

**The “*Faithful and
Discreet Slave*”
and its
“*Governing Body*”**

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Version 2

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CONTENTS

The Organization’s Theocratic Arrangement	1
A “Governing Body”?.....	8
A “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Class?	17
The Nature of Parables.....	23
Principles for Interpreting Scripture	25
Literalist Interpretation of a Parable	28
Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Matthew 24:45 – 51	32
Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Luke 12:42 – 48.....	36
The GB’s Treatment of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Parable	38
Lessons from History.....	40
The Governing Body’s Peshier Treatment.....	47
Parallels with a Modern-day Eschatological Group	50
SUMMARY	53
Appendix A: Thirty “Illustrations” from <i>Insight on the Scriptures</i>	59
Appendix B: Selection from <i>Organized to do God’s Will</i>	62
Appendix C: <i>Branch Manual</i> on “The Worldwide Order”	65

Jesus spoke more about the “Kingdom of the Heavens” than about anything else. *The Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses* says that people do not realize that Jesus was speaking about a formally structured kingdom government arrangement.

The Governing Body says that this government is **ALREADY OPERATING** towards humankind. In this arrangement, the Supreme God speaks to humankind **ONLY** through His **SOLE** representative on Earth – the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

This group of men in Brooklyn therefore demand total and absolute obedience to every one of their directives. To disobey them is to disobey the instructions that are coming from Jehovah God.

This is a very serious situation for humankind, for information is coming from the Governing Body that the Battle of Armageddon is **IMMINENT!**

The ten or so men in Brooklyn are either Jehovah God’s sole voice on Earth and they are the only channel He is using to warn the people on this doomed Earth, or these men are guilty of blasphemy of the Highest Order.

Doug Mason

The Organization's Theocratic Arrangement

During the heady days that led to the debacle of “1975”, the *Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses*¹ illustrated its claims with the following diagram.

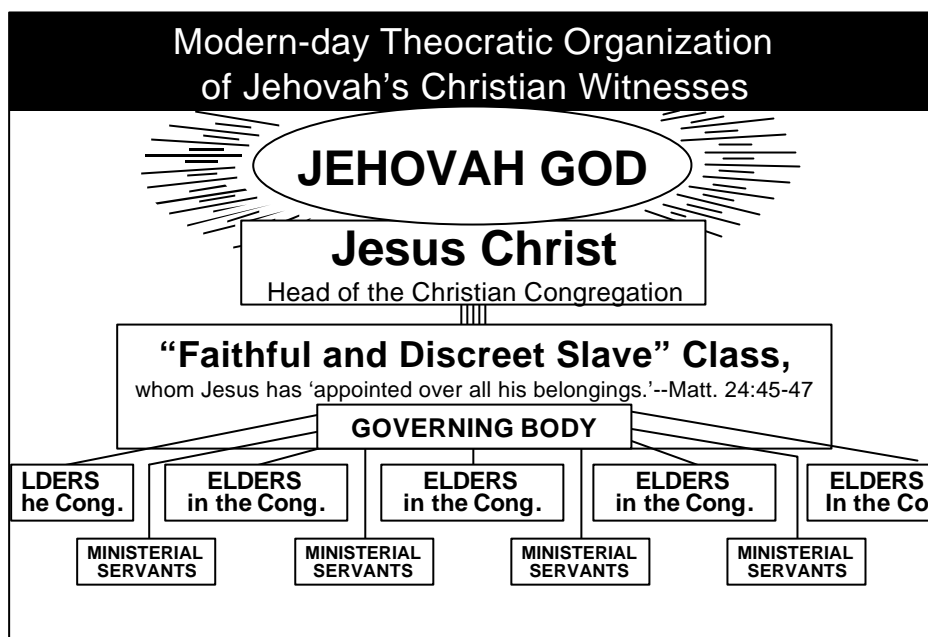


Chart from *The Watchtower* December 15, 1971, page 749

The diagram shows Jesus Christ in direct control of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Class (FDS), with a representative group, known as the “Governing Body” (GB) controlling the worldwide body of Jehovah's Witnesses (JW).

A Theocracy

The GB defines its authoritarian rule as a *Theocracy*, a term that describes a “government by a god or priests”. The GB asserts that the NT term “Kingdom of Heaven (God)” is speaking of the *government* by God that today operates only through its organization.

This theocratic government – the *Kingdom of God* – is headed by Jehovah God. His son Jesus Christ directs its sole earthly representative of the Kingdom – the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses, a group of about ten men located in Brooklyn USA.

In the *Watchtower* magazine where it presented the above diagram, the GB wrote:

Jehovah the great Theocrat has now provided us the theocratic organization for getting this good news preached to its completion.²

It is a theocratic organization, ruled from the divine Top down, and not from the rank and file up.³

¹ Terms such as *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society* (WTBTS) and *International Bible Students Association* (IBSA) are formal bodies set up to satisfy the legal requirements of various nations.

² *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 754, par. 27, “Theocratic Organization with Which to Move Forward Now”. (Throughout this Study, highlighting with underlining have been added.)

The claim continues to be made

Over the years, the Governing Body continues to assert these claims.

Jehovah God has ... provided his visible organization, his “faithful and discreet slave,” made up of spirit-anointed ones, to help Christians in all nations to understand and apply properly the Bible in their lives. Unless we are in touch with this channel of communication that God is using, we will not progress along the road to life, no matter how much Bible reading we do.⁴

It is as Peter expressed it when some of the disciples stumbled over Jesus' teaching: “Lord, whom shall we go away to? You have sayings of everlasting life.” (John 6:68) The Lord Jesus Christ still has those “sayings,” and he is dispensing them through the one “faithful and discreet slave” organization that he today uses on earth.⁵

Communication from Jehovah God

Jehovah God is said to make his will known to Jesus Christ and the “Slave” Class. Somehow, this information is made available to the Remnant of the Class, who are still on earth. The heavenly portion of this Class rules with Christ, while the Governing Body is their sole representative on earth. Jehovah God only communicates with humankind through this system. The Governing Body thus performs the role and duties that other Christians assign to the Holy Spirit.

The Governing Body's position “must be recognized”

Disobedience to the instructions from the GB is said to be the same as disobeying Jehovah God himself. It is as serious as that.

“Whom shall we go away to?” (John 6:66-69) No question about it. We all need help to understand the Bible, and we cannot find the Scriptural guidance we need outside the “faithful and discreet slave” organization.⁶

Your attitude toward the wheatlike anointed “brothers” of Christ and the treatment you accord them will be the determining factor as to whether you go into “everlasting cutting-off” or receive “everlasting life.”⁷

Recognition of that governing body and its place in God's theocratic arrangement of things is necessary for submission to the headship of God's Son.⁸

Really, can we get along without the direction of God's organization?
No, we cannot!⁹

³ *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 754, par. 29, “Theocratic Organization with Which to Move Forward Now”

⁴ *The Watchtower* December 1 1981, page 27 par. 4, “The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter”

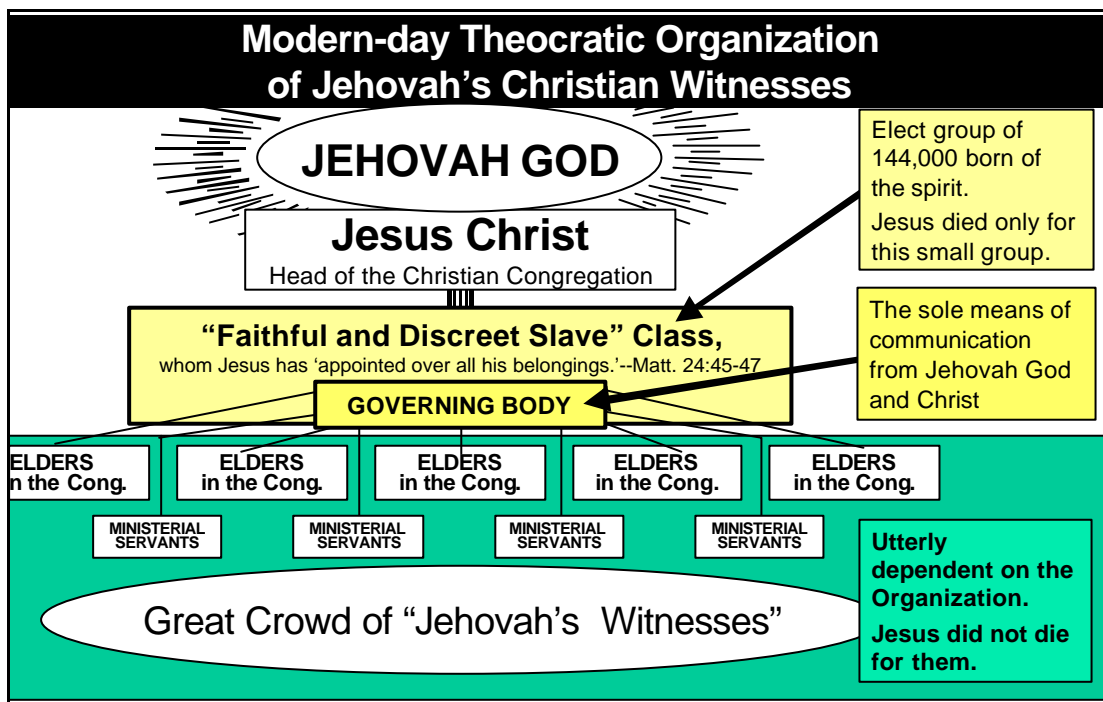
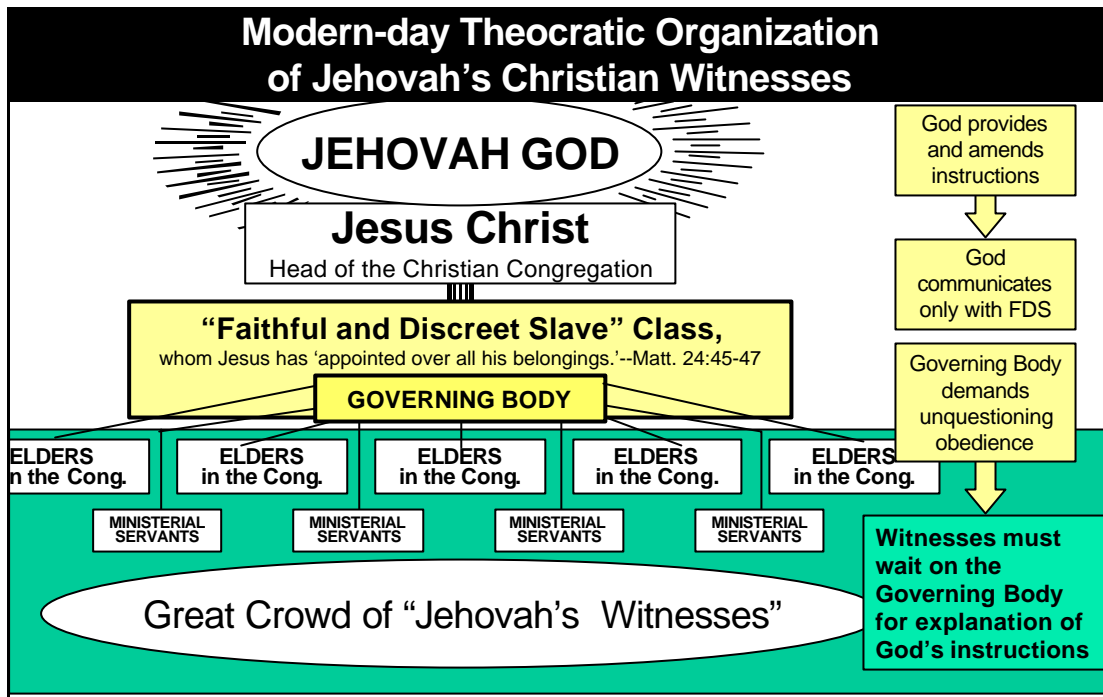
⁵ *The Watchtower* December 1 1981, page 31 par. 19 “The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter”

⁶ *The Watchtower* February 15 1981 page 19 “Do We Need Help to Understand the Bible?”

⁷ *The Watchtower* August 1 1981 page 26 par. 20, “Harvesting in the ‘Time of the End’ “

⁸ *The Watchtower* December 15 1972 page 755, “Do You Submit to Christ's Headship Today?”

⁹ *The Watchtower* January 15 1983, page 27 par. 20 “Armed for the Fight Against Wicked Spirits”



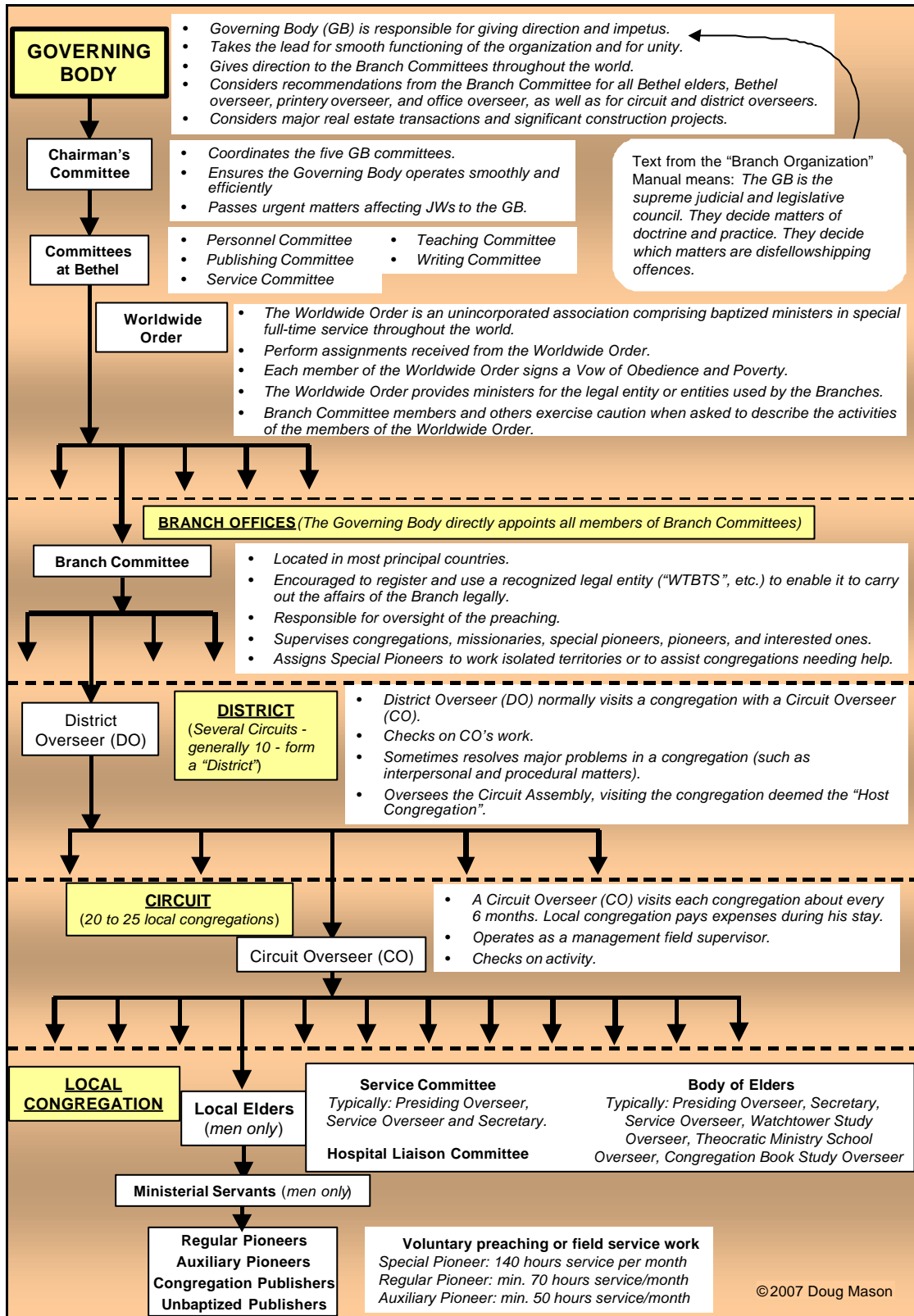
Accountability, responsibility and power

True to its claim of being a “government”, the GB exercises absolute top-down control. This is shown in the following diagram, which is drawn from information provided in official publications along with experiences provided by JW’s.

The structure of the organization shows the GB’s direct legal and ethical accountability. The Chart shows that the GB takes ultimate responsibility and accountability for all legal, ethical and moral issues.

The Writing Department wields great power, being the producer of magazines and books that are “studied” in a tightly controlled process. Every group in the world reads the same material simultaneously in precise lock-step unison, like the North Korean army on parade.

The Organization's Theocratic Arrangement



The "FDS" does not appear in the Organization Chart

Although the FDS is provided a prominent role in the Chart shown on page 1 of this Study, it does not appear as an identifiable entity in the above Organization Chart, because the FDS class has no operational responsibility. The members of the GB are of the FDS Class, and the GB as a whole represents the GB.

The anointed as individuals are used to serve in the Society's printing factories, to write and publish books and magazines, and are sent out as public speakers; some travel as branch, circuit and district servants, others continue as faithful congregation overseers and study conductors.¹⁰

Worldwide Religious Order

Despite being the members of the FDS, the small number of JWs who have the "heavenly hope" have no responsibility and no authority, unless they are members of the Governing Body.

Rather than use the FDS for its teaching, preaching and similar responsibilities, the GB set up a Religious Order, originally known as the "Order of Special Full-Time Servants" to perform these tasks. Virtually all members of this religious Order are not members of the FDS. To reflect the worldwide range of the Order's activities, from 2003 it became known as the "Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses."

At the time of the name change, the GB wrote:

Worldwide, a total of 19,823 ordained ministers staff such branch facilities. All are members of the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.¹¹

As with other religious Orders, its members undertake a vow of poverty and obedience. This is recognized by the Courts. Based on evidence provided by counsel for the Jehovah's Witnesses, a Court concluded:

The purpose of the the *Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses* ("the Order") is to "further the religious objectives of Jehovah's Witnesses."

Members of the Order are special, full-time servants who oversee the spiritual needs of the various Jehovah's Witnesses congregations they are assigned to serve. Members of the Order take a vow of poverty and are prohibited from secular employment. They perform their duties without salary. Instead, in return for their services, they receive "housing and a nominal monthly reimbursement for personal necessities provided by the Order." The Order is responsible for arranging housing for its servants.¹²

The following is also based on evidence provided to a Court by legal counsel for the Jehovah's Witnesses.

I. STATEMENT OF FACTS. Plaintiff (*Montavilla Unit of the Portland, or company of Jehovah's Witnesses inc.*) is a religious organization. ... The Circuit Overseer is an important figure in the hierarchy of the *Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses* ("the Order"). Sworn to a lifetime of poverty and obedience, he is forbidden any secular employment and is required to devote himself to the administrative and spiritual oversight of the congregations in the circuit he oversees, and must reside within that boundary.

¹⁰ *The Watchtower* July 15 1960 pages 439-440, "Staying Awake with the 'Faithful and Discreet Slave'"

¹¹ *2003 Yearbook*, page 30

¹² *West Beaverton congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses (plaintiff) v. Washington County Assessor (defendant)*. (Oregon Tax Court, Magistrate Division, Property Tax, Decision TC-MD 031095E)

II. ANALYSIS. Providing housing for its Circuit Overseers is reasonably necessary for the religious objectives of the Order. ... It is not lost on the court that the Circuit Overseer is required to take a vow of poverty.¹³

Legal corporate entities

The GB appoints the personnel of the Branch Offices, which are located in most principal countries. The Branch Offices are urged to register themselves as legal corporate entities with the local authorities, using names such as "Watchtower Bible and Tract Society" or "International Bible Students Association". The GB's preaching activities are facilitated by these legal entities but would be carried out without them.

Financial resources

Whereas a government raises its national revenue through taxes and charges, the GB raises its international funds through its publishing activities. It enjoys a guaranteed readership of several million for each issue of its magazines and books, with minimal production costs and volunteers who handle the distribution. Unlike the activities of religious bodies, the GB bears no costs for humanitarian or disaster relief, unless it is to provide support to any "brother" who is affected. It has a large holding of real estate.

Beware of "Independent thought" and "Independent spirit"

While not decrying individuality and creativity, the GB does not permit independence of thought when it comes to its directions or counsel. The GB requires total submission.

When it comes to pure worship, it is vital that we look to Jehovah for direction and cooperate with "the faithful and discreet slave" and the congregation elders. That is a way to seek righteousness, and it protects us from developing an independent spirit.¹⁴

Thus, an independent or competitive spirit must be replaced by a cooperative and loving disposition and a willingness to submit to theocratic direction.¹⁵

A spirit of independent thinking does not prevail in God's organization, and we have sound reasons for confidence in the men taking the lead among us.¹⁶

Avoid Independent Thinking How is such independent thinking manifested? A common way is by questioning the counsel that is provided by God's visible organization.¹⁷

Obedience to the GB above life

Control extends to expecting JWs to lay down their lives in obedience to the GB's interpretation of Scripture. Although official figures are not available, it is estimated about 1000 JWs die each year because of the GB's demands concerning the medical use of blood. This is 3 per day, many of whom are children.

¹³ Montavilla unit of the Portland, or company of Jehovah's Witnesses inc. (plaintiff) v. Multnomah County Assessor (defendant). (Oregon Tax Court, Magistrate Division, Property Tax, Decision TC-MD 021250A)

¹⁴ *The Watchtower* January 1 2006, pages 28-29, "Seeking Righteousness Will Protect Us"

¹⁵ *Kingdom Ministry*, March 1995 p. 6 par. 17 "Bethel Service—More Volunteers Needed"

¹⁶ *The Watchtower*, September 15 1989, page 23 par. 13 "Be Obedient to Those Taking the Lead"

¹⁷ *The Watchtower*, January 15 1983, page 22, "Exposing the Devil's Subtle Designs"

Obedience to the GB above loved ones, family, and friends

The GB pressures Witnesses to obey them above loved ones, family, and friends who are no longer faithful to the GB.

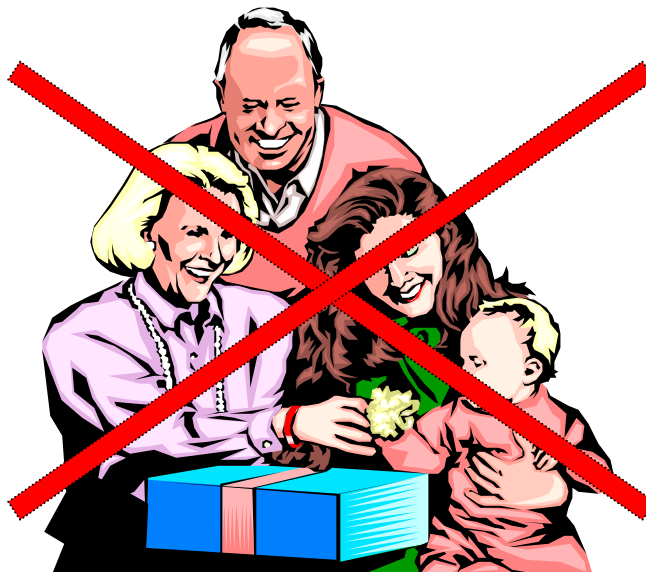
[An ex-JW] can no longer converse with members of the [JW] congregation. [Disfellowshipped JWs are] totally cut off from loved ones and from close contact with the [JW] congregation.¹⁸

[The expelling process] rules out social fellowship, too, such as joining an expelled person in a picnic or party, ball game, trip to the beach or theater, or sitting down to a meal with him.¹⁹

JWs may only communicate with their ex-JW spouse or children while they are living in the same home, provided it is not on spiritual matters. This places enormous pressure on a JW as they consider the likely consequences of disobeying the GB.

The GB demands the complete severance of loving relationships between parents and their children, between grandparents and their grandchildren, and so on, for the sake of the organization.

A man who is disfellowshipped or who disassociates himself may still live at home with his [JW] wife and faithful children ... normal family affections and dealings can continue. The situation is different if the disfellowshipped or disassociated one is a relative living outside the immediate family circle and home. It might be possible to have almost no contact at all with the relative. ... This may be difficult because of emotions and family ties, such as grandparents' love for their grandchildren.²⁰



**The WTS demands the complete breakdown
of loving relationships within families**

Because of the exclusive nature of the organization, the people within the congregation had been an ex-JW's only friends for many years. The prospect of being completely cast adrift and totally cut away is a mighty disincentive to disobeying the GB.

¹⁸ *The Watchtower* April 15 1988 page 29 "Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit"

¹⁹ *The Watchtower* September 15, 1981 page 24 "Disfellowshipping—How to View It"

²⁰ *Discipline That Can Yield Peaceable Fruit*, Watchtower April 15 1988, p 28

A “Governing Body”?

The organization dates the first mention of its Governing Body (GB) to 1944 CE, two years after Rutherford’s death.

In the year 1944 the *Watchtower* magazine began to speak about the *governing body* of the Christian congregation.²¹

The claimed divine source

In the NWT, the Parable uses the term “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (FDS), which the GB has adopted. However, the Parable does not use the term “Governing Body”. Indeed, the term “Governing Body” does not appear anywhere in Scripture. So where did the FDS receive its information about a “Governing Body”?

How did this governing body make its appearance in recent times? Evidently under the direction of Jehovah God and his Son Jesus Christ.²²

The GB thus claims it is the product of direct divine intervention.

But it is one thing to claim there was a Governing Body in Apostolic times, and quite another to prove the same pattern should prevail today, and further, to provide objective proof where to find it. The following assertion by the GB is critical to its claimed authority.

In the first century, a group of older men in Jerusalem made up a governing body that had oversight of the congregations and of the Kingdom-preaching activity in general. The same pattern is followed within Jehovah’s organization today.²³

The role of the GB

The GB’s primary task is focused on the spiritual needs of the “congregation”.

The Governing Body is primarily concerned with providing spiritual instruction and direction for the Christian congregation.²⁴

They direct the worldwide Kingdom-preaching work and the supplying of spiritual nourishment at the right time. Christ thus leads the congregation by means of the spirit-anointed “faithful and discreet slave” and its Governing Body.²⁵

The GB says it is part of the FDS and presides over it.

The governing body is part of the “faithful and discreet slave” class and presides over it as spiritual shepherds and overseers.²⁶

²¹ *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 755 “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”

²² *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 760, “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”

²³ *The Watchtower*, January 15 2001, page 21 “Keep in Step With Jehovah’s Organization”

²⁴ *The Watchtower* January 15 2001 page 21 “Keep in Step With Jehovah’s Organization”.

²⁵ *The Watchtower* September 15 2005, page 22 “Go On Walking as Jesus Christ Walked”

²⁶ *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 758, “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”

The GB says it represents the FDS.

A small group of qualified men from among the anointed overseers now serve as the Governing Body, representing the composite faithful and discreet slave.²⁷

The governing body as representing the “faithful and discreet slave” class.²⁸

A small group of qualified overseers from among the composite “faithful and discreet slave” form the Governing Body, serving as the representative of the slave class.²⁹

Kingdom interests on the earth have been entrusted to “the faithful and discreet slave,” which is represented by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Matthew 24:45-47)³⁰

It is the “GB of the FDS”.

The governing body of the “slave” class. The governing body has the strictly spiritual field for its operation.³¹

Scripture argues against a “Governing Body”

The nature and formation of the Scriptures argues against the existence of a “Governing Body” or that such a formal body provided universally binding directions.

The nature of James’ declaration

The first group of Christians was a small Jewish sect. By divine intervention, the previous persecutor Saul, now named Paul, went beyond the Judean borders, taking their message about Jesus Christ to Gentile nations.

Paul’s audience had no understanding of Jewish culture. They had no Jewish heritage. As this converted persecutor brought Gentiles into the fold, the Jews and Gentiles had to be made aware of their mutual obligations.

This was discussed by the Jewish Christian leaders, and when James made his declaration, he wrote to the Gentile section of the movement, not to everyone. He provided the Gentiles with a message from Ezekiel³², written at the time of the Jews’ Babylonian Exile, something the Gentiles were not aware of.

This was therefore a decision made by a man to a small section of the movement.

²⁷ *The Watchtower* March 15 2002 page 14 “Christ Leads His Congregation”

²⁸ *The Watchtower* December 15 1971 page 760 “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”; Also: *Isaiah’s Prophecy – Light for All Mankind 2* chapter 21 page 317 “True Worship Expands Worldwide”

²⁹ *The Watchtower* September 15 2005, page 22 “Go On Walking as Jesus Christ Walked”

³⁰ *The Watchtower* January 15 2001 page 21 “Keep in Step With Jehovah’s Organization”

³¹ *The Watchtower* December 15 1971 page 762 “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”. *The Watchtower* January 15 2001 page 29 “How the Governing Body Differs From a Legal Corporation”

³² “You eat meat with the blood still in it and look to your idols and shed blood. ... You rely on your sword, you do detestable things, and each of you defiles his neighbor’s wife.” (Ezekiel 33:25 – 26) **Compare that with:** “abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.”

The nature of the Christian writings

Individual Christian leaders wrote personal letters to individuals and to specific congregations (ekklesias). Paul wrote to Timothy, Titus and Philemon, as well as to individual congregations³³. John wrote to his friends³⁴, to a dear lady³⁵ and to Gaius³⁶. Luke wrote to Theophilus³⁷. Jude wrote to his friends. Revelation was written to the elders of seven churches. Mark and Matthew structured their gospels in accordance with the Jewish liturgy³⁸.

When they were written and sent, these documents were not issued through or authorized by a centralized “governing body”.

The canonization by the Jews

In their writings, these Christians writers quoted from the wide range of Jewish writings available to them. This forced the Jews to decide which of their writings were to be deemed Scripture.

That decision was not made to by any Christian “governing body”. The Jews decided on their Canon of Scripture at a time when, according to the GB, the Jews had been passed over by Jehovah, the Christians had become the “New Israel”, and the primitive Church had slipped into apostasy.

The canonization by the Christians

In the 4th century CE, long after the GB says the Christian Church had slipped into apostasy, the Church Fathers decided which books and letters formed their inspired, sacred literature.³⁹ The content of the Christian Scriptures (“New Testament”) thus did not come from any Governing Body that is relied on by the current *Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses*.

Jerusalem not at the center

The GB relies on its assertion that the primitive church had a “governing body” that was located in Jerusalem. It further claims its operation is modeled on that system. However, when Paul recounted his experience as a missionary, he shows that he did not consult with nor represent any “Governing Body” at Jerusalem.

I want you to know, brothers, that the gospel I preached is not something that man made up. **I did not receive it from any man, nor was I taught it;** rather, I received it by revelation from Jesus Christ. ...

But when God, who set me apart from birth and called me by his grace, was pleased to reveal his Son in me so that I might preach him among the Gentiles, **I did not consult any man, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were apostles before I was,** but I went immediately into Arabia and later returned to Damascus.

Then **after three years, I went up to Jerusalem to get acquainted with Peter and stayed with him fifteen days. I saw none of the other apostles—only James, the Lord’s brother.** I assure you before God that what I am writing

³³ Such as to the Roman, Galatian, Ephesian, and Corinthian congregations.

³⁴ 1 John

³⁵ 2 John

³⁶ 3 John

³⁷ Luke 1:3; Acts 1:1

³⁸ *Liberating the Gospels*, John Shelby Spong, Harper and Collins

³⁹ Interestingly, *Hebrews* and *Revelation* barely slipped through.

you is no lie. Later I went to Syria and Cilicia. I was personally unknown to the churches of Judea that are in Christ. ...

Fourteen years later I went up again to Jerusalem, this time with Barnabas. I took Titus along also. I went in response to a revelation and set before them the gospel that I preach among the Gentiles. But I did this privately to those who seemed to be leaders, for fear that I was running or had run my race in vain.⁴⁰

While Vice-President of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, Fred Franz recognized the significance of Paul’s experience. Franz discussed this in a speech he gave at the September 7, 1975 Graduation Program for the Missionary School of Gilead.

In relating the holy spirit’s calling of Paul and Barnabas to missionary activity, the vice president continually emphasized that all this was done through the *Antioch* congregation (hence *not* through Jerusalem where the apostolic body was located). [Footnote: *It should be remembered that the whole basis for the Witnesses’ teaching of a “governing body” arrangement and authority is that there was such an arrangement operating from Jerusalem in Bible times.*] [Franz] said:

“And then, all of a sudden as he [Paul] was serving in Antioch, in Syria, not in Israel but in Syria, why God’s spirit spoke to that congregation there in Antioch and said, ‘Now of all things, you set aside, YOU, this congregation in Antioch, you set aside these two Men, namely Barnabas and Saul for the work for which I have commissioned them.’ And so the Antioch congregation did that and they laid their hands upon Paul (or Saul) and Barnabas and sent them forth ... and they went forth by the holy spirit operating through the Antioch congregation and they went out on their first missionary assignment.

“So, you see the Lord Jesus Christ was acting as the Head of the congregation and taking action directly, without consulting anybody here on earth what he could do and what he could not do. And he acted in that way in regard to Saul and Barnabas and they were both apostles of the Antioch congregation.”⁴¹ ...

He is undermining the whole teaching and claim about the existence of a centralized, first-century governing body operating out of Jerusalem with earthwide authority: to supervise and direct all congregations of true Christians everywhere in all matters, a concept that the Society’s publications have built up in the minds of all of Jehovah’s Witnesses and to which the vast majority hold today. ...

But the vice president had by no means finished and he drove the idea home with even greater force. Describing the completion of Paul and Barnabas’ first missionary tour, [vice-President Franz] continued with growing intensity and dramatization:

“ ... and where did they go, where did they report? There’s the record, you read it for yourself in the closing verses of the fourteenth chapter of Acts. They went back to Antioch, to the congregation there, and the account says that they related things in detail to them, to this

⁴⁰ Galatians 1:11, 12, 15 – 22; 2:1 – 2:2

⁴¹ *Crisis of Conscience*, Raymond Franz, pages 78 – 79, Commentary Press, ISBN 0-914675-03-6. Available at <http://www.commentarypress.net>. An audio recording of the speech by Fred Franz is available from Commentary Press.

congregation that had committed them to the undeserved kindness of God for the work they had performed. So there’s where they reported. So the record also says they stayed in Antioch not a little time.⁴²

Jerusalem was the problem, not the solution

The GB portrays the council at Jerusalem, as recorded at Acts 15, as proof positive that the early church also had a “Governing Body”. Scripture records the situation:

Some men came down from Judea to Antioch and were teaching the brothers: “Unless you are circumcised, according to the custom taught by Moses, you cannot be saved.” This brought Paul and Barnabas into sharp dispute and debate with them.

So Paul and Barnabas were appointed, along with some other believers, to go up to Jerusalem to see the apostles and elders about this question.

The church sent them on their way, and as they traveled through Phoenicia and Samaria, they told how the Gentiles had been converted. This news made all the brothers very glad.

When they came to Jerusalem, they were welcomed by the church and the apostles and elders, to whom they reported everything God had done through them.⁴³



In his speech to the Gilead graduation Class, Vice-President Fred Franz referred to this passage, pointing out to his audience that Paul and his party went to Jerusalem to address a problem being caused by them. Paul did not go there to seek counsel or authorization, but to confront the troublemakers coming from Jerusalem. Franz continued:

“Now, what happened? All of a sudden something occurred and Paul and Barnabas, they go up to Jerusalem. Well, what’s the matter? What brings them up to Jerusalem?”

⁴² *Crisis of Conscience*, Raymond Franz, pages 79 – 80. (See also Acts 14:28.)

⁴³ Acts 15:1 – 4

“Well, is it the body of apostles and of other elders of the Jerusalem congregation that summoned them up there and say, ‘Look here! We have heard that you two men have gone out on a missionary tour and finished it and you haven’t come up here to Jerusalem to report to us. D’YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE? We are the council of Jerusalem. DON’T YOU RECOGNIZE THE HEADSHIP OF THE LORD JESUS CHRIST? If you don’t come up here in a hurry, we’re going to take disciplinary action against you!’

“Is that what the account says? Well, if they had acted that way toward Paul and Barnabas because they reported to the congregation by means of which the holy spirit had sent them out, then this council of apostles at Jerusalem and other elders of the Jewish congregation would have put themselves above the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ.”

His points were completely valid. They were also completely contrary to the view presented in the Society’s publications, which present a picture of Jerusalem as the seat of a governing body exercising full authority and direction over all Christians as Christ’s agency, acting with divine authority. That is doubtless why, unlike other talks the vice president has given, this one was never used as the basis for articles in the *Watchtower* magazine. For any individual Witness to present such an argument today would be counted as heretical, rebellious speech. If actually applied as stated, his words would mean that any congregation on earth could send out its own missionaries if they believed Christ Jesus and holy spirit so directed, doing so without consulting anyone else, whether in Brooklyn or in a Branch Office. There was no question in [Raymond Franz’s] mind as to the quick and adverse reaction this would provoke from the Society’s headquarters and its offices. It would be viewed as a threat to their centralized authority and any congregation doing this would in so many words be asked, “Do you know who we are? Don’t you recognize the headship of the Lord Jesus Christ operating through us?” ...

The talk went on to show that the real reason Paul and Barnabas went to Jerusalem, as recorded in Acts, chapter fifteen, was because *Jerusalem itself* had been the source of a serious problem for the Antioch congregation, men coming down from Jerusalem and stirring up trouble over the issue of lawkeeping and circumcision. Hence the trip to Jerusalem was to overturn the effect of the teaching of these Jerusalem troublemakers.⁴⁴

Authority of Antioch maintained

Following their confrontation with the Jerusalem party, Paul and his partner Silas embarked on their missionary journeys. Each time, it was the church at Antioch that sent them on their journey, without the involvement of any “Governing Body” in Jerusalem.

[Franz] dealt with the second missionary tour of Paul and his new partner Silas and emphasized again that it was from the *Antioch* congregation that they went forth, so that “again, the Antioch congregation was being used to send out missionaries of great eminence in Bible history.” That they returned to *Antioch* and that from *Antioch* Paul embarked on his third tour. Winding up the account from the book of Acts, the vice president said:

⁴⁴ *Crisis of Conscience*, Raymond Franz, pages 80 – 81

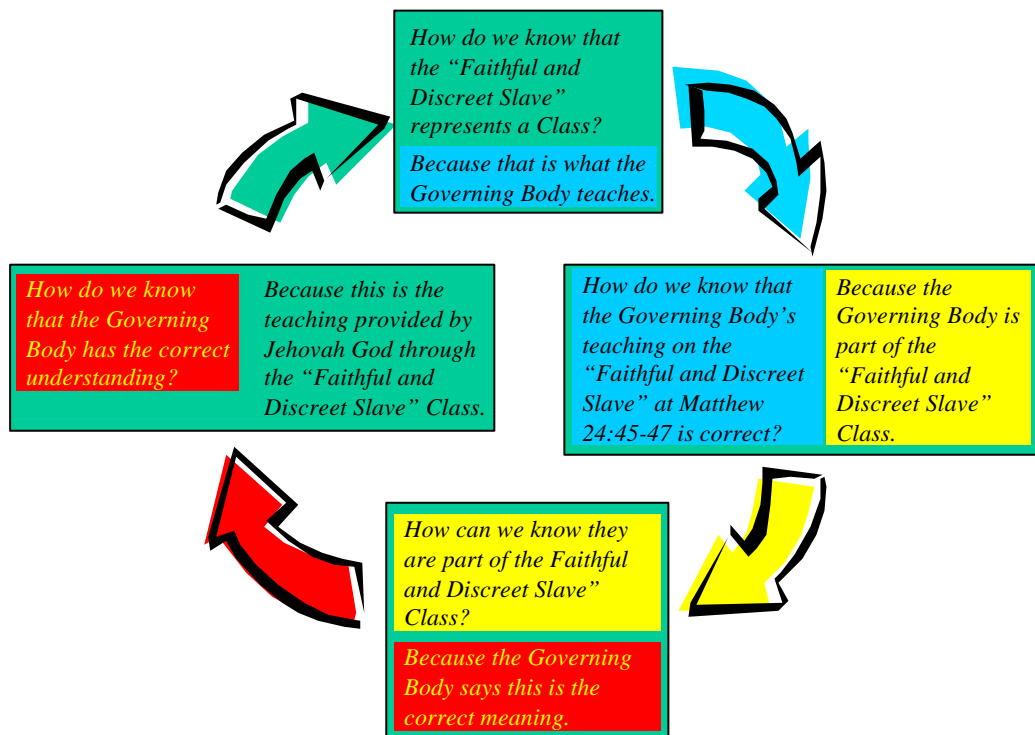
"And so as we examine this account of these two most outstanding among the missionaries recorded in Bible history, we find that they were sent out especially by the Lord Jesus Christ, the Head of the church, a fact which the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society has upheld and accepted ever since the Society was formed. So, we see how the Lord Jesus Christ is the Head of the church and has a right to act direct, without whatever other organizations in view, no matter who they are. He is the Head of the church. We can't challenge what HE DOES."

Those last three sentences spoken by the vice president represent the position taken today by a number of Witnesses. For taking that identical position, they are now labeled "apostates."⁴⁵

The Governing Body's circular reasoning

The Governing Body's (GB) application of the FDS parable to itself is not independent objective proof. The parable cannot be the GB's foundation. For the GB to claim this parable for its own foundation because it says this is how the parable is to be interpreted makes the argument circular.

For how can it be known that the GB's interpretation and application are correct? Only through an independent source.



Knight-jump Eisgesis

The term "Governing Body" does not appear in the Parable of the FDS. Indeed, the term does not appear anywhere in Scripture.

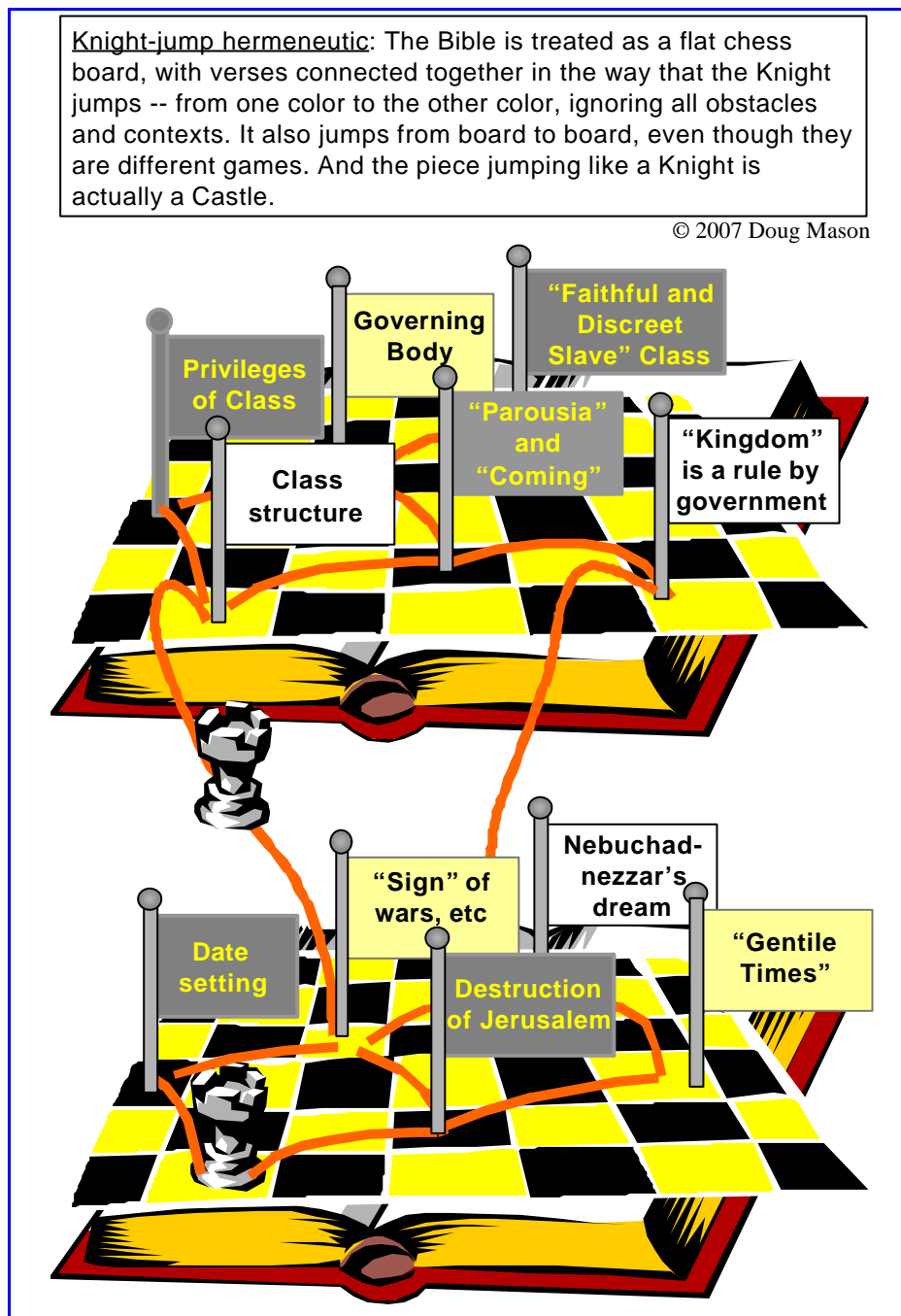
⁴⁵ *Crisis of Conscience*, Raymond Franz, page 81

The organization claims that the meeting recorded at Acts 15 is of the original "Governing Body". Not only is that position difficult to defend, but the question must be asked: "How can the Parable in Matthew and Luke be linked to or associated with the meeting at Acts 15?"

Not only does the GB do this, but it is able to hop around Scripture, picking up disparate verses, passages and words, to create a self-fulfilling theory. For example, it hops from Matthew and Luke to Acts, Revelation, Peter, and individual letters by Paul to create a web. It thus glues together dissimilar and unrelated material, oblivious of context, to manufacture its predetermined conclusions.

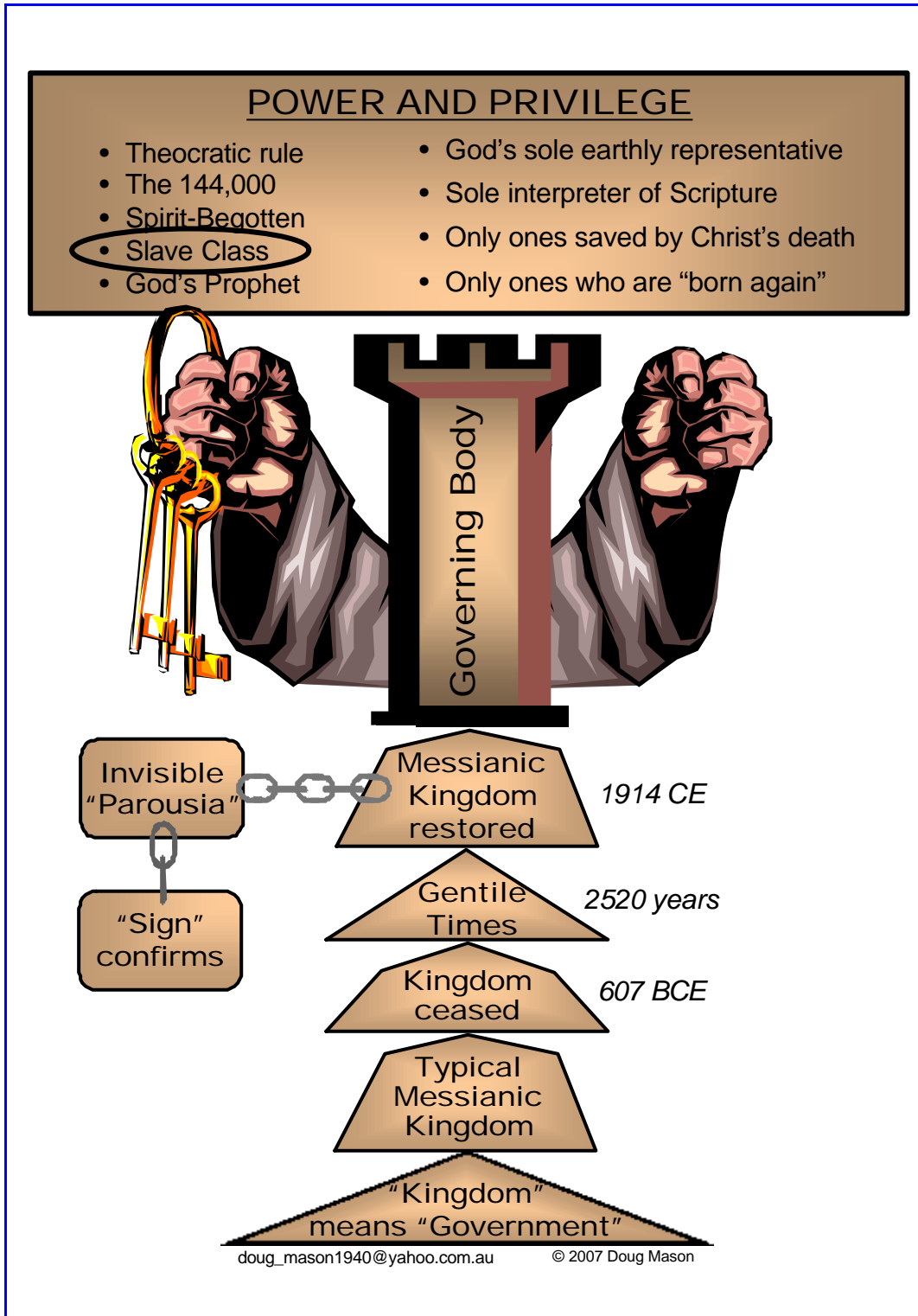
The following picture provides a simple illustration, in which the Knight from chess jumps around the Scripture as if it was a flat board, and connects items that do not relate.

This is quite typical of eschatological, date setting, apocalyptic groups, and the GB is one of many bodies that employs this technique to arrive at its predetermined conclusion.



Reliance on its false neo-Babylonian chronology

As described in the following diagram, the GB claims its authority through its self-fulfilling explanation that relies on its false neo-Babylonian chronology.



A “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Class?

The group of Jehovah’s Witnesses whose hope is to rule with Christ from heaven, is known as the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (FDS) Class. The “Governing Body” (GB) represents that FDS Class and is derived from it.

Parabolic source for the term “FDS”

The GB obtains the term “Faithful and Discreet Slave” and its high calling from its translation and interpretation of the parable at Matthew 24:45-47 as rendered in its NWT.

“Who really is **the faithful and discreet slave** whom his **master** appointed over his **domestics**, to give them their food at the proper time? Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to YOU, He will appoint him over all his belongings.”

Matthew 24: 45 – 51 (NIV)

“Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?

It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards.

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

Luke 12: 42 – 48 (NIV)

The Lord answered, “Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time?

It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk.

The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows. But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows. From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.

The parable of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” appears only in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke. It does not appear in either Mark or John.

The “Slave” Class

The GB says this parable is a prophecy about a specific “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Class located on earth. These followers have the “heavenly hope”.

Jesus said: “Who really is the faithful and discreet slave whom his master appointed over his domestics? ... The “master” is Jesus Christ. The “slave” is the group of anointed Christians on earth.⁴⁶

This “slave” class is made up of the spirit-begotten, spirit-anointed followers of Jesus Christ, and these followers make up his congregation on earth.⁴⁷ (In this instance, the term “congregation” means the members of the FDS.)

Every member of “the Israel of God” is a dedicated, baptized Christian anointed with holy spirit and having a heavenly hope. Hence, the expression “faithful and discreet slave” refers to all members of that anointed spiritual nation as a group on earth at any particular time from 33 C.E. until now.⁴⁸

Reliance on an unproveable event

Although the GB makes this claim that the FDS has existed at all times since the time of Jesus Christ, they cannot verify that claim. Further, it is one thing to say that the Slave in the parable represents a class of Christians on Earth and it is quite another to demonstrate who those Christians are.

The organization asserts that the *Parousia* of Jesus Christ was an invisible event that took place in heaven in 1914 CE. At a set time later, namely 1918 CE, Jesus examined the populace on Earth and found that only one small group was faithful. It comes as no surprise to be told that Jesus decided that this group were the faithful members of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society.

This means that the existence of a FDS Class, and the existence of an assessment by Jesus at a particular point in history, and the assessment that this group was the only worthy Christians on Earth, are nothing more than assertions. There are no evidences, no proofs, only self-promoting, subjective claims.

On arriving to inspect his slaves in 1918, therefore, whom did the Master, Jesus Christ, find giving to his body of attendants their measure of food supplies at the proper time? ... The facts show that it was the group of anointed Christians associated with the publishers of the magazine *Zion’s Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, now called *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah’s Kingdom*.⁴⁹

The members of that elite group knew nothing about this judgement and decision in 1918, because they still taught that Christ’s invisible Parousia took place in 1874, a date they held on to as late as 1930. And most what this group taught has been devoured and changed.

The Governing Body’s FDS are spread around the world, numbering about 0.1% of the millions of Jehovah’s Witnesses (JW) who have the “earthly hope”.

⁴⁶ *The Watchtower* September 15 2005, page 22 “Go On Walking as Jesus Christ Walked”

⁴⁷ *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1971, page 758, “A Governing Body as Different from a Legal Corporation”

⁴⁸ *The Watchtower* March 1 2004 page 10 par. 9, “A ‘Slave’ Who Is Both Faithful and Discreet”

⁴⁹ *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1990 pages 13-14 “‘The Faithful Slave’ and Its Governing Body”

The FDS has “the chief responsibility”

On the earth today, the chief responsibility for caring for our spiritual needs has been entrusted to “the faithful and discreet slave.”⁵⁰

This slave class is entrusted with caring for Jesus’ earthly interests and with providing timely spiritual food.⁵¹

Regarding God’s channel of communication, Jesus said that the “faithful and discreet slave” would provide spiritual nourishment at the right time for all his followers and that he would set this “slave” over all his belongings.⁵²

“The Anointed”

The organization’s founder and first President, Pastor Charles Taze Russell claimed that Jesus Christ’s work such as “life-giving”, and titles such as “Eternal Father”, were shared by Christ’s heirs and workers.

“Since the overcomers of the Gospel age...are to be so closely identified with their Lord and Head Christ Jesus, as to be called “members of his body,” “his bride” and his joint heirs, it is evident that they with him, and by virtue of the ransom which he gave, are to be members in particular of that great Prophet and Life-giver, and will share in the work of life-giving, restoring the dead and dying world to perfection; hence the term Everlasting Father, as well as every other title of the Head, is to be shared by his joint-heirs and co-workers.”⁵³

Russell identified “Christ” as being Jesus, while “the Christ” was made up of the Head (Jesus) and the Body (the spirit-begotten Christians).

This Christ is composed of many members. This age will end when the full number of the “elect” shall have been found and tested. Then the body will have been completed. When the Messiah is complete, The Christ will be complete”⁵⁴

In Rutherford’s day, those who partook of the bread and wine, who shared in the glory of Christ, belonged to “the Christ” class.

Jesus and the members of his body thus developed through trial and tribulation according to the divine arrangement will constitute the seed of Abraham, through which seed God will ultimately extend blessings to all the families of the earth. The Apostle Paul with prophetic vision looking down through the corridors of the age, marking the suffering of mankind and the development of the Christ class, *the seed*, exclaimed: “The whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God”.⁵⁵

⁵⁰ *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1989, page 21, par. 5, “Be Obedient to Those Taking the Lead”

⁵¹ *The Watchtower* September 15 2005, page 22 “Go On Walking as Jesus Christ Walked”

⁵² *The Watchtower*, December 1 1981, page 27 par. 5 “The Path of the Righteous Does Keep Getting Brighter”

⁵³ *The Watchtower* February 1888, page 1007

⁵⁴ *The Watchtower* June 15, 1911, reprints page 4841

⁵⁵ *Millions now Living will Never Die*, J. F Rutherford, pages 84 – 85

The Christ is a composite body made up of many members.⁵⁶

In Greek, “anointed” is “Christ”.⁵⁷ Thus when the GB claims that the FDS are **“the Anointed”**, this would be rendered in Greek as **“the Christ”**.

Some twenty years after Rutherford’s death, the organization was driven to repudiate his use of the term “the Christ”. There must have been a strong reason for the organization to prepare a detailed denial of his position.

What about the expressions **“the Christ”** and **“Christ”**? Does the use of the article with “Christ” designate something different from when no article is used? Might it be that, whereas the term “Christ” refers to Jesus Christ alone, the term “the Christ” could also include the 144,000 members of his body? Do the Scriptures support this thought or distinction? No, they do not. ... There are many scriptures that distinguish between “the Christ” and the members of his body. ... The expression “the Christ” of itself at no time includes the members of Christ’s body.⁵⁸

In the above reference they repudiate this application of the term “The Christ”. However, the organization continues the concept, using the English “Anointed” rather than the Greek “Christ”.

They continually and strongly promote the FDS and its GB as the “Spirit-Anointed”. The organization acknowledges that JWs who are not of the FDS class also have “holy spirit”⁵⁹, which shows that the “Spirit Anointing” of the FDS class is superior and special.

Jesus warned his Disciples to watch out for the **deceivers** who would falsely point to wars, famines, and earthquakes⁶⁰ as the sign of the “end of the age”. At the same time, Jesus told his Disciples that these deceivers would claim to be **“the Christ”**⁶¹. That is, they would claim to be **“the Anointed”**.

Jesus answered: “Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am **the Christ**,’ and will deceive many. You will hear of wars and rumors of wars, but see to it that you are not alarmed”...

“At that time if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is **the Christ**!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it. For **false Christs** and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive. ...

“So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out **in the desert**,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the **inner rooms**,’ **do not believe it**. For as lightning that comes from the east is **visible** even in the west, **so will be the coming** of the Son of Man.”⁶²

⁵⁶ *The Harp of God* page 202 (1927)

⁵⁷ Both “Christ” (Greek) and “Messiah” (Hebrew and Aramaic) mean “one who has been anointed”. The term “cristov/cristos” was originally an adjective (“anointed”). In the LXX it developed into a substantive (“an anointed one”), then developed still further into a technical generic term (“the anointed one”). During the intertestamental period it developed further into a technical term referring to the hoped-for anointed one, that is, a specific individual. In the NT the development starts as technical-specific in the gospels, and then develops in Paul to virtually mean Jesus’ last name.

⁵⁸ *The Watchtower* September 1 1963, page 539 “Names for Christ and His Congregation”

⁵⁹ *The Watchtower* February 1 2002 page 21 “Have You Received ‘the Spirit of the Truth’?”

⁶⁰ Matthew 24: 6 – 7

⁶¹ Matthew 24:3 – 5

⁶² Matthew 24:4 – 6, 23 – 24, 26 – 27

The “Congregation”

Often, the GB limits the term “congregation” to mean the JW’s with the heavenly hope.

This congregation is referred to as “the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens,” the full number of which, under Christ the head, is 144,000. (Heb 12:23; Re 7:4) These called-out ones are “bought from among mankind” to carry out a special work here on earth and then to be with Christ in heaven as his bride. ...

Usually when the Christian Greek Scriptures mention “the congregation” in a general sense, reference is being made to the 144,000 members thereof, the anointed followers of Christ exclusive of Jesus himself. (Eph 5:32; Heb 12:23, 24)⁶³

The “Domestics”

The GB claims that the parable says the FDS will provide the good food to its “domestics” during these “Last Days”. The GB explains that these “domestics” are the individual members of the FDS class.

Who, though, are the “domestics,” who receive spiritual nourishment from the slave? ... The domestics [are] also anointed Christians, viewed, not as a group, but as individuals.⁶⁴

The GB thus claims Jesus told his disciples that about 1900 years later a group of about ten men in an undiscovered country, a group that will be part of the FDS Class, will be dispensing good food to the remainder of that group.

The faithful and discreet slave ... gives food to the domestics at the proper time. (Matthew 24:45) The *slave as a body* is responsible for supplying the food, but the domestics, the individual members of that body, are sustained by partaking of that spiritual provision. They are the same group but described in different terms—collectively and individually.⁶⁵

Thus the FDS Class will be providing God’s good food to themselves when the Lord “returns”. The GB says it knows it is that group of men on earth.

The “Evil Servant” Class

The Parable also speaks of an evil servant. The Governing Body says this slave represents the earlier members of the “servant” class who went their own evil way.⁶⁶ The GB arbitrarily applies the Good Servant to itself and the Evil Servant to its opposition.

The GB completely ignores the FDS

The GB claims that the FDS dispenses spiritual nourishment, using the GB as its representative.

“The ‘faithful and discreet slave’ class of today has been appointed over all the Kingdom interests belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ.”⁶⁷

⁶³ *Insight on the Scriptures* Vol 1, page 498 “Congregation”

⁶⁴ *The Watchtower* March 1 2004 page 10 par. 9, “A ‘Slave’ Who Is Both Faithful and Discreet”

⁶⁵ *Revelation – Its Grand Climax at Hand*, chap. 29 page 201 “Singing the Triumphal New Song”.

⁶⁶ *God’s Kingdom of a Thousand Years has Approached* (1973), pages 361 - 362

⁶⁷ *The Watchtower*, December 15 1971 page 754, “Theocratic Organization with Which to Move Forward Now”

In reality, this arrangement is not followed. The world-wide thousands of FDS members have no input into the deliberations or pronouncements of the GB. Nor is input ever sought by the GB from the FDS class.

And to perform the task of dispensing spiritual nourishment, the GB created a religious Order: the *Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses*.

The GB does not want any FDS member to gain the idea they are being used by God. A recent WT article said that 1935 was not the deadline for inclusion into the “FDS class”, and that it is possible for members of the FDS Class to “fall away” and be “replaced”. Another recent article recognized that “earthly-hope” JW's also have “holy spirit”. It appears that the GB is attempting to prevent any member of the FDS class thinking that the FDS Class actually “has been appointed over all the Kingdom interests belonging to the Lord Jesus Christ”.

The FDS Class does not provide the articles and books

Virtually every magazine article and book is written by a Witness who only has the “earthly hope”. These authors are therefore not part of the FDS.

At Headquarters, the writing is not prepared by people who are of the GB, nor by people because they are they of the FDS class. Fred Franz did not write anything from about the early 1980s. He dictated rambling articles into a recorder but the Writing Department never used them. In the US Branch, most writing is done by the “earthly” class.

Once in a while, a senior Writing Department person might ask someone outside Bethel to submit an article. While the person could be of the FDS class, this is most unlikely. The writer might be attached to a foreign branch, and are almost always Gilead Graduates.

The Nature of Parables

The “FDS” story is a “parable”

The Governing Body (GB) agrees that these accounts are *Parables*.

When answering the apostles’ question concerning his future presence and the conclusion of the existing system of things, Jesus Christ included a **parable**, or **illustration**, dealing with a “faithful and discreet slave” and an “evil slave.”⁶⁸

“Who really is the faithful and discreet slave?” With that question, Jesus Christ introduced a **parable**, or an **illustration**.⁶⁹

In the introduction to the parable at Luke, the apostle Peter, apparent leader of the disciples, asked:

“Lord, are you telling this **parable** to us, or to everyone?”⁷⁰

The word comes from the Greek παραβαλλο (paraballo). *Para* means “beside” and *Ballo* means to “cast” or “throw”, so *paraballo* means “to cast beside”.

The Governing Body’s New World Translation (NWT) renders παραβαλλο (paraballo) in Luke 12:41 as “illustration”. This is an apt description.

What a “parable” is

In a parable, a familiar idea is placed next to an unfamiliar idea in such a way that the comparison provides a better understanding and acceptance of the unfamiliar idea. This is done through a simple story that uses features which are analogous or parallel to the points or principles being introduced.

Parables are distinguished from other literary figures in that they are narrative in form but figurative in meaning. Parables use both similes and metaphors to make their analogies, and the rhetorical purposes of parables are to inform, convince, or persuade their audiences. Pedagogically, Jesus used parables to motivate hearers to make proper decisions.

A parable may be briefly defined as a figurative narrative that is true to life and is designed to convey through analogy some specific spiritual truth(s) usually relative to God’s kingdom program. Again, the GB concurs.

A “parable” is a comparison or similitude, a short, usually fictitious, narrative from which a moral or spiritual truth is drawn.⁷¹

The *pa-ra-bo-le*’ served as a means of teaching or communicating an idea, a method of explaining a thing by ‘placing it beside’ another similar thing.⁷²

⁶⁸ *Insight on the Scriptures* (WTBTS) Vol 1. pp. 805

⁶⁹ *Watchtower*, March 1, 1981, p. 24 “Do You Appreciate the ‘Faithful and Discreet Slave’?”. See also *Watchtower*, October 1, 1981 pp. 22-23 “Who Really Is the Faithful Steward, the Discreet One?”

⁷⁰ Luke 12: 41

⁷¹ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBTS, Vol 1, page 1174

⁷² *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBTS, Vol 1, page 1175

Illustrations [parables], although drawn from life and natural things, did not necessarily take place in actuality.⁷³

A parable is a story employing a vehicle to achieve its objective, usually to teach a lesson or to make a point. They are windows that let in the light.

Benefits of a parable

A parable provides a very effective method for getting a message accepted, since the recipient is not aware of its personal implications until the message has been delivered. Once more, the GB agrees.

Parables are a powerful teaching device, effective in at least five ways:

- (1) They arrest and hold attention. ...
- (2) They stir up the thinking faculty ...
- (3) They stir emotions and ... reach the conscience and the heart.
- (4) They aid memory. ...
- (5) They preserve the truth, for they are always applicable and understandable in any time and age. ... They deal with life and natural things.⁷⁴

⁷³ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBTS, Vol 1, pp. 1176

⁷⁴ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBTS, Vol 1, page 1175

Principles for Interpreting Scripture

SCRIPTURAL INTERPRETATION DURING APOSTOLIC TIMES

Generally speaking, in Apostolic times there were four styles of interpretation: Literalist, Midrashic, Peshar and Allegorical.

Jewish exegesis of the first century can generally be classified under four headings: literalist, midrashic, peshar and allegorical. Admittedly, such a fourfold classification highlights distinctions of which the early Jewish interpreters themselves may not have always been conscious. In dealing with a system that thinks more wholistically, functionally and practically than it does analytically-and stresses precedent more than logic in defense of its ways – any attempt at classification must inevitably go beyond that system’s explicit statements as to its own principles. ... The Jewish treatment of Scripture falls quite naturally into one or the other of these four categories.⁷⁵

Literalist

The “Literalist” takes the words at face value, and seeks to determine what the words meant to the initial intended audience. This method seeks to uncover the idioms and culture of the time that a piece was initially delivered.

Judaism often took the words of the Old Testament quite literally. Rabbinic literature contains a number of examples of where the Scriptures were understood in a straightforward fashion, resulting in the plain, simple and natural meaning of the text being applied to the lives of the people-particularly in the application of deuteronomic legislation. Frequently, in fact, the interpretation is woodenly literal.⁷⁶

A discussion on the literalist understanding of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” parable is provided later in this study.

Midrashic

“Midrashic” may be defined as:

“an exegesis which, going more deeply than the mere literal, attempts to penetrate into the spirit of the Scriptures, to examine the text from all sides, and thereby to derive interpretations which are not immediately obvious.”⁷⁷

Midrashic interpretation, in effect, ostensibly takes its point of departure from the biblical text itself (though psychologically it may be motivated by other factors) and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings contained therein by means of agreed upon hermeneutical rules in order to contemporize the revelation of God for the people of God. It may be

⁷⁵ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 28, Eerdmans

⁷⁶ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 28, Eerdmans

⁷⁷ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 32 – 33, Eerdmans

briefly characterized by the maxim: “That has relevance to This”; i.e., What is written in Scripture has relevance to our present situation.”⁷⁸

Pesher

Pesher may be defined as meaning “solution” or “interpretation”⁷⁹

The term *pesher* means, “to explain.” In fact, however, *pesher* is an application of OT scripture with little to no concern for the context of the passage applied.⁸⁰

Pesher interpreters assume that OT authors were speaking to the contemporary audience. This form of interpretation is tied to a word, text or OT allusion, which is then related to a present person, place or thing. The interpretations are generally aloof from the source context and appear to lack any coherent methodology. According to Lundberg, “This kind of commentary (*pesher*) is not an attempt to explain what the Bible meant when it was originally written, but rather what it means in the day and age of the commentator, particularly for his own community.”⁸¹

Generally, those who use this form of interpretation, such as the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, limit *Pesher* to prophetic utterances, whether perceived or actual. The GB applies literal and allegorical interpretation to the balance of Scripture. At times they take their literal understanding to extremes, as with the GB’s position on the medical use of blood.

Allegorical

[An] “allegory” (Gr., *al·le·go·ri´a*), ... is a prolonged metaphor in which a series of actions are symbolic of other actions, while the characters often are types or personifications. Paul uses the Greek verb *al·le·go·re´o* (allegorize) at Galatians 4:24, concerning Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar. It is translated ‘be an allegory’ (*KJ*), ‘be an allegorical utterance’ (*AT*), and “stand as a symbolic drama” (*NW*).⁸²

AN ANCIENT ALLEGORY The allegory [in Ezekiel chapter 23] involves two sisters who failed to trust in God and looked elsewhere for blessing and protection. The older sister was Oholah and the younger one, Oholibah. Oholah is identified as representing Samaria, the final capital of the northern or ten-tribe kingdom of Israel, and Oholibah as representing Jerusalem, the capital of the southern kingdom of Judah.⁸³

The Dead Sea Scrolls include a number of examples of allegorical interpretation, representative of which is the treatment of Hab. 2:17 in 1QpHab 12.3-4: “‘Lebanon’ stands here for the Communal Council, and ‘wild beasts’ for the simple-minded Jews who carry out the Law.” But

⁷⁸ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 37, Eerdmans

⁷⁹ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 37, Eerdmans

⁸⁰ *Matthew’s Use of the Old Testament: A preliminary analysis* by Lee Campbell at <http://www.xenos.org/MINISTRIES/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtmain.htm>

⁸¹ *Matthew’s Use of the Old Testament: A preliminary analysis* by Lee Campbell at <http://www.xenos.org/MINISTRIES/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtmain.htm>

⁸² *Insight on the Scriptures* Vol 1., pages 1174-1175 “Illustrations”

⁸³ *The Watchtower* February 1 1973, pages 89-90, “Why Trust in God?”

though allegorical exegesis was widespread amongst Jews of the first century, it was not dominant in Palestine.⁸⁴

Pesher understanding makes extensive use of allegory.

CONTEMPORARY INTERPRETATIONS

The passage of time has necessitated further forms of understanding. Contemporary interpretation may broadly be classified as “Lower Criticism”, and “Higher Criticism”.

Lower Criticism

In the broadest sense, lower criticism deals with the language (vocabulary, grammar, syntax) and the history of the transmission of the text. It attempts to restore the reading of the original autographs.

When the expression “lower criticism” is confined to the study of the Biblical text, it is often given the term, “textual criticism”.

Lower Criticism involves the study and comparison of extant manuscripts, determining their historical and geographical interrelationships. Lower Criticism develops and applies criteria and techniques for restoring as nearly as possible the original wording of the text of the Bible. Textual criticism may be seen as basic to accurate Bible study.

Higher Criticism

Higher Criticism studies questions such as the authorship, time, place, and circumstances of writing, historical validity, and literary relationships of a work.

Higher Criticism of the Bible may be divided into two types, which in many aspects blend into one discipline:

- That which takes a **skeptical** attitude toward the Bible. **The skeptic** relegates Bible narratives to the realm of fiction, and rejects everything that must be accepted by faith.
- That which criticizes it on the basis of **available historical evidence**. Conclusions are drawn from internal evidence by studying the historical parts of the Bible, its laws, prophecies and wisdom literature, with comparisons from other known sources. Higher Critics evaluate the possible historical accuracy of Bible stories.

⁸⁴ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 48, Eerdmans

Literalist Interpretation of a Parable

A parable is an analogy, not symbolic

Events and people in a **parable** are **analogies**. An analogy illustrates by providing similarities, and a comparison is placed alongside to show such a similarity.

Symbols appear in **allegories**, and they are usually more involved than a parable. A parable should therefore not be pushed beyond the immediate meaning of what it is teaching.

An allegory provides symbols and types, whereas a parable does not.

Form of a parable

The arrangement of a parable ensures that its point of comparison comes out clearly. Without halts and detours, a parable's story line has a strong direct flow, and runs to the point of the comparison. *The individual features of the story combine in this dramatic movement and have a role in the development of the story, but have little if any role in its meaning.*

Only when the story reaches its goal is the listener released from suspense. The point of comparison forms the end of the parable.

Understanding a parable

Sometimes Jesus supplied the interpretation (e.g., Matt. 22:14; 25:13), and on other occasions the Gospel writer made an editorial comment. Often the key to interpretation can be found in the prologue to the parable (e.g., Luke 18:1, 9; 19:11). Other times the epilogue gives a clue to the proper interpretation (Matt. 25:13; Luke 16:9). And in some parables the prologue and epilogue form an interpretive parenthesis around the story (e.g., Matt. 18:23–24, 35; **Luke 12:16–21**).

The full meaning of a parable may be determined by considering:

- (1) The culture of the original hearers.
- (2) The situation that caused the parable to be given.
- (3) Any explicit explanation of the parable, whether by Jesus or by the gospel writer.

The proper approach is made,

- First, by reading the context, ascertaining the setting in which the illustration was spoken, asking, What were the conditions and the circumstances?
- Next, a knowledge of the Law, the customs and usages, and the idiom of the day
- Finally, the factors in an illustration [parable] should not be given an arbitrary meaning, one that is gained from a private view or from philosophy.⁸⁵

⁸⁵ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBS, Vol 1, pp. 1176

Culture of the original hearers

A parable employs words, stories, situations and ideas commonly understood by the original recipients.

Jesus generally drew his illustrations from the surrounding creation, from familiar customs of everyday life, from occasional happenings or not-possible situations, and from recent events well known to his hearers.⁸⁶

The modern reader therefore needs to be fully aware of the everyday experiences and understandings of the people who originally received the message.

Before one should seek to understand the significance of the parables for one's own situation today, one should seek the original meaning of the parables and their application for Jesus' audience in the first century. Before seeking to determine any current application, ask: "What did the parable mean when it was uttered by Jesus during his ministry?"

A parable can be properly interpreted only by understanding the audience and the occasion that caused Jesus to utter it. Most stories involve customs, conditions, and ideas peculiar to the Jews of Palestine in Jesus' time and therefore require explanation before a modern reader can fully understand them.

The proper understanding of a parable's historical and cultural contexts is the beginning point for proper interpretation. Discover as much as possible about the local color incorporated in the parable.

Each parable Jesus spoke was taken either from analogies to nature or from people's reasonings and judgments. These were taken out of the thought and mind-set of ordinary persons living at that time in Israel.

Augmenting the historical foundation with an awareness of first-century culture allows the parables to retain their true-to-life nature and unlocks the parabolic references to the religious and social cultures of the original settings of the parables.

The goal of each parable is to point up an analogy between the story and the intended lesson or appeal.

Initiators of a parable

Jesus often told parables to answer a question, meet a challenge, or to invite the hearers to change their thinking. The central truth can be identified by understanding what question, occasion, problem, or need is portrayed in the historical setting.

To discover the need that prompted the parable is a significant step towards unlocking its meaning within its original context.

Explanation of a parable

As the GB states:

A good number of illustrations [parables] are understood because of the Bible's own explanation.⁸⁷

When the speaker or the writer provides the explanation of a parable, that is the end of the matter.

Details in parables serve as background for the central truth in the foreground. A parable is a "truth carried in a vehicle," These details are necessary to carry the story, but they are not part of its meaning. Various details often play important roles, but on the other hand they may

⁸⁶ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1178

⁸⁷ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1177

simply add a backdrop to the story. The background details of a parable often help focus attention on the main point(s) in the foreground.

[An] obstacle to understanding is the drawing of too fine an application of the illustration, trying to make every detail of the narrative of the literal events fit symbolically by arbitrary application or interpretation.⁸⁸

- Discover the meaning of the whole parable rather than search for the meaning of each small part. Once the whole meaning has been determined, the meanings of the small constituent fall into place.
- Conversely, once the small, constituent meanings are understood, the meaning of the whole emerges.

The presence of details in a parable does not call for an allegorical interpretation. As an example, the lesson to be drawn from the parable of the “Wise and Foolish Virgins” is explicitly given in Scripture:

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.⁸⁹

That is the only lesson being taught, “be prepared”. Although all virgins tired of waiting, some had made preparations for any delay.

The fact that they were “virgins”, that they had “lamps”, and that the lamps needed “oil” are features employed to get a single message across to all people at all time, which is: “Keep watch, be prepared because you do not know when he will come”.

Indeed, the Groom came at the time when he was not expected, at midnight, long after the end of the Jewish day, which ends at sunset, when people are asleep.

Determine the central truth

Understanding the central comparison (analogy) of a parable provides a safeguard against excessive allegorizing. Parables are structured such that the point of the comparison is very clear. The story has a strong direct flow, running to the point of the comparison.

The individual features of the narrative combine in this movement, and function in the development of the narrative. When the flow of the narrative reaches its goal, the suspense is released. The point of comparison forms the end of the parable.

Further examples

Examples of Parables and their meanings, as explained by the GB in its book *Insight on the Scriptures*, are provided as an Appendix to this Study.

Summary of principles

1. When an interpretation of a parable is given, this **MUST** be our guide for interpretation. Jesus explained many parables,
2. An item in a parable, such as the seed, can only represent one thing.
3. A parable cannot be pressed beyond the context of its primary meaning.
4. Not every detail of a parable has significance in the analogy or application. Avoid over-allegorizing and note carefully what occurs at the end of a parable as the clue to the meaning of the parable. This is called the “rule of end stress.”
5. Parables do not necessarily depict real or historical events.

⁸⁸ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1176

⁸⁹ Matthew 25:13 (NIV)

6. Note the literary setting of the parable in the gospel. This can provide clues to the overall interpretation of the parable, especially its mood and affective force.
7. Note the wording, structure, general progression, plot progress, and suspense. Remember these are stories and need to be read as such. In this connection it is helpful to note any changes in the same parable in another gospel.
8. Read the parables in their original historical situation first. Nothing should be read *out* of them that is not consistent with the customs employed in them. Certainly no later reading of theology or church experience should be read *into* them.

That is, those to whom these parables were first addressed by Jesus or later communicated by the evangelists would have understood any later interpretation. This preserves the link between writer's intended meaning and any subsequently attributed meaning.

9. Note the main characters and things in the parable, and any parallels and or contrasts between them. The main characters are often clues as to the parable's main points.
10. Recognize that there are two audiences being addressed by the parables. First is the audience that Jesus originally spoke to, such as the Scribes and Pharisees. Secondly is the audience of the early church that the evangelists addressed their writings to. A different audience signifies a slightly different function for the parables and thus a slightly different emphasis in interpretation.

Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Matthew 24:45 – 51

Context of the parable

The context of the parable at Matthew 24:45 – 51 commences at Matthew 24:3, where Jesus' disciples asked him:

- When will the temple be destroyed?
- What will be the sign of your coming (Greek: “parousia”) and of the end of the age?

In the disciples' minds, these events were all linked. The destruction of the temple signaled the end of the Age, at which time Jesus would finally be recognized as the Anointed Messiah. This realization by the Jews would be marked, so they thought, with the grand pomp and ceremony that accompanied the arrival of a noted dignitary or emperor. They were very familiar with these grand events, which were technically known as the dignitary's *Parousia*, or “Coming”.

Before answering his disciples, Jesus warned them against deceivers who would point to events such as wars and stories about wars (*see to it that you are **not alarmed** ... **the end is still to come***), famines and earthquakes (*all these are the **beginning** of birth pains*).

If anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or, ‘There he is!’ do not believe it.

For false Christs and false prophets will appear and perform great signs and miracles to deceive even the elect—if that were possible. See, I have told you ahead of time. So if anyone tells you, ‘There he is, out in the desert,’ do not go out; or, ‘Here he is, in the inner rooms,’ do not believe it.

While the disciples thought of Jesus coming in terms of localized contemporary events, such as their subjugation to Rome, Jesus pointed forward to his coming will be as visible as lightning across the whole sky, in power and great glory and cataclysmic events across the whole heavens.

For as lightning that comes from the east is visible even in the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man.⁹⁰

At that time the sign of the Son of Man will appear in the sky, and all the nations of the earth will mourn. They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of the sky, with power and great glory.

And he will send his angels with a loud trumpet call, and they will gather his elect from the four winds, from one end of the heavens to the other.⁹¹

The parable is a warning

The parable of the “faithful and wise servant”, applies as a warning to any good Christian leader:

⁹⁰ Matthew 24:23 – 27 (NIV)

⁹¹ Matthew 24: 30 – 31 (NIV)

It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.⁹²

The parable warns of the fate that awaits the “servant” who says in his heart (not outwardly), that his Lord delays his return. The Lord will return when the servant is not expecting him, and so the servant’s destiny is sealed.

But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ ... The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.⁹³

A series of parables

At the point in Jesus’ discourse where he says all nations shall see his coming with power and great glory, when his angels will gather the elect, Matthew gathers a series of parables.

These parables are introduced with the statement that apart from the Father, no one, not even Jesus, knows when these momentous events will take place.

No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father.⁹⁴

Using stories and situations very familiar to the common people he was speaking to, Jesus then told them be ready for the coming judgment at all times, for this might happen at any time.

An examination of this group of parables demonstrates that the parable relied on by the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses for its unique existence is talking to all people in every age, and it simply says: “be ready at all times for your Master’s coming, and do not backslide”.

- **Unprepared in Noah’s time** (Matt 24: 37 – 42)

At the time of the Disciples, the visit of a great dignitary was termed his *Parousia*. Great preparations were made, roads were repaired, crowds flocked, there were processions, and special “advent coins” showing the royal visit of the king were minted.

In this Parable of Noah’s time, instead of the people busily preparing themselves for the forthcoming Parousia, they continued on with their normal daily lives, totally unprepared for the flood that took them away. This situation, says Jesus, will be repeated at the Parousia of the Son of Man.

As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be at the coming of the Son of Man. ... they knew nothing about what would happen until the flood came and took them all away. That is how it will be at the coming of the Son of Man.

Jesus provided the meaning of this parable to his hearers, so there can be no doubt:

Therefore **keep watch**, because you do not know on what day your Lord will come.

⁹² Matthew 24:46 – 47 (NIV)

⁹³ Matthew 24:48, 50, 51 (NIV)

⁹⁴ Matt 24:36 (NIV)

- **Unprepared for the unannounced thief** (Matt 24: 43 – 44)

Understand this: If the owner of the house had known at what time of night the thief was coming, he would have kept watch and would not have let his house be broken into.

Jesus provided the meaning of this parable to his hearers:

So you also must **be ready**, because the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.

The owner of the house received no warning of the time.

- **The faithful servant might be deceived** (Matt 24:45 – 51)

In this parable, Jesus moves his attention to believers, and tells his hearers that even these must maintain their readiness for the coming Son of Man.

Who then is the faithful and wise servant, whom the master has put in charge of the servants in his household to give them their food at the proper time?

Whereas the previous parables relate to the general populace, Jesus now speaks of a person who has bonded to him as his servant. The ordinary sense of the word “servant” and of the sense given in the cited passages is that of any individual, not of a set group of individuals. Jesus explains that it will be good for this servant should he be doing the right things when the master returns.

It will be good for that servant whose master finds him doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

In the previous parables, Jesus says “I am coming, whether you are ready or not”. In this parable the faithful servant says “I am always ready, whether you are coming or not”.

But, explains Jesus, if that servant says his Master delays his coming and acts accordingly, the servant will find the Master comes while he is not ready and unaware.

But suppose that servant is wicked and says to himself, ‘My master is staying away a long time,’ and he then begins to beat his fellow servants and to eat and drink with drunkards. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of.

The fate of that servant is sealed forever with the hypocrites.

[The Master] will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the hypocrites, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

To the world, the servant says Jesus is coming, but the servant’s thoughts and actions show him to be a hypocrite.

This parable says it is possible for people who are aware that their Master is coming, to fall away and be lost.

- **Unexpected arrival of the bridegroom** (Matt 25: 1 – 13)

This parable is about the arrival of a bridegroom. The long wait by virgins drags into the night, then at a time when he is not expected, the bridegroom arrives. Those virgins who made preparations for the long wait are invited to the feast.

The parable provides an object lesson for the modern reader. The bridegroom is said to arrive at “midnight”. For the Jews listening to Jesus’ words and to the Jews of the primitive church, the day ended and began with the setting of the sun. The points about “midnight” are:

- It is a time when people are asleep

- It is not a time when a bridegroom would be expected to arrive.

Those influenced by the prophetic speculators of the 19th century make much of the fact that the bridegroom arrives at midnight, and they relate this to the contemporary end of a day at midnight. This is irrelevant. The message of the parable is that the bridegroom comes when people are asleep, and when he comes at this unexpected hour, some will be ready, others will not. Nothing more is intended, nothing less.

So the explanation given by Jesus to this parable is:

Therefore keep watch, because you do not know the day or the hour.

The Governing Body actually concurs:

The purpose of the illustration (parable) is plainly shown in Matthew 25:13⁹⁵

- **Employing the master's investments** (Matt 25: 14 – 30)

This parable demonstrates that “being ready” means to be employing that which God has invested. God has invested in each person according to their ability, and he requires his investment to be employed by the recipient. “To be ready” does not mean hiding God’s investment.

- **The Judgment scene: Sheep and Goats** (Matt 25:31 – 46)

The event described just before this series of parables was the Final Judgment at the glorious coming of the Son of Man. This parable of the separation of the sheep and the goats returns to that scene:

When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, he will sit on his throne in heavenly glory.⁹⁶

This parable draws on an experience his hearers would have been very familiar with. While previous parables pleaded “be ready at all times”, this parable of the Sheep and the Goats explains what “to be ready” really means.

For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.⁹⁷

And these people performed these acts selflessly, unaware of Christ’s enduring interest.

⁹⁵ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1183

⁹⁶ Matthew 25: 31 (NIV)

⁹⁷ Matthew 25: 35 – 36 (NIV)

Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Luke 12:42 – 48

The parable of the “Faithful and Wise servant” appears at Luke 12: 42 – 46. In Luke’s Gospel, the Olivet Discourse appears at chapter 21. This means that the parable at Luke appears in a context that is totally different from the context in Matthew.

Meanwhile, when a crowd of many thousands had gathered, so that they were trampling on one another, Jesus began to speak first to his disciples saying: “Be on your guard against the yeast of the Pharisees, which is hypocrisy.”⁹⁸

Jesus continued speaking to his disciples until someone in the crowd called out to him. Jesus answered and then gave a parable to illustrate:

Someone in the crowd said to him, “Teacher, tell my brother to divide the inheritance with me.” Jesus replied, “Man, who appointed me a judge or an arbiter between you?” Then he said to them, “Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; a man’s life does not consist in the abundance of his possessions.”

And he told them this parable: “The ground of a certain rich man produced a good crop.”⁹⁹

Jesus then turned to his disciples and addressed them:

Then Jesus said to his disciples: “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. Life is more than food, and the body more than clothes.”¹⁰⁰

After giving this advice to his disciples, Jesus continued,

Be dressed ready for service and **keep your lamps burning**, like men waiting for their **master to return from a wedding banquet**, so that when he comes and knocks they can immediately open the door for him.

It will be good for those servants whose master finds them **watching when he comes**. I tell you the truth, he will dress himself to serve, will have them recline at the table and will come and wait on them.

It will be good for those servants whose master **finds them ready**, even if he comes in the second or third watch of the night.

But understand this: If the owner of the house had known at **what hour the thief was coming**, he would not have let his house be broken into.

You also must be ready, because **the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him**.¹⁰¹

Peter wondered if Jesus was addressing the crowd with these parables, or whether he was speaking only to his disciples.

⁹⁸ Luke 12: 1 (NIV)

⁹⁹ Luke 12: 13 – 16 (NIV)

¹⁰⁰ Luke 12: 22 – 23 (NIV)

¹⁰¹ Luke 12: 35 – 40 (NIV)

Peter asked, “Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?”¹⁰²

Answering Peter’s question, Jesus presents the parable of the “Faithful and Wise Manager”.

The Lord answered, ‘Who then is the faithful and wise manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? It will be good for that servant whom the master finds doing so when he returns. I tell you the truth, he will put him in charge of all his possessions.

But suppose the servant says to himself, ‘My master is taking a long time in coming,’ and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and to eat and drink and get drunk. The master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he is not aware of. He will cut him to pieces and assign him a place with the unbelievers.

“That servant who knows his master’s will and does not get ready or does not do what his master wants will be beaten with many blows.

But the one who does not know and does things deserving punishment will be beaten with few blows.

From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.¹⁰³

There is no doubt about the meaning of the parable, for Jesus provides it most clearly at the conclusion of the parable. Jesus told Peter that rather than it being a question of whom was Jesus speaking to, what mattered was the hearer’s response to what he knew.

The message is similar

In both accounts of this parable, the focus is on the response by the hearer.

In Matthew’s account, one hearer knew the Truth and responded appropriately, while another knew the Truth but did not act accordingly. Both men believed his Lord was coming, but one thought that the promised Coming was delayed. The focus is on the professed believer’s response.

Likewise in Luke’s account, the believer who knows more is expected to respond appropriately. Again the focus is on the professed believer’s response.

While the parable’s message is the same in both instances, the details are different. But this is of no consequence, since the details in the Parables do not contain any symbolism. They exist solely to allow the parable’s single message to be delivered.

¹⁰² Luke 12: 41 (NIV)

¹⁰³ Luke 12:42 – 48 (NIV)

The GB's Treatment of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" Parable

The GB employs eisegesis

The interpretation of Scripture that takes into account matters such as the local environment at the time of writing, the writer's background, their contemporary customs, and so on, endeavors to **extract** the meaning of a passage. The principles behind that extracted meaning may then be adapted and adopted to suit a different time and custom. This process of extraction, employing accepted hermeneutics, is known as *exegesis*.

The GB's regularly applies Scripture differently, starting with its conclusion and then searches Scripture for support. This is most clearly seen in any publication, where a paragraph expounds the GB's position, and it then presents Scripture as support, often only providing a Scripture reference at the very end of a paragraph. Reading such a referred passage often shows that the GB could not have derived its position simply by applying exegetical techniques. This process of reading a meaning into Scripture to support a prior conclusion is known as *eisegesis*.

GB's error: "Symbols and types occur in parables"

The GB provides its principles on the interpretation of parables in its book *Insight on the Scriptures*, under the heading of "Illustrations". While they do acknowledge conventional understandings of parables, they insert erroneous ideas, likely with their eyes fixed on their predetermined outcome.

The *Insight* book recognizes that it is in **allegories** that actions are symbolic and the characters are types or personifications.

"**Allegory**" (Gr., al·le·go·ri·a), which is a prolonged metaphor in which a series of actions are **symbolic** of other actions, while the characters often are **types or personifications**.¹⁰⁴

Symbolism, types and personifications do not appear in a parable, where the actions and the characters are **analogies**. A *parable* is an "illustration". **A parable is not an "allegory"**.

So the GB is wrong when it says that in the parable of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" the events are *symbols* and the people are *types*. In the following passage, the GB's *Insight* book incorrectly infers it is possible to find symbols in a parable:

General misconceptions that can hinder the understanding of the illustrations [parables] of the Bible: ... trying to make every detail of the narrative of the literal events fit symbolically by arbitrary application or interpretation.¹⁰⁵

In the above sentence, the words "*by arbitrary application or interpretation*" should be omitted, so that the sentence should read: "trying to make **any** detail of the narrative provide a symbol".

Items in a parable, whether "seed" or "oil", enable the parable's lesson to be made, and are not symbols. Most often, the single lesson is explicitly stated by Scripture, which is the case with the "FDS" parable being considered.

¹⁰⁴ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, page 1175

¹⁰⁵ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1176

GB Error: "A parable may also be a prophecy"

The GB interprets the parable of the Faithful and Discreet Slave as a prophetic allegory, not literally. In their major treatise on parables ("illustrations"), the GB erroneously goes beyond the scope of a parable. Jehovah's Witnesses are told, quite incorrectly, that a parable may also be a prophecy, in both the short term and the long term.

Bible illustrations [parables] have more than one aspect. They ... often have a prophetic meaning and application. Moreover, some had a prophetic meaning for the time when they were spoken or shortly thereafter, and some were to have, in addition, a fulfillment in the distant future.¹⁰⁶

This is indefensible. **A parable is an illustration, it is not a prophetic utterance.**

The Governing Body's omission

In its treatise on the subject of parables, the Governing Body's writer presents and discusses 30 (thirty) of Jesus' parables (illustrations):

Some of Jesus' prominent illustrations. In the material that follows, you will find helpful information concerning the background and context of 30 of the illustrations used by Jesus Christ in his earthly ministry and recorded by the Gospel writers.¹⁰⁷

However, despite taking pages to cover the majority of Jesus' parables, the Governing Body's book fails to mention the parable that is basic to its existence – the parable of the "faithful and wise/discreet servant/slave/manager".

One could speculate as to its reasons. Was the Governing Body concerned that their inconsistent and biased handling of this parable might be evident when placed against their handling of these other parables?

¹⁰⁶ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1176

¹⁰⁷ *Insight on the Scriptures* (1988), WTBT, Vol 1, pp. 1178

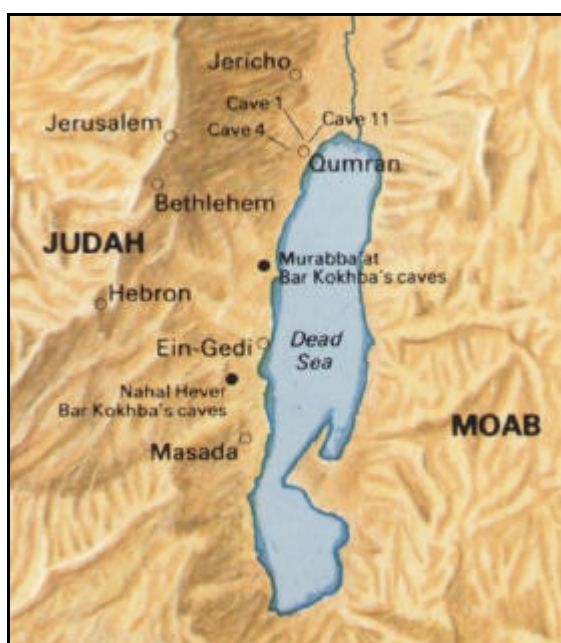
Lessons from History

History is littered with unfulfilled expectations of the Messiah's Coming. Throughout the centuries, people have seen messages hidden within Scripture that provide "the" date, only to see their predictions fail. All have failed to deliver.

It has all happened before. There is nothing special or new about the claims made for itself by the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" (FDS) and its Governing Body (GB).

The community at Qumran

The story of the Jews living at Qumran during the 1st and 2nd centuries BCE help demystify the GB, because the GB's claims for itself and the manner in which it uses Scripture have already been used by the community at Qumran.



Living in the "Last Days"

The Qumran community also believed they were living in the "Last Days" before the final eschatological cataclysmic age that heralded the coming Messiah.

The Dead Sea sectarians considered themselves to be the divinely elected community of the final generation of the present age, living in the days of "messianic travail" before the eschatological consummation. Theirs was the task of preparing for the coming of the Messianic Age and/or the Age to Come. And to them applied certain prophecies in the Old Testament which were considered to speak of their situation and circumstances.¹⁰⁸

Among the Dead Sea covenanters, the biblical texts were looked upon from the perspective of imminent apocalyptic fulfilment.¹⁰⁹

¹⁰⁸ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 38, Eerdmans

¹⁰⁹ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 39, Eerdmans

God's mysteries revealed only to the "Teacher of Righteousness"

Just as the Governing Body is the sole source for understanding the revelations by God's servants, the Qumran community had its sole voice, its "Teacher of Righteousness".

Central in the consciousness of the covenanters of Qumran was what might be called the *râz* (mystery)-*peshar* (interpretation) revelational motif, which is found explicitly stated in the commentary on Hab. 2:1-2:

*God told Habakkuk to write the things that were to come upon the last generation, but he did not inform him when that period would come to consummation. And as for the phrase, "that he may run who reads," the interpretation (peshar) concerns the **Teacher of Righteousness** to whom God made known all the mysteries (*râzîm*) of the words of his servants the prophets.¹¹⁰*



Caves at Qumran

The "Teacher" set the paradigms for Study Groups

The lessons studied by the followers of the Governing Body are tightly controlled, with no room provided to question anything that it says. This follows the pattern set by the Qumran community's Teacher of Righteousness.

The **understanding of the Teacher** in regard to certain crucial passages and the guidelines he laid down for future study were to be the touchstones for all further exegesis, and members were strictly forbidden to incorporate extraneous opinion "in any matter of doctrine or law." ... [The Teacher] **sounded the keynote and set the paradigms** in his treatment of certain prophecies, and **the membership met in study cells and communal sessions to carry on investigations along the lines set out for them by their teacher.**¹¹¹

¹¹⁰ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 41, Eerdmans

¹¹¹ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 44, Eerdmans

Biblical interpretation at Qumran, then, was considered to be first of all revelatory and/or charismatic in nature. Certain of the prophecies had been given in cryptic and enigmatic terms, and no one could understand their true meaning until the Teacher of Righteousness was given the interpretative key.¹¹²

The Writing Department

There is great power in the written word, for it helps ensure uniformity in understanding. To achieve its ends, the community employed writers in its Scriptorium. The Qumran community stored thousands of items in the nearby caves.



The Scriptorium, where the manuscripts of the Qumran community were produced

The GB also relies heavily on the outputs from its Writing Department, which imparts great power to the Writing Department. Although the GB says that it is the representative of the FDS class, most – probably all – of the written material is created by those who are not members of the FDS class.

Prophecies related exclusively to them

The community at Qumran also believed Biblical prophecies were speaking exclusively and directly about them. The GB also applies prophecies and Biblical types exclusively to themselves and to their organization. Qumran's expectations failed, and so will the GB's.

[The people of Qumran] did not think of the particular prophecies in question as the message of God which was significant in an earlier period and now, *mutatis mutandis*, was also relevant to them. Rather, they looked upon these selected passages as being exclusively concerned with them.¹¹³

¹¹² *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 43-44, Eerdmans

¹¹³ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 39, Eerdmans

Prophecies spoke about their own current events

Many eschatological movements, particularly those based on the USA Advent movements of the 19th century, apply Biblical prophecies to events occurring in their own times. Events as Turkey and the Ottoman Empire, World Wars, the nation of Israel, contemporary political maneuverings, all have been seen from time to time as being the exclusive subject of Biblical prophecies. All failed.

The people of Qumran applied prophecies in the same way, relating them exclusively to their own time. All failed.

Qumran's peshet interpretation of the Old Testament is neither principally "commentary" nor "midrashic exegesis." "It does not," as Cecil Roth points out, "attempt to elucidate the Biblical text, but to determine the application of Biblical prophecy or, rather, of certain Biblical prophecies: and the application of these Biblical prophecies in precise terms to current and even contemporary events."

The crucial question in defining peshet interpretation has to do with the point of departure. In contradistinction to rabbinic exegesis which spoke of "That has relevance to This," the Dead Sea covenanters treated Scripture in a "This is That" fashion.¹¹⁴

Focus on Daniel

The GB and its movement are people of the Old Testament (OT), the Hebrew Scriptures. They focus on and interpret the meaning of events and dates in the OT. They do not read the OT through the eyes of the New Testament (NT), the Scriptures of the Christians. Of particular focus for the GB is the period of the Babylonian Captivity, particularly the dates related to Jeremiah and the prophecies of Daniel.

The Qumran community likewise reinterpreted the prophecies of Daniel.

The men of Qumran seem not so much conscious of following a rabbinic mode of exegesis as recreating the Danielic pattern of interpretation. In Dan. 9:24-27, Jeremiah's prophecy of seventy years is reinterpreted by the angel Gabriel to mean seventy heptads of years, and in Dan. 11:30 Balaam's prophecy regarding the "ships of Kittim" is employed to denote a Roman fleet. In the Aramaic portion of Daniel (2:4-7:28) there are thirty occurrences of the word [Hebrew characters]; and the greater part of the material contained therein can appropriately be classed as "Theme and Variations on the *Râz-Peshet* Motif": Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the metallic human image, and Daniel's interpretation (ch. 2), Nebuchadnezzar's dream of the gigantic tree and its fall, and Daniel's interpretation (ch. 4), the writing on the wall at Belshazzar's banquet, and Daniel's interpretation (ch. 5), and Belshazzar's dream of the composite animal, and Daniel's interpretation (ch. 7). "In the Book of Daniel it is clear that the *râz*, the mystery, is divinely communicated to one party, and the *peshet*, the interpretation, to another. Not until the mystery and the interpretation are brought together can the divine communication be understood." And, as Bruce comments further:

This principle, that the divine purpose cannot be properly understood until the *peshet* has been revealed as well as the *râz*, underlies the biblical exegesis in the Qumran commentaries. The *râz* was communicated by God to the

¹¹⁴ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 43-44, Eerdmans

prophet, but the meaning of that communication remained sealed until its peshar was made known by God to His chosen interpreter. **The chosen interpreter was the Teacher of Righteousness, the founder of the Qumran community.**¹¹⁵

Where are they now?

These people of Qumran, who taught they were living in the “Last Days”, the people who foreshadowed the message and method of the GB, where are they now? They are still at Qumran, in its cemetery, where they have been waiting for over 2000 years.



This cemetery holds the remains of about 1100 Qumran men¹¹⁶

A landmark study

In a landmark study, William Brownlee provided an insight into the attitude and practices employed by the Dead Sea community. While some specifics do not directly relate to the Governing Body’s practices, broadly they do relate.

It laid down the strict injunction that no man of the Community may answer questions of interpretation according to non-sectarian opinion “in regard to any teaching or judgments.”

Many scholars have observed that the sectarian literature is saturated with Biblical phraseology. Some of it has been described as a mosaic of scripture citation. This is a clear demonstration of the constant application of the sect to the study of their holy books. But if the sect appears to piece together scriptural citations and reminiscences, it **binds them together with the mortar of interpretation**, producing a new picture of the Old Testament and its meaning. Nothing is taken over unmodified, or uninterpreted. ...

Perhaps as a product of some “charismatic exegete,” or possibly as a product of the oral community *midrash* (or exposition), there sprang the Habakkuk Commentary (DSH). Its interest is not legal ... but prophetic.

¹¹⁵ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, page 42, Eerdmans

¹¹⁶ The handful of women and children in the cemetery were buried much later, by Bedouin tribes.

Its whole concern is to what events the ancient prophet Habakkuk makes reference in the first two chapters of the book which bears his name. ...

I have given considerable time to the study of the hermeneutical (i. e., interpretative) principles or presuppositions of the roll and have made the following tentative tabulation of them.

HERMENEUTICAL PRINCIPLES OR PRESUPPOSITIONS OF DSH

1. Everything the ancient prophet wrote has a *veiled, eschatological meaning*.
2. Since the ancient prophet wrote cryptically, his meaning is often to be ascertained through a *forced, or abnormal construction of the Biblical text*.
3. The prophet's meaning may be detected through the study of the *textual or orthographic peculiarities* in the transmitted text. Thus the interpretation frequently turns upon the special readings of the text cited.
4. A *textual variant*, i.e., a different reading from the one cited, may also assist interpretation.
5. The application of the features of a verse may be determined by *analogous circumstance* or by
6. *Allegorical propriety*.
7. For the full meaning of the prophet, *more than one meaning* may be attached to his words.
8. In some cases the original prophet so completely veiled his meaning that he can be understood only by an *equation of synonyms*, attaching to the original word a secondary meaning of one of its synonyms.
9. Sometimes the prophet veiled his message by writing one word instead of another, the interpreter being able to recover the prophet's meaning by a *rearrangement of the letters in a word*, or by
10. *The substitution of similar letters* for one or more of the letters in the word of the Biblical text.
11. Sometimes the prophet's meaning is to be derived by *the division of one word into two or more parts*, and by expounding the parts.
12. At times the original prophet concealed his message beneath abbreviations, so that the cryptic meaning of a word is to be evolved through *interpretation of words, or parts of words, as abbreviations*.
13. *Other passages of scripture* may illumine the meaning of the original prophet.¹¹⁷

Qumran and the GB make the same claims

The people of Qumran said they were living in the "Last Days". The GB also says these are the very last of the "Last Days". The people of Qumran thought they had unlocked mysteries contained in Scripture regarding the imminent cataclysmic coming of the Messiah. The GB

¹¹⁷ "Biblical Interpretation among the Sectaries of the DSS", pages 60 – 62, William Brownlee, in *The Biblical Archaeologist*, Vol 14, No 3, (September 1951)

also says it has unlocked the truth concerning the imminent cataclysmic coming of Christ and everything associated with that event.

History repeats and the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses stands in a long line of people who have wrongly predicted that they knew when Christ was coming.

There is no doubt that Christ IS coming, for Scripture says so, but God has provided no clue when that cataclysmic event will take place. Indeed, Scripture clearly says that no one knows but God the Father. In the meantime, Christ says, "Coming, ready or not", while the faithful Christian says, "Ready, coming or not".

The Governing Body's Peshar Treatment

There is a marked similarity in the manner in which the Jewish community at Qumran and the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses (GB)¹¹⁸ apply **prophetic** Scripture. This method is termed "*Peshar*".

This is relevant to the current Study because the GB applies Peshar treatment to the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" (FDS) parable. The GB teaches that the FDS parable is a prophecy, and that elements within it are allegories or symbols.

The use of Peshar treatment at Qumran refers to their use of our "Old Testament", but the critical observations on Peshar also apply to any who use it with the "New Testament".

Features of Peshar

The following list¹¹⁹ summarizes interpretive features of the 1st and 2nd century BCE Jews living at Qumran, showing the Peshar treatment they employed when interpreting prophecy.

- The authors of Scripture are said to be speaking to the contemporary audience. A word, text or OT allusion is related to a present person, place, or thing. Scripture is written especially for the present. The work of the inspired interpreter is to discover the meaning for the present.
- Current events interpret scripture, rather than scripture being quoted to explain a current event.
- There is no attempt to explain what the Bible meant when it was originally written, but rather what it means in the day and age of the commentator, particularly for his own community.
- The interpreter shows little inclination to justify his wholesale substitution of the author's intent for that of his own community.
- Although the term *peshar* literally means "to explain", it is an application of OT scripture with little to no concern for the original context of the passage.
- Interpretations appear to lack any coherent methodology.
- Interpretative techniques are fundamentally eisegetical. That is, their hermeneutic approaches are hostile to the notion of objective interpretation.
- They fragment the text and force each phrase to cause it to carry a contemporary meaning.
- They rarely give reasons for their interpretations.
- It is possible that they 'invent' variants of Scripture.
- Scriptural prophecies are said to be incomprehensible mysteries that can only be interpreted by the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.

¹¹⁸ See the Appendix: *Textual Weaving from Qumran to Waco* for a comparison of Qumran with David Koresh and his "Branch Davidian" sect.

¹¹⁹ Based on:

<http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/Tyndale/staff/Instone-Brewer/TheolHermeneutics.htm>

<http://www.xenos.org/MINISTRIES/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtmain.htm>

"A Doctrinal Study of Acts 2:14" — Clifford Rapp Jr., Chafer Theological Seminary

- Although all the authors of Scripture were prophets (including Moses and David), God reveals things to their 'Teacher of Righteousness' which were not even known to the prophets, so that the 'Teacher's' words come 'from the mouth of God'.
- All the destructive activities described by a prophet are attributed to the 'wicked priest' while all the good things are attributed to their own 'righteous teacher'.
- They simply state that *'this is that'*. For example, in the *Song of the Well* at Num. 21:18 'the well is the Torah', 'the diggers are the returned of Israel' and 'the nobles of the people are those who come to delve in the well'.

An example of Peshar at Qumran

The use of Peshar is hostile to the good and proper interpretation and understanding of Scripture.

In the peshar Habakkuk, the writers [at Qumran] simply take Habakkuk's references to the Chaldeans and apply them to the Romans without any effort to justify the application. The context of Habakkuk seems to hold little interest for such interpreters. In the same commentary all the destructive activities described by Habakkuk are attributed to the 'wicked priest' while all the good things are attributed to the 'righteous teacher' – the antagonist and protagonist typical of Qumran peshar writing. Again, the interpreter shows little inclination to justify the wholesale substitution of the authorial intent for that of his community.¹²⁰

Peshar is limited to prophecies

While the Qumran community said Biblical prophecy was speaking directly to them and about them, the community treated the other parts, particularly the legislative elements, quite literally.

In the Dead Sea Scrolls, where preoccupation with one distinctive type of interpretive procedure (peshar, in this case) so overshadows all others, one could easily get the impression that the men of Qumran never understood the Old Testament literally. ... The peshar commentaries from Qumran are, to date, only on prophetic material: the "former prophets," the "latter prophets," and the Psalms. Evidently deuteronomic legislation, while having to be necessarily adapted somewhat to their unique situation, was taken for the most part quite literally – if not hyperliterally.¹²¹

The GB takes a very literal stance on some elements in the Torah, as with its stance on Blood, although it does take an allegorical view of the first account of Creation.

Even Jewish NT writers did not use Peshar

The manner in which the Qumran community treated Scripture is completely at odds to the manner that is employed by the writers of the NT. Even the NT's most Jewish writers – Matthew, Paul and Peter – did not employ Peshar treatment.

Peter did not use Peshar at Pentecost.

Peter does not follow the Qumran peshar interpretation pattern in either form or in principle. At Qumran the current events interpreted scripture.

¹²⁰ *Matthew's Use of the Old Testament: A preliminary analysis* by Lee Campbell at <http://www.xenos.org/MINISTRIES/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtmain.htm>

¹²¹ *Biblical Exegesis in the Apostolic Period*, Richard Longenecker, pages 30-31, Eerdmans

At Pentecost scripture was quoted to explain a current event. ... Peter's words do not correspond to the Qumran pattern.¹²²

Matthew did not use Peshier.

Clearly, Matthew is not a peshier commentary. ... there are several reasons to doubt that Matthew is using peshier techniques: ...

The NT author is not uncovering meaning hidden to the OT author. Instead, he is using the OT passage as an example of a broad theme of which the OT author was aware.

C. H. Dodd has shown that the NT use of the OT is not haphazard proof-texting but the use of a few text plots in the OT.

What is clear from this preliminary study is that Matthew was not using peshier-like eisegetical techniques, when he used the Old Testament in his gospel. He apparently often used his own translations of Greek, Hebrew and Aramaic sources rather than isolating extant translations that fit an interpretive agenda.

The use of interpretive methods consonant with those found in scripture substantially strengthens the confidence of modern interpreters who are committed to the kind of careful exegesis that honors the intent of the ultimate author.¹²³

¹²² *A Doctrinal Study of Acts 2:14*, Clifford Rapp Jr., CTSJ 1:1, Spring 1995

¹²³ *Matthew's Use of the Old Testament: A preliminary analysis* by Lee Campbell at <http://www.xenos.org/MINISTRIES/crossroads/OnlineJournal/issue3/mtmain.htm>

Parallels with a Modern-day Eschatological Group

Not unexpectedly, the features of the apocalyptic Qumran community find their parallel in other eschatological groups, such as the ill-fated Branch Davidian sect headed by David Koresh. This group also appropriated Scripture uniquely to themselves as THE ANOINTED (“Christ”) of Yahweh operating in the “Last Days” that precede the very imminent cataclysmic intervention by God into the history of humankind.

The *Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses* (GB) is not unique, in that it reflects the patterns exhibited by other likeminded groups, both ancient and modern. There is no mystery or mystique. It has been happening throughout history, and the GB is just one of a series, and it will not be the last one in the series.

The following passages, reproduced with permission of the author, assess parallels between the Qumran community and the Branch Davidians.

These passages come from *Patterns of the End: Textual Weaving from Qumran to Waco*, by Dr James D. Tabor, available at <http://www.religiousstudies.uncc.edu/jdtabor/waco.html>. The complete article is published in the volume *Toward the Millennium: Messianic Expectations from the Bible to Waco*, edited by Peter Schaefer and Mark R. Cohen, E.J. Brill, 1998, pages 409 – 430. **Highlighting** has been added for emphasis.

Major thematic parallels [exist] between the apocalyptic belief system of the Branch Davidians and that of the Qumran community, as reflected in the Dead Sea Scrolls. **Both groups located their history and experiences in the prophetic texts of the Hebrew Bible, understood their community as the elect and chosen saints living at the “appointed time of the end”, and were led by a “Teacher” who claimed a definitive and ultimate role as God’s final revelatory messenger. ...**

That the two communities, and their respective Teachers, dealt with and appropriated some of the same texts in strikingly similar ways, yet are separated by two millennia, is a testimony to the enduring power of such textual dynamics in the life of apocalyptic movements of this genre. ...

As [Koresh] saw things, he was not merely one interpreter among many, but **THE final Interpreter** of all the mysteries and revelations of God. He began to identify himself with a certain “Prophetic Voice” that runs through specific texts of the Hebrew Prophets and is also found in the Psalms. I think there is good evidence that other “messianic” types in Jewish and Christian history have identified with these same texts, and sought to appropriate this Voice—including the Teacher of Righteousness at Qumran and likely Jesus himself. ...

Koresh held that the entire book [of Revelation] was written from the standpoint of a later time, so that it functions as a kind of proleptic message for the last generation.

So, Koresh did understand himself as a “Christ” figure, but not in the sense that he thought he was Jesus of Nazareth, the “Christ” whom he believed that God had sent in the first century. As he often told his followers: the English word Christ, taken from the Greek word *Christos* comes from the Hebrew word “messiah”. **It means one who is anointed or chosen.** It is a title, not a name, and is commonly used in the Old Testament or Hebrew Bible for all the kings and

priests of Israel. Koresh believed that just as God sent Jesus of Nazareth as a “Christ” to his generation, to accomplish a certain mission, there would also appear, prior to the end of time, a final manifestation of a Christ figure. ...

Koresh relied chiefly on the Psalms to show that such a manifestation of “Christ” could not be limited to Jesus of Nazareth. In Psalm 110:4 a descendent of David, king of ancient Israel, is addressed as “a priest forever after the order of Melchizedek”, which for Koresh provided the link between the “Christ” of Abraham’s day, Melchizedek, and subsequent manifestations. ... The Dead Sea scroll community shared this exalted view of Melchizedek, and expected him to appear as an anointed Redeemer figure in the end-time. It appears, based on a fragmented but precious text from Cave 4, that they also identified this heavenly Melchizedek figure with the anointed “Messenger of the Spirit” predicted in Isaiah 61:1-4—the one who brings “Good Tidings” (see *11Q13*, Col. 2). There is every reason to conclude, based on this citation, that they are identifying the role of **their Teacher of Righteousness with that of the exalted Melchizedek figure**. Such a view is hardly surprising in view of the astonishing language of heavenly exaltation found in several other related fragments from Qumran. Indeed, these texts appear to reflect the claims of the **Teacher himself to have ascended to heaven and taken his seat among the Holy Ones above**. ...

According to Revelation 10:7, which was an absolutely crucial verse for the Davidians, it was “in the days of the voice of the seventh angel (or messenger), when he shall begin to sound, the mystery of God should be finished, as he declared to his servants the prophets”. **Koresh claimed to be that final seventh messenger**, and thus it would be **to him that the full mystery of the prophets would be revealed**. It is significant that **the Habakkuk Commentary from Qumran speaks of the Teacher of Righteousness in a similar way**. ...

Koresh argued that the reference in Revelation to the “days of the seventh messenger” was an unequivocal reference to the last times, *not* to the time of Jesus. Just prior to this pivotal verse another angel declares that “there should be delay no longer” (Rev 10:6b), so obviously, Koresh emphasized that these matters apply to the last days of human history. What is so striking is that **he might just as well have quoted the Qumran commentary on Habakkuk and applied the language to himself—the result would have been the same**.

This expectation of a succession of “Christ figures” is not unique in the history of Christianity. Some early Jewish-Christian groups, such as the Ebionites, apparently held views that were somewhat similar. Of course the Ebionites did not believe any further “Christs” would appear after Jesus. For such groups he was the final and ultimate manifestation of the phenomenon—the fullness of the Spirit had “rested upon him.” Accordingly, Koresh’s assertion, that the two appearances of Christ (the First and Second Coming) involve two separate human individuals—first Jesus and then himself—is somewhat unique. ...

Koresh found his role described in great detail in Isaiah 40-66. Some these texts in Isaiah appear to be addressed to an individual, the very figure Koresh claimed to be. It was as if such Scriptures had been written just for him.

There are dozens of references to a mysterious “servant” of Yahweh in Isaiah 40-55. Most of these appear to refer to nation of Israel, who is called, metaphorically, God’s Servant (e.g., Isa 42:21). However, the four sections of Isaiah that biblical scholars call the “Servant Songs,” are distinguished in both style and content and have often been understood, by both Jews and Christians, to refer to single individual (Isa 42:1-4; 49:1-6; 50:4-11; 52:13-53:12). This individual is, in fact, contrasted with the Servant nation, that is said to be deaf and blind (Isa 42:19). The New Testament applies each of these “Songs” to Jesus. In the Dead Sea Scrolls, particularly in the Thanksgiving Hymns (*IQHodayot*), these texts and ideas were **applied to the Teacher of Righteousness as well**. The author declares, “These things I know through your understanding, for *you have opened my ears to wonderful mysteries* . . .” (*IQH* 9:21). And further, “For You, O my God, have concealed me from the children of men, and Your law You have hidden in [me] until the time you reveal Your salvation to me” (*IQH* 13:11). In one

section he clearly appears to have the role of the figure addressed in Isaiah 50:4 in mind: “[And] You, my God, have appointed me as a holy counsel to the weary. You [have taught me] Your covenant, and my tongue is as one of Your disciples” (*IQH* 15:10). It is clear in the Scrolls that the community’s expectation focused on the arrival of *the* “Prophet like Moses.” He was not understood to be merely one among many, but the final revelator, who would inaugurate and orchestrate the events of the End.

This idea of the two messiahs, one Priestly and the other Davidic, appears to be drawn from Zechariah 4:14, but appears to have been modified somewhat with the arrival of the Teacher of Righteousness. The anticipation of the arrival of the Prophet as reflected in the *Damascus Document*, the early copies of which I take to be written *before* such a Teacher had arrived (in contrast to Text A, Col 1, that looks back on his career, as does the fragment of Text B), appears to base its hopes for this “coming one” on the texts of Scripture. Numbers 21:18 and 24:17 are both understood to predict the arrival of an Interpreter (*Doresh*) of the Torah, who will “teach righteousness in the last days” (*CD*, Text A Col 6:2-11; 7:17-19), and Deuteronomy 18:18 is directly cited in *4Q175*. It seems clear to me that in *CD* Text B, the *Community Rule*, and the *Habakkuk Pesher*, he has not only appeared but has been killed, fueling the certainty of the community that there were indeed living in the last generation (final 40 year period, see *CD* Text B Col. 20:1; *4Q171*). Indeed, the *Habakkuk Pesher* appears to focus primarily on the crisis of faith sparked by the failure of the End to arrive. The text promises a reward to those who hold steady in their faith in the Teacher of Righteousness, which means in context, not abandoning the authenticity of his mission in both predicting and bringing about the End (*IQpHab* 6-7). ...

[His students] became convinced that David Koresh was indeed the one he claimed to be, a final Christ or “Servant” of Yahweh. Koresh argued, for example, that the servant mentioned in Isaiah 49:1-4 is actually introduced in the previous chapter as the one who will lead God’s people out of Babylon and eventually even destroy the Babylonians (48:14-20). The text also says this one will “raise up the tribes of Jacob, and restore the preserved of Israel” (Isa 49:6). Certainly Jesus never did this, and Koresh connected such a task with Revelation 7, where the “messenger from the east,” the very one he claimed to be, gathers his 144,000 from the twelve tribes of Israel ...

Koresh expected that his followers, who would eventually number 144,000, would someday move to Israel, and actually participate in the final events of the end described in Daniel 11:40-45 as set forth above. All of these events, described in such detail in the prophets, the Davidians understood in the most literal way and constantly discussed in great detail. They often referred to Isaiah 2 and Micah 4, and the actual kingdom or government which God was to set up in Jerusalem, in the Land of Israel, following the events of Daniel 11.

There is much we can learn from the career and self-understanding of David Koresh in our studies of Messianism. ... Koresh’s appropriation of a specific set of texts from the Hebrew Scriptures, that in his judgment addressed him directly and personally, is most worthy of analysis. He becomes for us a contemporary example, if not in personality and style, in exegetical strategy, of how such claimants to the messianic texts of the Hebrew Scriptures appropriate and live within their parameters. The notion of a living Prophet, who is at the same time “more than a Prophet”, but indeed, the Prophet like Moses, adds significantly to our understanding of the dynamics of such apocalyptic systems.

SUMMARY

The Organization's Theocratic Arrangement (pages 1 to 7)

- The GB asserts that the NT term “Kingdom of Heaven (God)” is speaking of the *government* by God that today operates only through its organization.
- It is a “Theocratic Government” (ruled from the divine top down), in which the GB exercises absolute top-down control.
- Disobedience to the instructions from the GB is said to be the same as disobeying Jehovah God himself.
- The organization's structure shows the GB's direct legal and ethical accountability.
- Rather than use the FDS for its teaching, preaching and similar responsibilities, the GB set up a religious Order, “Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah's Witnesses.” The members of the Order undertake a vow of poverty and obedience.
- Branch Offices are urged to register themselves as legal corporate entities to facilitate their preaching activities.
- The GB requires total submission and does not permit independence of thought when it comes to its directions or counsel.
- Obedience to the GB above life, loved ones, family, and friends.

A “Governing Body”? (pages 8 to 16)

- The GB claims it is the product of direct divine intervention.
- The GB claims it follows the pattern set in the first century, in which a group of older men in Jerusalem made up a governing body that had oversight.
- Its primary task is the spiritual needs of the “congregation”.
- The GB is “part of the FDS and presides over it”; it “represents the FDS”; and is the “GB of the FDS”.
- The nature and formation of the Scriptures argues against the existence of a “Governing Body” or that such a formal body provided universally binding directions.
- As a missionary, Paul shows that he did not consult with nor represent any “Governing Body” at Jerusalem.
- Paul did not go to Jerusalem to seek counsel or authorization, but to confront the troublemakers coming from Jerusalem.
- Each time Paul and his partner Silas embarked on their missionary journeys, the church at Antioch sent them on their journey, without the involvement of any “Governing Body” in Jerusalem.
- The GB's application of the FDS parable to itself is not independent objective proof, but is circular reasoning.
- The GB's claimed authority is based on its self-fulfilling explanation that relies on its false neo-Babylonian chronology.

A “Faithful and Discreet Slave” Class? (pages 17 to 22)

- The group of Jehovah’s Witnesses whose hope is to rule with Christ from heaven, is known as the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” (FDS) Class.
- The GB obtains the term “Faithful and Discreet Slave” and its high calling from its translation and interpretation of the parable at Matthew 24:45-47.
- The GB says this parable is a prophecy about a specific Spirit-anointed FDS Class located on earth.
- The FDS Class and a favorable assessment of them by Jesus at a particular point in history are nothing more than bald assertions. There is no proof, only self-promoting, subjective claims.
- Chief responsibility for spiritual needs is said to be entrusted to the FDS Class.
- Russell and Rutherford said that “the Christ” is composed of many members.
- Later, the organization was driven to repudiate this use of the term “the Christ”. However, the organization continues the concept, using the English “Anointed” rather than the Greek “Christ”.
- Jesus told his Disciples that deceivers would claim to be “the Christ”. That is, they would claim to be “the Anointed”.
- The GB often limits the term “congregation” to the JWs with the heavenly hope.
- The GB claims that the “domestics” in the parable are the individual members of the FDS class.
- The Parable also speaks of an evil servant. The GB arbitrarily applies the Good Servant to itself and the Evil Servant to its opposition.
- The GB claims that the FDS dispenses spiritual nourishment. In practice, this arrangement is not followed, as the FDS has no input into the deliberations or pronouncements of the GB.
- Virtually every magazine article and book is written by a Witness who is not part of the FDS.

The Nature of Parables (pages 23 and 24)

- The “FDS” story is a “parable”.
- In a parable, a familiar idea is placed compared with an unfamiliar idea in a way that provides better understanding and acceptance of the unfamiliar idea.
- Parables are narrative in form but figurative in meaning.
- Parables are a powerful and effective teaching device.

Principles for Interpreting Scripture (pages 25 to 27)

- In Apostolic times, the four styles of interpretation were: Literalist, Midrashic, Peshet and Allegorical.
- The “Literalist” takes the words at face value, and seeks to determine what the words meant to the initial intended audience.
- “Midrashic” may be defined as an exegesis which, going more deeply than the mere literal, and seeks to explicate the hidden meanings.
- While “Peshet” may be defined as meaning *solution* or *interpretation*, it exhibits little to no concern for the context, it is aloof from the source context, and appears to lack

any coherent methodology. Peshier interpreters assume OT authors were speaking to the contemporary audience.

- An “Allegory” is a prolonged metaphor in which actions are symbolic, while the characters are often types or personifications. *Peshier* makes extensive use of allegory.
- “Lower Criticism” deals with the language.
- “Higher Criticism” studies questions such as the authorship, time, place, and circumstances of writing, historical validity, and literary relationships of a work.

Literalist Interpretation of a Parable (pages 28 to 31)

- Events and people in a *parable* are analogies, whereas symbols appear in *allegories*
- A parable ensures that its point of comparison comes out clearly.
- The individual features of the story have a role in the development of the story, but have little if any role in its meaning.
- The full meaning of a parable may be determined by considering (1) The culture of the original hearers; (2) The situation that caused the parable to be given; (3) Any explicit explanation of the parable.
- When the speaker or the writer provides the explanation of a parable, that is the end of the matter.
- Details in parables serve as background for the central truth in the foreground but are not part of its meaning.
- Details in a parable do not call for an allegorical interpretation.
- The only lesson to be drawn from the parable of the “Wise and Foolish Virgins” is given in Scripture: “be prepared”.
- Understand the central comparison (analogy) of a parable.
- Principles of interpreting a parable:
 - * A given interpretation must be our guide.
 - * An item can represent only one thing.
 - * A parable cannot be pressed beyond the context of its primary meaning.
 - * Not every detail of a parable has significance; avoid over-allegorizing: note carefully the end of a parable.
 - * They do not necessarily depict a real or historical event.
 - * Note the literary setting.
 - * Note the wording, structure, general progression, plot progress, and suspense of the story.
 - * Nothing should be read *out* of a Parable that is not consistent with the customs employed in it. Preserve the link between the writer’s intended meaning and any subsequently attributed meaning.
 - * Note the main characters and things in the parable, and any parallels and or contrasts.
 - * Recognize the two audiences being addressed: the audience that Jesus originally spoke to; and the audience of the early church.

Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Matthew 24:45 – 51 (pages 32 to 35)

- The context commences where the disciples linked the destruction of the temple, Christ's *Parousia*, and the end of the Age.
- The FDS parable provides a warning to any good Christian leader.
- In a series of parables, Jesus says that he will come when he is not expected.
- Jesus used stories and very familiar situations to tell people to be ready for the coming judgment at all times, for this might happen at any time.
- In the FDS parable, Jesus told them:
 - * to maintain their readiness for the coming;
 - * the faithful servant might be deceived;
 - * the faithful servant will be put in charge when Jesus returns;
 - * if that servant says his Master delays his coming and acts accordingly, the servant will find the Master comes while he is not ready and unaware;
 - * the fate of that servant is sealed forever with the hypocrites;
- The FDS parable teaches that it is possible for people who are aware that their Master is coming, to fall away and be lost.

Literalist Exegesis of the Parable at Luke 12:42 – 48 (pages 36 and 37)

- The parable at Luke appears in a context that is totally different from the context in Matthew.
- Peter wanted to know if a parable was addressed only to them, or to everyone.
- Jesus answered that what mattered was the hearer's response to what he knew.
- In both accounts of this parable, the focus is on the response by the hearer.

The GB's Treatment of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" Parable (pages 38 and 39)

- The process of extracting information from Scripture, employing accepted hermeneutics, is known as *exegesis*.
- The process of reading a meaning into Scripture to support a prior conclusion is known as *eisegesis*. The GB regularly employs this process.
- In *allegories*, actions are symbolic and the characters are types or personifications.
- Symbolism, types and personifications do not appear in a parable, where the actions and the characters are *analogies*.
- A *parable* is an "illustration", it is not an "allegory".
- The GB is wrong when it says that in the parable of the "Faithful and Discreet Slave" the events are *symbols* and the people are *types*.
- The single lesson taught by the FDS parable is explicitly stated by Scripture.
- Jehovah's Witnesses are told, quite incorrectly, that a parable may also be a prophecy. A parable is an *illustration*, not a prophetic utterance.

Lessons from History (pages 40 to 46)

- There is nothing special or new about the claims made for itself by the GB.

- The GB's claims for itself and the manner in which it uses Scripture have already been used by the community at Qumran.
- The Qumran community also believed they were living in the "Last Days" before the final eschatological cataclysmic age that heralded the coming Messiah.
- The Qumran community looked at biblical texts from the perspective of imminent apocalyptic fulfilment.
- Just as the Governing Body is the sole source for understanding divine revelations, the Qumran community also had its sole voice, its "Teacher of Righteousness".
- Just as with JW's, members of the Qumran community were strictly forbidden to incorporate extraneous opinion.
- Just as with JW's, the Qumran membership met in study cells and communal sessions to carry on investigations along the lines set out for them by their teacher.
- Just as with the GB's heavy reliance on the outputs from its Writing Department, the Qumran community also employed writers in its Scriptorium.
- The GB and the people of Qumran related prophecies exclusively and directly to their own time. All failed.
- Both the GB and the Qumran community reinterpreted the prophecies of Daniel.
- No man of the Community or person under the control of the GB may question interpretation outside the sect's opinion.
- Both the GB and the Qumran sect bind together scriptural citations with the mortar of interpretation, producing a new picture of the Old Testament and its meaning. Nothing is taken over unmodified, or uninterpreted.
- Hermeneutical principles or presuppositions of Dead Sea Hanakkuk Commentary (DSH):
 - * The ancient prophet wrote with a *veiled, eschatological meaning*.
 - * The ancient prophet's meaning is often to be ascertained through a *forced, or abnormal construction of the Biblical text*.
 - * Interpretation frequently turns upon the special readings of the text cited.
 - * *A textual variant*, may also assist interpretation.
 - * The application of a verse may be determined by *analogous circumstance or by Allegorical propriety*.
 - * *More than one meaning* may be attached to a prophet's words.
 - * A prophet can be understood only by attaching a secondary meaning of one of its synonyms to the original word.
 - * A prophet's meaning may be recovered by a *rearranging the letters in a word*, or by
 - *Substituting similar letters*.
 - *Dividing one word into two or more parts*, and by expounding the parts.
 - *Interpreting words or parts of words, as abbreviations*.
 - * *Using other passages of scripture* to illuminate the meaning.

- The GB stands in a long line of people who wrongly predicted that they knew when Christ was coming.
- God has provided no clue when that cataclysmic event will take place. Only he knows.

The Governing Body's Peshar Treatment (pages 47 to 49)

- The similar manner in which the GB and the Jewish community at Qumran applied prophetic Scripture is termed "*peshar*".
- Features of Peshar treatment employed at Qumran when they interpreted prophecy
 - * The authors of Scripture are speaking to the contemporary audience. Scripture is written especially for the present.
 - * Current events interpret Scripture.
 - * The commentator explains what a prophecy means in his day and age, particularly for his own community.
 - * The interpreter shows little inclination to justify his wholesale substitution of the author's intent for that of his own community.
 - * There is little to no concern for the original context of the original passage.
 - * There appears to be no coherent methodology.
 - * The hermeneutic approaches are eisegetical, hostile to the notion of objective interpretation.
 - * The text is fragmented and each phrase is forced to carry a contemporary meaning.
 - * Reasons are rarely given for their interpretations.
 - * They may 'invent' variants of Scripture.
 - * Prophecies are incomprehensible mysteries that can only be interpreted by the 'Teacher of Righteousness'.
 - * The 'Teacher's' words come 'from the mouth of God'.
 - * The destructive activities described by a prophet are attributed to the 'wicked priest' while all the good things are attributed to their own 'righteous teacher'.
 - * They simply state that '*this is that*'.
- The Qumran community treated non-prophetic parts of Scripture, particularly the legislative elements, quite literally.
- Even the NT's most Jewish writers – Matthew, Paul and Peter – did not employ Peshar treatment.

Parallels with a Modern-day Eschatological Group (pages 50 to 52)

- The features of the apocalyptic Qumran community find their parallel in other eschatological groups.
- The *Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses* (GB) is not unique, in that it reflects the patterns exhibited by other likeminded groups, both ancient and modern. There is no mystery or mystique. It has been happening throughout history, and the GB is just one of a series, and it will not be the last one in the series.

Appendix A: Thirty “Illustrations” from *Insight on the Scriptures*

Some of Jesus’ prominent illustrations

In the following, from pages 1174 – 1175 of the book “Insight on the Scriptures”, the GB shows how these parables are to be understood. Notably, the parable of the “Faithful and Discreet Slave” is not given. The GB’s explanation is inconsistent with its reasoning on these other parables, for in the FDS Parable, the GB goes beyond the explanation provided by Jesus, and applies allegorical meanings for individual items.

(1) The two debtors (Lu 7:41-43).	The parable’s application are found in the context, Luke 7:36-40, 44-50.
(2) The sower (Mt 13:3-8; Mr 4:3-8; Lu 8:5-8).	The explanation is plainly given at Matthew 13:18-23; Mark 4:14-20; and Luke 8:11-15.
(3) Weeds among the wheat (Mt 13:24-30)	Explanation is provided by Jesus.
(4) The mustard grain (Mt 13:31, 32; Mr 4:30-32; Lu 13:18, 19).	It is stated that the subject is “the kingdom of the heavens.”
(5) The leaven (Mt 13:33).	The subject is “the kingdom of the heavens.”
(6) The hidden treasure (Mt 13:44).	As stated in the text, the subject is “the kingdom of the heavens”.
(7) The merchant seeking pearls (Mt 13:45, 46).	[Jesus] likens the Kingdom of the heavens to a fine pearl of such value
(8) The dragnet (Mt 13:47-50).	Jesus describes a separating, or culling out, of those unfit for the Kingdom of the heavens. Verse 49 points to “the conclusion of the system of things” as the time when the fulfillment culminates.
(9) The unmerciful slave (Mt 18:23-35).	The application is stated in verse 35.
(10) The neighborly Samaritan (Lu 10:30-37).	The proper conclusion to be drawn from the illustration is shown in verses 36 and 37.
(11) The persistent friend (Lu 11:5-8).	As shown in verses 9 and 10, the point to be drawn from it is ...
(12) The unreasonable rich man (Lu 12:16-21).	As shown in verse 15, the point emphasized is ...
(13) The unproductive fig tree (Lu 13:6-9).	Unless they repented, they would all be destroyed. (Lu 13:1-5) Then he went on to use this illustration
(14) The grand evening meal (Lu 14:16-24).	Verses 1-15 give the setting; at a meal the illustration was related to a fellow guest who said: “Happy is he who eats bread in the kingdom of God.”

(15) The one lost sheep (Lu 15:3-7).	Luke 15:1, 2 shows that the illustration was prompted by the muttering of the Pharisees and the scribes over the fact that Jesus welcomed sinners and tax collectors.
(16) The lost drachma coin (Lu 15:8-10).	The setting is found in Luke 15:1, 2, and this illustration immediately follows the one concerning the one lost sheep. Verse 10 points out the application.
(17) The prodigal son (Lu 15:11-32).	The Pharisees and scribes were muttering because Jesus welcomed tax collectors and sinners and ate with them. Jesus replied by giving the illustrations of the one lost sheep and the lost coin, followed by this parable.
(18) The unrighteous steward (Lu 16:1-8).	The lesson to be drawn from the illustration is stated in verses 9-13. The steward is commended, not for his unrighteousness, but for his practical wisdom.
(19) The rich man and Lazarus (Lu 16:19-31).	The setting, in Luke 16:14, 15, shows that the money-loving Pharisees were listening and sneering. But Jesus told them: “You are those who declare yourselves righteous before men, but God knows your hearts; because what is lofty among men is a disgusting thing in God’s sight.”
(20) Good-for-nothing slaves (Lu 17:7-10).	Verse 10 shows the lesson to be drawn from the illustration.
(21) The widow and the judge (Lu 18:1-8).	As stated in verse 1, the illustration was “with regard to the need for them always to pray and not to give up.” Verses 7 and 8 also show application. The illustration emphasizing prayer was particularly appropriate in view of what is stated in the preceding chapter, verses 20 to 37.
(22) The self-righteous Pharisee and the penitent tax collector (Lu 18:9-14).	The setting and the objective of the illustration are found in verses 9 and 14 respectively.
(23) The workers paid a denarius (Mt 20:1-16).	The illustration is part of Jesus’ answer to Peter’s question in Matthew 19:27: “Look! We have left all things and followed you; what actually will there be for us?” Note also Matthew 19:30 and 20:16.
(24) The minas (Lu 19:11-27).	The reason for the illustration, as stated in verse 11, was that “they were imagining that the kingdom of God was going to display itself instantly.”
(25) The two children (Mt 21:28-31).	To show the religious leaders what kind of persons they really were. Jesus points to the application of his illustration in verses 31 and 32.

<p>(26) The murderous cultivators (Mt 21:33-44; Mr 12:1-11; Lu 20:9-18).</p>	<p>This illustration, too, was in answer to the question about the source of Jesus’ authority. (Mr 11:27-33) Immediately after the illustration, the Gospel accounts state that the religious leaders realized that he was speaking about them.—Mt 21:45; Mr 12:12; Lu 20:19.</p>
<p>(27) The marriage feast for the king’s son (Mt 22:1-14).</p>	<p>As indicated by verse 1, this illustration is a continuation of the discussion that precedes it and is part of Jesus’ reply to the question about the authority by which he carried on his work. (Mt 21:23-27) For application, note verses 2 and 14.</p>
<p>(28) The ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13).</p>	<p>This illustration concerning “the kingdom of the heavens” is part of Jesus’ reply to the question of his disciples recorded in Matthew 24:3. The purpose of the illustration is plainly shown in Matthew 25:13.</p>
<p>(27) The marriage feast for the king’s son (Mt 22:1-14).</p>	<p>As indicated by verse 1, this illustration is a continuation of the discussion that precedes it and is part of Jesus’ reply to the question about the authority by which he carried on his work. (Mt 21:23-27) For application, note verses 2 and 14.</p>
<p>(28) The ten virgins (Mt 25:1-13).</p>	<p>This illustration concerning “the kingdom of the heavens” is part of Jesus’ reply to the question of his disciples recorded in Matthew 24:3. The purpose of the illustration is plainly shown in Matthew 25:13.</p>
<p>(29) The talents (Mt 25:14-30).</p>	<p>Spoken by Jesus to four of his disciples just three days before his death, not long after which he was to ascend to heaven. It, too, is part of Jesus’ reply to the question found at Matthew 24:3.—Mr 13:3, 4.</p>
<p>(30) The sheep and the goats (Mt 25:31-46).</p>	<p>(Mt 25:31-46). As stated in verses 31, 32, 41, 46, what is here illustrated is the separating and judging of the people of the nations when the Son of man arrives in his glory. This illustration is part of Jesus’ reply to his disciples’ question concerning ‘the sign of his presence and the conclusion of the system of things.’—Mt 24:3.</p> <p>Sheep and goats commonly graze together in the Middle East. ... The goats merely represent one class of people, and the sheep represent another class.</p>

Appendix B: Selection from *Organized to do God's Will*

The following comes from pages 15 to 21 the book *Organized to do God's Will*,¹²⁴ released by the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses. It the basic procedure manual produced by the Governing Body for its followers. This unedited citation confirms the assertions made in this Study.

CHAPTER 3: TRUSTING "THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE"

WHO really is the faithful and discreet slave?" With that question, Jesus Christ introduced a parable, or illustration, of prophetic importance. It is part of "the sign" he gave regarding "the conclusion of the system of things." (Matt. 24:3, 42-47) Jesus indicated that the "slave" would be busy during the time of the end.

"That slave" would be entrusted with oversight of Kingdom interests on earth and have the serious responsibility of providing God's people with spiritual food "at the proper time." In this connection Jesus further stated: "Happy is that slave if his master on arriving finds him doing so. Truly I say to you, He will appoint him over all his belongings."

This parable raises serious questions for our consideration.

Who is "that slave"? What are the "belongings"? What part do we individually play in this prophetic illustration? Such questions are not of mere academic interest. Properly identifying these things and maintaining trust in "the faithful and discreet slave" helps us to do Jehovah's will.

IDENTIFYING "THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE"

In the illustration, Jesus stated that the "slave" would provide the needed spiritual food. Whom did Jesus appoint to feed his followers in the first century? And whom did he find still faithfully doing so when he returned in Kingdom power in 1914? Obviously, no human has lived through all those centuries. So "the faithful steward, the discreet one," must symbolize the composite body of Christ's spirit-anointed footstep followers who live on earth at any given time. (Luke 12:42) Yes, Christ uses this body to publish information on the fulfillment of Bible prophecies and to give timely direction on the application of Bible principles in daily life. In turn, this spiritual food is distributed through the local congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. – Isa. 43:10; Gal. 6:16.

What, then, are the "belongings"? These are all the spiritual assets on earth that have become Christ's property in connection with his authority as heavenly King. Included are facilities at the headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses, along with branch offices, Kingdom Halls, and Assembly Halls worldwide. The "belongings" also embrace the commission to preach "this good news of the kingdom" throughout the earth and to teach those who respond. The "slave" serves as God's instrument to gather into association with the congregation "a great crowd . . . out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues," who will survive the great tribulation. (Luke 12:42-44; Matt. 24:14; Rev. 7:9-14) In fact, this great crowd plays a large part in seeing

¹²⁴ 2005 edition cited

to it that the good news is preached to the ends of the earth. They are among the precious “belongings” of Christ and are greatly loved by the slave class for their loyal, zealous support.

THE ROLE OF THE GOVERNING BODY

“The faithful and discreet slave” seeks to preserve unity and makes it possible organizationally for ‘all things to take place decently and by arrangement.’ (1 Cor. 14:40) To accomplish this in the first century, a group of anointed Christians from among the faithful and discreet slave class were chosen as its representatives. As such, they did not consult with all anointed elders in the world before making decisions. From their position in the Jerusalem congregation, they served as a governing body for the entire anointed Christian congregation.

From Pentecost 33 C.E. onward, the faithful apostles of the Lord Jesus Christ took the lead in providing direction for the newly founded Christian congregation. (Acts 4:33, 35, 37; 5:18, 29) By about the year 49 C.E., this governing body had been enlarged to include more than Jesus’ apostles. When the circumcision issue was decided, that body included “the apostles and older men in Jerusalem.” (Acts 15:1, 2) It was their responsibility to consider matters affecting Christians everywhere. They sent out letters and decrees, all of which strengthened the congregations and made it possible for the disciples to remain united in thought and action. The congregations followed the direction of the governing body, and as a result, they received Jehovah’s blessing and prospered. – Acts 8:1,14,15; 15:22-31; 16:4, 5.

The value of such an arrangement is evident today. The anointed ones making up the present-day Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses have decades of faithful service and theocratic experience behind them. They offer spiritual direction to Jehovah’s people, as did the first-century governing body. The Governing Body also continues to carry the responsibility of overseeing the preaching work, producing Bible study material, and arranging for the appointment of overseers to serve in various capacities in the organization. These are some of the Kingdom interests of Christ that are being cared for today. Like the early Christians, we gladly look to spiritually mature men for Bible-based direction and guidance in matters of worship.

As was true in the first century, the Governing Body today is made up of imperfect men. However, Jehovah has used imperfect humans in the past to accomplish his will. He instructed Noah to build an ark and to preach about the coming destruction of his day. (Gen. 6:13, 14, 22; 2 Pet. 2:5) Moses was appointed to lead Jehovah’s people out of Egypt. (Ex. 3:10) Imperfect men were inspired to write the Bible. (2 Tim. 3:16; 2 Pet. 1:21) Jehovah’s use of imperfect men today to direct the preaching and disciple-making work does not weaken our confidence in God’s organization. Rather, we are strengthened because we know that without Jehovah’s backing, the Governing Body could never accomplish all that they do.

WHY TRUST “THE FAITHFUL AND DISCREET SLAVE”

There are many reasons to have complete trust in the slave class. First and foremost, Jesus has appointed them over all his precious “belongings.” This is a clear indication that he has complete trust in them.

Second, God’s Word admonishes Christians to cooperate fully with those taking the lead. Why is this to our advantage? As recorded at Hebrews 13:17, the apostle Paul stated: “Be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive, for they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account; that they may do this with joy and not with sighing, for this would be damaging to you.” For our spiritual protection and well-being, it is incumbent upon us to be obedient and submissive to direction from overseers as they ‘keep watch over our souls.’

As recorded at 1 Corinthians 16:14, Paul stated: “Let all your affairs take place with love.” Decisions made in behalf of God’s people are influenced by this superior quality of love. Regarding love, 1 Corinthians 13:4-8 states: “Love is long-suffering and kind. Love is not

jealous, it does not brag, does not get puffed up, does not behave indecently, does not look for its own interests, does not become provoked. It does not keep account of the injury. It does not rejoice over unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth. It bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never fails.” Since love dominates all of the decisions that are made for the benefit of Jehovah’s servants, we have every reason to feel secure under such direction. Moreover, this is simply a reflection of Jehovah’s love for all his people.

Through much hardship and experience, the slave class has demonstrated that the spirit of God is with it. Abundant blessings have been poured out upon the visible part of Jehovah’s organization today, and therefore, we wholeheartedly give it our full support and trust.

HOW WE DEMONSTRATE OUR TRUST

Those who are appointed to responsible positions in the congregation demonstrate their trust by gladly accepting and faithfully discharging the obligations of their appointments. (Acts 20:28) As Kingdom proclaimers, we zealously engage in the house-to-house work, make return visits, and conduct home Bible studies. (Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20) In order to benefit fully from the rich spiritual food being dispensed by “the faithful and discreet slave,” we prepare well for and attend all our Christian meetings. This includes assemblies and conventions that are arranged each year. We greatly benefit from the interchange of encouragement that takes place when freely associating with our brothers at these Christian gatherings. – Heb. 10:24, 25.

Our trust in ‘the faithful slave’ is also manifest when we support the organization with our material contributions. (Prov. 3:9, 10) When we see that our brothers are in need materially, we respond without delay. (Gal. 6:10; 1 Tim. 6:18) This we do in a real spirit of brotherly love, constantly being on the alert for opportunities to show our appreciation to Jehovah and his organization for the goodness bestowed upon us. – John 13:35.

Another way to show that we trust the slave class today is to support its decisions. Even though we may not fully understand the reasoning behind certain decisions, we know that upholding them will be for our lasting good. On occasion important issues have been clarified, and we have wholeheartedly supported these decisions. As a result, Jehovah blesses us for our obedience to his Word and to the slave class. We thus show our subjection to the Master, Jesus Christ.

Yes, we have every reason to trust “the faithful and discreet slave” fully. Satan, the god of this system of things, is making an all-out effort to disgrace Jehovah’s name and organization. (2 Cor. 4:4) Do not fall prey to Satan’s wicked tactics. (2 Cor. 2:11) He knows that only a short period of time remains before his abyssing, and he is trying to take down with him as many of Jehovah’s people as possible. (Rev. 12:12) However, as Satan intensifies his efforts, may we draw ever closer to Jehovah by manifesting complete trust in the channel that He is using to direct His people today. Satan is waging war against “the remaining ones” of the slave class, who have been entrusted with directing “the work of bearing witness to Jesus.” (Rev. 12:17) Our full confidence in Jehovah and his arrangements results in a united brotherhood.

Appendix C: *Branch Manual on “The Worldwide Order”*

The following is provided to verify that the claims made within this Study regarding the “Worldwide Order” do not misrepresent the Organization’s position.

The following is reproduced from *Branch Manual*, effective December 15, 1977, Revised 2003, pages 1-3 to 1-4. (Bold is from the original.)

39. LEGAL ENTITIES AND THE WORLDWIDE ORDER: Branch Committee members should have a clear understanding of the relationship among the Governing Body, Branch Committee, the legal entities used by branches, and the Worldwide Order of Special Full-Time Servants of Jehovah’s Witnesses (“Worldwide Order”). ...

42. Members of the Worldwide Order serve at all branches and provide the personnel needed to operate the various functions carried on by the legal entities the branches use. (See 2003 Yearbook, page 30.) For this reason, it is important for Branch Committees to understand what the Worldwide Order is and the relationship between it and the legal entities branches may use.

43. The Worldwide Order is an unincorporated association made up of all those in special full-time service throughout the world. Members of the Worldwide Order are baptized ministers in special full-time service who perform whatever assignment they receive from the Worldwide Order. Each member of the Worldwide Order signs a Vow of Obedience and Poverty (“Vow”), which is a voluntary commitment made by each member. The Worldwide Order sees to it that each member of the Order receives basic necessities, regardless of the member’s assignment or the legal entity through which the member serves.

44. The Worldwide Order provides ministers for the legal entity or entities used by the branches to carry out the spiritual activities of Jehovah’s Witnesses. (Rom. 12:1; Matt. 24:14; 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) Members of the Worldwide Order are not compensated and do not receive in-kind benefits for any services they perform for a legal entity. The support a member receives is based on the member’s commitment to the Order stated in the Vow and is not related to any service performed or the nature of any assignment. Members of the Worldwide Order receive food, shelter, and other basic necessities.

Regardless of the nature of their privilege of service, all receive modest, yet appropriate support. **In view of the foregoing, the activities of any legal entity used by the Branch Committee are not to be viewed or regulated as a “commercial” enterprise or as involving an employer/employee relationship between any legal entity and members of the Worldwide Order.**

45. At times authorities attempt to categorize the endeavors of those in special full-time service as secular “work.” As Christians, we do have a “work” commissioned to us. (John 4:34; 5:17; Acts 13:2; 1 Cor. 15:58; 16:10; 2 Tim. 4:5) However, members of the Worldwide Order are motivated, not by pecuniary gain, but rather to accomplish the will of Jehovah and Jesus Christ in helping all to “attain to repentance.” (2 Pet. 3:9) Even so, in keeping with Jesus’ admonition, Branch Committee members and those who serve under their oversight need to exercise caution when asked to describe the nature of our activities. (Matt. 10:16) While we do engage in “work,” even as Jesus and his first century disciples did, we are certainly not secularly employed or motivated.

46. Although many countries provide tax exemptions for religious entities, some countries do not. Tax exemptions are generally created by law and are usually not a legal right. Where required to do so by Caesar, legal entities used by branches should pay the taxes legally required of them, even if other religious entities do not follow the law. Conversely, legal entities used by branches should not pay taxes where there is an accepted legal basis for not doing so. Every Branch Committee should take full advantage of any legal exemption from taxation. Branch Committees should keep in mind that how they handle tax and legal matters (including the tax or legal status of those in the Worldwide Order) could have implications for other branches, the worldwide organization, and the Worldwide Order. If a Branch Committee feels that it should describe itself, its legal entities, or the Worldwide Order differently than set forth above, it must first provide details of the proposed adjustment to the Governing Body for direction.