

The Absurd Teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses

An investigation of their writings

"Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!"

and

"What Does the Bible Really Teach?"

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Introduction

For those people who are not acquainted with the Bible and who engage in conversation with Jehovah's Witnesses, it is usually difficult to check their Bible based reasoning. Some people may believe that a look into the Bible should be sufficient to get the right interpretation, but many of the biblical verses are difficult to understand and also easily misunderstood.

Jehovah's Witnesses like to argue on the basis of texts from Daniel's book (Old Testament), to which they attribute exact prophecies for our present day.

But are they really predictions for the modern age? Is the Bible actually a book of God, scientifically and historically accurate, and a harmonious entirety as the Watchtower Society (WTS) claims?

This study intends to provide guidance to all those who have doubts about the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, but don't know how to argue against them.

From the perspective of Jehovah's Witnesses, Daniel's book is under indictment. Critics say that in reality this scripture was not written during Daniel's Babylonian exile – as pretended – but centuries later, around 165 BC, and Daniel is a fictional person.

Daniel's book is of particular importance to Jehovah's Witnesses because their philosophy of life is largely based on predictions of this prophecy in the Old Testament. In their writing "Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!" they therefore first of all give their opinion on numerous attacks on Daniel's book with regard to time of origin, authorship and truthfulness, and subsequently interpret the predictions of Daniel and other biblical prophets.

In the present study, the arguments and interpretations of the WTS are to be examined and discussed. In addition, a few more biblical topics important to Jehovah's Witnesses will be discussed, such as Armageddon, Messiah and paradise expectation, original sin and the attitude of the WTS towards other religions.

In doing so, the WTS book "What Does the Bible Really Teach?" as well as various Bibles and other literature are consulted using the following abbreviations:

Bibliography

- BBD „Die LXX-Übersetzung des Danielbuches“, Birte Braasch (2003),
webdoc.sub.gwdg.de, Braasch 2003 (PDF)
- BDE „Das Buch Daniel“, www.bibelwerk
- BEL „Belsazar – eine Studie über die Historizität dieser biblischen Person“, Denis
Kaiser (2003); www.bibelschule.info
- Dan The Book of Daniel
- DGG „Der gefälschte Glaube“, K. Deschner 2004
- DJW „Der Jesuswahn“, H. W. Kubitz 2013
- DLW „Die Lehre der Zeugen Jehovas – der Wachtturmgesellschaft“, www.efg-
hohenstaufenstr.de, 11.5.2016
- DTV „dtv-Atlas Weltgeschichte“ Band 1, 2015
- ERV English Revised Version (of the Bible)
- ESV English Standard Version (of the Bible)
- GJP „Jesaja Buch, Prophet, Botschaft“, Margit und Eberhard Gill, www.gills-
web.de, Jesaja-Wildberger
- GNB „Die Bibel – die gute Nachricht“, revidierte Fassung, 2000, Deutsche
Bibelgesellschaft Stuttgart
- Isa The Book of Isaiah
- Jer The Book of Jeremiah
- JIE "Jesus, Interrupted", B. D. Ehrman, 2009
- JWB "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures", Watchtower Bible and Tract
Society, 1984
- JWD1 "Faith in Action" Part 1, DVD of Jehovah's Witnesses
- JWD2 "The Bible – Its Power in Your Life", DVD of Jehovah's Witnesses
- JWG „Die Suche der Menschheit nach Gott“, Wachtturm Bibel- und Traktat-
Gesellschaft, 1990
- JWI „Einsichten über die Heilige Schrift“ (2 Bände), Wachtturm Bibel- und Traktat-
Gesellschaft, 1990
- JWJ „Der größte Mensch, der je lebte“, Wachtturm Bibel- und Traktat-Gesellschaft,
2009
- JWL „Das Leben – Wie ist es entstanden?“, Wachtturm Bibel- und Traktat-
Gesellschaft, 1985

- JWM „Die Bibel – Gottes oder Menschen-Wort?“, Wachturm Bibel- und Traktat-Gesellschaft, 1989
- JWP “Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!”, Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 1999 (PDF)
- JWS "Die ganze Schrift ist von Gott inspiriert und nützlich", Wachturm-Gesellschaft, 1990
- JWW “What Does the Bible Really Teach?” Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, 2005 (PDF)
- KB „Die Offenbarung des Johannes – katholisches Bibelwerk“, www.bibelwerk.de
- KJV King James Version of the Bible
- KNS „König des Nordens – König des Südens“, O. Fiebrandt, 2004; www.sektenausstieg.net
- KYWI „Kyros II.“, militärische Expansionen, Krieg gegen Babylon; Wikipedia
- LDBI „Lexikon der biblischen Irrtümer“ W. J. Langbein, 2003
- Lk Luke Gospel
- MESO „Persien Geschichte online info“, www.geschichte.info 08_01_Mesopotamien, Persien (PDF)
- Mk Mark Gospel
- MRK Neue-Welt-Übersetzung der Heiligen Schrift, Wikipedia
- Mt Matthew Gospel
- NAWI „Nabonid“, Wikipedia"
- NIV New International Version of the Holy Bible
- Rev Revelation
- RSV Revised Standard Version of the Bible (all cited Bible verses without any references were taken from the RSV)
- TBU "The Bible Unearthed", I. Finkelstein; N. A. Silberman, 2002
- WWTB "Who Wrote the Bible?", R. E. Friedman, 1989

Belshazzar

The fifth chapter of Daniel's book is about Belshazzar, a Babylonian king who behaves arrogantly towards Yahweh and is punished for it with death. JWP 15-16 rightly asserts that there are cuneiform tablets documenting the historicity of Belshazzar. In addition – JWP reports – Dan 5 itself provides further evidences of Belshazzar's real existence and Daniel was demonstrably a contemporary at his royal court in Babylon, for only as such was he able to give this report (Dan 5) which is rich in detail about Belshazzar's banquet, for example light-hearted eating, drinking wine and the presence of his secondary wives and his concubines (JWP 22-23). For this reason, it is almost absurd in the opinion of the WTS to claim that Daniel's book was written only centuries after the death of Belshazzar"¹. The same can be read in BEL 11"².

"In fact, only someone living at that (Belshazzar's) time, an eyewitness as Daniel, was able to provide such accurate information"

However, in what way BEL comes to the (JWP-compatible) conclusion that Daniel has provided "accurate information" about Belshazzar in his book, remains puzzling. What do we learn there about him? First he gets drunk together with his guests. Then he ridicules the Jewish faith by drinking with them and his wives from the holy vases of the plundered and destroyed Jerusalem temple. He praises the gods of Babylon and then he is frightened by the Mene-Tekel-writing on the wall which he lets interpret by Daniel whom he then gives the third place in the kingdom. That same night Belshazzar was killed.

Similar stories about haughtiness and punishment by Yahweh draw like a red thread through the Old Testament. The story of Belshazzar's banquet might as well be a fantasy product as "Aladdin and the miracle lamp" – also a narrative with lots of "accurate information". Good food, wine consumption as well as secondary wives and concubines did exist also at other royal courts in later times. For the knowledge about such well-known occurrences as described in Dan 5, no contemporary witness was necessary. Moreover, a "feast for a thousand of his Lords" (Dan 5:1) after Belshazzar's defeat in the battle against Cyrus II (near Opis; 539 BC) is completely unbelievable. Probably Belshazzar was killed in this combat. Thus, he could not give a banquet in Babylon. Therefore, Dan 5 seems more like a propaganda story about Yahweh punishing haughty rulers (Dan 5:22-26).

A reason for the concealment of the concubines and secondary wives (on Belshazzar's feast) in the Septuaginta – discussed in JWP 23¹ –, could also be of non-moral nature:

BBD 204:

"It is also conceivable that the women in the opinion of the LXX-translator had no access to royal banquets and the LXX-translator therefore keeps silent about the concubines and secondary wives."

However, when asked, whether the Aramaic-Hebrew Danielbook was written in the second century BC or – as claimed by JWP 23¹ – during that time only translated into Greek, but written in the sixth century BC (JWP 26), BDE gives a clear answer:

"A basic stock of Daniel-legends arose already under Persian rule (539-331 BC) and was compiled in the third century BC (Dan 3-6) at the latest.

During the ensuing conflict with the Seleucids and because of anti-Semitic trends in the Hellenism, the visions of Dan 2 and Dan 7 (framing) as well as introduction chapter Dan 1 (in the Aramaic language) were added, resulting in an Aramaic Daniel book 1-7. When this conflict worsened by turning the YHWH temple into a temple of Zeus, the vision chapter 8 was added to the Aramaic Daniel book, and the introduction chapter 1:1-2,4 was translated into Hebrew. In a final step, further visions were added (Dan 9, 10-12), turning Dan into an apocalyptic book during the first half of the second century BC."

Accordingly, Dan 5 was written a long time before its translation into Greek.

The idea for Belshazzar's feast could come from the texts of the antique writers Xenophon (430-355 BC) and Herodotus (485-425 BC), cited in BEL 10. They mention a festival in Babylon when Persian troops occupied the city. But these authors – just like Berossos (340-270 BC), cited in BEL 11 – did not live until many years after the death of Belshazzar (539 BC). So they were not contemporary witnesses and their reports on Babylon's occupation are considered unrealistic by modern historians³. Therefore, such sources of literature are not suitable for verifying Dan 5 as a factual report, especially as they do not report anything on Belshazzar's banquet. In Dan 5, "detailed information about the person Belshazzar" (BEL 11²), which could be confirmed outside the Bible, are nowhere to be found. All events described there may have been invented – as well as Daniel's statement that Nebuchadnezzar is the father of Belshazzar (Dan 5:2,11,18). However, ZJP 16-17 argues – contrary to the opinion of some critics –, Dan 5 clearly states that Belshazzar is the son of Nabonid and grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, since in Hebrew and Aramaic there exists no word for 'grandfather' or 'grandson', but 'son' in these languages has the meaning of 'grandson of the' or 'descendent of the' as for example in Mt 1:1 indicated. In this respect, so they claim, Belshazzar is recognizable in the biblical text as grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. As such, he can also be identified, because Belshazzar transferred to Daniel the third place in his kingdom (Dan 5:29⁴).

Hereto, the following can be said:

Nabonid was married to Nitokris, the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar's second marriage. Their son Belshazzar (MESO 337) was really a grandson of Nebuchadnezzar, but actually, the name 'Nabonid' is nowhere to be found in Daniel's book, as said "critics"⁴ rightly say. The claim that neither in Hebrew nor in Aramaic exists a word for "grandfather" or "grandson" is not correct. As can be read in Google, these words are very well represented in both languages. Belshazzar can be confirmed outside the Bible as son of Nabonid (BEL 5; MESO 337), but not within it. There, Belshazzar is the son of Nebuchadnezzar.

A reinterpretation of the word "son" in "grandson" or "descendent" as in Mt 1:1⁴, is immediately understandable for everyone (Jesus, the son of David): Nobody would think of Jesus as the own son of David. In Dan 5:22, however, such a reinterpretation would lead to confusion and therefore is out of the question, because in Dan 5, Nebuchadnezzar is the father of Belshazzar, as for example in Dan 5:2:

"Belshazzar, when he tasted the wine, commanded that the vessel of gold and of silver which Nebuchadnezzar his father had taken out of the temple in Jerusalem be brought ..."

Thus, from Daniel's point of view, Nebuchadnezzar was second in the kingdom so that

Daniel could only be appointed third. Consequently, the critics' criticism that Daniel thinks Nebuchadnezzar is Belshazzar's father, questioning Daniel's credibility as an eyewitness⁴, cannot be refuted by the argument in JWP 16-17 (see also JWP 110). From Daniel's point of view, Nebuchadnezzar is the owner of the second place in Belshazzar's kingdom. The only fact about which Dan 5 reports is found in verse 30, namely, Belshazzar's death at the regime-change. However, from this it cannot be concluded, that Daniel was an eyewitness at Belshazzar's royal court. Also remains, as said above, the question if Belshazzar on his last day actually was in Babylon.

MESO 337:

"In 539 BC, the Babylonian army under Belshazzar was defeated by Cyrus II at Opis. Babylon accepts Cyrus as liberator."

About a nocturnal military surprise, as described in JWP 111 and by Xenophon (BEL 10), the found cuneiform texts report nothing but they do report about Cyrus' "acclaimed entry into Babylon ..." (MESO 372). If Belshazzar, as asserted in Dan 5, was in Babylon during his alleged death night, he would have had to go after the lost battle at Opis on the Tigris to the more than 50 kilometres distant Babylon on the Euphrates (BEL 7-8: Belshazzar was "the commander of the army"). Why do we learn about this important event nothing from Daniel, who according to JWP 17 was in Babylon at the place of the events and who was allegedly so well informed? And why did Belshazzar host a banquet after this military catastrophe? Why is this not mentioned in a single word, even though it meant the end of his reign? And why Belshazzar offers Daniel the third place in a kingdom, which he had already lost with the battle against Cyrus? Why the Mene-Tekel-writing on the wall? Daniel is silent about this. That doesn't speak for a well-informed eyewitness who was in Babylon at the scene.

Daniel believes that Nebuchadnezzar is the father of Belshazzar. But why does not the real father sit on the throne? Nabonid was

"the last king of the Neo-Babylonian Empire. He ruled in dependence of the priestly caste ... The deposition of the supreme deity, Marduk, made the priesthood pact with Cyrus of Persia, causing the fall of Babylon and the end of Nabonid....He left the administration of the land to his son Belshazzar ..."
(MESO 337)

Daniel, on the other hand, reports that Belshazzar's father had gone mad (see also JWP 90-92 and Dan 5:20-21⁵). The same story is told also in the previous chapter (Dan 4:22-32; see also JWP 90-92). There, however, Nebuchadnezzar recovers after "7 times" (7 years). How does Daniel come to this story (see also JWP 67, 82, 90, 95)? It comes from the "stanza poem of Nabonid".

Wikipedia:

"It was written after 539 BC by the Marduk-priesthood in connection with the fall of Nabonid. In this inscription the Babylonian king is accused of insanity, blasphemy and neglect of the cults. It was therefore only a matter of time in the eyes of the priesthood until Marduk's revenge meets Nabonid. The elevation of Sin (moon-god) to the chief god is attributed to the insanity of Nabonid that prompted him to stay in oasis Tema."

In short, this pagan lampoon was rebuilt by the Dan-5-author into a biblical Nebuchadnezzar-story about arrogance and punishment by Yahweh. But he made a mistake. He mistook Nabonid for Nebuchadnezzar! The assertion made in JWP 13-14 that critics of the Daniel-book agreed unisonous that Daniel's book was written entirely in the second century BC, is not tenable, as stated in BDE (see above). Accordingly, the writer of Dan 5 could have lived in times when Belshazzar had not yet fallen into oblivion. However, he cannot have been an eyewitness at the royal court in Babylon because of the said mistake he made.

JWP 110-111 shows a set of Bible-verses in proof of the surprise of Babylon by troops of Cyrus: Isaiah 21:1,2,5,6; 44:27. These are however misquotations. Isaiah 21:1-6 (in contrast to Isaiah 44:27) was written before the takeover of the Babylonian Empire by Cyrus II (see also GJP). He defeated the king of Media in 550 BC (MESO 372) and took over his kingdom. The author of Isaiah 21 describes his fantasies about the conquest of Babylon by the Elamites and Medes (Isaiah 13:17) – but not by the Persians – as well as a destruction of Babylonian idols (Isaiah 21:9). There is not talked about Cyrus (in the contrary to chapter 44). Cyrus, however, took over Babylon without a fight (539 BC). He also did not destroy Babylonian idols but reintroduced the Marduk cult (MESO 372).

TBU 308:

"The Persians tolerated and even promoted local cults as a way to ensure the loyalty of local groups to the wider empire ..."

Isaiah 21 was written in the time before 550 BC, when the Medes were not yet under the Persian rule, but Isaiah 44 only after 539 BC, the year of the peaceful takeover of Babylon by Cyrus. In this case, however, the Persians did not have to lower the water level of the Euphrates near Babylon, as JWP 110-111 misinterprets verse 27 from Isaiah 44.

Isaiah 44:27 (GNB):

"Now I say to the danger-threatening sea: 'Dry out! Your floods shall dry up!'"

GNB 676:

"This is probably the world power Babylon. It is compared to the ancient sea, which as a chaos precedes the creation and constantly threatens it."

The story of the level-lowering of the Euphrates by Cyrus' troops comes from Herodotus's "Nine Books of History" ('Kleio'1,191). But it has nothing to do with the historical events.

NAWI:

"... Herodotus's account of the fall of Babylon is almost entirely unhistorical."

Who was Darius the Mede?

The fifth and sixth chapter of Daniel's book report on a "Darius the Mede" who, after the death of Belshazzar, took over the Babylonian empire.

Dan 5:30-6:3:

"That very night Belshazzar the Chaldean King was slain. And Darius the Mede received the kingdom, being about sixty-two years old. It pleased Darius to set over the kingdom a hundred and twenty satraps, to be throughout the whole kingdom and over them three presidents, of whom Daniel was one, to whom these satraps should give account, so that the king might suffer no loss."

But who was Darius the Mede? It is known from historical research that Cyrus II, the king of Persia, became ruler of Babylonia after Belshazzar's death, but not a "Darius the Mede".

JWP 17-18⁶ reports the following:

"Darius the Mede has not yet been found by name in secular or archaeological sources ... Could Darius have been the ruling name, or title, of a powerful Median official left in charge of Babylon? Some suggest that Darius may have been a man named Gubaru. Cyrus installed Gubaru as governor in Babylon, and secular records confirm that he ruled with considerable power ..."

However, according to Dan 6:1-3, Darius was not one of the "three presidents" but king of the Babylonian Kingdom, in which he appointed 120 satraps and three presidents. From Daniel's point of view, he was "the son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans" (Daniel 9:1), after Belshazzar, the king of the Chaldeans (the inhabitants of the Babylonian Empire; GNB 358) had been killed (Daniel 5:30). Cyrus was according to Daniel's opinion the successor of Darius.

Dan 1:21:

"And Daniel continued there until the first year of king Cyrus."

Dan 6:28:

"So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Darius and the reign of Cyrus the Persian."

In reality, however, Cyrus was not the successor of a Darius (MESO 372). Daniel should have been aware of this, if he was really Cyrus' contemporary as Dan 6:28 and Dan 1:21 report. A simultaneous rule of Cyrus and Darius, as JWP 18⁶ supposes, does not follow from Dan 6 and would also contradict Esra 6:1,3,14 (NIV). There is Cyrus a predecessor of Darius. Cyrus II became ruler of Media in the year 550 BC after his military victory over Astyages (the king of this country) and this he was also when he occupied Babylonia in the year 539 BC and until his death 530 BC. It is therefore obvious that the author of Dan 5 and 6 mistook Cyrus II for "Darius, the Mede" (Dan 5:31). So he was not sufficiently acquainted with the history.

A misinformation is also present in Dan 9:1, in which Darius is called "son of Ahasuerus".

Dan 9:1:

"In the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede, who became king over the realm of the Chaldeans ..."

Darius, however, was not the son but the father of Ahasuerus (= Xerxes I, see MESO 375; GNB 417; KNS). Neither of them was "by birth a Mede", but each of them was by birth a Persian (Achaemenid). The Persian King Darius (= Darius I) son of Hystapes, ruled from 522 to 486 BC, Ahasuerus (= Xerxes I) from 485 to 465 BC. "The son of Ahasuerus" was Artaxerxes who was at power from 464 to 424 BC (GNB 417; MESO 375). Thus, "the first year of ... the son of Ahasuerus" was the year 464 BC. If Daniel, according to Dan 1:1-6, came to Nebuchadnezzar's royal court in Babylon "in the third year of the reign of Jehoiakim, king of Juda" (Dan 1:1-6), as a young man – i.e. in the year 605 BC –, then, "in the first year of Darius, the son of Ahasuerus," – that is, in the year 464 BC – he would have been about 160 years old. Consequently, Darius, mentioned by Daniel (Dan 9:1), cannot be Ahasuerus' son. He cannot mean Darius I either, because he did not take over the Babylonian empire from Belshazzar (or Nabonid). The "powerful Median official" in Babylon, mentioned in JWP 18⁶, was (according to MESO 338) not "Darius" but Ugbaru II, also known as Gobrias II, a tribal lord. "Gubaru", mentioned in JWP 18⁶, is probably Ugbaru I (= Gobrias I).

MESO 338:

"After the fall of king Nabonid, Gobrias I was appointed as governor of Babylon after he had fought on the side of king Cyrus II in the decisive battle (near Opis)",

KYWI

"after the king of Persia (Cyrus II) had formed a military alliance with the tribal leader Ugbaru and had promised him the satrap position in Babylon."

When Gobrias I died in 538 BC

"Cyrus II appointed his son Cambyses II as his successor and gave him the title 'King of Babylon'" (MESO 338; compare JWP 17-18⁶).

He, however, provoked and insulted the Babylonian priesthood.

"Probably Cambyses II soon had to hand over his office to the successor Gobrias II who was listed in the Babylonian chronicle from 536 BC as 'Satrap of Babylon'." (MESO 338)

For the above mentioned satraps of Babylon this results in the following chronicle:

	Reign
Ugbaru I (Gobrias I)	539 – 538 BC
Cambyses II (son of Cyrus II)	538 – 536 BC
Ugbaru II (Gobrias II)	536 – 522 BC

and for the Persian kings:

Cyrus II	559 – 530 BC
Cambyses II	530 – 522 BC
Darius I	522 – 486 BC
Ahasuerus (Xerxes I)	485 – 465 BC
Artaxerxes	464 – 424 BC

Now the question arises: Did the author of Dan 6 copy the career of Daniel from that of Ugbaru II? Ugbaru II was according to MESO 338 governor of Babylon under Cyrus II and later on he had one of the highest positions of honour at the court of Darius I. Dan 6:28 would therefore be congruent with the career of Ugbaru II, if Darius is exchanged for Cyrus and vice versa:

'So this Daniel prospered during the reign of Cyrus and the reign of Darius the Persian.'

Thus, the following plausible picture arises:

- 1) In Dan 5:31 and 6:1-3 Cyrus II was confused with Darius I. In other words: "Darius the Mede" is in reality Cyrus II who had already become king of Media 550 BC, too. (see Ezra 6:1-3)
- 2) "...Darius, the son of Ahasuerus, by birth a Mede" (Dan 9:1) is in reality Cyrus II.
- 3) Dan 6:28 projects the career of the historical Ugbaru II (who was influential both under Cyrus II and later for a short time under Darius I) into Daniel's life.
- 4) The author of Dan 5-6 and Dan 9 was historically insufficiently informed and therefore cannot have been a contemporary at the court of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus and Darius.

Dan 11:2 provides a further proof of Daniel's inadequate knowledge of history: There is alleged that after Darius (whom the author confuses with Cyrus), there were four Persian rulers in total until the conquest of Persia by the Greeks. But actually there were more than ten (MESO 372-379).

Telling Details

In JWP 19-23, it is said that there are "details in the book of Daniel indicating that the writer had first-hand knowledge of the times he wrote about":

- Daniel in the burning fiery furnace
- the prohibition "to change the laws of the Medes and the Persians"⁷
- "Daniel 3:1-6 reports that Nebuchadnezzar set up a giant image for all the people to worship" under threat of fire death
- "... Daniel records Nebuchadnezzar's boastful attitude about his many construction projects."⁸

"Moreover, the evidence suggests that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was closed long before the second century B.C.E." (JWP 24)⁹

To these assertions the following is to be noted: As exposed in BDE (see chapter "Belshazzar"), a "basic stock of Daniel legends (Dan 3-6)" arose "already under Persian rule (539-331 BC)." Thus, Daniel's knowledge of death penalty by the burning fiery furnace or lion's den in Babylonia or Persia would be easily explained as well as the aforementioned Persian prohibition of a change in the law (Dan 6:16⁷), if it really existed, and the existence of death penalty like lion's den or fire death do not prove Daniel's miraculous survival of such procedures – that's exactly what the critics of 'Daniel in the fire oven' are all about. This story as well as Nebuchadnezzar's alleged religious order to worship a golden statue (Dan 3:1-6) serves as evidence of Daniel's exemplary faith. For this story JWP provides no extra-biblical evidence, nor for Nebuchadnezzar's alleged boastful behaviour⁸. In addition, a king's name stamped on bricks was also common in other dynasties – for example, among Egyptian rulers – as well as the boasting of successful campaigns or of a busy building activity. For a knowledge of such well-known occurrences, Daniel was not necessary as a contemporary witness. Therefore, Dan 5 appears rather as a propaganda-story for Yahweh, who punishes haughty and blasphemous rulers. The same applies to the chapters 3, 4, 6 in Daniel's book. There is no extra-biblical evidence for a Yahweh-believing king Darius the Mede (Dan 6:27; see also Cyrus, Ezra 1:2-3) or for a Nebuchadnezzar, who converted to the Yahweh belief (Dan 3:28-29; 4:31-34) and who "fell upon his face and did homage to Daniel" (Dan 2:46). These are religious fairy tales. Nebuchadnezzar's alleged insanity (Dan 4:32) is also not proven. Likewise, the stories of Daniel in the fire-furnace and in the lion's pit seem rather legendary – as propaganda stories for Yahweh – as well as the book of Jeremiah. In this book, Nebuchadnezzar is described as a "servant" of God, who, on God's command, invades the land of Judah (Jeremiah 25:9) to punish the faith-renouncing Jewish people. For this God-ordered act he shall (irrationally) be punished by the Almighty (Jeremiah 25:12).

Ultimately, on the one hand, it is about building the god of the Jews as a world leader, to whom all kings have to submit, and on the other hand explaining the loss of David's throne by an alleged apostasy of the Jewish people, which was politically rather insignificant at that time but by the religious-fanatical authors of the Old Testament was blown up to the most important people on earth.

Moreover, it is questionable whether – as claimed in JWP 24⁹ – "the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was closed long before the second century B.C.E." The following statement can be found under "Tanakh" in Wikipedia:

"There is no scholarly consensus as to when the Hebrew Bible canon was fixed: some scholars argue that it was fixed by the Hasmonean dynasty, while others argue it was not fixed until the second century CE or even later."

More Testimonials for Daniel's Book

The WTS claims that Daniel's book had already been completed in the year 536 BC (JWP 26) and in the main only reports facts. In JWP 25, 27¹⁰ it is said that it is of high credibility; even Alexander the Great, as the historian Josephus reported, recognized the prophecy for his campaign there. Consequently, the book of Daniel could not have come into existence only in the second century BC during the Maccabean-time, as Bible critics claim. In addition, Daniel was mentioned in Ezekiel's book (14:14,20; 28:3), i.e. already in the sixth century BC.

Here is the following to say:

- The alleged transfer of Daniel's book to Alexander was about 400 years before Josephus (37 – 100 CE) wrote about it. Which sources of information did he refer to? Are they credible? JWP is silent about this.
- A dating of the Daniel-book with regard to its genesis was already referred to in the chapter "Belshazzar" referring to BDE.
- Concerning the JWP-argument that Daniel is mentioned in the book Ezekiel several times by name (Ezekiel 14:14,20;28:3), one learns in GNB 359:
"In addition to the recipient of the vision in the Daniel book, there is another bearer of this name (actually in the slightly modified form 'Danel') in Ez14:14-20 next to Noah and Job who is named as an exemplary righteous. A Daniel figure with this property is known from Canaanite tradition. Ezekiel evidently names three exemplary men who do not belong to Israel."

That means: Daniel from the book Ezekiel has nothing to do with Daniel the prophet.

The Greatest Witness

JWP 27-28:

"Finally, though, let us consider the greatest of all the witnesses to the authenticity of Daniel – none other than Jesus Christ. In his discussion of the last days, Jesus refers to 'Daniel the prophet' and to one of Daniel's prophecies – Matthew 24:15; Daniel 11:31; 12:11. Now if the Maccabean theory of the critics were correct, one of two things would have to be true. Either Jesus was duped by this forgery or he never said what Matthew quotes him as saying. Neither option is viable. If we cannot rely on Matthew's Gospel account, how can we rely on other parts of the Bible? If we remove those sentences, what words will we next pluck from the pages of the Holy Scriptures?"

But there are many contradictions between the four Gospels alone. That means: If Matthew wrote the truth, the other Gospels contain falsehoods. An example: What are Jesus' last words on the cross?

Matthew 27:46: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

Luke 23:46: "Father, into thy hands I commit my spirit!"

John 19:30: "It is finished."

That means: Three completely different versions (see JIE 64-70)! Consequently, two evangelists must have written the untruth. Why not Matthew? But if Matthew did not even know Jesus' last words on the cross, how can we be sure that it was Jesus who quoted from the Daniel book, as Matthew 24:15 claims?

JWP 28:

"Jesus further authenticated the book of Daniel at the very time of his baptism. He then became the Messiah, fulfilling a prophecy in Daniel regarding the 69 weeks of years (Daniel 9:25, 26...)."

Concerning the baptism, you can read in Luke 3:22:

"and the Holy Spirit descended upon him in bodily form, as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, 'Thou art my beloved Son; with thee I am well pleased.'
(see also JIE 94-95)

In the Gospel of Luke 2:11, however, one learns on the occasion of the birth of Jesus:

"for to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is Christ the Lord."(see also JIE 94-95)

So Jesus was the Messiah at birth (and thus also the Son of God^{10a}), because the translation of "Christ" is "Messiah" (GNB 358). That is: two conflicting versions in Luke's Gospel.

According to the book of Acts 13:33, however, he did not become God's Son until after his resurrection:

"Thou art my Son, today I have begotten thee." (see also JIE 94-95)

And according to John's Gospel 17:5, 24, he was already God's Son
"... before the world was made." (see also JWW 42)

But when did he become God's Son? The 69 weeks of years, which according to JWP 28 (see above) were prophesied by Daniel, could therefore also refer to Jesus' birth or resurrection. In fact, however, they have nothing to do with Jesus, but relate to a time centuries before the birth of Jesus (see next chapter).

As stated above, there are not only contradictions between the Gospels, but also in them. Another example for this is in Matthew 1:1-18: The ancestry of Jesus (see also DGG 27ff). According to these verses, Jesus is a descendent of David. However, Jesus' family tree is not identical with Mary's, but surprisingly with Joseph's! According to Matthew 1:18, Mary got pregnant from the "Holy Spirit" and not from Joseph. Luke 3:23-38, too, supplies Jesus' tree, which, however, is quite different from the one in Matthew's Gospel (see DGG 27-28).

JIE 36

"Joseph is not Jesus' father. But that creates an obvious problem. If Jesus is not a blood-relation to Joseph, why is it that Matthew and Luke trace Jesus' bloodline precisely through Joseph? This is a question that neither author answers: both accounts give a genealogy that can't be the genealogy of Jesus, since his only bloodline goes through Mary, yet neither author provides her genealogy."¹¹

You can read about Jesus' genealogical tree in JWW 21:

"The Bible ... include not only the names but also the ancestry of individuals. For example, note the detailed ancestral line of Jesus set out at Luke 3:23-38."

On the other hand, one learns in JWW 42:

"He (Jehovah¹²) transferred the life of his firstborn Son from heaven to the womb of a Jewish virgin named Mary. No human father was involved."

In principle, such nonsense runs through the whole 'Holy Scripture' – from the very first page. There is stated in the verses 4 and 5 that God created the light as well as day and night on the first day of creation. In verses 14 to 19, on the other hand, he did not create them until the fourth day (JIE 9). When did he actually create them? In JWW 20, however, one learns:

"The harmony of the Bible is impressive, but that is what we would expect of a book from God."

But let's go back to the title of this chapter: "The Greatest Witness". Who are actually the extra-biblical witnesses of the "Greatest Witness"? The answer is: There are none! Often, ancient historians are mentioned who reported about Jesus in their writings: Tacitus (54-117), Josephus (37-100, see also JIE 150), Suetonius (70-140), Pliny the Younger (61-113), Lucian (120-180). But they were not his contemporaries and Jesus' contemporary Philo of Alexandria (25 BC – 50 A.D.)³⁶,

"an excellent connoisseur of Judaism, of its sacred writings and sects ... (who) tells not only about the Essenes but even about Pilate" (DGG 15),

doesn't report anything about Jesus.

JIE 148:

"What do Greek and Roman sources have to say about Jesus? Or to make the

question more pointed:

If Jesus lived and died in the first century (death around 30 CE), what do the Greek and Roman sources from his own day through the end of the century (say, the year 100) have to say about him? The answer is breath-taking. They have absolutely nothing to say about him. He is never discussed, challenged, attacked, maligned, or talked about in any way in any surviving pagan source of this period. There are no birth records, accounts of his trial and death, reflections on his significance, or disputes about his teachings. In fact, his name is never mentioned once in any pagan source. And we have a lot of Greek and Roman sources from this period: religious scholars, historians, philosophers, poets, natural scientists; we have thousands of private letters; we have inscriptions placed on buildings in public places. In no first-century Greek or Roman (pagan) source is Jesus mentioned."

Considering that, it would perhaps be comforting if at least the four evangelists were contemporary witnesses of Jesus. But they were not.

DGG 20-22:

"All the Gospels ... were originally handed down anonymously. Only later did they receive authors' names and did the church issue them as works of apostles and their students. That's what their reputation has just established. In fact, they all come from no apostle

Unanimously, modern historical-critical theology declares that virtually nothing can be ascertained of Jesus' life, neither from individual stages of it, nor from his mental particularity or even development....

According to the opinion of the entire critical Bible-science, the Gospels are not reliable historical fundamental sources, but already further evolved mythological literary products, originated by religious exuberance. They are religious tracts and missionary scriptures which not only want to strengthen the faith of Christians but gain new followers, too. The authors did not have the slightest interest in historical reality in our sense. In other words: The Gospels are phantasy products of the later community. The parish was the actual creator of the Christ picture. Very old myths have been the godfathers here."

The 70 'Weeks'

In the second book of Samuel, Yahweh promises to the king David the eternal continuance of his dynasty.

2 Samuel 7:16:

"And your house and your kingdom shall be made sure for ever before me; your throne shall be established for ever."

But the promise of Yahweh is not kept, the Babylonians conquer Jerusalem.

WWTB 136:

"Josiah^{12a}, the culminating hero of the Deuteronomistic history, had died. The Deuteronomistic history looked ironic, even foolish, twenty-two years later. The Babylonians had destroyed and exiled Judah. The 'eternal' kingdom had ended. The family that would 'never be cut off from the throne' was cut off from the throne. The place 'where Yahweh causes his name to dwell' was burned down. And the things that were said to exist 'to this day' did not exist anymore. What was to be done with the positive, hopeful history book that culminated in Josiah? Someone decided to make a second edition of it."

In 1 Kings 8:25 (see also WWTB 133), the possession of David's throne now depends on the king's behaviour (see also 1 Kings 9:6-7); in Jeremiah 25:6-12, an apostasy of the Jewish people from the true faith is invented. This delict is to be punished with a permanent devastation of the countries and with a 70-year-long subjection of the Jewish people (Jeremiah 25:9,11). But countries did not become an "everlasting reproach". In 2 Chronicles 36:21 (ESV) this problem is noticed and a tacit correction made:

"... until the land had enjoyed its Sabbaths. All the days that it lay desolate it kept Sabbath, to fulfil seventy years."

Daniel corrects as well:

Dan 9:1-2:

"...the number of years which ... must pass before the end of the desolations of Jerusalem, namely, seventy years."

Yet the Babylonian reign over Judaea didn't last 70, but only 48 years (587-539 BC). In addition, contrary to expectations, the foreign rule over the Jewish people was not over: the rule of the Persians followed. What does modern archaeology say about the devastation of Judah? According to recent findings, the land around Jerusalem was continuously populated, and the Babylonian exile affected only a minority of the Jewish people (see TBU 305-308).

In addition, the claim in Nehemiah's book (2:1-3) that Jerusalem was still in a devastated state in the twentieth year of king Artaxerxes (i.e. 444 BC; that is, since 143 years), seems to be a fairy tale (compare Dan 9:25). According to TBU 307-308, urban life in Jerusalem began to revive after the Persian takeover of the Babylonian empire (539 BC).

Dan 9 was written during the reign of Antiochus Epiphanes (= Antiochus IV, 175-164 BC), see BDE, starting from the year 168 BC when a Zeus-altar ("abominations") was

erected in the temple of Jerusalem (GNB 399¹³; see also the beginning of the chapter "The disgusting thing").

Dan 9:27:

"and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate ..."

The author of Dan 9 knew, therefore, that the foreign reign over the Jews had lasted more than 70 years – as originally announced by Jeremiah 25:11 (see also Jer 30:3,8-9, 20-22). Therefore, he renamed the 70 years to "70 weeks of years", with a "week of year" (or in short: "week") corresponding to 7 years.

Dan 9:24:

"Seventy weeks of years are decreed concerning your people and your holy city, to finish the transgression, to put an end to sin, and to atone for iniquity, to bring in everlasting righteousness, to seal both vision and prophet, and to anoint a most holy place (reinauguration of the temple)."

Even more clearly formulated is Daniel's correction of Jeremiah 25:11 in Dan 9:24 in GNB:

"Not 70 years, but 70 weeks of years must pass according to God's plan, until he turns the fate of your people and the holy city ..."

Daniel divides the "70 weeks of years" into four sections (see figure at the end of this chapter).

Dan 9:25-27:

- 25 "Know therefore and understand that from the going forth of the word to restore and build Jerusalem to the coming of an anointed one, a prince, there shall be seven weeks. Then for sixty-two weeks it shall be built again with squares and moat, but in a troubled time.
- 26 And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing; and the people of the prince who is to come shall destroy the city and the sanctuary. Its end shall come with a flood, and to the end there shall be war; desolations are decreed.
- 27 And he shall make a strong covenant with many for one week, and for half of the week he shall cause sacrifice and offering to cease; and upon the wing of abominations shall come one who makes desolate, until the decreed end is poured out on the desolator."

That means:

After being destroyed by the Babylonians (in the year 587 BC) Jerusalem shall be in a ruined state for 7 'weeks' (= 7 weeks of years = 49 years). Afterwards Cyrus II ("an anointed one", Dan 9:25) will come and Jerusalem will be rebuilt within a short time and be in a rebuilt state for 62 'weeks' (434 years). Nevertheless, this time will be sorrowful because Juda is under a foreign rule. Consequently, Daniel has transformed the 70 years of foreign rule, prophesied by Jeremiah, in 70 'weeks' (= 70 weeks of years = 70x7 = 490 years) to save Jeremiah's credibility. Dan 9:25-27 was written between 168 and 165 BC (Daniel: bibelwissenschaft.de). At that time, it was clear to every reader of Jer 25:11, that Jeremiah was wrong in his prophecy of

the 70 years (see Jeremiah 30:3, 8-9, 20-22). Daniel's conversion of the 70 years into 70 'weeks' thus served to safeguard Jeremiah's prophet status. In this conversion it was unimportant whether the 70 'weeks' actually corresponded to 490 years (in reality there were only 422). He probably did not know the exact number himself, but he knew that it was more than 70 years.

According to Dan 9:26, "an anointed one" is killed after 62 'weeks'. Meant is Onias III, a prevented Jewish high priest, who was said to have been killed 3,5 years before Antiochus' temple-sacrilege (see 2 Maccabees 4:34 and KNS). Then comes the army of Antiochus IV (king of the Seleucids), "the people of the prince" (Dan 9:26). 3.5 years ("half of the week", Dan 9:27) after the death of Onias, Antiochus' army destroys Jerusalem (Dan 9:26) and disgraces the Jewish temple (168 BC). But after 3.5 years, God's judgment ("the decreed end", Dan 9:27) shall begin (165 BC).

The WTS interprets Dan 9:25-27 completely differently (see table at the end of this chapter). According to the opinion of the WTS, Daniel accurately predicted Jesus' baptism and crucifixion (JWW 197-198) with JWP 186-196 referring (inter alia) to the verses Genesis 22:17-18 and Isaiah 9:6,7; 53:8, which, however, have nothing to do with Jesus. Jehovah's Witnesses identify Onias III with the help of their false translation of Dan 9:26¹⁴ in JWB with Jesus (see also JWP 192; KNS), who, in their opinion, was killed after 62 'weeks' ("cut off", JWP 192; JWB: Dan 9:26), astonishingly however, he was, according to JWP 189 and JWW 198, baptised at the same time (the "Messiah appears"). There he is killed only after 62,5 'weeks'. According to JWP 188, the 70 'weeks'(490 years) begin in the year 455 BC, that is the 20. year of government of Artaxerxes (Nehemiah 2:1). This year, however, was not 455 BC, but 444 BC (see timetable at the end of chapter "The 7 times"). The WTS ignores the official historiography, claiming in addition, that historians would confirm this year (455 BC) as his 20. year of government (JWW 199). What is the reason? It's about making the 490 years (70 'weeks') compatible with Jesus' baptism and execution, and thus to prove Daniel's prophecy in the sense of Jehovah's Witnesses. According to JWP 189 the 490 years end in the year 36, when apostle Petrus is said to have preached (JWP 194).

The 70 'weeks' in Dan 9:24, however, have nothing to do with Jesus but refer to the period between 587 and 165 BC, that is, between the year of destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's troops and the divine judgment awaited by the Jewish priesthood. Dan 9:24-27 was written as vaticinium ex eventu between the year 168 BC, the year of the desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem, and the year 165 BC. The only real prophecy of this chapter refers to the time about three years after this sacrilege: God's revenge (Dan 9:27, "the decreed end", Yahweh's judgment). However, this prediction was not fulfilled.

Finally, it should be emphasized that Jehovah's Witnesses see no connection between the 70 years from Jeremiah 25:11 and the 70 'weeks' from Daniel 9:24. For them, Daniel's 70 'weeks' are not a correction of Jeremiah's 70 years. From their point of view, the latter start in the year 607 BC and end 537 BC, the former last for them from 455 BC to 36 CE. In the Bible, however, both times begin in the year of the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar's troops (Dan 9:2, 24; Jer 25:11), that is, according to today's chronology in the year 587 BC. According to Jer 25:1,3, Jeremiah announced this catastrophe in the "fourth year of Jehoiakim"(604 BC) or in "the first year of Nebuchadnezzar" (604 BC) and he warned the Jewish people according to Jer 25:3 since "the thirteenth year of Josiah"(i.e. 626 BC).

Interpretation of the 70 'weeks' (Dan 9:25-27)

<u>by the Bible</u>		<u>by Jehovah's Witnesses</u> (JWP 188-189, 301; JWW 198)
Destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians (in 587 BC); the 70 'weeks' begin		Jerusalem's reconstruction begins in 455 BC; the 70 'weeks' begin
7 'weeks', that is 49 years, pass away (actually 48 years)		7 'weeks', that is 49 years, pass away
Cyrus II ("an anointed one"; Dan 9:25) conquers Babylonia in 539 BC		Jerusalem's reconstruction is completed in 406 BC
62 'weeks', that is 434 years pass away (actually 367 years)		62 'weeks', that is 434 years pass away
Onias III ("an anointed one"; Dan 9:26) is killed in the year 172 BC		baptism of Jesus in the year 29
0.5 'weeks' (3.5 years) pass away		0.5 'weeks' (3.5 years) pass away
erection of a Zeus-altar ("abomination"; Dan 9:27) within the Jewish temple in the year 168 BC		Jesus' execution in the year 33
0.5 'weeks' (3.5 years) pass away		0.5 'weeks' (3.5 years) pass away
God's judgment ("decreed end", Dan 9:27) begins in the year 165 BC, at the end of the 70 'weeks'		the 70 'weeks' end in the year 36

Nebuchadnezzar's Dream

In the second chapter of Daniel's book, Nebuchadnezzar had a dream that made him frightened. However, he forgot its content and demanded under threat of death penalty that the magicians, the enchanters, the sorcerers and the Chaldeans be summoned, to tell and interpret the dream. Daniel succeeds with Yahweh's help (see Dan 2: 31-45¹⁵). The dream is about a statue. Its head was made of gold, its chest and arms were made of silver, its belly and loins of copper, its thighs of iron and its feet of an unstable iron-clay mixture. JWP 51 takes the following position:

"Daniel told Nebuchadnezzar: 'After you there will rise another kingdom inferior to you.' (Daniel 2:39) A kingdom symbolized by the image's breast and arms of silver would succeed Nebuchadnezzar's dynasty.

Some 200 years earlier, Isaiah had foretold this kingdom, even giving the name of its victorious king – Cyrus (Isaiah 13:1-17; 21:2-9; 44:24-45:7,13).

This was the Medo-Persian Empire."

But there is no talk of Cyrus in Isa 13:1-17 and 21:2-9, but of a "Lord of hosts", i.e. Yahweh, who wants to destroy the population of Babylon, including their children, with the help of the Medians. Since Cyrus is mentioned neither in Isa 13:1-17 nor in 21:2-9, but certainly in Isa 44:28 and 45:1, it must be assumed that Isaiah-chapter 13 and 21 were written before the conquest of the Median kingdom (by Cyrus), that is, before the year 550 BC (MESO 372; see also GJP). So the author of Isa 13 and 21 hoped that the Medes would destroy Babylon when they were not yet under Persian rule. In fact, however, it was the Persians (under Cyrus) who conquered Babylonia.

The period of origin for Isaiah chapters 13 and 21 is therefore between the beginning of the first wave of exile of the Jewish elite to Babylon – thus 597 BC (GNB 363) – and the year 550 BC, the period of origin for the chapters 44 and 45, however, after the conquest of Babylonia by Cyrus, 539 BC. The Isaiah-verses 13:1-17 and 21:2-9, given in JWP 51, contain a false prognosis: The kingdom of God announced here did not come. Isaiah (13:19), however, predicts "Sodom and Gomorrah" (as does Jeremiah 50:40) about Babel, which is supposed to become a desert. It is the wishful thinking of a fanatical Jewish author, which has not been fulfilled – fortunately for the inhabitants of Babylon, who according to Isaiah 13:16 should be slaughtered, as is also desired in Psalm 137:9:

"Happy shall he be who takes your little ones and dashes them against the rock!"

Such a punishment of the Babylonians would also be highly incomprehensible in that Yahweh, according to Jeremiah 25:9, had sent Nebuchadnezzar to punish the Jews for apostasy. Nebuchadnezzar thus acted only in accordance with God's will (Jer 27:6-8).

The assertion in JWW 23, Isaiah's prophecy of Babylon's destruction (Isa 13:19-20; 14:22-23) has been fulfilled, is not true. The Medes and the troops of Cyrus II did not destroy Babylon. Until about the year 1000 CE Babylon remained inhabited; the above Isaiah-verses are false prophecy (see also Jer 25:12; Jer 50-51).

But let's go back to the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream (Dan 2:31-45): Its golden head symbolizes the Babylonian kingdom; the silver region (arms, breast) corresponds to the imperium of the Persians, which followed the Babylonian. The copper area (belly, loins) is the kingdom of Alexander (the Greeks) and the iron legs

and earthen-iron feet represent the kingdom of the Ptolemies (viewed from Jerusalem: in the south) as well as of the Seleucids (in the north), which arose from the empire of Alexander (see DTV 67). As a rule, the rulers of these succeeding states do not get along together

"just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed ...It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever."
(Dan 2:43-44)

It is an end-time expectation of the Jews (for the year 165 BC) during the Seleucid period (304-62 BC) in which the establishment of a state of God is prophesied. It is well known that this expectation did not come true, even though the Maccabee rebellion in 167 BC from 142 BC on (GNB 418) led to the independence of Judaea (Hasmonean empire) for about 80 years.

JWP 54-59, however, interprets the lower districts of the statue differently: the copper area corresponds to both Alexander and Ptolemaic dynasties, i.e. the epoch between 336 BC and 30 BC. The upper part of the legs symbolizes the Roman empire from 30 BC, the lower one an "Anglo-American world power" and the area of the feet a "political divided world in the time of the end" from 1914 on, where people live today.

JWP 59:

"... traditional ironlike rulerships have been obliged to listen more and more to the common people, who want their say in the governments ruling over them. (Job 10:9)"

That means, democracy is no desire of Jehovah's Witnesses.

According to JWP 59, the ten toes represent all of today's national states, whereby the "ten" is not to be understood literally, but as a symbol of completeness.

From Dan 2, however, this interpretation of the statue does not arise. The author of Dan 2 expected the beginning of God's kingdom on earth in the near future, but not more than 2000 years later, as the WTS claims (JWW 151): For him, the "time of the end" was the time under Antiochus, in which the Jews felt particularly oppressed. With the present times, the statue has nothing to do at all. JWP refers to the Revelation 17:9-10 when interpreting the statue:

"The seven heads are seven mountains on which the woman is seated; they are also seven kings, five of whom have fallen, one is, the other has not yet come, and when he comes he must remain only a little while."

According to JWP 55, 57¹⁶, the five fallen kings are Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Medo-Persia and Greece, the sixth king symbolizes the Roman empire, and the seventh king is the British empire which was created in 1763 (JWP 57) – but in fact already existed before – and mutated into an Anglo-American double power and was symbolized by the iron legs of the statue in Nebuchadnezzar's dream.

According to KB

"the revelation was written at the end of the reign of the emperor Domitian (81-96)."

If, according to JWP 57, the seventh king came to power after the year 1763, then the Revelation would have prophesied an event that was at least 1667 years in the future. For Christians of the first century AD, however, near-term expectations were

interesting, but not an "Anglo-American alliance" many centuries later. GNB 388-389 delivers a much more plausible explanation for Revelation 17:10. Thus, the five already fallen kings are the Roman rulers Caligula, Claudius, Nero, Vespasian and Titus. The sixth king is the still ruling Domitian, the seventh will only be in power for a short time, and the eighth (Revelation 17:11) is Nero, returning from the abyss, the anti-Christ, Satan¹⁷.

Prophecies only make sense as near-time expectations and just such one was Revelation 17:10. Revelation and Daniel's book have nothing at all to do with an "Anglo-American world power" and the present times.

God's Kingdom

In JWP 61-62 (see also JWP 261) is explained what happened in heaven 1914¹⁸. There, when in October of this year "the appointed times of the nations" ended, a heavenly kingdom had been established under Jesus' presidency "(Luke 21:24; Revelation 12:1-5; 19:16)", which would stand forever "(Revelation 11:15)". This "Messianic kingdom" would soon, like the stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream in Dan 2:35, destroy all the earthly kingdoms symbolized by the toes of the statue (JWP 59), and then rule the world (become a great mountain).

What do Jehovah's Witnesses understand by "the appointed times of the nations" (JWW 217)? This formulation in Luke 21:24 of JWB is not to be found in the RSV-Bible. There is talk of "the times of the gentiles". It refers to the times before the establishment of a divine kingdom on earth. Luke 21:24:

"they (the inhabitants of Judaea) will fall by the edge of the sword, and be led captive among all nations, and Jerusalem will be trodden down by the Gentiles, until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled."

Luke's Jesus prophesies in this verse the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 by the Romans and the capture of Jewish citizens by the Roman military. Luke 21 was written after this event as vaticinium ex eventu (see "Lukas: bibelwissenschaft.de").

Luke writes in

Luke 21:27:

"And then they will see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory."

and in Luke 21:31-32:

"So also, when you see things taking place, you know that the kingdom of God is near.

Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place."

Jesus thus announces his return as the Son of man¹⁹, who is to bring salvation from the Romans, that is, the "times of the Gentiles" end with Jesus' return, after which the reign of Jesus is established on earth (Luke 22:30; see also Mt 24:37-51). This is supposed to happen during the lifetime of his generation, that is, within the first post-Christian century. In the above verses (of Luke), there is no talk about a heavenly reign of Jesus (JWP 146, 261) which would be established more than 1800 years later (in the year 1914). The Watchtower Society (WTS) had predicted the end of "the times of the Gentiles" for the year 1914²⁰. However, after Armageddon had not occurred in 1914 – and likewise in 1925 (JWP 303) and the mid-1930s (JWP 292) – the WTS transferred the establishment of the divine kingdom to heaven (the beginning of the heavenly presence of Jesus, JWW 84-85, 92, 150, 185). But the divine kingdom in Luke 21:31 is not a kingdom in heaven to be established in 1914 (JWW 85, 217; JWP 289), but a divine kingdom on earth (Luke 21:27-28) which was expected shortly after the conquest of Jerusalem by the Romans (in the year 70 CE). According to Luke 21:32, it should still be established in times of Jesus' generation:

"Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all has taken place."
(see also Luke 9:27; Mt 16:28)

Jesus in the Gospel of Mark and Matthew also sees it that way (Mk 9:1; Mt 24:34) and according to Mark 1:15 this is said to have happened even during Jesus' lifetime:

"the time is fulfilled, and the Kingdom of God is at hand..."

However, in the first post-Christian century, the evangelists did not think at all of a divine reign that would be established in heavenly spheres more than 1800 years later (in 1914)

"to end Gentile domination of the earth"(JWP 261).

In addition, the rule of said "Gentile domination" was not ended. The world is ruled by secular governments to this day. What should this alleged heavenly government have effected since 1914 (so in the "last days"; JWP 239)? More than a palaver cannot have come out, because the WTS claims:

"World conditions are going from bad to worse."

(JWW 184)

Moreover, the "times of the Gentiles" in Luke 21:24 concern the time before Armageddon, that is, they last until Armageddon begins. Thus, in 1914, they would not have come to an end, despite the alleged establishment of a heavenly government of God starting in 1914. In the Bible, the "times of the Gentiles" (Luke 21:24), "the time of the end" (Dan 11:40) and "the appointed time of the end" (Dan 8:19) are the same: It is a time of a few years that remains until the beginning of the kingdom of God. The difference that WTS makes between these two times ("times of the Gentiles"="the appointed times of the nations" until 1914; "time of the end"="the last days", from 1914 to Armageddon) is unknown to the Scriptures. The construction of a heavenly divine government, that started in 1914, has nothing to do with the near-term expectations of the authors of Revelation, Luke's and Mark's Gospel, who were expecting a divine government on earth during their lifetimes, but not in heaven and not more than 1800 years later, in the year 1914. The other biblical verses stated in JWP 61-62¹⁸ such as Revelation 12:1-5; 19:16; 11:15(JWW 77), do not concern the year 1914:

Rev 19:11-16 is about Jesus coming out of heaven armed with a sword "to smite the nations" – meaning especially the Romans – and to rule "with a rod of iron". This was to happen after the reign of Domitian, around the year 100 AD (see Rev 17:10; GNB 388-389¹⁷), but did not happen. There is no talk in Rev 11:15 about a celestial government to be established in 1914 (JWP 61, 261; JWW 77). Rev 12:1-5 (JWP 61¹⁸) is about a dragon (GNB 359), so Satan, with seven crowned heads threatening the Jesus child. So, this is about – as already explained in the previous chapter for Rev 17:10 (see GNB 388-389¹⁷) – the Roman emperors Caligula to Domitian. Then – around 100 AD – God's judgement is to take place, followed by a millennial kingdom of God on earth.

Nota bene: In the Bible the beginning of God's kingdom is shifted more and more into the future: From the eight pre-Christian century (Isa 11:5-10) to the year 165 BC (Dan 12:2-3; 2:44), to the year 30 AD (Mk 1:15), then to Jesus' generation (Mk 9:1; 13:30; Lk 9:27; Mt 24:29-41) and finally to the time around the year 100 AD (Rev 19-20). In Mt 4:17; 5:3,10,12,19,20; 7:21; 10:7 God's government becomes a heavenly kingdom and finally shrinks to a soul state of believing persons (Lk 17:21). Thus, the hope for a world domination of God and his Messiah (Rev 11:15) was buried – in view of the constantly increasing power of the Romans – with Jesus' consolation saying "My kingship is not of this world"(John 18:36). But with a "celestial kingdom" which according to JWP 261 and JWW 85-87 was set up in October 1914, to destroy soon all of today's human governments (JWW 151), the Bible verses quoted in JWP 61-62¹⁸ have nothing to do at all. Why should the authors of the Revelation, who wrote at the end of the first century CE, be interested in a period more than 1800 years later, a

time, when God's kingdom would already have been existed for many centuries from their point of view?

In JWW 79-80 verse 10 from Rev 12 is interpreted as "prophecy":

"The following prophetic words describe what would happen: ... Did you notice two very important events described in that Bible verse? First, God's kingdom under Jesus Christ begins to rule. Second, Satan is cast out of heaven down to the earth."

The author of Rev 12:10, however, doesn't write about an event of the future but of the past.

Rev 12:10:

"Now the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God and the authority of his Christ have come ..."

It is therefore no prophecy! The Revelation was written in the years 90-95 AD (see Offenbarung: bibelwissenschaft.de). Thus, the kingdom of God began according to the opinion of the author of Rev 12:10 at this time, but not in 1914, as the WTS believes. Nevertheless, Jehovah's Witnesses claim

"There is undeniable proof that Jehovah God has established upon a heavenly throne a Ruler for mankind." (JWP 113; see also JWP 261; JWW 85, 217)

but they do not provide evidence. All cited references, such as Lk 22:29 (JWP 261), Rev 11:15 (JWP 61), Mt 24:3-8, Lk 21:11 (JWW 218), do not concern the year 1914 AD. The evangelists and the authors of the Revelation were expecting the kingdom of God during their lifetime in the first post-Christian century.

Mt 24:34:

"Truly, I say to you, this generation will not pass away till all these things take place."

However, this prediction did not come true: God's kingdom didn't come (see also DGG 36). Certainly it was longed for in the "Lord's Prayer"(Lk 11:2; Mt 6:10) and announced by Mark (1:15:"the kingdom of God is at hand") and Luke ("good news"), but has turned out to be a flop^{21, 22, 23}. Also Lk 4:43, indicated in JWW 86, concerns the age of Jesus:

"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God to the other cities also; for I was sent for this purpose."

There is not written:

"I must preach the good news of the kingdom of God, which will come in about 2000 years"

That would not have interested anyone.

Jehovah's Witnesses, however, believe:

"What he (Jesus) foretold (God's kingdom) is now taking place!" (JWW 87; see also JWW 33-36)

The 7 Times

The stone in Nebuchadnezzar's dream mentioned in the beginning of the previous chapter, which destroys a statue (JWP 62; Dan 2:34-35) and becomes a mountain (God's kingdom), aims at that kingdom which is symbolized by the legs and feet of the statue, the fourth kingdom into which the third kingdom (that of Alexander; see Dan 2:39) has fallen apart. According to Dan 2:41, the fourth empire is "a divided kingdom", the parts of which, despite marriages, don't hold together in the long run.

The Roman empire, however, and its "remnants" which "still existed in 1914" – as JWP 61 claims –, is not meant by that. The author of Dan 2 had a current expectation. He means the kingdoms of the Seleucids and Ptolemies, in whose time Dan 2 was written, that is between 168 BC and 165 BC. These kingdoms are to be destroyed by the impact of a stone and replaced by a divine kingdom ("great mountain").

With the fantasies of the WTS (JWP 61), that the falling stone and the mountain symbolize an event in the third millennium A.D., this has nothing to do at all. The author of Dan 2 expected the creation of an earthly kingdom of God (Dan 2:44) that would liberate the Jews from Seleucid rule during his lifetime. He did not think of a "Messianic kingdom" (JWP 61) built in the sky, more than 1800 years later, in 1914, which would someday, perhaps in the third millennium, "extend its power toward our globe" (JWP 62). There remains also the question, why Jesus has not long ago extended his alleged divine kingdom over the earth. Since 1914 he would have had over a hundred years to do so. Where are the biblical evidences for Jesus' heavenly government since 1914? According to Revelation 12:10 there is a heavenly kingdom of God already at the time of its writing (at the end of the first century AD)!

How do Jehovah's Witnesses get to the year 1914? They derived it from chapter 4 of Daniel's book. There, Nebuchadnezzar has a dream in which a huge tree, symbolizing his royal rule, is felled. According to Daniel's dream interpretation, the king falls into madness for 7 times (= 7 years; Dan 4:32) and then returns to his throne after recovery (JWP 90-93; compare also 'Stanza poem of Nabonid'; see chapter "Belshazzar"). According to JWP 95-97, "7 times" mean 7 years for Nebuchadnezzar:

"In prophecy, a year averages 360 days ... So the king's 'seven times', or seven years, were 360 days multiplied by 7, or 2520 days ... The prophetic 'seven times' lasted much longer than 2520 days ..."

namely 2520 years (JWP 96, 301; JWW 216; JWD 1) which began 607 BC

"when Jerusalem was destroyed (by Nebuchadnezzar) and the typical kingdom of God ceased to function in Judah". (JWP 96)

By adding 2520 years to the false destruction-date of Jerusalem, 607 BC, Jehovah's Witnesses get to the year 1914 (JWW 216,218).

JWP 97:

"In that year 'the appointed times of the nations', were fulfilled, and God gave rulership to 'the lowliest one of mankind' – Jesus Christ – who had been considered so base by his foes that they even had him impaled (Daniel 4:17)."

In Dan 4:17, however, nobody is impaled. Obviously, the WTS has been trying to build a bridge from Nebuchadnezzar to Jesus Christ, that is, an interpretation of Dan 4:17 which is completely out of thin air. In this verse there is no talk of Jesus. And the reinterpretation of Nebuchadnezzar's 2520 days of madness in 2520 years is completely conjured out of the hat, as well as the interpretation of the tree from Nebuchadnezzar's dream as an "universal sovereignty of Jehovah". (JWP 95)

Dan 4:20-22:

"The tree you (Nebuchadnezzar) saw, ... it is you, O king ..."

The "7 times" from Dan 4:32 (see above) can by no means be interpreted prophetically in the sense of JWP 96 as 2520 years. The "7 times" are 7 years (see also KNS). Everything else is wild speculation. A "Scriptural rule: A day for a year" (JWP 96) does not exist without a specific explanation such as in Ezekiel 4:6:

"... forty days I assign you, a day for each year"

as well as in Numbers 14:34. In addition, the question remains why JWP 300-301 does not count the 1290 days in Dan 12:11 as years, according to the said "Scriptural rule", but, as a matter of course, as days. That sounds like:

"I re-create my world, just the way it suits me."

The construction of 2520 years (in JWP) from the "7 times" (Dan 4:32) does not occur within the Bible.

Why did Jehovah's Witnesses not choose the year 587 BC, the year historians generally recognize for the destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar, but the year 607 BC? They would have come to the year 1934. Why the heavenly kingdom of Jesus has not been established in the year 1934? The answer is: because Jeremiah said:

"This whole land shall become a ruin and a waste, and these nations serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jer 25:11)

And 607 minus 70 gives 537.

JWP 52:

"In 537 B.C.E., Cyrus issued a decree that allowed Jewish exiles in Babylon to return to their homeland and rebuild Jerusalem and Jehovah's temple."
(according to GNB 417 and TBU 307 it was the year 538 BCE)

But if the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians took place in 587 BC, the subjugation of the Judaeans by the Babylonians lasted not 70 but 50 years. But that would mean: Jeremiah's prophecy was wrong! However, that would be totally unthinkable for the WTS because Jeremiah was a mouthpiece of Jehovah.

JWW 20:

"In a similar way, the Bible contains God's message, not that of the men who wrote it down. Thus, the entire Bible truthfully is 'the word of God' –
1 Thessalonians 2:3"

If the number '70' turned out to be wrong, both Jeremiah and Jehovah himself would be untrustworthy. It would be, so to speak, a catastrophe for Jehovah's Witnesses

because for them the Bible is of internal harmony, of scientific and historical accuracy and reliable prophecy (JW 25-26).

JWW 20:

"The harmony of the Bible is impressive, but that is what we would expect of a book from God."

JWW 21:

"The Bible is also historically accurate and reliable."

Therefore, this year, 607 BC, as the year of the destruction of Jerusalem, must get defended with teeth and claws, the scientific historiography must be wrong and accordingly get 'corrected' (see JWP 108). As a result of this 'corrected' year, a whole series of data results, which deviate from the official historiography. From the death year of Nabopolassar, the predecessor and father of Nebuchadnezzar, all correct year indications are tacitly postponed by about 20 years until the year 539 BC and the time between Nebuchadnezzar's death and the occupation of Babylon by the Persians (539 BC) is pumped up from 23 to 43 years (see chronological table) in order to compensate. In JWP 50-51 it sounds like this:

"Nebuchadnezzar, who reigned for 43 years, headed a dynasty that ruled over the Babylonian Empire. It included his son-in-law Nabonidus and his oldest son, Evil-merodach. That dynasty continued for 43 more years, until the death of Nabonidus' son Belshazzar, in 539 B.C.E. (2 Kings 25:27; Daniel 5:30)"

Chronological table (comparison of years; all year indications before Christ)

	JWP	GNB	MESO
Nabopolassar (reign)	-624		626-605
Nebuchadnezzar II (reign)	624-582	604-562	604-562
Amel-Marduk (reign)			562-560
Neriglissar (reign)			560-556
Nabonid (reign)			556-539
Belshazzar (Nabonid's co-regent)(reign)	-539		554-545
Jehoiakim (king of Judah) (reign)	628-618	608-598	
Battle of Carchemish	625	605	605
Taking Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II	617	597	
Destruction of Jerusalem by Nebuchadnezzar II	607	587	
Babylonian exile of the Jews	607-537	587-538	
Babylon's occupation by Cyrus II	539	539	539
Cyrus' freedom decree for the Jews	537	538	538
Cyrus II (reign)			559-530
Cambyses II (reign)		529-522	530-522
Bardiya (reign)			522
Darius I (reign)		521-486	522-486
Xerxes I (Ahasuerus) (reign)		485-465	486-465
Artaxerxes I (reign)	475-435	464-424	465-424

The Wicked Little Horn

Dan 7 is about a dream of Daniel, which he allegedly had at the time of Belshazzar and in which "four great beasts came up out of the sea ..." (Dan 7:3). The fourth animal had ten horns.

Dan 7:8:

"I considered the horns and behold, there came up among them another horn, a little one, before which three of the first horns were plucked up by the roots; and behold, in this horn were eyes like the eyes of a man, and a mouth speaking great things."

In verse 17 (Dan 7), the four animals are interpreted as four kingdoms. The ten horns of the fourth animal according to verse 24 correspond to ten kings:

"... ten kings shall arise, and another shall arise after them; he shall be different from the former ones, and shall put down three kings."

JWP 135-136 identifies the fourth animal as the Roman Empire. In fact, however, it does not correspond to the Roman Empire, but to the Seleucid and Ptolemaic Kingdoms (followers of Alexander's Empire, the third animal), the legs and feet of the statue from Dan 2 (see chapter "Nebuchadnezzar's dream"). Dan 7, like Dan 2, was created as vaticinium ex eventu during the reign of the Seleucid king Antiochus IV (175-164 BC). The fourth beast has nothing to do with the removal of the last Roman emperor in 476 C.E. or "the authority of the pope", as JWP 136 claims. Its ten horns do not symbolize, as JWP 136 fantasizes, "all the kingdoms that resulted from Rome's dissolution", but they do symbolize the Seleucid rulers before Antiochus IV. The latter is the worst in the eyes of the Jews, because he set up a Zeus altar ("abominations", Dan 9:27) in Jerusalem's temple and because he forbade the Yahweh cult¹³. In Daniel's dream he comes up as a little horn (Dan 7:8; see also Wikipedia). The three horns which were "plucked up" in Dan 7:8, symbolize the competitors of Antiochus IV: Seleucus IV, his son and Seleucus' chancellor Heliodorus. They were all eliminated (Dan 7:24). The Watchtower Society, however, interprets it completely differently. From its point of view, Britain is the little horn.

JWP 138-141:

"Britain's supremacy was confirmed by the crushing victory over Napoleon of France in 1815 C.E. The 'three kings' (three horns), that Britain thus 'humiliated' were Spain, the Netherlands and France. (Daniel 7:24) As a result, Britain emerged as the world's greatest colonial and commercial power. Yes, the 'small' horn grew to become a world power! The angel told Daniel that the fourth beast, or fourth kingdom, would 'devour all the earth'. (Daniel 7:23) ..."

"... There was more to the 'small' horn than the British Empire ... The United States of America eventually became Britain's ally ..."

So, this little horn was in reality a little big horn: "the Anglo-American World Power" (JWP 141). This horn ("the King of the South", JWP 246,284)

"is observant, astute! It speaks grandiose things, dictating policy for much of the world and acting as its mouthpiece, or false prophet. Daniel 7:8,11,20; Revelation 16:13,19:20." (JWP 141)

Moreover, it is also deceitful and vicious. It tracks

"Jesus' spirit-anointed followers on earth"(JWP 141),

that means: the elite of Jehovah's Witnesses.

"For years before World War I, the remnant of these anointed ones publicly warned that 1914 would see the conclusion of 'the appointed times of the nations.' (Luke 21:24)" (JWP 142)

The little big horn, however, ignored this warning

"for it persisted in harassing the anointed 'holy ones' (=Jehovah's Witnesses elite)." JWP 142

"By decree of the Great Judge, Jehovah God, the horn that blasphemed God and harassed his 'holy ones' will have the same experience as the Roman Empire, which persecuted the early Christians."(JWP 145)

But why should the ancient Jews, the addressees of Daniel's book, have been interested in an "Anglo-American World Power", which, from the perspective of Jehovah's Witnesses, originated in 1763 AD and persecutes them? In addition, the WTS is not a Jewish, but a Christian faith community. The authors of the chapters 2,7 and 12 in Daniel's book had a near-term expectation for Jews – not for Christians, who at that time didn't exist – concerning the liberation from the rule of Antiochus IV (see BDE). Dan 7:25-27:

"... and they shall be given into his hand for a time, two times, and half a time. But the court shall sit in judgment, and his (Antiochus') domination shall be taken away, to be consumed and destroyed to the end. And the kingdom and the domination and the greatness of the kingdoms under the whole heaven shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High (the Jews); their kingdom shall be an everlasting kingdom, and all domination shall serve and obey them."

In plain language that means: Within 3.5 years, the removal of Antiochus IV, a world court of Yahweh and the beginning of God's earthly kingdom are expected. This prophecy has proven to be a flop: God's judgement did not come, neither did God's kingdom.

Antiochus IV disgraced the Jewish temple in Jerusalem in 168 BC (GNB 418) and died in 164 BC. Dan 7 was written during that time.

Daniel: bibelwissenschaft.de:

"Since Daniel's book does not mention the reinauguration of the temple in the year 164 BC, it has apparently been completed shortly before this date."

The times in which Jehovah's Witnesses live and lived – that means: more than 2000 years later –, were for the author of Dan 7 the times of God's kingdom since hundreds of years.

In Dan 8:8-12, the little horn appears again in a vision of Daniel: A horn (the kingdom) of a goat (Alexander) breaks and four new horns grow in its place, that is, the empire of Alexander decays into four dominations (Seleucid and Ptolemaic kingdom, Asia Minor and Macedonia; see DTV 67). Out of one of these four horns grows a little horn. Dan 8:9:

"Out of one of them came forth a little horn, which grew exceedingly great toward the south, toward the east and toward the glorious land."

This refers again to Antiochus IV, ruler of the Seleucid Empire.

Dan 8:10-11:

"It grew great, even to the host of heaven; and some of the host of the stars it cast down to the ground, and trampled upon them. It magnified itself, even up to the Prince of the host; and the continual burnt offering was taken away from him, and the place of his sanctuary was overthrown."

This means: Antiochus let kill some Jews ("host of heaven") and some of their priests ("stars") and converted the Jewish temple in Jerusalem into a pagan temple. This sacrilege shall last 1150 days (Dan 8:14). In a vaticinium ex eventu, Daniel is prophesied the end time court "in the third year of the reign of king Belshazzar" (Dan 8:1) by the angel Gabriel:

"He said, 'Behold, I will make known to you what shall be at the latter end of the indignation; for it pertains to the appointed time of the end'." (Dan 8:19)

The author of Dan 8 expected 1150 days (2300 evenings and mornings = 1150 days! See also Dan 9:27; 12:7,11) after the desecration of the Jewish temple (168 BC) the elimination of Antiochus IV, so according to today's chronology, for the year 165 BC (1150 days are about three years).

The WTS, however, interprets the little horn (Dan 8:10), which "grew great, even to the host of the stars"(= simple members of the WTS) as an "Anglo-American World Power", the "seventh world power"(JWP 173-175). The "stars" (Dan 8:10) are for them "holy ones", "spirit-anointed Christians" (JWP 175), that means, the elite of Jehovah's Witnesses, who by a particularly exemplary life qualified themselves for a participation in a heavenly government ("Messianic Kingdom" = "kingdom covenant"; JWP 261), which allegedly in October 1914, the beginning of the end time (JWP 61, 146, 261), had been established and which is to be under Jesus' command. This celestial government is expected to reach a membership of 144000 at Armageddon (JWI II 483).

JWP 146:

"...the 144000 faithful spirit-anointed Christians... are resurrected from death as immortal spirits to reign with Christ on heavenly Mount Zion ..."

On the other hand, JWW 73 claims:

"The Bible also refers to another kind of resurrection, one to life as a spirit creature in heaven. Only one example of this type of resurrection is recorded in the Bible, that of Jesus Christ."

What next? Are the 144000 resurrected spirit-anointed Christians spirit-creatures or are they not? Additionally, according to JWW 74 and 85, the resurrection of the 144.000 (in contrast to the claim from JWP 146) is less about a future event than an event that has been taking place since Jesus' alleged heavenly enthronement in 1914, i.e. since the beginning of the "time of the end" (1914), that is, "during the presence of Christ".

JWW 74:

"These 144000 Christians, including Jesus' faithful apostles, are raised to life in heaven. When does their resurrection take place? The apostle Paul wrote that it would occur during the time of Christ's presence. (1 Corinthians 15:23) ..."

JWW 85:

"God's kingdom is a heavenly government with Jesus Christ as King, and from among mankind, 144000 are taken to rule with him. – Revelation 14:1,4. The kingdom started to rule in 1914, and since then Satan has been cast out of heaven down to earth. – Revelation 12:9"

"The remnant on earth of the 144000" (JWP 175), that means the chosen ones of Jehovah's Witnesses, who are not yet seated in the celestial government but are still walking on earth, will according to JWP 175-6

"reign in heaven with the lamb. – Revelation 14:1-5. Today the remaining ones of the 144000 are earthly representatives of the 'heavenly Jerusalem' – the citylike kingdom of God – and its temple arrangement. (Hebrews 12:22,28;13:14) In this sense they occupy a 'holy place' that the seventh world power tries to trample on and make desolate. (Daniel 8:13)

What was the experience of Jehovah's Witnesses during World War II? They suffered intense persecution! ... 'The army' of kingdom proclaimers and their work of preaching 'the good news' were banned in almost all of the British Commonwealth. (Mark 13:10) ... By persecuting 'the holy ones' during World War II, the small horn put on great airs 'all the way to the Prince of the army'. Or, as the angel Gabriel states, it stood up 'against the Prince of princes'! (Daniel 8:11,25) The title 'the Prince of princes' applies exclusively to Jehovah God."

However, as stated above, the little horn (Dan 8) has nothing to do at all with an "Anglo-American World Power" ("seventh world power", JWP 175) that tracks Jehovah's Witnesses, but it is a term for the ancient ruler Antiochus IV. It would have been dangerous for the author of Dan 8 to name this king by his real name – hence the term "little horn", which the Jewish readers at that time knew how to interpret correctly, but not as an "Anglo-American World Power", which would persecute Jehovah's Witnesses more than 2000 years later. The author hoped Antiochus would be eliminated soon and the sanctuary be restored within a few years after its desecration. That's the essential theme Dan 8 refers to. Yet, in JWP, the desecrated sanctuary is being reinterpreted as a "holy place that the seventh world power" (that is, an "Anglo-American World Power" in the present time) "tries to trample on and make desolate (Daniel 8:13)" (JWP 175). JWP combines the 144000 of Revelation 7:4 and 14:1 with the "army of heavens" in Dan 8:10(JWB), even though there is no such connection in the Bible at all. According to Rev 7:4-8, the 144000 consist of 12000 exquisite, God-marked people from each of the 12 tribes of Israel:

Rev 7:4:

"And I heard the number of the sealed, a hundred and forty-four thousand sealed^{23a}, out of every tribe of the sons of Israel ..."

From the point of view of the Revelation, that came into being during Domitian's reign (81-96 CE). The 144000 were complete by the end of the first post-Christian century. But there is no talk of a heavenly government of the 144000 in Revelation. Although verses 4 and 6 in Rev 20 report on (because of their faith) beheaded Christians who reigned for a thousand years with Jesus after their resurrection (reign of the martyrs), there is no talk of a heavenly government and of 144000 rulers. However, Jehovah's Witnesses claim that their already deceased elite members are in a heavenly government, and the members of their current elite (about 8000) "who die in our day are instantly resurrected to life in heaven" and would be inducted into Jesus' heavenly reign to replenish it to 144000 (JWW 74; JWP 175).

On the other hand, one learns in JWP 292, the 144000 had already been complete in the mid-1930s – so a third Armageddon-date, which however also proved to be a flop. In addition, the WTG claims that there are women – such as Sarah, Ruth and Esther – in the club of the 144000. This is however a pure bachelors' club:

Rev 14:4:

"It is these who have not defiled themselves with women, for they are chaste; it is these who follow the Lamb wherever he goes."

There is no talk here of women who have not yet defiled themselves with men. A reception of women in the elite of the 144000 is also surprising because Jehovah's Witnesses are after all a patriarchal community according to Paul's epistle to the Ephesians 5:22. JWW 143:

"Wives, submit to the headship of your husband ..." (see also JWW 137-138)

In the heavenly government, on the other hand, equal rights are said to prevail?

One also wonders what shall happen to those who are not among the 144000 chosen (sealed). Rev 9:4-6 provides clear information: they are to be tormented for months. So no good perspective for the simple members of the WTS and all the other people without God's seal on their foreheads.

The authors of the Revelation awaited the end time judgment in the near future, that is, towards the end of the first century AD:

Rev 1:1:

"The revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place ..."

Therefore, the Revelation has nothing to do with an Anglo-American world power (seventh world power). The same applies to the biblical verses cited above (Hebrews 12:22-28; 13:14; Mark 13:10). Additionally, the question remains why the "Anglo-American World Power" is said to be the seventh world power. Why not the eighth? During the thirteenth century AD, the Mongol empire was the largest and most powerful empire, but it is not even mentioned in the world-power-numeration of the WTS.

The above mentioned "2300 evenings and mornings" (Dan 8:14), beginning with the desecration of the Jewish temple in 168 BC, according to the opinion of Jehovah's Witnesses occurred only more than 2100 years later (JWP 301), from 1938 to 1944, and in the latter

"the Watch Tower Society's president spoke on the subject 'The Theocratic Alignment Today'." (JWP 178)

JWP 178:

"While the 2300 days ran their course during World War II, which began in 1939, the offering of 'the constant feature' at God's sanctuary was severely restricted because of persecution (of the elite of Jehovah's Witnesses) ... As we have noted, during the closing months of World War II, Jehovah's Witnesses reaffirmed their determination to magnify God's rulership by serving him as a theocratic organization."

When the "2300 days" had passed, the "holy place" of Jehovah's Witnesses was back in its "rightful theocratic state" (JWP 179).

But the author of Dan 8 was not interested at all in a future more than 2100 years later.

In addition, the "2300 evenings and mornings" (Dan 8:14) correspond – as already mentioned above – 1150 days but not 2300. The writer of Dan 8 was expecting God's judgment at the time of Antiochus IV within a few years. JWP claims that according to Revelation 11:7, the 'small horn' fought the WTS-elite during the First World War:

"Harassment of God's anointed ones climaxed on June 21, 1918, when the president, J.F. Rutherford (the successor of C.T. Russell, founder of WTS) and prominent members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society were sentenced on false charges to long prison terms. Intending 'to change times and law', the 'small' horn had effectively killed the organized preaching work. (Revelation 11:7) So the foretold period of 'a time, and times and half a time' ended in June 1918." (JWP 143)

Revelation 11:7, however, refers only to the Roman period of the first century AD. The "beast that ascends from the bottomless pit", mentioned there, i.e. Satan, the anti-Christ (GNB 351), does not appear in the twentieth, but in the first post-Christian century. The author of Revelation did not think about the problems of Jehovah's Witnesses during the First World War. For him, these times were the times of "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev 21:1) of God, in which there would be no more wars and Roman emperors. He reflected on the removal of Roman rule by God. And the predicted period of "a time, two times, and half a time" from Dan 7:25 does not refer to a distant future in June 1918 and Jehovah's Witnesses, but to a time between 168 BC and 165 BC, after which God's judgment should follow (Dan 7:26).

Similarly, the extension of the life of the first three animals from Daniel's dream "for a season and a time" (JWP 145; Dan 7:12) has nothing to do with modern times. The three animals (three empires) from Daniel's dream (Greeks, Persians, Babylonians) have been perished long before today's time and do not longer exist – contrary to a claim in JWP – as "remnants" (Greece, Iran, Iraq and members of the United Nations) that

"will be obliterated at the war of the great day of God the Almighty (Revelation 16:14,16)." (JWP 145)

The date for Armageddon, however, the WTS prophesied for the year 1914, proved, as already said, as a flop.

JWD1:

"Primarily, they (the members of WTS) thought that 1914 would just be the start of the judgment coming upon the world, or Armageddon..."

For this reason, "the war of the great day of God" (Armageddon; JWP 281) was shifted to an indeterminate but near future and for the year 1914 an ending of the "appointed times of the nations" (JWP 146) was invented, against which the WTS allegedly had been warning for many years (JWP 142). Furthermore, Jehovah's Witnesses claim the installation of a "heavenly kingdom" in 1914 by Jehovah, who is said to have enthroned his son Jesus Christ there. JWP 146:

"With Jesus Christ, God has made a covenant for a Kingdom, just as he had made one with King David. (2 Samuel 7:11-16; Luke 22:28-30) When 'the appointed times of nations' ended in 1914 C.E., Jesus Christ, as David's royal heir, could rightfully receive kingdom rule."

However, the Luke verses given (see also JWP 261) are Jesus' near-term expectation

for God's kingdom, as can be seen in Luke 9:27:

"But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who will not taste death before they see the kingdom of God."

From the point of view of Luke's Jesus, this kingdom would become reality in the following decades after his sermons, but not over 1800 years later (1914). The latter prediction would not have interested his listeners. Moreover, Daniel 7:13 – contrary to an assertion in JWP 145-146 – does not reveal an enthronement of Jesus in 1914.

Dan 7:13:

"... with the clouds of heaven there came one like a son of man, and he came to the Ancient of Days and was presented before him."

The author of Dan 7, who wrote during the reign of Antiochus IV (175-164 BC), expected the annihilation of this ruler (Dan 7:11) within a few years and then the son of man¹⁹, but not after more than 2000 years. He hoped for a release from this hated ruler (see Dan 2:44) as well as the beginning of God's kingdom on earth (not in heaven) during his own lifetime.

2 Samuel 7:11-16 (see above; JWP 146; compare also JWP 261) concerns God's promise to David and his kingship, so it has nothing to do with the year 1914 (see the beginning of chapter "The 70 'weeks'").

Finally, it should be noted that the WTS mentions the problems of the Jews with Antiochus IV in JWP 227 and sees a connection between Dan 11 and this ruler (JWP 231,284), but, paradoxically doesn't realize this obvious context for Dan 7 and 8.

The Two Kings Change Identities

In chapter 14 of JWP (230-255) Dan 11 is interpreted. Dan 11 treats a prophetic walk through history (GNB 826-828):

- "Alexander the Great and his end" (Dan 11:2-4)
- "The rivalry between Ptolemaic and Seleucid empires" (Dan 11:5-20)
- "Antiochus Epiphanes, the enemy of the People of God" (Dan 11:21-45)

Dan 11:20:

"Then shall arise in his place one who shall send an exactor of tribute through the glory of the kingdom; but within a few days he shall be broken, neither in anger nor in battle."

The "one who shall send an exactor of tribute" is the Seleucid king Seleukos IV (the successor of Antiochus III), who was killed in 175 BC.

Dan 11:21:

"In his place shall arise a contemptible person to whom royal majesty has not been given; he shall come in without warning and obtain the kingdom by flatteries."

The "contemptible person" is Antiochus IV, who initially ruled only vicariously for his nephew, the rightful heir to the throne. The latter was killed in 170 BC.

JWP 232 translates Dan 11:20 as follows:

"There must stand up in his position [that of Antiochus IV] one who is causing an exactor to pass through the splendid kingdom ..."

In this text, however, JWP confuses Antiochus IV with his predecessor Seleukos IV and interprets further:

"The one 'standing up' in this way proved to be the first Roman emperor, Octavian, who was known as Caesar Augustus,"

JWP identifies Emperor Augustus as "King of the North" and in this role as successor of Antiochus IV., citing Matthew 24:15-6.

JWP 232:

"When you catch sight of the disgusting thing that causes desolation, as spoken of through Daniel the prophet, standing in a holy place, ... then let those in Judaea begin fleeing to the mountains'. (Matthew 24:15,16) Quoting from Daniel 11:31, Jesus warned his followers about a future 'disgusting thing causing desolation'. This prophecy involving the king of the north was given some 195 years after the death of Antiochus IV, the last Syrian king in that role. Surely, another ruling entity would have to assume the identity of the king of the north. Who would that be? ... Caesar Augustus."

If Jesus had actually made the above statement 195 years after the death of Antiochus IV (164 BC), then the time for the said "desolation" would be around the year 31 CE. However, Augustus died already 14 CE, so as "the king of the north" and originator of the "desolation" would not come in question. But how should these Matthew-verses be interpreted?

Matthäus: bibelwissenschaft.de:

"The Mt presupposes the destruction of Jerusalem in the Jewish War (66 AD - 73 AD) ... The genesis of the gospel is usually ... dated to the period between 80-90 AD."

The result is the following:

The author of this gospel reinterprets the prophecy in Dan 11:31 and 9:27 – that is, the desecration of the Jewish temple ("abomination", GNB 399¹³) by Antiochus IV in the year 168 BC – to a prophecy for the year 70 AD (in which the Jewish temple in Jerusalem was destroyed by the Romans) and put it into the mouth of Jesus (twofold vaticinium ex eventu!). Thus, the author of Mt 24:15-16 abuses the above verses from Daniel's book as a prediction of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans.

How JWP 232 comes on Emperor Augustus as "king of the north", remains puzzling, as this ruler does not result from the quoted verses Mt 24:15-16 and Dan 11:31. The same applies to the claim that said "exactor" was sent by Augustus to order a "census" (JWP 233). In Dan 11:20 there is no talk of a census at all (see also KNS). Furthermore, JWP 251 claims, that "one who is to be despised" (Dan 11:21, JWB) is identical to Tiberius, the successor of Augustus (JWP 234). Arbitrarily JWP 233 speculates further:

"The king of the north had indeed changed identity!

This king had by now become the Roman Empire in the person of its emperors."

However, from the perspective of the author of Dan 11, the "king of the north" is a Seleucid king, for the Seleucid kingdom was situated in the north from Jerusalem (see also Jer 25:9 "tribes of the north"; KNS). It makes no sense to call the Roman emperors Augustus and Tiberius "king of the north" (JWP 236), since their centre of power, seen from Judaea, was not in the north, but in the west. The main theme in Dan 11 is the evil doings of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV, who desecrated the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. The Roman Emperors Augustus and Tiberius play no part in Daniel's book and the "Leader of the covenant" (Dan 11:22, JWB) is not identical with Jesus – as JWP 236 claims – but with a Jewish leader (Dan 11:22, GNB: "a head of the people of God", literally: 'a prince of the covenant') who is said to have been killed about 3.5 years before Antiochus' temple-sacrilege (Onias III, 2 Maccabees 4:34; see also KNS).

From the point of view of Jehovah's Witnesses, the identity of the king of the north and that of the south (Dan 11) changed over the centuries. The former mutated from the Seleucid ruler Seleukos I (JWP 217-218, 284) to the Roman emperors (JWP 233), the German Empire (JWP 246, 256) and finally to the Soviet Union (JWP 272, 276, 284). The latter mutated from the Ptolemaic king Ptolemy I (JWP 217-218, 284), to Queen Zenobia (JWP 246, 254, 284) and Great Britain (JWP 256, 284) and finally to an "Anglo-American world power" (JWP 246, 284).

Such a mutation, however, does not arise from the Bible. Moreover, the genealogical tree of the king of the south, asserted in JWP, is contradictory: According to JWP 284, Britain is a king of the South, who has his origin in Ptolemy I. According to JWP 140, however, Britain originated from the Roman Empire, which is referred to in JWP 284 as king of the north, who is said to be descended from Seleucus I.

That means: Britain is a king of the south according to JWP 284 (see also 246), but according to JWP 140 it is a king of the north!

According to JWP, Kaiser Wilhelm II, a king of the north, sowed the seed for the First World War by disregarding the royal rule of Jesus, established in 1914 by Jehovah in heaven (JWP 61). JWP 261:

"But the heart of the Germanic king of the north was against the holy Kingdom covenant. Instead of acknowledging Kingdom rule, Kaiser Wilhelm acted

effectively by promoting his schemes for world domination. In so doing, he sowed the seed for World War I."

However, Kaiser Wilhelm II probably never heard anything from the Bible Students (WTS) throughout his life. In addition, accordingly to JWP 61, the "Heavenly Kingdom" was not established until October, 1914, whereas the First World War began already at the end of July this year. Thus, Wilhelm's "heart" could not have acknowledged the rule of the heavenly and "holy Kingdom covenant" before the beginning of World War I. In any case, Kaiser Wilhelm lost this war. JWP 262:

"Giving the reason for this, the angel said: 'there will certainly come against him the ships of Kittim, and he will have to become dejected. (Daniel 11:30a)" (continuation²⁴)

Verse 30 from Dan 11, however, does not refer to the First World War, but to the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV. He had occupied parts of Egypt (of the kingdom of Ptolemy VI; "king of the south") in 168 BC, but in the same year was summoned by the Romans ("ships of Kittim", Dan 11:30) to withdraw from this land, what he wisely did (see also JWP 231). Then he desecrated the Jewish temple in Jerusalem (Dan 11:31). Dan 11 has nothing to do with Kaiser Wilhelm, Hitler, the Pope (JWP 265; see also JWP 262-264²⁴) and a persecution of Jehovah's Witnesses, nor does Mt 25:40²⁴. It's about a world judgement, in which Jesus presides and mercilessly judges mankind (see Mt 25:41), and the assertion in JWP 265-266²⁴, that Dan 11:31 predicted the war of Hitler, is absurd. The author and the readership of Dan 11 expected the annihilation of Antiochus IV by Yahweh (Dan 11:45) "at the time of the end" (Dan 11:40). The times 2000 years later were for them times of the kingdom of God without evil worldly rulers. According to JWP, the Nazi-king of the north mutated after Second World War to the Soviet-king of the north (JWP 272, 276, 284). Under his rule

"Christendom became more than ever a part of this world – a disgusting apostasy in Jehovah's eyes –John 17:16; James 4:4. What of genuine Christians – the people who are knowing their God and those having insight?... As a result, true Christians both 'stumbled' and prevailed." (JWP 272-273)

However, John 17:16 has nothing to do with apostasy, but refers to Yahweh's assistance to the followers of Jesus, the latter is asking for.

And James 4:4 reads:

"Unfaithful creatures! Do you not know that friendship with the world²⁵ is enmity with God?"

but has nothing to do with Christians during the Nazi- and Soviet-period, but aims to the first post-Christian century in which the Romans ruled over Judaea.

The Disgusting Thing

Daniel's book 11:31 reports on the desecration of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem. There is taken away "the continual burnt offering" and "set up the abomination that makes desolate" (see also GNB 399¹³). In JWB the latter is named the "disgusting thing" and Matthew 24:15 is interpreted in JWP 267 as follows:

"Jesus had also spoken of 'the disgusting thing'. In the first century, it proved to be the Roman army that came to Jerusalem in 66 C.E. to put down Jewish rebellion. – Matthew 24:15; Daniel 9:27."

Mt 24:15 actually concerns the Romans (misusing the verses Dan 9:27 and 11:31) while Dan 9:27 and 11:31 refer to Antiochus IV.

JWP 269 asks:

"What 'disgusting thing has been put in place in modern times?'"

and comes to the conclusion – based on the Revelation – that it was the League of Nations (JWP 300), the "scarlet beast" (Rev 17:3), whose formation had been officially proposed in January 1919 and which

"ceased to exist as a world-peace organization, when World War II erupted. (Revelation 17:8). 'The wild beast', however, was 'ascend out of the abyss.' This it did when the United Nations, ...was established on October 24, 1945. Thus 'the disgusting thing' foretold by the angel – the United Nations – was put in place." (JWP 269)

JWP 300:

"As we saw in our discussion of Daniel 11:31, this disgusting thing was first the League of Nations and re-emerged later as the United Nations. Both are disgusting in that they have been heralded as the only hope for peace on earth. Thus, in the hearts of many, these institutions actually take the place of God's kingdom! The League was officially proposed in January 1919. At that time, then, both conditions of Daniel 12:11 were met. So the 1290 days began in early 1919 and ran until the autumn ...1922... By the end of the foretold 1290 days, the holy ones ... In September 1922 ... held a landmark convention at Cedar Point, Ohio, USA."

Thus, for Jehovah's Witnesses it is clear: Dan 11:31 and Rev 17:8 have prophesied the League of Nations and the United Nations (UN). It has already been explained in the previous chapter why Dan 11 did not target the twentieth century AD but the Seleucid period, especially the year 168 BC. The same applies to Dan 12. The 1290 days in Dan 12:11 refer to the temple's desecration: 1290 days after the installation of Zeus' altar ("abomination") God's judgment is to begin when the "time of the end" (Dan 11:40), i.e. the reign of Antiochus IV, has come to an end, that means, after his death (Dan 11:45).

Dan 12:2:

"And many of those who sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt."

Thus, the author of Dan 12:11 did not prophesy "a landmark convention" of the WTS "at Cedar Point, Ohio, USA in September 1922", but the beginning of God's judgement 1290 days after the temple desecration in 168 BC. The "abomination" has nothing to do with the UN or its predecessor, nor does the "scarlet beast" from Rev 17:3,8. The Revelation came into being at the end of the first century AD (Offenbarung: bibelwissenschaft.de). The author of Rev 17:8 looks back on an animal in the past and prophesies its reappearance. The "scarlet beast"(Rev 17:3, 7,8) does not symbolize the League of Nations (JWP 269) – because the author could not have looked back on it temporally – nor its successor, the UN, which was founded in 1945, but is identical to the Roman Emperor Nero (= Satan¹⁷). For the author of Revelation, times of the twentieth century CE were long beyond the millennial kingdom (Rev 20:6), that is, times of the "new earth" (Rev 21:1), in which there would be no room for the UN. Similarly, untenable assertions as for Dan 12:11 can be found in JWP 301 for the Daniel verses 7:25 and 12:7 (1260 days), 8:14 (2300 evenings and dawns = 1150 days) and 12:12 (1335 days), see also JWP 304. These day counts all begin for the authors of Daniel's book in the year of the said temple sacrilege (168 BC). They have nothing to do with Jehovah's Witnesses (contrary to their claim in JWP 301), neither does Ezekiel 38:14-16.

JWP 283:

"Ezekiel, a contemporary of Daniel, also prophesied an attack on God's people (= Jehovah's Witnesses)."

These verses, however, are about an impending attack by hostile armies on the people of Israel in the sixth century BC, not on Jehovah's Witnesses millennia later.

The Revelation

The Revelation is a vision of John in which the world and its near and distant future is explained to him:

Mankind is for the most part corrupt and pays homage to Rome ("Babylon the Great") and its emperors (the beast with the wound, Rev 13:3,12). Satan, "the dragon", drives after his fall from heaven (altercation in heaven; Rev 12: 9,12), as a "scarlet beast" (Rev 17:3) and in the appearance of the Roman rulers a bad game:

Most people do not believe in Jesus, are gentiles and serve the Roman potentates. Therefore, according to Jesus' message of love, they shall be tormented or killed very soon (Rev 2:27; 9:15; 14:9-11) on "the great day of their wrath" (Rev 6:17), at Armageddon (Rev 16:16). Subsequently, a millennial kingdom with a divine world government will be installed which will rule with a rod of iron (Rev 19:15). At the beginning of this reign, the Christian martyrs will be resurrected (Rev 20:4). Satan is banished to the abyss for a thousand years. After that, he will finally be destroyed. All dead unbelievers will be burnt with fire and brimstone at the Last Judgment (Rev 20:11-15; 21:8). Finally, the eternal divine Kingdom of Peace begins (Rev 22:5).

The author of the Revelation expected Armageddon at his time, that is, at the end of the first century AD. He believed in the fast removal of Roman rule and in God's judgment on the wicked, unbelieving people. The latter idea he has taken from the books of Jeremiah and Isaiah of the Old Testament (Jer 25:31-33; Isa 24-27). But none of this has happened: The Roman Empire still existed for centuries, Armageddon, God's judgment, the millennial kingdom turned out to be hot air and the eternal kingdom of God (Rev 21), the paradise, did not come either.

For more than 100 years, the WTS has been reheating this now more than 1900 years old horror story, which, however, has nothing to do with our times today. Like all the real prophecies of the Bible, Revelation failed as a prediction. Jehovah's Witnesses ignore this fact, announce that Armageddon is ante portas (JWW 32, 85) and has been announced in the Revelation for our time as a decisive battle between an "Anglo-American World Power" (JWP 179), "the world empire of false religion" (JWP 281), Satan's kingdom (JWP 205) on the one hand and Jesus, the annihilator of evil, on the other hand.

According to JWW 86-95 (see also JWP 290-291, 295) we live in the "time of the end" (JWW 92) and in a world that is going from bad to worse (JWW 139-140, 184). Typical signs of these "last days" (JWW 94-95) are wars, food shortages, big earthquakes, epidemics "(Lk 21:11)", bad people – in short: we live in a world full of suffering and misery, as Paul, according to his second letter to Timothy 3:1-5, is said to have predicted (JWW 91²⁶).

However, this letter is not a prophecy for today, but Paul's opinion about his contemporaries more than 1900 years ago. Great earthquakes, epidemics and food shortages (Lk 21:11) existed already long before our time. So, the New Testament did not prophesy the "last days" for our time (JWW 91, 95), but a near future, as it was written in the first century AD. In fact, however, these "last days" were not last days, because God's judgment did not come. It came just as little as the court which had been announced by Isaiah for his time (Isa 13:13; Isa 24-27).

According to WTS, shortly after the establishment of Jesus' heavenly kingdom government in 1914, Satan was thrown out of heaven by "Michael (another name for Jesus)" (JWW 87) and his angels, as announced in Revelation 12:12. That's why

today's times on earth are particularly bad^{27, 28}. JWW 94:

"Since so many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled today, do you not agree that we are living in the last days?"

However, as already stated above, Rev 12:12 is not a prophecy for the third millennium AD, but for times long past, for the end of the first century AD. Rev 1:1:

"The Revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave him to show to his servants what must soon take place ..."

Furthermore, the name "Michael" is not "another name for Jesus" (JWW 218-219; JWP 289), but the name of an archangel.

GNB 386:

"Michael: one of the angelic princes or archangels, guardian angel of the people of God (Dan 10, 20-21). As leader of the angelic armies he fights against Satan (Rev 12, 7)."

Satan was thrown out of heaven more than 1900 years ago, but not in 1914.

Rev 12:12:

"But woe to you, O earth and sea, for the devil has come to you in great wrath, because he knows that his time is short!"

According to Rev 12:9, however, Satan fell from heaven before the writing of this verse
"...Satan, the deceiver of the whole world... was thrown to the earth ..."

But if Satan has had so much time to do evil – consequently the statement in Rev 12:12 is wrong – why should he have little time today?

Finally, it should be noted:

The assertion of Jehovah's Witnesses that "so many Bible prophecies are being fulfilled today" (JWW 94), is a construction that has nothing at all to do with reality: Today, not a single prophecy of the Bible is being fulfilled. The predictions of the Bible have nothing to do with the present time, but refer exclusively to the ancient world. In addition, all real predictions of the Holy Scriptures proved to be prophetic flops.

The Judgment

According to JWW 213, the judgment in Revelation 20:11,12 is not a time of fright:

"However, the Bible paints quite a different picture of this period of time. God's Word portrays it not as a terrifying time but as a time of hope and restoration."

JWW 214:

"No, the judgment will not focus on what people did before they died. How do we know that? The Bible says: 'The one who has died has been acquitted from his sin.' (Romans 6:7) Those resurrected thus come to life with a clean slate, so to speak."

(see also JWJ, chapter 133)

JWW 72-73:

"What about all the people who did not serve or obey Jehovah because they never knew about him? These billions of 'unrighteous' ones will not be forgotten. They too will be resurrected and given time to learn about the true God and to serve him."

But if the sins of the dead are blotted out, why is a judgment on the dead still necessary?

Rev 20:12:

"And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Also another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, by what they had done."

According to JWW 214

"Judgment Day begins after the war of Armageddon, when Satan's system on earth will be destroyed."

In Revelation, however, the last judgment does not take place until after the millennial realm, thus thousand years after Armageddon (Rev 20:5,7,11-15), and according to Revelation 20:15, everyone who is "not found written in the book of life", will "be thrown into the lake of fire". In Revelation, there is no talk about "billions of unrighteous ones", who, after their resurrection from the dead, in the Millennial Kingdom receive a second chance for an eternal, paradisiacal life (JWW 72-73). Moreover, in the Bible this period of a thousand years is not referred to as "Judgment Day" (JWW 73,214). The last judgment in Revelation 20:11-15 does not last a thousand years, as WTS claims, nor does it consist of 144000 judges^{28a} (JWW 214).

It is a judgment on the dead who are recorded in the book of life (Rev 20:12). All other dead who are not recorded there will be destroyed according to Revelation 20:15.

JWW 145:

"False religion leads to destruction."

Why then should the deceased "billions of unrighteous ones who did not serve or obey Jehovah because they never knew about him" (JWW 72), rise from the dead and get a second chance at eternal paradisiacal life, whereas all people living today (with the exception of Jehovah's Witnesses) will be destroyed at Armageddon?

The Revelation was written at the end of the first century AD. Armageddon was expected at that time and the Last Judgment was expected after the subsequent Millennial Kingdom, i.e. about a thousand years after the creation of the Revelation, but not in today's times. But even if Armageddon is imminent today (as Jehovah's Witnesses believe) -- why should people be afraid of the Last Judgment (Rev 20:11-15), which according to Revelation is not to take place until a thousand years after Armageddon?

If people are afraid of the courts of Revelation²⁹, they are afraid of the courts during the war of Armageddon, i.e. the courts of the seals, the courts of the trumpets (Rev 14:7) and the courts of the bowls (Rev 17:1; 18:10), which according to the Watchtower Society are coming soon and where all people except Jehovah's Witnesses are to be exterminated:

JWW 191:

"People need to be warned! They need to know that now is the time to choose Jehovah as their Sovereign. The end 'will not be late!' - Habakkuk 2:3"

and JWW 193:

"how delighted we will be that we made the right choice these last days!"

In JWW 94 you also learn the reason:

"'The end' means the time when God will get rid of wickedness on earth. To destroy all who wilfully oppose Him, Jehovah will use Jesus and powerful angels (2 Thessalonians 1:6-9)"

(see also JWP 293, JWW 94-95³⁰)

2 Thess 1:7-9:

"...the Lord Jesus is revealed from heaven ... inflicting vengeance upon those who do not know God and upon those who do not obey the gospel of our Lord Jesus. They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction..."

JWP 293:

"Numbering into the millions today, they (Jehovah's Witnesses) cherish the hope of surviving the coming destruction of this wicked world".

(see also JWW 94-95³⁰)

JWW 145:

"True religion leads to everlasting life. False religion leads to destruction."

It goes without saying that the only true religion is that of Jehovah's Witnesses (see also DLW).

JWP 289:

"Revelation 19:11-16 prophetically describes Jesus as the mighty Messianic King riding at the head of an angelic army and bringing destruction upon enemies of God."

God's enemy, however, is everybody who does not believe in him (JWP 289-290) and in Mk 16:16 one learns accordingly:

"He who believes and is baptised will be saved; but he who does not believe will be condemned."

(see also John 3:18)

also in Mt 13:49-50:

"The angels will ... throw them into the furnace of fire, there men will weep and gnash their teeth." (see also Mt 7:19; 12:36; 13:42; 24:37-41; Rev 9:5,15; 14:19-20; DJW 216-217³¹)

In Rev 19:21 they are graciously not burned, but "slain by the sword"

according to Jesus' message of love in Lk 19:27 (JWB):

"Moreover, these enemies of mine that did not want me to become king over them bring here and slaughter them before me."³¹

In JWW 78, on the other hand, one learns:

"Those words show that Jesus was to be a righteous and compassionate King over people on earth." (see also JWJ chapter 133)

The motto of WTS is basically:

'Think like us or die in court'

JWW 64 claims that belief in hell is an invention of "false religions":

"As noted earlier, some religions teach that if a person lives a bad life, after death he will go to a place of fiery torment to suffer forever. This teaching dishonours God. Jehovah is a God of love and would never make people suffer in this way. (Read 1 John 4:8)"

But the belief in hell is present in the New Testament:

2 Thess 1:9:

"They shall suffer the punishment of eternal destruction ..."

Rev 14:11:

"And the smoke of their torment goes up for ever and ever..." (see also Rev 20:11-15; 14:8-20; 21:8)

Mt 25:41:

"Then he will say to those at his left hand, 'Depart from me, you cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.'
(see also Mt 5:22,29,30;10:28; 18:8-9; Mk 9:43,45,47)

Mt 25:46:

"And they will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life"

Lk 12:5:

"fear him who, after he has killed, has power to cast into hell."
(see also Rev 6:8)

Already whoever says to his brother "you fool!" shall be liable to the hell of fire" (Mt 5:22). Jehovah's Witnesses, however, knit hell into a Gehenna", "a fitting symbol of everlasting destruction". (JWW 73) The question is, what then – as can be read in JWB ("New World Translation") – "a fiery Gehenna" (Mt 5:22) or a "Gehenna, where ... the fire is not put out" (Mk 9:47-48), should be in this supposed non-hellish "everlasting destruction". Moreover, the Gehenna is nothing but the Jewish name for 'hell' (Hebrew: gehinnom).

MRK: "The 'New World Translation' serves primarily to legitimize the special teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses... It is a highly tendentious translation and should, if at all, be read with great caution." (see also Dan 9:26, JWB ¹⁴)

www.bibelstudium.de:

"Bible forgery, 'New World Translation': The 'New World Translation' of Jehovah's Witnesses cannot really be called 'Translation', as the Holy Scripture has been adapted to special teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses..."

The WTS claims Jehovah to be a god of love (JWW 64, see above). This is clear from the following Bible verses (see also Mt 5:22; 7:19; 13:40,49-50; Mk 16:16):

Numbers 31:17:

"Now therefore, kill every male among the (Midian) little ones, and kill every woman who has known man by lying with him."

Psalms 137:9:

"Happy shall he be who takes your (Babylon's) little ones and dashes them against the rock!"

Isa 13:16:

"Their (Babylon's) infants will be dashed in pieces before their eyes, their houses will be plundered and their wives ravished."

Hosea 13:16:

"they shall fall by the sword, their (Samaria's) little ones shall be dashed in pieces and their pregnant women ripped open."

On the other hand, one learns in JWW 127:

"Well, according to the Mosaic Law, causing the death of a baby in its mother's womb was wrong. Yes, even such a life is precious to Jehovah. (Read Exodus 21:22,23; Psalm 127:3) This means that abortion is wrong." (see also JWW 133)

According to Hosea 13:16, instant abortions are apparently exempt from sin. In JWW, one is also taught as follows:

JWW 12:

"The Bible teaches that 'God is love'. (1 John 4:8)"

JWW 16:

"the Bible says that Jehovah is a God merciful and compassionate..."

JWW 11:

"Furthermore, God is holy. (Isaiah 6:3) This means that he is pure and clean. There is no trace of badness in him. So we can trust him completely."

But see Isa 11:4

"... and with the breath of his lips he (the Lord) shall slay the wicked."

Wicked people, however, are those who do not believe in God. So, does Yahweh not keep to his own commandment "You shall not kill!" (Exodus 20:13; JWW 127)?

Of course he does! Because the true meaning of this verse is 'You shall not kill a Jew!' (see also DJW 127)

But the children and women in the verses above are not Jews. Therefore, they may be killed with a clear conscience.

JWW 20 (see also JWW 146; JWM):

"...the Bible contains God's message, not that of the men who wrote it down. Thus, the entire Bible truthfully is the word of God. (1 Thessalonians 2:13)"

The Dent and the Paradise

Sin and death came into the world with Adam (Genesis 2:17; 3:6; 4:8) in the year 4026 BC (JWS 15) "the year of his creation" (JWS 15).

JWW 49:

"Yes, all of us have inherited sin from Adam."

JWW 29:

"The situation might be illustrated with a pan used for baking bread. If the pan has a dent in it, what happens to each loaf of bread made in the pan? Each loaf has a dent... Similarly, each human has inherited a 'dent'..."

Strangely, however, Jehovah did not succeed in eradicating the dent by a deluge (in 2370 BC; JWS 15). Noah and his family cannot have been without a bump. Otherwise, there would be no more evil in the world. But the omniscient Jehovah should have known that. According to JWI I 983, the true God is almighty. His power and knowledge are encompassing, they penetrate to every part of the universe.

But if he is omniscient and omnipotent (JWW 32, 167), why did he allow the creation of Satan at all? And why did he not make Adam and Eve as ideal as Jesus?

JWW 51:

"Jesus proved that a perfect man possessing free will could keep perfect integrity to God no matter what the Devil did."

So Jesus did not have a dent. That is also evident, because he was Jehovah's firstborn Son (JWW 42). But if Jesus was perfect and "was not under the penalty of sin" (JWW 50), why was he baptised? Did he perhaps inherit some of Mary's heritage and Adam's sin?

JWW 183:

"Baptism symbolizes dying to one's former way of life and becoming alive to do God's will. - 1 Peter 4:2"

Mk 1:4:

"John the baptizer appeared in the wilderness, preaching a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins"³²

Does that mean that Jesus had a bump? But if his baptism served only to become the Son of God (Lk 3:22), why is it told in Acts 13:33 that he became so only after his resurrection? And why was he God's Son, according to John 17:5, 24, already "before the world was made" (see chapter "The Greatest Witness")?

It looks like there are a lot of contradictions in the New Testament and also in WTS's Bible interpretation.

R. Dawkins:

"To be fair, much of the Bible is not systematically evil but just plain weird, as you would expect of a chaotically cobbled-together anthology of disjointed documents, composed, revised, translated, distorted and 'improved' by hundreds of anonymous authors, editors and copyists, unknown to us and mostly to each other, spanning nine centuries."
("The God Delusion" 268)

However, Jehovah's Witnesses believe, that 40 human secretaries or scribes were used by a single author (Jehovah) to write down the inspired word of Jehovah (JWI I 397; see also JWD 2).

But let's go back to Adam and Eve. If Jehovah is omniscient, he knew the whole course of their sorrowful life in advance despite Adam's "free will"(JWW 48). Why did he anyhow create human beings? To drown them in the flood? And why did he create man "with free will", if he should use it only to submit to Jehovah's will?

JWW 115:

"Jehovah draws close to those who humbly do what he asks of them."

JWW 124:

"You can become God's friend by obeying him. – James 2:23"

But what purpose does a free will have if Jehovah punishes all those whose free will does not correspond to his will (deluge, Sodom and Gomorrah, Armageddon, Judgment)?

JWW 125:

"God wants us to have respect for life - both our own and that of others"

Though what is the justification for such wishes of Jehovah – on the one hand considering abortion as a sin (JWW 127,133), but on the other hand trampling on human life?

If Jehova is merciful, why did he drive Adam and Eve out of paradise instead of simply forgiving them? Why the detour over the ransom sacrifice of Jesus (JWW 54-55, 167)? If Jehovah is merciful, he simply forgives people their sins. Then Jesus and his sacrificial death are completely superfluous. And if God is omnipotent, why does he need judgments, Armageddon and Doomsday (JWW 82)? Why didn't Jehovah destroy Satan and his "world empire of false religion" (JWW 154, 220) long ago? He also had no problem with the flood.

JWW 109

"Why does Jehovah allow all this suffering? If he is the Almighty, he has the power to stop it."

And why does almighty Jehovah need a Jesus to end the suffering?

JWW 32:

"Of course, Jehovah is the almighty God, the Creator of the marvellous

universe. (Revelation 4:11) Yet, nowhere does the Bible say that either Jehovah God or Jesus Christ is ruler of this world. In fact, Jesus specifically referred to Satan as 'ruler of this world'. (John 12:31; 14:30; 16:11)"

But if Yahweh is not the ruler of this world, why do Isaiah, Daniel, Paul and others tell us exactly the opposite? (Isa 40:22-24; Dan 2:37; 4:17; 5:21; 1 Timothy 6:15; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 135:6; Romans 13:1-2).

Anyway, God, the Almighty, according to WTS is not the master in his own house! He shall become it only in the future.

JWW 11:

"God is all-powerful. He can and will undo all the effects that wickedness has had on mankind. When God acts, he will do so in a way that will end evil forever! Read Psalm 37:9-11."

Anyway – according to Paul (Romans 5:12-21), Augustine and JWW 49 – we all inherited sin from Adam.

"Jehovah accepted the value of Jesus' sacrifice as the ransom needed to deliver mankind from slavery to sin and death. - Romans 3:23,24"

JWW 53 (see also JWW 167 and JWP 292)

JWW 63:

"... sin is like a terrible inherited disease from which no one can escape. Its consequence, death, is a curse. Death is an enemy, not a friend (1 Corinthians 15:26). How grateful we can be that Jehovah provided the ransom to rescue us from this dreadful enemy!" (see also JWW 67)

But in the Gospels, neither Jesus nor the authors of the Gospels speak of the fall of Adam, whose mistake Jesus has to reverse (Wikipedia, original sin).

R. Dawkins:

"What kind of ethical philosophy is it that condemns every child, even before it is born, to inherit the sin of a remote ancestor? ... the Christian focus is overwhelmingly on sin sin sin sin sin sin. What a nasty little preoccupation to have dominating your life." ("The God Delusion" 285)

www.bibelstudium-institut.de:

"Every man is held accountable by God only for his own sins, not for the guilt of his ancestors."

Therefore, it is better to regard original sin as hair-raising nonsense. The death of Jesus has nothing to do with original sin, and he has not saved anyone from death – not even Jehovah's Witnesses. Jesus was an end-time preacher who failed on the cross: the end-time did not come. But what to do with a failed person if you want to save him as Messiah and prophet? You carry out a deification (DGG 60), invent resurrection (DJW 203; DGG 83), ascension, the ransom sacrifice (DGG 83-86) and the eternal life in paradise for all who believe in him, and you announce:

"if Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain" (1 Corinthians 15:14)

However, according to the Old Testament, paradise and resurrection are possible

without a sacrificial death of a Messiah (see Isa 11:1-10; 65:17-25; 26:19; Psalm 72:7). Thus, Jesus' death was not necessary. Moreover, there is not a single extra-biblical witness to Jesus' resurrection, nor of his salvation sacrifice for the sins of men (Mk 10:45). The same applies to the entire Jesus legend as well as to Satan, Adam, his dent and the flood. People existed long before Adam's alleged creation in 4026 BC (JWS 15), Jericho was already in existence in the eighth millennium BC, the Cheops pyramid was built around 2550 BC, but shows no traces of a flood, which according to WTS happened in 2370 BC (JWS 15) and the papyri from the time of Cheops have not swum away, but still exist in the Egyptian Museum in Cairo. In addition, the Flood would have been destroyed the entire Egyptian culture. Allegedly, only eight people (Noah's family) lived in the world this year (Genesis 7:13). The Egyptians, however, were not extinguished (and were no vegans; JWW 129), but continued to exist cheerfully and continued to build their pyramids. In short: the doctrines of creation and the flood are humbug as it is the whole doctrine of paradise.

JWW 33:

"A new world is at hand! The Bible assures us:

'There are new heavens and a new earth that we are awaiting according to God's promise, and in these righteousness is to dwell!' (2 Peter 3:13; Isaiah 65:17) ... Jesus promised that in the coming new world, those approved by God would receive the gift of 'everlasting life'. (Mark 10:30)"

(see also JWW 143,153; JWP 290, 317^{33, 34, 35})

But why should this paradisiacal state occur soon, when, contrary to a forecast of the WTS, it did not occur in 1925? JWP 303:

"At that time (1922), there was a widely held view that pointed to 1925 the year for the resurrection to begin and for Paradise to be restored to the earth."

So WTS's prophecy flopped – just as it did 11 years earlier (1914) and ten years later (1935). Since the predictions of a new world in antiquity, such as in 2 Peter 3:13 and Isaiah 65:17 – which, however, were aimed at their time, not at the present day –, more than 1900 years have passed by now. Why, then, should God's kingdom arise soon, even though, despite all the announcements, it never came to fruition ²¹?

But if Armageddon should happen soon, then, according to Revelation 20:1-6, first a millennial reign would follow. Then God's Last Judgment shall be held (Rev 20:11-15) and only then, so after more than 1000 years, paradise come (Rev 21:1-7).

The Revelation predicts Armageddon for the time around 100 CE. If one adds the duration of the millennial kingdom, one arrives in the time around 1100 CE, thus in the high Middle Ages, in which the paradise should arise. But it did not. Thus, there is for WTS's prophecy – "a new world is at hand!"(JWW 33) – no plausible justification. In a hundred years, however, Jehovah's Witnesses will probably still proclaim the near end of the corrupt world (JWP 319, JWW 94) and also a "millennial reign of Christ", in which the survivors of Armageddon and judgment – that means: the simple people of Jehovah's Witnesses – shall be freed from their dent by Jesus and his 144000 fellow kings.

The Prophesied Messiah

In the opinion of Jehovah's Witnesses and other Christian religious communities and according to the authors of the New Testament, Jesus Christ was already predicted by prophets of the Old Testament hundreds of years before his appearance. In this regard, chapter 53 in Isaiah's book plays a special role. On closer inspection, however, it is not a prophecy about Jesus – as was often said out of religious zeal – but a story about a martyr of the past (from the perspective of Isaiah; DJW 159), who was killed before the writing down of this chapter (see especially Isaiah 53:8). Also some verses of the Psalter and of Daniel's book were similarly misinterpreted. JWW 200 shows a list of these supposed prophecies. They will be briefly discussed below.

Genesis 49:10, Born of the tribe of Judah

In this verse, Jacob, the forefather of the twelve Jewish tribes, describes his son Judah as the founder of the tribe of the same name. Judah's dynasty shall continue until Shiloh comes. Genesis 49:10 (KJV; see also JWB):

"The sceptre shall not depart from Judah, nor a lawgiver from between his feet, until Shiloh come; and unto him shall the gathering of the people be."

GNB 52:

"The word 'Shiloh' cannot be interpreted with certainty."

German Wikipedia:

"The meaning of this word is not certain and therefore a starting point for speculations, which includes the identification with the Messiah, David or various prophets,"

JWI II 842-3, however, clearly identifies Shiloh with Jesus. However, if you take a close look at verse 49:10 (Genesis), this assignment does not make sense. Jerusalem had been destroyed under the last Judaeen king Zedekiah (596-587 BC) by the Babylonians under Nebuchadnezzar. Since Shiloh is a desired king, Nebuchadnezzar cannot be meant. He ended latest 587 BC the Judaeen royalty. Thus, the clear conclusion arises: Jacob's prediction was wrong! Just as wrong as Samuel's about the eternal kingdom of David (2 Samuel 7:16, see the beginning of chapter "the 70 `weeks`"). The royal house of Juda was not replaced by a ruler named 'Shiloh', but went down with a crash. Shiloh never appeared and he has nothing to do with Jesus. Jesus was nailed to the cross.

Isaiah 7:14; Born of a virgin

In Isaiah 7:14 (RSV), however, we learn something different:

"Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign. Behold, a young woman shall conceive and bear a son, and shall call his name Immanuel."

So this verse is not about Jesus, but about an Immanuel who will be born by a "young woman". The interpretation in Matthew 1:22-23 is a misinterpretation of the original text. www.bibelwissenschaft.de:

"Isaiah predicts king Ahaz the birth of a child to be born by a young woman whose name remains unknown, but the child will be called Immanuel (Isaiah 7,10-14. 16 et seq.). A date is associated with the birth: 'For before the child knows how to refuse the evil and choose the good, the land before whose two kings you are in dread will be deserted.' (Isaiah 7,16)."

The child prophesied in Isaiah 7:14 is called Immanuel, but not Jesus. The 'two kings' whom Ahaz is afraid of are the ruler of Syria and that of Israel.

Isaiah 7:1 (RSV):

"In the days of Ahaz, the son of Jotham, son of Uzziah, king of Judah, Rezin, the king of Syria, and Pekah, the son of Remaliah, the king of Israel came up to Jerusalem to wage war against it, but could not conquer it."

This means: said Immanuel was born during the reign of the Jewish king Ahaz, i.e. in the eighth pre-Christian century, and therefore has nothing to do with Jesus – even though Matthew (1:22-23) wants to make us believe the contrary by misusing Isaiah's verse 7:14.

Isaiah 9:7 (Isaiah 9:6 in RSV): Descended from King David (see also JWW 33).

Isaiah 9 was written in the eighth century BC, at a time, when the Assyrians were a threat to Judah (Isaiah 8:7). At that time, Isaiah writes in Isa 9:6:

"For us a child is born, to us a son is given..."

He does not write:

'A child will be born to us'

That means: This future king, as a child, was already in the world, when Isaiah 9:6 was written in the eighth century BC (TBU 263), so it has nothing to do with Jesus either.

Psalm 2:7: Declared by Jehovah to be his Son

The theme of the second Psalm is a heavenly reign of an anointed one, to whom all earthly rulers are to submit. But the Psalms were already completed in the middle of the second century BC, and Yahweh says in Psalm 2:6 unmistakable:

"I have set my king on Zion, my holy hill."

and in Psalm 2:7:

"You are my son, today I have begotten you."

But he does not say:

'I will beget a son' or 'I will set my king'

The Messiah from Psalm 2 already existed many years before Jesus and was misinterpreted by the authors of the New Testament as a prophecy for Jesus (like in Acts 13:33; see also DJW 87).

Isaiah 53:1: Not believed in

Isaiah 53:7 Silent before his accusers

Isaiah 53:9 Buried with the rich

Isaiah 53 was written centuries before the birth of Jesus, as already mentioned above,

and reports on a martyr whose path of suffering was in the past (from Isaiah's view), but not in the future. Thus, this chapter is no prophecy for the passion of Jesus. But it was used by the evangelists as a blueprint.

Zechariah 9:9: Entered Jerusalem riding a donkey

Zechariah lived around 500 BC (see www.bibelwissenschaften.de). A prediction of Jesus who will ride a donkey 500 years later makes no sense. Zechariah did not expect the Prince of Peace after 500 years, but during his age. He should take over the world power, but has not appeared. Therefore, this prophecy was a flop.

Jesus, however, the walking and end-time preacher, failed at the cross and his followers borrowed the donkey from Zechariah for their Messiah-story.

Zechariah 11:12: Betrayed for 30 silver pieces

The 30 silver pieces in this verse are the reward for a "shepherd" who had tried to "guard sheep" (the people of Israel), but they didn't want to have anything to do with him. With a Judas wage (Mt 26:15), Zechariah 11:12 has nothing to do.

Likewise, all the other Psalm verses in tabulation of JWW 200 are no prophecies about Jesus. Moreover, in Psalm 22 – contrary to an assertion in JWW 200 – there is no talk of a "stake". With the exception of Psalm 2, all Psalm verses listed in JWW 200 are titled "Psalm of David" or "A Miktam of David" in the Bible. Psalm 110 speaks of David, but not of Jesus.

Conclusion: The verses in table of JWW 200 have nothing to do with Jesus – contrary to the statements of Jehovah's Witnesses as well as the authors of the New Testament. The latter, however, used these verses for the construction of their Jesus legend (DJW 87). The verses Micah 5:2 and Dan 9:25 were abused accordingly.

JWW 39-40:

"Consider just two examples. First, over 700 years in advance, the prophet Micah foretold that the promised One would be born in Bethlehem, a small town in the land of Judah (Micah 5:2). Where was Jesus actually born? Why, in that very town! (Matthew 2:1,3-9)

Second, many centuries in advance, the prophecy recorded at Daniel 9:25 pointed to the very year when the Messiah was to appear – 29 C.E. The fulfilment of these and other prophecies proves that Jesus was the promised Messiah."

These claims, however, are nothing but religious wishful thinking. DJW 86-87:

"But why does the family of Jesus has to go to Bethlehem? Matthew constructs this story for a reason that later has to serve often. He wants to present an Old Testament prophecy as fulfilled, in this case Micah 5:2: 'But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah, who are little to be among the clans of Judah, from you shall come forth for me one who is to be ruler in Israel.' That is why, and only for that reason, the birth story gets spun together. The future king of Israel has to be born in Bethlehem, an origin from the insignificant Nazareth was not enough³⁶. Also here, we see again: Where tradition does not fit, where the existing material does not seem to confirm the desired belief, the evangelist or one of his predecessors has no scruples to invent the most adventurous fairy-tale, as presented to us here as trip to Bethlehem and murder of children. And all this just to consider an Old Testament quotation as fulfilled."

Quite apart from this, the future ruler of Bethlehem is to save the inhabitants of Israel from the Assyrians (Micah 5:4-5). The Assyrian empire, however, ceased already in 609 BC. Therefore, the ruler from Bethlehem was expected before this time. Thus, Micah 5 is not a prophecy for Jesus, who is said to have lived more than 600 years later, but a near-term expectation in the seventh or eighth century BC.

Dan 9:25 has already been commented on in the chapter "The 70 'weeks'". The "anointed one, a prince", who comes after "seven weeks", is Cyrus II, who occupied Babylon in the year 539 BC and who allowed the Jews to return to their land in the following year. This verse doesn't have anything to do with Jesus, as well doesn't Hosea 11:1 (JWW 201). This verse is about the people of Israel and its exodus from Egypt. Matthew 2:15 (JWW 201) erroneously interprets this verse as the return of Jesus from Egypt. Matthew's maxim was probably the same as that in Luke's verse 24:44:

"Then he (Jesus) said to them, 'These are my words which I spoke to you, while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the law of Moses and the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.'" (see also JWW 201)

This verse clearly reveals, from where the evangelists took the mosaic stones for their Jesus-story. However, there are no prophecies for Jesus in the Old Testament. Examples of that pious fraud, proclaimed by WTS as "fulfilled prophecies", are:

Mt 1:23 (Isa 7:14)

Mt 12:17-18 (Isa 42:1-4); see also JWJ, chapter 33

Mt 2:6 (Micah 5:2)

Mt 24:15 (Dan 9:27, 11:31)

- Jesus' passion from Isa 53:4-7
- Jesus, the lamb, from Isa 53:7
- the forgiveness of sins through Jesus' sacrificial death from Isa 53:5
- Jesus' baptism: "You are my son, today I have begotten you"; literally copied from Psalm 2:7; see Acts 13:33
- Jesus' donkey ride: from Zechariah 9:9, see also Genesis 49:10-11
- Jesus' last words on the cross: "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" (Mk 15:34 and Mt 27:46) literally copied from Psalm 22:2
- resurrection-faith from Dan 12:2,13 and Isa 26:19

The Revelation is also copied; the books of Isaiah and Jeremiah served as blueprints:

- Isaiah Apocalypse in Isa 24-27; Isa 13:6, 9;13:13; 34:8; 63:4; 66:15-16
- Jeremiah, the court on the peoples: Jer 25:15-38
- the Messiah and his kingdom of peace: Isa 11; Isa 65:17-25; 66:22; see also Psalm 72:7

God's New People

From the point of view of the WTS, the Jewish people was rejected by Jehovah because it did not accept Jesus as its Messiah (JWP 267). The Watchtower Society refers to Matthew 23:37-39; 24:2 (see also Lk 21:5-6). In these verses – which are a vaticinium ex eventu (see Matthew 23:38, www.bibelwissenschaft.de) – the destruction of the Jewish temple in Jerusalem (70 AD) is prophesied as a punishment for this refused recognition and the dissolution of the covenant between Yahweh and the Jews is announced. Jehovah's Witnesses consider themselves as the new people of God (JWW 207; JWP 175). In addition, they consider themselves as the "true Christians" (JWW 153), the only religious community with the right faith (JWW 151). They reject all other Christian denominations as "counterfeit Christians" (JWP 288) such as the Catholic Church, which never had been possessing the status of God's people (as the successor of the Jewish people; JWG 274). This, however, sees it differently. During the Second Vatican Council in 1965, it stated in its 'nostra aetate':

"Although the Church is the new people of God, the Jews should not be presented as rejected or accursed by God, as if this followed from the Holy Scriptures."

In JWP 267, on the other hand, one learns:

"However, when the Jews rejected Jesus, Jehovah rejected them and their temple (Matthew 23:37-24:2). Since the first century C.E., Jehovah's temple has actually been a spiritual one, with its holy of holies in the heavens and with a spiritual courtyard on earth, in which the anointed brothers of Jesus (= WTS elite), the High Priest, serve. From the 1930's onward, the 'great crowd' (= simple members of WTS) have worshiped in association with the anointed remnant (= earthly elite of WTS) and are therefore said to serve in God's temple. (Revelation 7:9, 15; 11:1,2; Hebrews 9:11,12,24)"

However, Revelation and Paul's letter to the Hebrews quoted here, were written at the end of the first century CE and refer only to this time. These texts have nothing to do with 1930's and Jehovah's Witnesses. For a transfer of Jehovah's temple into heaven, JWP does not provide a single biblical record; the biblical verses stated above, report nothing about that. Moreover, people of Jewish faith did not and do not see themselves as being rejected by God. For them, the covenant with Yahweh was and still is. Mt 23:37-39 is only an assertion of Matthew's Jesus and aims at the exclusion of the rest of the Jewish community and appropriation of the status of God's people by Jesus' Jewish sect, and is partly responsible for the untold suffering inflicted on the Jewish community.

The Messiah, expected by the ancient Jews, was a powerful figure (JIE 87, GNB 385-386¹⁹), who would take over world domination (Dan 7:13-14) and drive out or destroy any enemy of God's people (as for example Antiochus IV). He was similar to the powerful figure in Revelation 19:11-16, who, armed with a sword, comes from heaven to "strike the nations" – meaning the Romans in particular – and to "rule them with a rod of iron" (see also JIE 87). This superhuman hero, however, never appeared.

Jesus in the Gospels, on the other hand, is rather the ridiculous opposite (see also JIE 87):

A choleric itinerant preacher, overturning tables of temple money changers (Mt 21:12-13)^{36a}, moving to Jerusalem on a donkey, disgracing Jewish scribes and orthodox Jews

(Pharisees) as "serpents" and "brood of vipers" (Mt 23:33), calling himself "King of the Jews" (Mt 27:11)^{36b} and wanting to kill all the Jews who don't want to accept him as their king (Lk 19:27). He declares that their status as God's people has been abolished (Mt 23:38), and is finally nailed to the cross by the Romans instead of expelling the Romans from Judaea.

That shall have been the Messiah?

Satan, Armageddon and the False Religions

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that we live in a "world empire of false religion"(JWP 112), "counterfeit Christians" (JWP 288) and since 1914 in "the time of the end" (JWP 294), in which they are "persecuted and even temporarily unable to carry out their public preaching activity" (JWP 295). It is Satan's world (JWW 32,108; JWP 205) that is getting more and more worse (JWW 139,184). But soon, this end time would expire, in which Jehovah's people and its saintly elite "persevered" (JWP 317). Then would come

"the final destruction of all human kingdoms by God's Messianic Kingdom. – Daniel 2:44; 7:22; 12:4."

(JWP 317, see also JWW 152)

"at the battle of Armageddon"³⁷ (JWP 285; JWW 82-84)

However, the WTS has been waiting for this in vain for more than hundred years (JWD 1)²⁰.

JWW 81:

"The Bible has much to say about that final war between God's Kingdom and the governments of this world."

But in fact, the Bible does not contain a single word about that. The Bible is all about the ancient world in which it was written, and its real prophecies, such as Armageddon, have failed without exception (see also Mt 24:37-41). In addition, the name 'Babylon' – contrary to an assertion in JWP 112 and JWW 152 – is not used in the Bible as a synonym for "false religion", a "religious empire" or "the world empire of false religion" (JWW 220):

GNB 334:

"In the New Testament, the name of the ancient Mesopotamian capital is used as a cover name for the Roman world power and its capital Rome (1 Peter 5, 13; Rev 18). Point of comparison is enmity against the People of God: The Roman emperor lets the Christians persecute. The Babylonians destroyed Jerusalem and its temple and led the upper classes of the country into exile."

Jehovah's Witnesses reject all other religions as "false religion" and their rites as "poisonous waste" (JWW 154) since they are influenced by Satan (JWW 64, see also DLW) and lead to "annihilation", "death", but not to eternal life (JWW 145). From their point of view, they are like trash ("harlot"; JWP 112), "God-dishonouring false doctrines" ("Babylon the Great", JWW 152) and practices"(JWP 112). Only through the faith of the WTS could we achieve eternal life in paradise in today's days (JWW 193). However, according to John 3:16, only faith in Jesus is the precondition for eternal life.

According to WTS, false religion does not overcome any barriers between races, societies and nationalities.

Jesus, however, preaches exactly these barriers.

Mt 10:5-6:

"These twelve Jesus sent out, charging them, 'Go nowhere among the Gentiles and enter no town of the Samaritans but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"

Mt 15:24:

"He (Jesus) answered, 'I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.'"³⁸

Nehemiah (13:1-3,23 f) and Ezra (10) forbid even mixed marriages of Jews and non-Jews (Adolf sends his regards!).

For Jehovah's Witnesses are crucifixes (JWW 206), religious holidays (JWW 222-223) such as Christmas like soiled sweets (JWW 159) which are related to a false worship.

JWW 154:

"Suppose you found out that your whole neighbourhood has been contaminated. Someone has secretly been dumping poisonous waste in the area, and now the situation is life threatening. What would you do? No doubt, you would move away if you could. But after doing that, you would still face this serious question, 'Have I been poisoned?'

A similar situation arises with regard to false religion. The Bible teaches that such worship is contaminated with unclean teachings and practices.

(2 Corinthians 6:17) That is why it is important for you to get out of "Babylon the Great", the world empire of false religion. (Revelation 18:2,4)"

For the WTS, other religions are "false religion";

"However, God's Adversary, Satan ... has promoted false religion, effectively filling the world with counterfeit Christians." (JWP 288)

"Genuine Christians", i.e., Jehovah's Witnesses, "...conquered the world, just as Jesus did. (John 16:33)" (JWP 272-273).

So they are "no part of the world"(JWW 149), even though they live in it. For them, it is a world that has turned away from God (GNB 411²⁵; John 18:36). They also do not participate in democratic elections, keep out of politics (JWW 149), because

"the Bible frankly says: 'Man has dominated man to his harm.' (Ecclesiastes 8:9)" (JWW 82)

Jehovah's Witnesses hope for an early theocracy, because the world, "this whole system of things" (JWW 191), is ruled by Satan from their perspective.

JWP 205:

"The apostle John declared that 'the whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one'" (1 John 5:19).

It is clear that the nations of the world never were and are not now under the guidance or rulership of God or Christ. While Jehovah permits 'the superior authorities' to exist and maintain control of earthly governmental affairs, he does not appoint his angel over them (Romans 13:1-7). Any princes or rulers over them could be placed there only by 'the ruler of the world', Satan the Devil."

However, in Paul's letter to the Romans and also in Dan 5 one learns something completely different:

Romans 13:1:

"Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God."

Daniel 5:21:

"... until he (Nebuchadnezzar) knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will."

(see also Dan 4:17; Isa 40:22-23; Timothy 6:15; 2 Chronicles 20:6; Psalm 135:6)

The Watchtower Society claims to be in possession of the truth. JWD 1:

"Like every individual Witness today, he knows he has the truth, he has to tell people around him. And that's what amounts to ... This (WTS) is not a work of man, this is a work of Jehovah God. It's evident, that Jehovah had already chosen this organisation."

You can also put it this way:

'Jehovah's Witnesses are in possession of the truth. There are people who do not recognize this truth. These are under the influence of the devil.'

Beware of the Black Pudding!

Jehovah's Witnesses reject blood transfusions and cite, inter alia, the Bible verses Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:20,29 (JWW 122). However, since blood transfusions were unknown in biblical times, these verses cannot refer to such.

Genesis 9:4:

"Only you shall not eat flesh with its life, that is, its blood."

But this verse is nonsensical, because blood, like water and air, is a pre-requisite for life of the animals, but these substances do not contain any animal life. In addition, one learns in JWW 132:

"True Christians are not under Mosaic Law ..."

Why does WTS then argue with the above verse of the Mosaic law? In Acts 15:20, 29 (JWW 122), there is also ordered to abstain from the blood but reasons are not given there. Thus, there results no plausible reason from these verses, to avoid the blood. The alcohol comparison in JWW 131 is not convincing either:

"If your doctor told you to abstain from alcohol, would you have it injected into your veins?"

The Bible makes no statement about supply of human blood, but about the consumption of animal blood.

That means: Beware of the black pudding! Because "whoever eats it shall be cut off" (Leviticus 17:14).

Alcohol infusions have no life-saving purpose, blood transfusions, however, very well. A ban on blood transfusion cannot be deduced from the Bible. Every Jehovah's Witness should be aware that in the event of an unexpectedly high blood loss associated with unconsciousness, he or she is at high risk of dying as a result of his or her own instruction, as no life-saving blood donations may be given in this case. Attempts to convince the patient of the need for a transfusion are then no longer possible. In general, the following applies:

1. Red blood cells (erythrocytes) are those cells in the blood that contain haemoglobin. Haemoglobin is able to take up oxygen in the lungs and release it in all the organs of the body, thus supplying the entire organism with oxygen. The amount of haemoglobin (Hb) contained in the blood thus allows conclusions about the amount of erythrocytes in the blood. The normal Hb value is between 11,5 and 15,0 g/100 ml.
2. Erythropoietin is able to stimulate the formation of erythrocytes in the bone marrow and to accelerate their maturation. The effect begins, however, with 10 to 14 days delay. Erythropoietin as a drug is successfully used in the treatment of chronic anaemia in diseases of blood formation, cancer patients after chemotherapy and kidney disease with loss of function of the same.
3. In acute blood loss from accidents and injuries or internal bleeding, for example, an ulcer of the stomach, an acute anaemia occurs. With a loss of 2 litres (man normally has 5 litres of blood), the person suffers from weakness, circulatory problems, thirst (fluid loss) and possibly fright. From a Hb of 6 and less the body suffers from oxygen deficiency, unconsciousness and finally a life-threatening

state of shock. From a Hb of 6, therefore, blood transfusions are required. Without them surgery and other steps to treat the sources of bleeding are impossible. An Hb below 4 is incompatible with life.

4. Literature:
Deutsches Ärzteblatt, Jahrgang 112, number 29-30, July 20, 2015, pages 506ff.
5. Conclusion:
If Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions, they accept that they may bleed to death after serious accidents and injuries with large blood loss or by severe internal bleeding, for example by gastrointestinal ulcers, even though they could have been rescued with transfusions. Human lives are then given up for this belief.

Résumé

The faith of Jehovah's Witnesses (= WTS = Watchtower Bible and Tract Society) is based on a colossal misinterpretation of the Bible. In their writings "Pay Attention to Daniel's Prophecy!" (JWP) and "What Does the Bible Really Teach?" (JWW), hundreds of Bible verses, especially from Daniel's book (Dan), the Revelation and the Gospels, are interpreted as predictions for modern times, even though they actually only refer to antiquity. In Dan, God's judgment and kingdom are predicted for the second century BC, in the New Testament for the first century AD – but not, as the WTS claims, for a period more than 1800 years later. Such long-range forecasts would not have been interesting for the readers at that time. They expected God's judgment during their lifetime.

Living in the Last Days?

Like all real Bible prophecies, Dan, Revelation and the Gospels failed in their prediction: God's kingdom did not come. Nonetheless, the WTS ignores this fact. For more than one hundred years, it has been proclaiming that we live in the "last days", that Armageddon is imminent and announced in the Bible for our modern times as a final battle between Satan's "world empire of false religion" and Jesus, the annihilator of evil. Only Jehovah's Witnesses – "the true Christians" – would survive this day of wrath and judgments.

Daniel's Book – Unknown Authors and False Prophecy

Contrary to WTS's belief, most of Daniel's prophecies are so-called 'vaticinia ex eventu': Daniel claims to write in the days of Nebuchadnezzar, Belshazzar, Cyrus and Darius. But as a matter of fact, he lived in later centuries, and pretends to have prophesied events of the past. However, given his poor historical knowledge, we cannot assume that he was an alleged contemporary witness at the court of Babylonian and Persian rulers.

The real names of the authors of Daniel's book – there were several – are unknown. Dan is essentially a propaganda scripture for the Yahweh faith as well as a scripture of hope and of comfort of the ancient Jewish community. The most important prophecy of this book – the beginning of God's kingdom in the time of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus IV in the year 165 BC – has not been fulfilled.

Ludicrous Constructions of Prophecies for Modern Times

For Jehovah's Witnesses, the destruction of the wicked world, Satan's world, is ante portas (JWW 32). They copied this idea from Daniel's book. There

"man's rule ... is confronted with the irrevocable coming of God's reign; only this will truly bring salvation. For the apocalyptic, therefore, no healing is expected within the history; it requires a fundamental change of times ..." (Daniel: bibelwissenschaft.de)

The same fundamental attitude can be found both in the Revelation and in the Gospels. The WTS adopted it also from these sources and projected it on our present times. But these books don't contain any prophecy for today's times – and neither does Daniel's book. Its interpretation by Jehovah's Witnesses is wholly false, arbitrary and full of contradictions. In this book – as in all other Old Testament Scriptures – there are no prophecies relating to Jesus, Jehovah's Witnesses, an "Anglo-American world power",

Kaiser Wilhelm II, Hitler, the UN, or the establishment of a heavenly "Messianic Kingdom" in the year 1914 AD. Such biblical interpretations are not just misinterpretations – they are ludicrous constructions, running like a red thread through the entire WTS literature. Their prototype is to be found in the New Testament. In the Gospel of Matthew, for example, a prophecy of Daniel is reinterpreted in the sense of this evangelist (Matthew 24:15). That balloon of pious fraud is pumped up by the WTS to an extreme size: Hundreds of Bible verses cited in JWP and JWW are reinterpreted by the WTS, resulting in a false doctrine which is full of contradictions. In addition, historically secured ruling times of antique rulers are modified in order to fulfil biblical prophecies, according to the motto:

"I re-create my world, just the way it suits me."

In this sense, the Watchtower Society has made its own Bible ("New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures") in which many Bible verses of the original text were translated incorrectly in order to support the absurd constructions of Jehovah's Witnesses.

False Religion and Poisonous Waste

Particularly problematic in the teaching of the WTS is the condemnation of all other Christian and non-Christian religions as "false religion", their rites and customs such as Christmas as "poisonous waste". WTS is a typical fundamentalist sect that considers a theocracy to be the ideal form of government. Tolerance in faith is not an option for Jehovah's Witnesses.

JWW 145:

"Like counterfeit money, false religion has no real value ... True religion leads to everlasting life. False religion leads to destruction ... the way we worship God means either life or death for us."

By contrast, in its "nostra aetate" from 1965 the Catholic Church declares:

"Likewise, other religions found everywhere try to counter the restlessness of the human heart, each in its own manner, by proposing 'ways', comprising teachings, rules of life, and sacred rites. The Catholic Church rejects nothing that is true and holy in these religions..."

The credo of Jehovah's Witnesses, however, is:

'Think like us, or die in the battle of Armageddon!'

Appendix

[The page numbers are linked to the respective chapters.]

¹ JWP 22-25 [[→ page 6](#)]

"The thrilling account of Belshazzar's feast, which is recorded in Daniel chapter 5, is rich in detail. Apparently, it began with lighthearted eating and plenty of drinking, for there are several references to wine. (Daniel 5:1, 2, 4) In fact, relief carvings of similar feasts show only wine being consumed. Evidently, then, wine was extremely important at such festivities.

Daniel also mentions that women were present at this banquet – the king's secondary wives and his concubines. (Daniel 5:3, 23) Archaeology supports this detail of Babylonian custom. The notion of wives joining men at a feast was objectionable to Jews and Greeks in the Maccabean era. Perhaps that is why early versions of the Greek Septuagint translation of Daniel omit the mention of these women.

Hebrew scholar G.F. Keil writes of Daniel 5:3: 'The LXX. have here, and also at ver. 23, omitted mention of the women, according to the custom of the Macedonians, Greeks and Romans.' Yet, the alleged forger of Daniel would have lived in the same Hellenized (Greek) culture, and perhaps even during the same general era, that produced the Septuagint!

In view of such details, it seems almost incredible that *Britannica* could describe the author of the book of Daniel as having only a 'sketchy and inaccurate' knowledge of the exilic times. How could any forger of later centuries have been so intimately familiar with ancient Babylonian and Persian customs? Remember, too, that both empires had gone into decline long before the second century B.C.E. There were evidently no archaeologists back then; nor did the Jews of that time pride themselves on knowledge of foreign cultures and history.

Only Daniel the prophet, an eyewitness of this times and events he described, could have written the Bible book bearing his name."

² BEL 11 [[→ page 6f.](#)]

"The cuneiform texts show that Belshazzar existed as a historical personality. These findings make it clear that this person was in the right place (in Babylon) at the right time (at the time of the fall of Babylon), in the right position (in the possession of the kingship) and died at the right time (at night of the conquest of Babylon). The ancient scriptures show that the knowledge of the existence of Belshazzar disappeared with time more and more. Had Daniel lived not before the second century BC, then the information available at that time would have been insufficient to provide such detailed information about the person Belshazzar as was provided by Daniel in the Biblical book of the same name. In fact, only someone who lived at that time, so to say an eyewitness like Daniel, could give such accurate information. The found cuneiform tablets and the ancient scriptures thus confirm the biblical account."

³ NAWI [[→ page 7](#)]

"Compared to the cuneiform sources, the importance of the statements of Greek historians is to be regarded as low ...

Herodotus's account on the fall of Babylon is almost entirely unhistorical. Overall, Herodotus' reports are not well usable sources ... According to Xenophon, the last ruler of Babylon, whose name he does not name, was a godless ruler. The valuations and descriptions, however, were made on the basis of older texts and the obvious veneration of the Persian king. The novel-like tendencies, already recognizable in

Herodotus, determine the quality of these historical sources and do not contribute to the elucidation of the actual circumstances."

⁴ JWP 16-17 [[→ page 7f.](#)]

"Still unsatisfied, some critics complain that the Bible calls Belshazzar not the son of Nabonidus, but the son of Nebuchadnezzar. Some insist that Daniel does not even hint at the existence of Nabonidus. However, both objections collapse upon examination. Nabonidus, it seems, married the daughter of Nebuchadnezzar. That would make Belshazzar the grandson of Nebuchadnezzar. Neither the Hebrew nor the Aramaic language has words for 'grandfather' or 'grandson'; 'son of' can mean 'grandson of' or even 'descendant of'. (Compare Matthew 1:1) Further, the Bible account does allow for Belshazzar to be identified as the son of Nabonidus. When terrified by the ominous handwriting on the wall, the desperate Belshazzar offers the *third* place in the kingdom to anyone who can decipher the words. (Daniel 5:7) Why third and not second? This offer implies that the first and second places were already occupied. In fact, they were – by Nabonidus and by his son, Belshazzar.

So Daniel's mention of Belshazzar is not evidence of 'badly garbled' history. On the contrary, Daniel – although not writing a history of Babylon – offers us a more detailed view of the Babylonian monarchy than such ancient secular historians as Herodotus, Xenophon and Berossus. Why was Daniel able to record facts that they missed? Because he was there in Babylon. His book is the work of an eyewitness, not of an impostor of later centuries."

⁵ Dan 5:20-21 [[→ page 8](#)]

"But when his heart was lifted up and his spirit was hardened so that he dealt proudly, he was deposed from his kingly throne, and his glory was taken from him; he was driven from among men, and his mind was made like that of a beast, and his dwelling was with the wild asses; he was fed grass like an ox, and his body was wet with the dew of heaven, until he knew that the Most High God rules the kingdom of men, and sets over it whom he will."

⁶ JWP 17-18 [[→ page 10f.](#)]

"Daniel reports that when Babylon was overthrown, a king named 'Darius the Mede' began to rule. (Daniel 5:31) Darius the Mede has not yet been found by name in secular or archaeological sources. Thus, 'The New Encyclopaedia Britannica' asserts that this Darius is 'a fictitious character'.

Some scholars have been more cautious. After all, critics once labeled Belshazzar 'fictitious' as well. Undoubtedly, the case of Darius will prove similar. Already, cuneiform tablets have revealed that Cyrus the Persian did not assume the title 'King of Babylon' immediately after the conquest. One researcher suggests: 'Whoever bore the title of »King of Babylon« was a vassal king under Cyrus, not Cyrus himself.' Could Darius have been the ruling name, or title, of a powerful Median official left in charge of Babylon? Some suggest that Darius may have been a man named Gubaru. Cyrus installed Gubaru as governor in Babylon, and secular records confirm that he ruled with considerable power. One cuneiform tablet says that he appointed subgovernors over Babylon. Interestingly, Daniel notes that Darius appointed 120 satraps to govern the kingdom of Babylon. – Daniel 6:1.

In time, more direct evidence of the precise identity of this king may come to light. In any case, the seeming silence of archaeology in this regard is hardly grounds to label Darius 'fictitious', much less to dismiss the entire book of Daniel as fraudulent. It is far

more reasonable to see Daniel's account as eyewitness testimony that is more detailed than surviving secular records."

⁷ JWP 21-22 [[→ page 13](#)]

"Another contrast emerges. Daniel shows that Nebuchadnezzar could enact and change laws on a whim. Darius could do nothing to change 'the laws of the Medes and the Persians' – even those he himself had enacted! (Daniel 2:5, 6, 24, 46-49; 3:10, 11, 29; 6:12-16)."

⁸ JWP 20 [[→ page 13](#)]

"As to boastfulness – why, the man had his name stamped on the very bricks! Daniel's critics cannot explain how their supposed forger of Maccabean times (167-63 B.C.E.) could have known of such construction projects – some four centuries after the fact and long before archaeologists brought them to light."

⁹ JWP 24 [[→ page 13f.](#)]

"The ancient Jews had deep regard for the book of Daniel and held it to be canonical. Moreover, the evidence suggests that the canon of the Hebrew Scriptures was closed long before the second century B.C.E. Later additions were simply not allowed, including some books written during the second century B.C.E."

¹⁰ JWP 25,27 [[→ page 15](#)]

"It has been suggested that no other book of the Hebrew Scriptures is as well attested to as Daniel. To illustrate: The famous Jewish historian Josephus attests to its authenticity. He says that Alexander the Great, during his war against Persia in the fourth century B.C.E., came to Jerusalem, where the priests showed him a copy of the book of Daniel. Alexander himself concluded that the words of Daniel's prophecy that were pointed out to him referred to his own military campaign involving Persia. This would have been about a century and a half before the 'forgery' as proposed by critics. Of course, critics have assailed Josephus concerning this passage. They also assail him for noting that some prophecies in the book of Daniel were fulfilled. Yet, as historian Joseph D. Wilson remarked, '[Josephus] probably knew more of the matter than all the critics in the world.'

The authenticity of the book of Daniel received further support when the Dead Sea Scrolls were found in the caves of Qumran, Israel. Surprisingly numerous among the finds discovered in 1952 are scrolls and fragments from the book of Daniel. The oldest has been dated to the late second century B.C.E. At that early date, therefore, the book of Daniel was already well-known and widely respected. Notes 'The Zondervan Pictorial Encyclopedia of the Bible': 'A Maccabean dating for Daniel has now to be abandoned, if only because there could not possibly be a sufficient interval between the composition of Daniel and its appearance in the form of copies in the library of a Maccabean religious sect.'

However, there is far older and more reliable attestation to the book of Daniel. One of Daniel's contemporaries was the prophet Ezekiel. He too served as a prophet during the Babylonian exile. Several times, the book of Ezekiel mentions Daniel by name.(Ezekiel 14:14,20;28:3) These references show that even during his own lifetime, in the sixth century B.C.E., Daniel was already well-known as a righteous and wise man, worthy of being mentioned alongside God-fearing Noah and Job."

^{10a} Prof. Dr. S. Wahle (liturgical scientist),, SWR2 Forum, Dec 18, 2018 [[→ page 16](#)]

"This man (Jesus) is the son of God from the beginning. This means that he is the

Savior and Messiah by birth and not as late as from his death or resurrection. That is, in his birth the salvation for man actually appears, that man, who is destined to die, will live. This actually is part of this birth event ... that the birth (of Jesus) is the beginning of our salvation. "

¹¹ The author of this study [[→ page 17](#)]

All the ancestors of Joseph in Jesus' respective family tree (Mt 1:1-16; Lk 3:23-38) are blood relatives. No one was admitted to these pedigrees due to an adoption. The assertion of some theologians that Jesus had become a descendent of David and the promised Messiah by Joseph's adoption, does not make sense, since one does not become a blood relative by adoption. Furthermore, in the above verses, there is no talk of an adoption of Jesus. Jesus was neither a descendent of David nor was he the promised Messiah (see chapter "The Prophesied Messiah") even if that may be the message, these pedigrees want to give us.

¹² GNB 374 [[→ page 17](#)]

"... the Hebrew name of God was most likely 'Yahweh'. Secured are only the consonants YHWH (the final H is mute). Since the Jewish scholars, who provided the Hebrew text with vowels, no longer pronounced the name of God out of timidity, instead of the original vowels, they used the vowels of the Hebrew word for 'Lord', which should be spoken at this point (adonaj; the initial 'a' in the spelling shortened to 'e'). Due to a misunderstanding, it later became the artificial word JeHoVaH. The original form of the name of God can be inferred from the short form 'Jah', which is contained for example in 'HalleluJah' ('do praise Yahweh'), as well as from ancient Greek texts."

^{12a} TBU 144 [[→ page 19](#)]

"To the people of Judah at the time when the biblical epic was first crafted, a new David had come to the throne, intent on restoring the glory of his distant ancestor. This was Josiah, described as the most devoted of all Judahite kings."

TBU 20:

Josiah, reign: 639-609 BC

¹³ GNB 399 [[→ pages 20, 33, 41, 43](#)]

"the abomination that makes desolate

The term ... traces back to the Daniel book (Dan 9, 27; 11,31;12,11) ... 'Abomination' refers to everything that is unclean and that makes impure ..."

The term refers in Daniel's book to the desecration of the temple of Jerusalem by Antiochus IV Epiphanes. In 168 BC, he let set up on the great burnt-offering altar, in front of the temple house, a small altar, on which sacrifices were made for the Greek god Zeus. As a result, the entire sanctuary was 'devastated', that means cultically impure, so that the Jewish sacrificial service was made impossible and the priests and congregation were expelled, the temple area became desolate (1 Macc 1, 54-59). This religious-political action was part of the effort to consolidate the unity of the Seleucid Empire (1 Macc 1,41-53). In Mt 24,14/Mk 13,14, this term does not have to indicate an exact repetition of this process, but in any case designates steps that correspond to it. The culmination of eschatological persecution is achieved by the state making the religion entirely servile to its purposes and finally so much so that the state and its representatives practically take the place of God Himself and no longer tolerate worship that is not for themselves (compare 2 Thess 2,3-4; Rev 13)."

¹⁴ Dan 9:26 (RSV) [*→ pages 21, 50*]

“And after the sixty-two weeks, an anointed one shall be cut off, and shall have nothing ...”

Dan 9:26 (JWB)

“And after the sixty-two weeks, Messiah will be cut off, with nothing for himself.”

¹⁵ Dan 2:31-45 [*→ page 23*]

“You saw, O king, and behold, a great image. This image, mighty and of exceeding brightness, stood before you, and its appearance was frightening.

The head of this image was of fine gold, its breast and arms of silver, its belly and thighs of bronze, its legs of iron, its feet partly of iron and partly of clay. As you looked, a stone was cut out by no human hand, and it smote the image on its feet of iron and clay, and broke them in pieces; then the iron, the clay, the bronze, the silver, and the gold, all together were broken in pieces, and became like the chaff of the summer threshing floors; and the wind carried them away, so that not a trace of them could be found. But the stone that struck the image became a great mountain and filled the whole earth.

This was the dream; now we will tell the king its interpretation. You, O king, the king of kings, to whom the God of heaven has given the kingdom, the power, and the might, and the glory, and into whose hand he has given, wherever they dwell, the sons of men, the beasts of the field, and the birds of the air, making you rule over them all – you are the head of gold. After you shall arise another kingdom inferior to you, and yet a third kingdom of bronze, which shall rule over all the earth. And there shall be a fourth kingdom, strong as iron, because iron breaks to pieces and shatters all things; and like iron which crushes, it shall break and crush all these. And as you saw the feet and toes partly of potter's clay and partly of iron, it shall be a divided kingdom; but some of the firmness of iron shall be in it, just as you saw iron mixed with the miry clay. And as the toes of the feet were partly iron and partly clay, so the kingdom shall be partly strong and partly brittle. As you saw the iron mixed with miry clay, so they will mix with one another in marriage, but they will not hold together, just as iron does not mix with clay. And in the days of those kings the God of heaven will set up a kingdom which shall never be destroyed, nor shall its sovereignty be left to another people. It shall break in pieces all these kingdoms and bring them to an end, and it shall stand for ever; just as you saw that a stone was cut from a mountain by no human hand, and that it broke in pieces the iron, the bronze, the clay, the silver, and the gold. A great God has made known to the king what shall be hereafter.

The dream is certain, and its interpretation sure.”

¹⁶ JWP 55, 57 [*→ page 24*]

“Consider these words recorded at Revelation 17:10: ‘There are seven kings: five have fallen, one is, the other has not yet arrived, but when he does arrive he must remain a short while. ‘When the apostle John penned these words, he was being held in exile by the Romans, on the isle of Patmos. The five fallen kings, or world powers, were Egypt, Assyria, Babylon, Medo-Persia and Greece. The sixth – the Roman Empire – was still in power. But it also was to fall, and the seventh king would arise from one of Rome's captured territories.

What world power would that be?

Britain was once a northwestern part of the Roman Empire. But by the year 1763, it had become the British Empire – the Britannia that ruled the seven seas. By 1776 its

13 American colonies had declared their independence in order to set up the United States of America. In later years, however, Britain and the United States became partners in both war and peace. Thus, the Anglo-American combination came into existence as the seventh world power of Bible prophecy. Like the Roman Empire, it has proved to be 'strong like iron' exercising ironlike authority. The iron legs of the dream image thus include both the Roman Empire and the Anglo-American dual world power."

¹⁷ GNB 388-389 [→ pages [25](#), [27](#), [44](#)]

"From the point of view of Christians, Nero already had traits of an anti-Christ since he had carried out the first systematic persecution of Christians in 64 AD in the urban area of Rome. For the prophet of Revelation 17 (see also 13,3.12.14.18: the head or the animal with the healed deadly wound), this negative image of Nero is connected with the expectation of the returning Nero.

With the already five 'fallen' 'kings' in 17,10, the Roman emperors Caligula (37-41), Claudius (41-54), Nero (54-68), Vespasian (69-79) and Titus (79-81) are probably meant. With 'one is', Domitian (81-96) is probably meant. The seer, who writes at the time of Domitian, expects – in order to make the number seven full – yet another 'king'(= emperor). Then appears, as the eighth king, an emperor, who – merged with the animal to unity – is also one of the last seven kings: Nero (17,11; see 17,8) who recurs from the abyss."

¹⁸ JWP 61-62 [→ page [26f.](#)]

"A Mountain fills the earth'

When 'the appointed times of the nations' ended in October 1914, the God of heaven established the heavenly Kingdom by enthroning his anointed Son, Jesus Christ, as the 'king of kings and Lord of Lords' (Luke 21:24; Revelation 12:1-5; 19:16). So it was that by divine power, not by human hands, the Messianic Kingdom 'stone' was cut out of the 'mountain' of Jehovah's universal sovereignty. This heavenly government is in the hands of Jesus Christ, upon whom God has conferred immortality. (Romans 6:9;1 Timothy 6:15, 16)

Hence, 'this kingdom of our Lord [God] and of his Christ' – an expression of Jehovah's universal sovereignty – will not be passed on to anyone else. It will stand forever. – Revelation 11:15

The birth of the Kingdom took place 'in the days of those kings.' (Daniel 2:44) These were not only the kings pictured by the ten toes of the image but also those symbolized by its iron, copper, silver and gold parts. Although the Babylonian, Persian, Grecian and Roman empires had passed away as world powers, their remnants still existed in 1914. The Turkish Ottoman Empire then occupied the territory of Babylonia, and national governments were functioning in Persia (Iran) and Greece and Rome, Italy. God's heavenly Kingdom will soon strike the symbolic image on its feet. As a result, all the kingdoms pictured by it will be broken to pieces, bringing them to an end. Indeed, at 'the war of the great day of God the Almighty' that 'stone' will strike with such crushing impact that the image will be ground to powder and the wind of God's storm will sweep it away like the chaff of a threshing floor. (Revelation 16:14,16) Then, like the stone that grew to mountainous size and filled the earth, God's Kingdom will become the governmental mountain that will affect 'the whole earth'. – Daniel 2:35

Though the Messianic Kingdom is heavenly, it will extend its power toward our globe for the blessing of all obedient inhabitants of the earth. This stable government will never be brought to ruin or be passed on to any other people. Unlike the kingdoms of dying human rulers, it itself will stand to times indefinite, forever. (Daniel 2:44) May you

have the privilege of being one of its subjects eternally.”

¹⁹ GNB 385-386 [→ pages [26](#), [39](#), [60](#)]

“The 'Son of Man', whose coming was expected by pious Jewish circles at the time of the New Testament, is, according to Daniel's book (unlike the word may suggest), a superhuman celestial figure, to whom, after the final judgment of God, the world government shall be entrusted (Dan 7, 13-14). According to an extra-biblical script – and also according to the Old Testament – the 'Son of Man' himself will hold the last judgment in God's commission. Jesus already claimed the authority of the 'Son of Man' in his earthly life when he decided what to do and what not to do before God (Mk 2,28), and when he promised man the remission of his guilt (Mk 2,10) ...”

²⁰ JWD 1 [→ pages [26](#), [62](#)]

"In 1876 C.T. Russell (founder of the WTS) had written an article... entitled: 'Gentile Times, when do they end?', in which he stated that the seven times will end in 1914. Russell concluded on the basis of the tree-dream recorded in Daniel chapter 4, that the dynasty that began with king David, would be restored 2520 years after its overthrow ... The Bible students (WTS) referred of that period as 'Gentile times! Primarily they thought that 1914 would just be the start of the judgment coming upon the world – or Armageddon ...”

²¹ DJW 215 [→ pages [28](#), [55](#)]

"On the one hand, Jesus was an abused, a person not taken seriously by the Church until today, but on the other hand, he was wrong, too. Like his followers later, he also succumbed to self-deception, the erroneous belief that God's kingdom was imminent. Jesus' error places him in a long series of religious enthusiasts, beginning with the Jewish apocalypticists and not ending with Jehovah's Witnesses, who have repeatedly predicted the end of the world. Jesus stands with his error in line with the enthusiasts of the Reformation, with the end-time monks of the Middle Ages, with heretical popular movements which, persecuted by the Church, proclaimed the early end of the world. Jesus is in line with countless sects waiting for the end of time, with Pietists, enthusiasts, religious preachers, self-proclaimed prophets, all those who await the dawn of the new era. Today one waits in pious circles for the establishment of the kingdom of God and for the second coming of the One who himself waited in vain for this kingdom two thousand years ago. All these admonishers, all these prophets have exposed themselves to ridicule – at least in retrospect. Because all these prophecies were wrong. Jesus was not the first and certainly not the last in this series of end time preachers. But he was the most well-known."
(see also DJW 96-98, 102)

²² LDBI 278-279 [→ page [28](#)]

"Jesus was an apocalyptic as well... According to his words ... the end time was imminent ... Jesus was wrong in an enormous way because the end of the world that he expected for the immediate future failed to appear till today."
(see also LDBI 249)

²³ DGG 33 [→ page [28](#)]

"The near end of the world", writes Eduard von Hartmann, "was the real and only content of the Gospel, which alone gave it the character of the *Good News*. It was the fundamental dogma of early Christianity, indeed it was even the only original Christian

dogma (beside the messianity of Jesus) and only stopped being dogma when it had actually proved wrong – without having ceased staying a quiet hope ..."

^{23a} these 144000 are not under the judgment of God [→ page [36](#)]

²⁴ JWP 262-266 [→ page [42](#)]

"Giving the reason for this, the angel said: 'There will certainly come against him the ships of Kittim, and he will have to become dejected.' (Daniel 11:30a) What were the ships of Kittim? In Daniel's time Kittim was Cyprus. Early in the first world war, Cyprus was annexed by Britain...

During the first world war, the ships of Kittim proved to be mainly the ships of Britain ... 'He [the king of the north] will actually go back and hurl denunciations against the holy covenant and act effectively; and he will have to go back and will give consideration to those leaving the holy covenant.' (Daniel 11:30b) So prophesied the angel, and so it proved to be...

Immediately after coming to power, Hitler launched a vicious attack against 'the holy covenant', represented by the anointed brothers of Jesus Christ. (Matthew 25:40) ... Hitler soon went to war, as the angel had correctly foretold: 'There will be arms that will stand up, proceeding from him; and they will actually profane the sanctuary, the fortress, and remove the constant feature.' (Daniel 11:31a) The 'arms' were the military forces that the king of the north used in order to fight the king of the south in World War II."

²⁵ GNB 411 [→ pages [42](#), [63](#)]

"The New Testament expression 'this world' designates the human world as one which has turned away from God and rejects his Son, who has turned his love to the world (John 3,16). Thus, the sphere in which people live becomes a world under God's judgment (John 3,19) which is ruled by evil (Gal1,4; Eph 6,12...). People who have been freed and made new by Christ are already snatched away from the power of evil and are no longer part of 'this world', even though they still live in it.

They show this through a changed behaviour (Rom 12, 2; Cor 5,9-11), but at the same time they wait for the new world, in which the good is the only power (2 Pet 3,13)."

²⁶ 2 Timothy 3:1-5 [→ page [45](#)]

"But understand this, that in the last days there will come times of stress. For men will be lovers of self, lovers of money, proud, arrogant, abusive, disobedient to their parents, ungrateful, unholy, inhuman, implacable, slanderers, profligates, fierce, haters of good, treacherous, reckless, swollen with conceit, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, holding the form of religion but denying the power of it. Avoid such people."

²⁷ JWW 87-88 [→ page [46](#)]

"God's faithful spirit rejoiced that Satan and his demons were gone. Humans, however, would experience no such joy. Instead, the Bible foretold: 'Woe for the earth ..., because the Devil has come down to you, having great anger, knowing that he has a short period of time'. Revelation 12:7,9,12 ...

As you will see, we are now living in that time of woe... The Bible refers to this period as 'the last days'."

²⁸ JWP 288 [→ page [46](#)]

"... Satan, has been waging an all-out war against the anointed (WTS-elite). He has

promoted false religion, effectively filling the world with counterfeit Christians."

^{28a} [→ page 47] According to Revelation 20:4, the government in the Millennial Kingdom consists of Jesus and reanimated beheaded martyrs. The Bible Text makes no statement about the composition of the judgment in the Millennial Kingdom in Rev 20:4.

²⁹ Rev 9:5 [→ page 48]

"they were allowed to torture them for five months, but not to kill them"

Rev 9:15:

"So the four angels were released, who had been held ready for the hour, the day, the month, and the year, to kill a third of mankind."

Rev 14:19-20:

"So the angel swung his sickle on the earth and gathered the vintage of the earth, and threw it into the great wine press of the wrath of God; and the wine press was trodden outside the city, and blood flowed from the wine press, as high as a horse's bridle, for one thousand six hundred stadia."

³⁰ JWW 94-95 [→ page 48f.]

"Jesus foretold that most people would ignore the evidence that we are living in the last days. The destruction of the wicked will come suddenly and unexpectedly. Like a thief in the night, it will catch most people by surprise, (Read 1 Thessalonians 5:2) Jesus warned. 'As the days of Noah were, so the presence of the *Son of man* will be. For as they were in those days before the Flood, eating and drinking, men marrying and women being given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered into the ark, and they took no note until the Flood came and swept them all away, so the presence of the *Son of man* will be.' – Matthew 24:37-39."

³¹ DJW 216-217 [→ page 49]

"... Jesus ... was a religious extremist, the kingdom he expected was not a kingdom of piece, it also meant judgment ..., his thinking is dominated by a belief in God's judgment and in hell, by howl and gnashing of teeth, not only by the grace of God but also by the suffering of those who are rejected ... Shall such a Jesus become the standard for today – a court preacher, hell announcer and a fundamentalist?"

³² DGG 62 [→ page 52]

"Ingenuously, Mark reports of Jesus' baptism by John, over which however many Christians at that time racked their brains. Not because almost all of the Jewish intelligentsia thought the baptist was crazy, but because his baptism was a baptism for the remission of sins. The execution of this baptism to Jesus, who according to ecclesiastical doctrine has been completely sinless – which of course was doubted or disputed in early Christianity –, thus presupposes in him a consciousness of sin. Apparently, the Jews soon used this argument against the Christians. So it came already in the Gospel of Matthew to justification attempts. In the innocent report of Mark he adds a dialogue to show that the Baptist is informed of Jesus' sinless nature: 'I need to be baptised by you, and do you come to me?' But Jesus answered him, 'Let it be so now.'" (Mt 3:14-15; see also JWW, chapter 12)

³³ JWW 46 [→ page 55]

"Jesus' death actually opens to us the opportunity for eternal life on a paradise earth,

in harmony with Jehovah's original purpose..."

³⁴ JWW 72 [[→ page 55](#)]

"All those in the memorial tombs" (see also JWW 59, 65, 71, 75, 211) will be resurrected (John 5:28,29)."

³⁵ JWW 185 [[→ page 55](#)]

"Jehovah has established a heavenly government, the Messianic Kingdom. It will soon bring an end of all suffering and will make the earth a paradise."
(see also JWW 4-5, 94, 192-193)

³⁶ Prof. K. H. Kuschel (catholic theologian), SWR2 Forum, Dec 20 2018 [[→ page 58](#)]

"Bethlehem is the city of David. David had lived there -- also as a shepherd. And whoever wanted to be taken seriously as Messiah, and perceived as Messiah in Israel during that period, had to be born in Bethlehem, the city of David."

^{36a} JIE 166 [[→ page 60](#)]

"The Temple was the focal point of all Jewish worship, as established in the Jewish Scripture. In Jesus' day, Jews from around the world would come to Jerusalem, to perform the animal sacrifices prescribed by the law, which had to be done in the Temple, nowhere else. Of course, people coming from long distances would not be able to bring sacrificial animals with them; these had to be purchased on site. But they could not be purchased with normal Roman currency: Roman coins were stamped with an image of the emperor, who in parts of the empire was thought to be a divine being. For Jews there was only one God, and so they were not inclined to bring the image of Caesar into the holy Temple. In addition, the law proscribed the use of any "graven images", another reason that Roman coins could not be used. Some other kind of money had to be made available, and so there had to be a kind of currency exchange, where Roman coinage could be traded for Temple currency, which did not bear the image of Caesar. The Temple currency could then be used to purchase the necessary animals."

^{36b} The author of this study [[→ pages 17, 61](#)]

The biblical Jesus is an end-time preacher and sectarian of the Jewish faith. He calls himself "King of the Jews" in the Gospels (Mk 15:2; Mt 27:11; Lk 23:3). In fact, however, the Roman emperor was the King of the Jews. Jesus' use of this title was thus a tremendous affront, a questioning of Roman rule over the Jews (in contrast, the biblical Pilate* – representative of Roman rule – believes that Jesus hasn't done any evil; Mk 15:14, Lk 23:4). This was the only plausible reason for his crucifixion. Jesus' statement "My kingship is not of this world" (John 18:36) does not appear in the earlier (synoptic) Gospels.

The story in the Gospels about Jewish high priests who desired Jesus' execution (Mk 15:11; Mt 27:20) and stir up the Jewish people against him (Mt 27:20-23), is easily to understand from the People-of-God-status (the covenant with Jahweh): The evangelists claimed this status for themselves and their community alone and wanted to deprive all other Jews of it who did not recognize Jesus as their Messiah (Mt 23:38-24:2) and not as the Son of God (Mk 14:61-62; Mt 26:63-64). But for this, they needed a convincing reason: the guilt of the Jewish people in Jesus' execution.

* Prof. Dr. Bernhard Zimmermann (classical philologist):

"... (Pilate's) task was to maintain the Roman administration in the Roman occupied

province ... of Judea, to ensure peace and order there, that the Roman emperor was respected ... and no riot arose. That was something the Romans were very afraid of, that riot was breaking out in the provinces ..."

Prof. Dr. Thomas Macho (cultural scientist):

"What seems little credible to me in view of the atmosphere at that time (Jesus' lifetime) is that they (the Romans) appointed such a wise, perhaps a little cynical, but tending towards tolerance procurator there (in Judea). The circumstances of his removal also speak against this. For Pilate did indeed exercise his office as procurator for ten years, but he was deposed because, according to the sources, he behaved too violently, too brutally. The reproaches that Philo of Alexandria mentions in his description of this deposition weigh heavily: It's about corruption and bribery, about robbery, about repeated executions without legal proceedings and, above all, about great cruelties. Suddenly a completely different image of Pilate arises ...: It's unlikely that a Roman humanist was chosen for this job."

(SWR2 Forum 1 April 2021: "Roms Mann in Judäa – Wer war Pontius Pilatus ?")

³⁷ GNB 371 [*→ page 62*]

Armageddon: literally 'mountain of Megiddo'

"The mysterious name for the place of the eschatological battle of the decision (Rev 16:16) was probably the result of a combination of various Old Testament statements of place which were linked in remembrance or promise with the victory of God over his enemies (compare Judges 5,19 and Sacharja 12,11, see the mysterious mountain of Isaiah 14,13 whose Hebrew name was harmo(g)ed = 'mountain of the assembly')."

³⁸ The author of this study [*→ page 63*]

Jesus in the Gospels thinks national. He turns almost exclusively to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Mt 10:6; 15:24). Non-Jews he degrades, he calls them "dogs" (Mk 7:27; Mt 15:26; in the Jewish faith, dogs are among the impure animals). Only exceptionally does he allow himself to be softened to help a non-Jewish woman (GNB 24; Mt 15:21-28).

On the other hand, he refers the prophecy of Isaiah 42:1-4 to himself (Matthew 12:17-21: "... he shall proclaim justice to the Gentiles" ... "and in his name will the Gentiles hope") and at the end of the Synoptic Gospels he gives his disciples the mission command to preach "to all nations" (Luke 24:47).

How is this contradiction to be understood? Quite simply: Every Synoptic Gospel had at least two authors.