has done) read some stuff from people who really have no interest in accuracy or truth, and look at things from a perspective of ill intent or just have an ax to grind for JW's. My relatives' deal was how the org has changed beliefs and understandings, which to me, is one of the top 5 reasons to stay and they were critical of Russell and things like that. The usual apostate trope, no originality. That's why I think they were reading third party stuff about an organization where they have first hand access to information and data-why read that if you have access to the original stuff?

Maybe this perspective will help:

Imagine you are living in the second half of the 19th century. You have some religious background, you believe in God but do not know or trust the teachings of the main and even smaller religious groups around. So what

you decide to do is to take the Bible, even get as many different translations and versions as you can find, along with some Hebrew and Greek dictionaries and the trusty polyglots and interlinear Bibles and Bible concordances that had recently starting coming available during the 1800s. You decide to take the following approach:

Pick a subject and then start finding every scripture that discusses that subject. Look at context around each instance and come up with a thesis about what the Bible actually says about it and write it down. Use Hebrew or Greek dictionaries to see if you can figure out what the words meant when they were used, what is the history of the word and so on. Discuss the various texts and information with the group. One thing you would want to do is clear any previous beliefs or conceptions and you would not, at least at first, use any commentaries by any religious groups or even any Bible scholars. Just the Bible itself.

One example might be the idea of the Hell-fire teaching or perhaps the nature of the Soul, and ask the simple question: is what the various Christian religions teach actually supported in the Bible?

Then maybe ask: is the Bible consistent within itself in these concepts and teachings? Or: when this is translated into English (or whatever language you are using) does it carry the same meaning as the original text? Is the grammar correct and consistently translated (i.e. consistent use of definite and indefinite articles for Greek to English translations)? If not, does the context dictate that variance and is that consistent with other parts of the Bible? Does it change anything?

If you did that, you would probably be as surprised as CT Russell and his fellow Bible students were. Even if done as an academic exercise by a non-believer it would yield surprising results when compared with what mainstream Christian churches teach from their pulpits. So many times you can come across people who say 'it's in the Bible' or 'yeah, the Bible teaches this or that' when nothing of the sort is true, or at best, context is removed and it changes the meaning.

Some things to consider:

As far as I can discern from reading a lot of stuff from the early days...

CT Russell never claimed to be a prophet.

CT Russell never claimed to be inspired.

CT Russell never claimed any direct communication from heaven.

CT Russell constantly indicated that the view of some subject was the 'current understanding' and subject to change.

Russell and his successors and those who make up the Governing Body do think they are filling the role of 'the faithful and discreet steward', the ones tasked with providing spiritual support in the context of the Last Days. I think that given how diligently they've kept at it, even getting it wrong sometimes and then having the spiritual ethics to correct it, does lend to that conclusion. It's certainly not like the Pope or any of the plethora of religions out there. And it's not like those who criticize them for even proffering spiritual teachings but who have nothing of value to add in its stead.

It is also clear that despite the goal of not bringing any preconceived ideas into their group, they did. The ideas of heavenly reward for all who die, concept of some sort of rapture, the nature and manner of Christ's return, the timing of Christ's return, use of the cross, the understanding of 'this generation' and the Last Days, celebrating non-Christian holidays like Christmas and some others were all part of the early beliefs that were promulgated. Within a few years they corrected those things and continue to. It's noteworthy that all the main doctrines, the really important stuff like the nature of God and Christ, God's name, the idea of redemption, the hope of some future, both heavenly and earthly, and of course the main one, the concept of the resurrection, to name a few, all have remained pretty much the same once they proved via the Bible that these things were absolutely true.

One thing that really set Russell and his successors apart was the willingness to indicate that they got things wrong or misunderstood meanings or that some belief was a holdover from non-Christian religions. And more importantly, they made a change in what were the official teachings of the Watchtower Society and later Jehovah's Witnesses. It is the opposite with just about all other religions. They doggedly cling to old discredited and non-Bible based beliefs. One only has to look at the Catholic Church to see that in stark contrast; but Protestant religions fare no better as they kept most of the beliefs that simply have no support in the Bible.

It is striking in its intellectual dishonesty to go back to the early days of Jehovah's Witnesses in the modern era and criticize the organization for the changes that were made when all updated understandings came with clear Biblical reasoning, whether those critics agree with them or not. The instructions to get rid of old publications that still had changed beliefs also should not be criticized, after all, confusion would reign if

you could not count on everyone having whatever the current version of the publications are when using those to teach and discuss. You didn't have to destroy the old copies. Many kept the versions as a historical record. No hidden agenda at all.

Some criticize the actions taken with these understandings, but what do people expect? If you believe something you act on it. To do otherwise you may as well not believe and get on with your life.

Dates

Yes, in their quest to understand the 'seasons and the times' with their belief that many scriptures have some sort of modern day impact, they attempted to get a fix on where humans and the world were in the stream of time. They got many dates wrong, as in nothing of note happened, got one date right, very right as something big did happen, but the meaning of it was partly misunderstood. Many in the organization put way too much emphasis on these dates, even though the Watchtower and other publications repeatedly indicated that it's not a prophecy and it could be wrong or, especially with the often mocked 1975, they indicated that it was just, by their reckoning, the 6000th year of humans. They pointedly, for several decades, wrote that they don't know what exactly will happen and what it means.

It is also true that they really didn't take to heart the admonition that Jesus conveyed when he said 'no one knows the hour'. Or maybe they were engaging in wishful thinking.

Real Indicators

One thing that seems to be lost on many outside of the organization and sadly some inside who haven't really proven to themselves what is true or what they can rely on as a solid foundation, is the one major real thing that sets Jehovah's Witnesses apart. This world is nuts in its hatred and violence within groups and especially between cultures and races. The idea that a Catholic has (apparently) no problem killing another Catholic (or Protestant, etc.) is very interesting if you know anything at all about the ideas that are put forth from Christ and his disciple's teachings. It's not perfect, but at least Jehovah's Witnesses are not and will never be part of the problem when it comes to lack of peace and all the strife in the world around us. Jehovah's Witnesses who were mortal enemies like Arabs and Israelis in the Middle East sit next to each other and share a belief that transcends the current hate and violence between those two groups. Same for Protestants and Catholics in Ireland and Northern

Ireland. Former gang members who were enemies are now friends. These are not the exception. It's well documented and I've seen it for myself in a number of locations both in the US and elsewhere.

What is that worth to people? If anything, all religions but Jehovah's Witnesses and certainly atheists, whose values are often local to each individual (no overarching morality or transcendence for them or my morality is not the same as yours, for example) and agnostics, who are so weak minded they can't really decide what they believe—all these have shown they have no answer, no solution. It stuns me to this day that people keep doing the same things they always have, vote for the same failed human political parties or support the various dictatorships around the world or they support the same religions that have given the world so much suffering, so much violence, so little hope. I would call anyone like that stupid but that may be giving them too much credit. It's a brain defect. Has to be. I've followed politics for more than 40 years and the same promises are made, the same sentences, not even any variation in most cases, and the same brain dead people cast their votes thinking that something is somehow going to change.

We all have to choose, and given the options that we have, I'll take the one where at least there's an attempt to get it right, where there's no fear of changing a belief when further information is uncovered.

JR Lowell said "The foolish and the dead alone never change their opinion".

One other thing, some people think the Bible condones violence against non-believers. It does not. Those people have not ever taken the time to really read the Bible. The Bible is part history book, part imparting of a proper ethical, moral, and correct 'worldview' (since that's a popular concept nowadays). At one time, there were a people that were God's people. Yes, the Jews. That was then, this is now. Jesus clearly stated those days were over and his disciples made it even more explicitly clearer. Even if the promises of some sort of New World on the earth or even heavenly afterlife were not true, living a life that conforms to the morality and values of True Christianity makes living far superior and better than any other way. It's not even hard, the second of the two 'commands' Jesus re-instituted, 'loving others as yourself' covers literally everything in life. You don't murder, go to war, hurt, maim, rape, hit, molest, steal, hate, assault, degrade yourself and certainly not anyone else. That's the ideal that Jehovah's Witnesses strive for. It isn't done perfectly. But in comparison to every other belief system or non-belief system, it is about as perfect as we can get in this world.

Think about the things people believe here in the 21st century. Think about the contortions they have to put their brains into to make any sense.

My opinion?

To some people, I'd ask, are you still clinging to religions that contribute to the world's problems including its violence and suffering? That's what is happening if you are still a Catholic or Baptist or Muslim or Buddhist or any number of other religions that allow members to go to war or kill and maim in the name of nationalism or tribalism. We can call non-religious nationalism in here as a religion too. Looks, acts, walks like a religion, it surely must be one. No, sorry, political parties are a religion.

If someone is still an atheist, I'd ask, why are you still an atheist, despite the volumes of solid evidence that the Universe had a beginning and the preciseness and order of it all? Despite the clear evidence physicists and mathematicians now show that there is simply not enough time for evolution to do what we know it must have done? And stop clinging to a "scientific" theory that was dreamed up before scientists even knew about DNA, cellular biology and literally tens of thousands of other things we now know. You're embarrassing yourselves. And let's not even talk about the multiverse or dimensions, let's leave the science fiction for Hollywood. If you are an atheist, power to you. You have nothing. You are nothing. You have no future. In your 'worldview', all is for nothing. You exist, you live, you die. Any meaning your life has is simply you giving yourself meaning. There are few things as vapid as that. One question I have for you, why do you trudge through the days working all day, coming home, spending time maybe with someone, maybe just you tinkering with a hobby. Why? If this life has nothing in it except the life you live now, why not do something to get money fast, get resources, live the good life, have it all while you have health (assuming you have health)? I mean, even if you have to take it from someone who has it. It shouldn't matter that you are taking something someone else has. Remember, life is now, there's nothing in the future. Nothing you do matters in the grand scheme of things, there's no 'ultimate consequences'. What are you waiting for? Seriously. If you don't do whatever it takes to grab money, pleasure, excitement and whatever else floats your boat and continue to just trudge through life, then I have to conclude that you are an absolute moron. Only a moron would remain enslaved to the drudgery of everyday life if there was nothing but this life to live and at death you just ceased to exist with no other hope for anything else.

If someone says they are a so-called agnostic, well, I have to ask, are you really still an agnostic? Is your brain working? Make a decision. Decide what you think is going on, what is real, what matters. Read a few books and get a clue. This business about things like a transcendent god not being understandable or unknowable is just stupid. You're like the dude in the Beatles song "Nowhere Man" (or woman--no there are only two sexes/genders, if you think otherwise, then it's exactly what I'd expect someone who just can't make their minds up about anything to believe; weak; pathetic). You have no spine or backbone, you simply can't commit to anything. I pity you. As I said, read a book and do some thinking on your own. My God. Oh, sorry, My Maybe God--Maybe Not God (didn't want to confuse you). It must be painful to wake up every day and just not know, and worse, to think it is unknowable. If there's fear of being wrong, well, welcome to humanity. In the end, you will be like a squirrel who goes out on the street, a car comes and the poor thing (that's you in this metaphor) goes back and forth, unable to decide to go across or go back until the car mercifully crushes him.

This is not even hard people. Most make it hard because they think every belief is on the same level. All beliefs are OK. Easy come, easy go. Wrong. If your belief, your worldview includes war, violence, rape, suffering and oppression for any number of "reasons", or no "reasons", then your belief is defective. It's invalid. It has no place in the world. Why can I say that with any confidence? I think that a good response to that is *quod erat demonstrandum* or better known as QED.

I think I made my point.

(from me - 05-23-22)

Wow M, i can **SO** relate to your scenario about putting all external teachings aside and letting the Bible explain itself. That's how i came to the conclusions i came to.

As for atheists, in my opinion they can't be trusted. Not specifically because they don't believe in God, but because they believe in evolution.

Evolution is belief in survival of the fittest. One animal is not condemned for taking what another animal has. A lion is not condemned for killing another lion so he can take over his pride. If humans are nothing more than the result of survival of the fittest, than that process is still ongoing to an atheist. We are all just animals, so there is nothing wrong with taking what someone else has, even if you have to kill them to do it. It's just survival of the fittest.

Atheists can't have a moral code because morality does not exist in the evolutionary process. In fact, it hinders it.

As for my view of agnostics, i think Revelation 3:15, 16 coves it pretty well.

Thanks a bunch for sharing!!

:^)

Dave

(edited for content 03-02-2023)
