

perceptions originating with men where the Bible is merely used to appear to support such perceptions? Strong assertions and dogmatic rhetoric prove nothing.

Assertions about "invisible" returns (1874, 1914) do not require observable evidence; one either believes it or one doesn't. But every observable prediction-one that require empirical evidence-has fallen to the ground unfulfilled. It is in this realm of observable events that the outworking of history has consistently been repeatedly refuted. The failure of observable predicted events to take place strongly suggests that those things said to occur in heaven did not take place as well. Russell asserted that when the world ended in

1914 all of his prognostications would prove to be vindicated. 1914 did not fulfill even one of his assertions.

Millions of Jehovah's Witnesses will continue to believe the delusion that they will never die. However, . men cannot deliver on such a promise. Keep in mind that when that promise first began to be preached in 1918 and later put in written form in 1920 in the publication, "*Millions Now Living Will Never Die*," it was addressed to those NOW LIVING! Are there, today, millions of Jehovah's Witnesses who were alive back there in 1918-1920? Hardly. The vast majority of Witnesses living today hadn't even been born then! □

The Lord's Evening Meal: Who Should Partake?

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On Thursday evening, April 4, 1985, Jehovah's Witnesses will observe what they call the "Lord's Evening Meal." According to *The Watchtower*, February 15, 1985, the "Lord's Evening Meal is, without question, the year's greatest celebration for all true Christians." (Page 21, par. 20) Last year, according to Watchtower Society figures there were 7,416,974 in attendance for this celebration. Of these, only 9,081 partook of the bread and wine used to symbolize Jesus' body and blood given in sacrifice for the life of the world. (In. 6:51) This works out to a ratio of one partaking for every 824 in attendance. The remaining 7,407,893 were merely "observers." With the approach of another annual observance the publishers of the magazine above saw fit to present two study articles reinforcing the rigid rules that govern this unusual celebration.

The first article: "*Nisan 14-A Day For Remembering*," is designed to convince the overwhelming majority of Witnesses that their faith in Christ as their redeemer and being baptized in his name is not sufficient reason to partake of the emblematic bread and wine in keeping with the Lord's command: "Keep doing this in remembrance of me." (Luke 22: 19) At the same time, the second article:

"*The Other Sheep and The Lord's Evening Meal*," stresses how important it is that they be in attendance to observe a ritualized reenactment of Jesus' procedure and further forecast that, "every congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses, large and small alike, and every isolated group will meet together in obedience to the

Master's command." (Page 21, par. 20) This dichotomous doctrine enables millions of Witnesses to view themselves as faithfully fulfilling Jesus' command all the while they are not doing so. Only a fraction of one percent of those attending will actually eat and drink the emblems. The rest will merely pass the emblems from one to another without touching them. This is not what the Lord commanded. His command was: "Take eat. This means my body. Also, he took a cup and having given thanks, he gave it to them saying: 'Drink out of it, all of you.'" (Matthew 26:26,27 NW) So, from the outset, it needs to be pointed out that merely passing these emblems in a ritualistic way without sharing in them has no Scriptural precedent. It is, rather a Watchtower Society tradition-a tradition of their own making and is no older than 1938-the first year the Society decided to invite members of the "great crowd" to attend, "not to partake of the memorial emblems, the unleavened bread and wine, but as respectful observers." (*The Watchtower* Nov. 15, 1979, page 27) Prior to 1938 the so-called "other sheep" were not even invited to this annual observance.

This 47-year-old tradition is foreign to what took place on the night our Lord introduced this means of remembering his dying on behalf of his followers. On that occasion all of the disciples present shared in this spiritual food and drink. By the time the apostle Paul penned his first letter to the Christians in Corinth, it appears that this observance was a common feature of Christian worship: "When you meet together, it is not the Lord's supper that you eat. For in eating, each one goes ahead with his own meal, and one is hungry and

another is drunk. What! Do you not have houses to eat and drink in? Or do you despise the church of God and humiliate those who have nothing? What shall I say to you? Shall I commend you in this? No, I will not. For I received from the Lord what I also delivered to you, that the Lord Jesus on the night when he was betrayed, took bread and when he had given thanks, he broke it and said: 'This is my body which is for you. Do this in remembrance of me.' In the same way also the cup, after supper saying: 'This cup is the new covenant in my blood. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink the cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes." -1 Corinthians 11.20--26 RSV. We note that Paul received his information directly from the Lord. He makes it clear that the significance of the emblematic meal is the recalling of the person of Christ and the proclaiming of his death until he comes. The focus is clearly on the *person* and this is consistent with the Lord's command to "do this in remembrance of *me*. The English word "remembrance" is used to translate the apostle Paul's expression in the above text as well as the one at Luke 22: 19. The original Greek word used in these verses translates the Greek noun ANAMNESIS. According to W.E. Vine's *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words*, ANAMNESIS implies, "not 'in memory of' but an affectionate calling of the person himself to mind." Thus viewed the observance is a remembrance of the Lord's person and the fact that he died for us. *It is not the celebration of a date!* While the Nisan 14 date was significant as a date to celebrate the Passover each year under the Law, there is no indication in Scripture that it was a date to be religiously kept under the new covenant as a sacred date.

How *often* would it be appropriate to do this?

According to Watchtower doctrine, it would be only proper once each year on the anniversary date and then only by a very small minority of Christians. This Watchtower tradition has been in place "since the 1870's according to published reports." (*The Watchtower*, July 1, 1959, page 410) Like the traditions found in other religious groups, this tradition draws authority from the tradition itself rather than the

Bible.

In the absence of clear biblical directives in the matter and in the light of what the apostle Paul had

to say in I Corinthians 11 :20--26, it would appear that this was a matter to be determined by those who assembled to observe the Lord's supper. Those who have been conditioned to observing a strict once-each year tradition may not be comfortable observing it at other times. Others, not accustomed to this tradition may be comfortable doing so more frequently. The context of Paul's words deal more with the spirit in which the meal is shared in than how often it is observed. Surely, it would be appropriate to do so on the anniversary of Jesus' death (although there is no indication in scripture that this was the custom) but it cannot be argued that this is the only time it may properly be done.

Paradoxically, in its efforts to establish that only an annual observance is scripturally proper the Watchtower Society focuses on the Passover in this regard at the same time arguing that the Passover did not typify the Lord's evening meal! In this they focus more on the date than the person: "This evening of universal importance took place nineteen hundred and fifty-two years ago on the 14th day of Nisan, the first lunar month of the Jewish sacred calendar. This day would be one that was never to be forgotten by his devoted footstep followers. To ensure that his loyal followers would never overlook the significance of what was then to take place, Jesus instituted a special commemorative evening meal, described by the apostle Paul as "the Lord's evening meal." (Page 10, par. 2)

The next several paragraphs continue to elaborate on the historical significance of the day in Israelite history by telling about the institution of the Passover when the Israelites and certain Egyptians were delivered from Egypt. They quote Exodus 12: 14,27 in this regard: "This day (Nisan 14) must serve as a memorial for you, and you must celebrate it as a festival to Jehovah throughout your generations. It is the sacrifice of the Passover to Jehovah, who passed over the houses of the sons of Israel in Egypt when he plagued the Egyptians."

By focusing on the Passover as a "memorial" celebration divinely instituted to be observed once each year, the Society seeks to make it appear scriptural that the remembering of Christ by the use of the emblematic bread and wine should be done but once each year: "Why is this so? Well, the Jewish Passover was celebrated just *once* each year, and Jesus started the Memorial on that same Passover night, Nisan 14 ...

Jesus clearly meant that his disciples should keep the celebration of his death on the Passover Day, which came once a year." (Page 16, Par. 3)

In the vocabulary of Jehovah's Witnesses the word "Memorial" is constantly used as a synonym for "the Lord's evening meal" or "supper." However, the word "memorial" does not appear in the English translation of the Society's *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*. And, as it has been pointed out, it does not represent an appropriate rendering of the Greek noun ANAMNESIS. The word "Memorial" is used, however, in the above translation of the *New World Translation of the Hebrew Scriptures*. Apparently the word memorial more readily suggests an anniversary observance because of its use in their translation in connection with the Passover and therefore is used to make a connection between the two. Despite all of this, they insist that the Passover did not typify the Lord's supper:

"Some have suggested that the increasing great number of 'other sheep' should partake of the emblems. Their reasoning is: Since 'the law has a shadow of the good things to come,' and since one of the requirements of the Law was the keeping of the Passover by both Israelites and circumcised alien residents, this would imply that both classes of sleeplike ones in the 'one flock' under the 'one shepherd' ought to partake of the Memorial emblems. (Hebrews 10:1; John 10:16; Numbers 9:14) This raises an important question: Was the Passover a type of the Memorial?" (Page 17, par. 6) "It is true that *certain features* of the Passover observance in Egypt were undoubtedly fulfilled in Jesus. Paul likens Jesus to the Passover lamb, saying, 'Christ our Passover has been sacrificed.' (1 Corinthians 5:7) The sprinkling of the Passover lamb's blood on the doorposts and lintels assured deliverance for the firstborn within each Israelite home. Similarly, it is through the sprinkling of Christ's blood that 'the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens' receive their deliverance, or 'release by ransom.' (Hebrews 12:23,24; Ephesians 1 :3,7) Furthermore, not a bone of the Passover lamb was to be broken, and this also found fulfillment in Christ Jesus. (Exodus 12:46; Psalm 34:20, John 19:36) hence, it is true to say that the Passover, in certain respects, was *one* of the many features in the Law that provided 'a shadow of the good things to come.' All these features pointed forward to Christ Jesus, 'the Lamb of God.'" John 1 :29 (Pages 17, 18 par. 7) Italics in original.

"Nevertheless, the Passover was *not strictly* a type of the Lord's Evening Meal. Why not? When the Passover was instituted in Egypt, the flesh of the roasted lamb was eaten, but none of the blood of the Passover lamb was eaten. In contrast, however, when Jesus instituted the Memorial of his death, he specifically instructed those then present to eat his flesh and drink his blood, symbolized by the bread and the wine. (Exodus 12:7,8; Matthew 26:27 ,28) In this very important aspect-the blood-the Passover was not a type of the Lord's Evening Meal." (Page 18, par. 8)

The above paragraphs from *The Watchtower* provide strong Scriptural arguments for concluding that the ancient Passover did, *in every respect*, typify the future sacrifice of the Lord Jesus Christ and its efficacy regarding the forgiveness of sin. They even quote the apostle's words that 'Christ, our Passover has been sacrificed.' Why, then, do they refuse to accept the logical conclusion of their own testimony? It is because the Passover was eaten *by both the native Israelite as well as the alien, circumcised stranger*. (Exodus 12:43-49) To accept the Bible's plain evidence that the Passover typified the Lord's sacrifice and the institution of the simple meal commanded by the Lord would force them to acknowledge that *all believers* ought to share in the antitypical Passover-Jesus Christ!

The so-called "' great crowd" are not viewed as spiritual Israelites, but rather as comparable to the alien resident of ancient Israel. But, as regards the Passover there was but "one law .. for the native and for the alien resident who is residing as an alien in your midst." (Exodus 12:49) To argue that because the Passover lamb's blood was not drunk therefore it could not typify the evening meal is nothing more than hair-splitting. Under the Law, the blood of the sacrificial animals was never drunk, but rather poured out or sprinkled on the altar. Also, the features of the law were mere *shadows* of the good things to come. Obviously, the *realities* of what was foreshadowed would differ in certain respects.

In ancient Israel what qualified a non-Israelite to partake of the Passover was circumcision. In the Christian system of worship "circumcision" is in connection with the heart-the seat of faith. (Romans 2:29; 10:9) It is the cleansing power or faith in Christ's sacrifice: "In union with Christ you were circumcised, not with the circumcision that is made by men, but with the circumcision made by Christ, which consists of being freed from the power of this sinful self. For when

you were baptized, you were buried with Christ, and in baptism you were also raised with Christ through your faith in the active power of God, who raised him from death. You were at one time spiritually dead because of your sins and because you were Gentiles without the Law. But God has now brought you to life with Christ. God forgave us all our sins; he canceled the unfavorable record of our debts with its binding rules and did away with it completely by nailing it to the cross," -Colossians 2: 11-14, *Good News Bible*.

Many Jehovah's Witnesses are able to discern from their reading of the Bible as well as their own heartfelt inclinations that they ought to partake of the emblems in obedience to the Lord's command : "keep doing this in remembrance of me," but are prevented from doing so by the Society's arbitrary teachings on the matter. To obey Jesus' command "While not professing to be of the "remnant" of the 144,000 would result in disfellowshipping. Disfellowshipping has occurred for expressing the intent of partaking while never having done so. Local bodies of elders carefully monitor who does and who does not partake of the emblems.

The Society further muddies the waters of understanding by introducing other unscriptural concepts regarding what it means to share in the emblematic bread and wine: "'The act itself demonstrates to the partakers, and to the onlookers that they have already benefited from the ransom sacrifice of Christ Jesus, but in a special way and for a special purpose. How does this work out? On the basis of their faith in Christ's sacrifice and their dedication to Jehovah, God credits them with the merit of Jesus' human sacrifice. For what purpose? So that they can have imputed to them human perfection and thus have a righteous standing before God. Jehovah then begets these by his holy spirit and they become his spiritual sons. They are now in a position to sacrifice their right to live on earth in return for a heavenly inheritance. All of this has taken place before they share in the Lord's Supper."11 -Romans 5: 1,2,8: 8: 15-17; James 1: 18 (Page 13, par. 10)

The scriptures cited at the end of the above paragraph say nothing about the imputing of "human perfection" to Christ's disciples nor do they say anything about using this imputed perfection to "sacrifice" in return "for a heavenly inheritance." All of this is structured in a sectarian and elitist fashion to create divisions among Christians that the Bible simply does not teach.

Under the sub-heading: "The Need for Self-Examination, " there is contained some excellent advice for millions of Jehovah's Witnesses who look upon Jesus Christ as their redeemer and mediator. The information has to do with making a personal decision whether to partake or not: "Paul recommended regarding the Lord's Evening Meal: 'First let a man approve himself after scrutiny, and thus let him eat of the loaf and drink of the cup.' (1 Corinthians 11:28, 29) Did you notice that Paul says you are the one who is to do the approving after scrutiny'? Of course, it is not wrong to talk over such a serious matter with a mature Christian, but you alone must determine your personal relationship with Jehovah and his Son. " (Page 20, par. 17) The problem, however, of an individual within the Watchtower religious system determining whether he should partake or not is skewed by the sectarian context in which it is advised. Their arguments are deliberately designed to discourage the individual from partaking by rendering his motive to do so suspect.

This section of the magazine is addressed to those "who are distressed by doubts as to whether they are entitled to partake of the emblems." (Page 20, par. 16) The publishers will not acknowledge it, but if some are "distressed by doubts," it is more than likely that the doubts have been sown by the Society itself. They say that some who may only have "recently become associated" might have difficulty determining if they should partake or not. They suggest that the desire to partake might be nothing more than a "holdover from a previously held church teaching," or "connected with some selfish desire or emotional feeling." (Page 21, par. 19) In this way the Society intimidates and humiliates those who are impelled to partake on the basis of faith in Christ's sacrifice. All of the "food for thought" in this section regarding to partake or not is presented in a negative way.

The fact is that it is not just those "recently associated" who express concern about this matter of partaking. Many mature Christian Witnesses who have considerable experience with the Word of God have come to question this most serious doctrinal position of The Watchtower Society. As the apostle Paul explains in 1 Corinthians 11, and as the Watchtower rightly points out, it is *the individual believer* who must make the decision. It is not for other men to determine for us or discourage us from doing so.

The self-examination that attends this occasion

goes without saying. It serves to remind one of the suffering and death of our Lord On our behalf. It reminds us that he bought us with this price and that in every respect he is our Master. These are sobering reflections and can have a beneficial effect on our spiritual life. That seems to be the thrust of Paul's comments at 1 Corinthians 11 :27-32 "Consequently, whoever eats the loaf or drinks the cup of the Lord unworthily will be guilty respecting the body and the blood of the Lord. First let a man approve himself after scrutiny, and thus let him eat of the loaf and drink of the cup. For he that eats and drinks, eats and drinks judgement against himself if he does not discern the body. That is why many among you are weak and sickly, and quite a few are sleeping (in death). But, if we would discern what we ourselves are, we would not be judged. However, when we are judged, we are disciplined by Jehovah, that we may not become condemned with the world." – 1 Corinthians 11:26-32 NW.

There were nearly 7.5 million in attendance last year when Jehovah's Witnesses came together to observe the Lord's evening meal. It seems likely that even more will attend this year's observance. Last year 9,081 partook of the emblems. How many will do so this year remains to be seen, but the trend is to fewer and fewer doing so. It is assumed that the mortality rate of these elderly ones figures into this decline. The artist's drawings of the hands pictured handling the emblems are old hands. It is not likely that many new, younger ones will partake of the emblems. Why? Because in this magazine as well as all other magazines and books that deal with this matter the Society continually stresses the point that by 1935 the ones who were to make up the 144,000 had been gathered.

Commenting on the change in the good news introduced by the Society it says the following: "The

modern history of Jehovah's Witnesses shows that since 1931, more attention started to be given to the 'other sheep' through the Kingdom message. Then on May 31, 1935, with the delivering of the talk 'The Great Multitude,' the 'great crowd' that the apostle John saw in vision was clearly identified with the 'other sheep.' What did this new emphasis indicate? Surely that *the gathering of the 'little flock' was drawing to a close* and the time had come for Jesus, through the administration of 'the faithful and discreet slave,' to turn his attention to gathering the 'other sheep.' "" Matthew 24:45-47 (Page 21, par. 18) Italics added.

The above represents a self-fulfilling prophesy. The Witnesses are told that the good news that had been preached for 19 centuries ceased to be valid after 1935. Therefore, how could anyone who came under the influence of Watchtower preaching draw any other conclusion but that he was not to consider himself a child of God?

If millions of Jehovah's Witnesses conclude that Jesus is not addressing them when he said: "keep doing this in remembrance of me," it is not because they concluded this from their own reading of the Bible, but because they have been systematically taught it by the Society. That what was decided upon at a religious convention in 1935 can be cited as *the authority* for changing the historical good news is more than remarkable. The whole structure of different classes of Christians with different hopes and relationships with God and Jesus Christ rests on nothing more substantial than the chronological speculations of the Watchtower Society and the heretical teachings that accompany these speculations. These speculations have been repeatedly and consistently refuted by the outworking of history. □