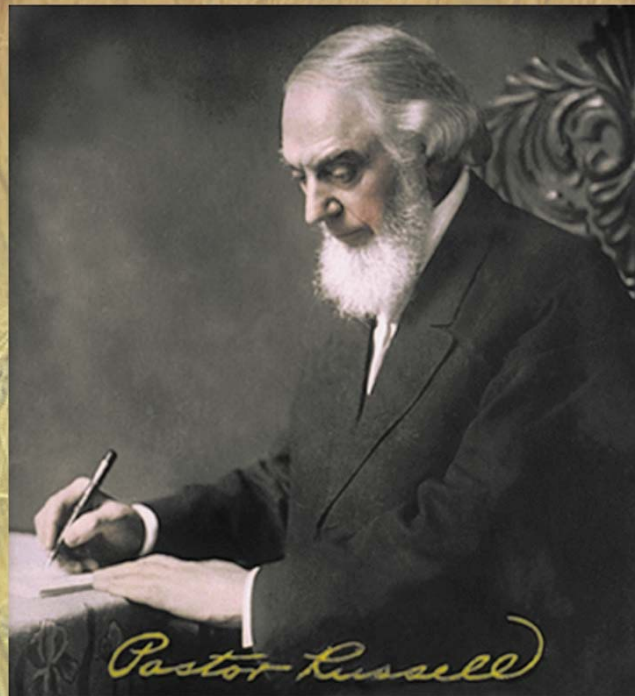


Bible Students



**Pastor Russell founded
the Bible Students not
Jehovah's Witnesses**

The cover contains two symbols that characterize Pastor Russell's Bible Students.

1. Early in his movement that began in 1872 Pastor Russell promoted a lapel pin that his Bible Students wear to this day. The cross and crown surrounded by a wreath symbolized that Christians by daily cross bearing (suffering with Jesus) will gain the crown of life. Then they will share with Jesus in his Kingdom offering eternal life (symbolized by the evergreen wreath) to mankind.

Of course, Jehovah's Witnesses don't believe Jesus died on a cross but rather on an upright stake. Many Jehovah's Witnesses consider wearing this cross and crown emblem as idol worship, which certainly disqualifies them as Pastor Russell's Bible Students.

2. Wheat became the hallmark of Bible Students' activity. Wheat symbolizes (Matthew 13) gathering the Lord's people (wheat) through a worldwide proclamation of biblical truth.

Inside cover

Copyright July 10, 2010
Kenneth Rawson
kwrpeace@optonline.net

Bible Students

**Pastor Russell founded
The Bible Students not
Jehovah's Witnesses**

Judge Rutherford founded "Jehovah's Witnesses" in 1931.

In 1931, over 75 percent of the Bible Students from Pastor Russell's era had already separated from Judge Rutherford. Therefore, Judge Rutherford observed that neither "Russellites" nor "**Bible Students**" were any longer appropriate names for his followers. They passed a resolution that henceforth they would call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses." (Page 7)

Introduction

The phrase “Pastor Russell’s Bible Students” is frequently used in this booklet to distinguish them from Watch Tower followers. These Bible Students highly esteem Pastor Russell as the one used at the end of the age to dispense the truth during the end times. However, they do not blindly accept whatever he taught like the Watch Tower followers have to accept everything they are taught. Pastor Russell’s Bible Students prove all things by the Scriptures and individually hold fast that which they think is scripturally correct.

With all the Internet exchange of information, Jehovah’s Witnesses are beginning to realize that the image of Judge Rutherford is a liability and are out to minimize his stature and fictionalize a relationship between Pastor Russell and Jehovah’s Witnesses that never existed.

Additionally, there are hundreds of Jehovah’s Witnesses and ex-Jehovah’s Witnesses who are dissatisfied with the current operation of the Watch Tower and the history of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Both my parents were Bible Students before Judge Rutherford controlled the Watch Tower. From a young age I have vivid memories of discussions my parents had with other Bible Students from Pastor Russell’s day concerning the takeover of the Watch Tower by Judge Rutherford and the direction he pursued.

Also, my situation in the Bible Student movement during the 1940s through the 1960s enabled me to have discussions with more close associates of Pastor Russell than most brethren. This history has been invaluable to me.

For example, way back then I learned that in 1926 Judge Rutherford discarded the basic Scriptural teaching of character development. (Galatians 5:18-25 and 2 Peter 1:4-11) He said we are characters and can’t change. No doubt there were personal reasons for his change.

But Pastor Russell’s Bible Students cherished this teaching of character development. Why? They believed that the 144,000 were to share with Jesus in the Kingdom, as sympathetic priests who would nurture, develop in love and judge the world of mankind. To qualify for this work they must now develop the character likeness of the Heavenly Father. 2 Corinthians 3:18.

The writer published some of this material in the 1950s, 1970s and most of it in the 1990s, but the need is now greater than ever. The information goes forth with the prayer that by our Heavenly Father’s grace it will give Scriptural direction to those who love Jehovah.

Jehovah's Witnesses Are Not Pastor Russell's Bible Students

The picture is clear. The historical data reveals beyond a doubt that the Bible Students founded by Pastor Russell and Jehovah's Witnesses founded by Judge Rutherford are two separate movements.

Pastor Russell founded the Bible Students. The movement had its beginning in 1872 at Allegheny, Pennsylvania, where a newly formed Bible Class selected Charles Taze Russell as its Pastor. At that time other earnest Christians were forming independent Bible classes for in-depth Bible study to meet the then rising wave of infidelity. While many clung blindly to the creeds that originated in the "Dark Ages," the Bible Students emerged to challenge intelligent unbelief and unintelligent belief.

Pastor Russell became a leader of thought and activity among these congregations. In 1879 Zion's Watch Tower was formed, later known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (not to be mistaken with Jehovah's Witnesses). This society did not become the central authority of the Bible Student movement. It could not because all cooperating congregations of Bible Students held strictly to congregational self-government. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society was basically a publishing house and lecture bureau that constantly employed Bible lecturers who traveled throughout the Western Hemisphere—some to the far reaches of the world.

How and Why Jehovah's Witnesses Were Founded

An unfortunate piece of history provides the answer to the origins of "Jehovah's Witnesses." After the death of Pastor Russell in 1916, the purpose of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society changed drastically. Joseph Rutherford, whom Pastor Russell had recently dismissed from his staff, seized legal control of the Watch Tower, dismissed the majority of the Board of Directors, and established dictatorial authority. The Watch Tower became the central head and authority over all congregations willing to yield their sovereignty. Basic doctrines of the "new society" seriously digressed from the teachings of Pastor Russell as the writings of Pastor Russell were discarded. The methods of conducting the evangelistic work were altered. The more sensational digressions, such as refusing blood transfusion and saluting the flag, caught the public's eye.

But many individuals and whole congregations refused to surrender their Christian liberty or accept the new teachings. As early as 1917, the exodus from the newly declared sovereign headquarters began. By 1918 one-fourth of the Bible Students left Judge Rutherford and remained true to the teachings of the late Pastor Russell.⁽ⁱ⁾ They were the first of the exodus of Pastor Russell's Bible Students who separated from Judge Rutherford's tyranny.

The majority believed the door to the High Calling was open. They formed new congregations and organized a service organization to publish Bible Student study literature.

There are many books about the Watch Tower organization, even by former Watch Tower members. But none have the insight of William Schnell, a former Rutherford insider during those crucial years of Judge Rutherford's terminating the Bible Student movement and creating the Jehovah's Witnesses.

During the struggle between Judge Rutherford and the Bible Students, Schnell was in the upper echelon of the Watch Tower and made very insightful observations. At the time he finally wrote his book, *THIRTY YEARS A WATCHTOWER SLAVE*, he was neither a Jehovah's Witness nor a Bible Student. Schnell noted that further doctrinal changes and aggressive promotions by Judge Rutherford resulted in a large increase in new members faithful to Judge Rutherford. But this generated opposition from Pastor Russell's Bible Students who still remained in the Watch Tower endeavoring to reverse Judge Rutherford's revisionism of doctrine and practice. Judge Rutherford's reaction is described by Schnell as follows: ⁽ⁱⁱ⁾

Between 1925 and 1931 Rutherford embarked on a campaign to purge Russell's followers. By 1931 over three-fourths of those formerly associated with the Bible Student movement in Pastor Russell's day remained faithful to his teachings by completely separating from Rutherford.

Regarding those who left, Schnell remarked, "That is precisely what the new Watch Tower Society wanted and what they had hoped to accomplish." ⁽ⁱⁱⁱ⁾ Speaking of the new converts Schnell said: ^(iv)

These, of course, were in the majority after the bloodletting of three-fourths of the Bible Students had been so adroitly accomplished.

Further, Schnell observed: ^(v)

The old Bible Students, spirit begotten . . . individuals, true Christians, would never have stood for such subversion of thinking and practices. Being students of the Bible, they had been warned by what Paul had said in 2 Tim. 4:3: "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine."

The lineage of the Bible Student congregations of today traces back through these separatist Bible Students to Pastor Russell their founder. A description Schnell gives of Pastor Russell's Bible Students reveals why Judge Rutherford could not subdue them:

Bible Students had been of such rugged individuality type that they claimed they had fled various [church] organizations in order to become and remain free and unencumbered in their quest of Bible studies and living as Christians. They felt that the organizations from which they had fled had become too rigid and stifling, a condition which they considered detrimental to their course as Christians. In fact, in those days Bible Students were the most rugged individualists ever to appear since the days of the early Church. Their motto of "non-conformity" became a by-word.

These "rugged individualists" believed in the autonomy of each congregation. There was no place for a dictator like Judge Rutherford.

Jehovah's Witnesses Founded in 1931

Now that three quarters of the Bible Students of Pastor Russell's era were purged while the remainder of the Bible Students submitted to Judge Rutherford's doctrinal changes, a new movement could be founded. In 1931, fifteen years after Pastor Russell's death, Jehovah's Witnesses was founded. Its founder, Joseph Rutherford, presented a startling resolution entitled "A New Name," which was adopted at an International Convention on July 26, 1931, at Columbus, Ohio. The resolution first observed that neither "Russellites" nor "**Bible Students**" were any longer appropriate names (certainly not since over 75 percent of the Bible Students from Pastor Russell's era had already separated). Henceforth they would call themselves "Jehovah's Witnesses."^(vi)

Note this well. Pastor Russell's Bible Students did not evolve into Jehovah's Witnesses. As "Wikipedia" also observes, because of Judge Rutherford's doctrinal changes, his movement "lost most of its original membership between 1916 and 1928." This means that when Judge Rutherford changed the name of his movement to Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931, **Pastor Russell's Bible Students were gone.**

What Happened to These Bible Students?

I was well informed, by those who were there, about what happened when Judge Rutherford discarded character development in 1926. This was the beginning of the end for Pastor Russell's Bible Students in the Watch Tower. 1928-1931 saw their large exodus from Judge Rutherford's Watch Tower, which marked the inception of the Bible Student movement of today. How? In August of 1928 over 80 Bible Students in the Pittsburg area left the Watch Tower. What should they do? Where should they go? October 31 was the anniversary of Pastor Russell's death. Great! They would have a three day anniversary convention and invite all the Bible Students they knew who had left the Watch Tower since 1918. What a success! It was beyond everyone's fondest dreams. And it became an annual event until 1942, when WW2 limited travel. New congregations were formed, and older congregations in existence since the 1918 exodus were enlarged. All congregations or ecclesias were autonomous based on the teachings of the Apostle Paul, as in the time of Pastor Russell.

The Bible Students who exited the Watch Tower after 1928 had a fervent enthusiasm for public witnessing. By 1932 they formed a new service organization solely to direct an aggressive public witnessing program. Now there were two Bible Student service organizations. Over time both changed and widened their scope of operation.

There was a further exodus between 1931 and 1935. It consisted of a few of Pastor Russell's Bible Students who had lingered after 1931 but finally left Judge Rutherford, as well as many who had come into the movement under Judge Rutherford but left, because they didn't believe they were Jehovah's Witnesses who replaced Israel in God's plan. Since then, there has been a continual trickle of ex-Jehovah's Witnesses into the Bible Students movement.

Back to Judge Rutherford and His New Movement

Based on new doctrines, Judge Rutherford was giving a new name to a relatively new group, who were not Pastor Russell's Bible Students.

Joseph Rutherford, not Pastor Russell, founded Jehovah's Witnesses. Pastor Russell died in 1916. Jehovah's Witnesses was founded in 1931. Pastor Russell founded the Bible Students who still affirm his teachings. Judge Rutherford rejected Pastor Russell's teachings, purged those Bible Students loyal

to Pastor Russell's ideals from his movement, rejected the name Bible Students and named his new movement "Jehovah's Witnesses."

The picture is clear. The historical data reveals beyond a doubt that Pastor Russell's Bible Students and Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses are two separate movements.

Yet there is one point that tends to be confusing and contradictory. Why do Jehovah's Witnesses sometimes refer to Pastor Russell as their founder? Certainly it is not because they agree with his basic teachings. In fact, they so vigorously disagree with his basic teachings that they have time and again categorized Pastor Russell's Bible Students as the "evil servant" class who will be annihilated eternally. (*Bible Students, on the other hand, have nothing but joyful expectation for the Witnesses' eternity.*)

What is the sin of Pastor Russell's Bible Students that makes them so evil? What is the abominable sin that they have committed that merits eternal destruction? The answer is simply that Bible Students still hold on to the biblical teachings of Pastor Russell! That means that they reject Jehovah's Witnesses' doctrines. To Jehovah's Witnesses, the basic teachings of Bible Students are gross error—worthy of eternal judgment.

The absurd contradiction emerges when Jehovah's Witnesses claim Pastor Russell as their founder. Where did the Bible Students get their so-called gross errors but from Pastor Russell? If Pastor Russell taught this gross error, why do Jehovah's Witnesses claim Pastor Russell as their founder?

"Historic Depth"

For one reason and one simple reason alone do the Jehovah's Witnesses claim Pastor Russell as their founder—"historic depth." As a Christian church, the Jehovah's Witnesses are neophytes. Since the Jehovah's Witnesses only began in 1931, they needed historic credibility. Imagine in the 1930s, '40s or '50s, saying, "Our Christian group only began in 1931." Claiming Pastor Russell as their founder projects them back into the 1800s as a Christian group. After all, a number of Christian churches, like the Disciples of Christ, had their beginnings in the 1800s. As evidence of their sensitivity to historic depth, Jehovah's Witnesses try to do a "one-upmanship" on all Christian churches by claiming that Able, Adam's son, was the first Jehovah's Witness. This is really reaching for historic depth!

The historic facts are clear. Pastor Russell founded the Bible Students in the 1870s. Judge Rutherford founded the Jehovah's Witnesses in 1931. Pastor Russell's Bible Students and Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses are two separate and distinct movements.

Just to illustrate this point, the Lutherans and Roman Catholics have a common lineage simply because the Lutherans broke away from the Papacy. But they are two separate churches. The Lutherans believe Martin Luther's teachings and the Catholics believe the teachings of the popes. Just because the Lutherans' lineage goes back to the popes does not mean the popes are the founders of the Lutherans. The popes are the founders of the Roman Catholics who believe their doctrines.

Just as Baptists and Presbyterians believe in eternal torment, so Bible Students and Jehovah's Witnesses believe in eternal annihilation. But this similarity does not make them the same group! It is

well to observe that Bible Students feel most Jehovah's Witnesses are noble-minded people and are just as likely as other people to enjoy the blessings of God's eternity. (*We only wish they shared such kindly feelings towards us!*)

Note this well: Judge Rutherford adopted the name Jehovah's Witnesses because the name "Bible Students" was no longer an appropriate name. But why the name change?

Actually, "Jehovah's Witnesses" is a scriptural concept repeated three times in chapters 43 and 44 of Isaiah. The Prophet Isaiah is obviously speaking of the Jewish People, and the Bible Students have always understood it that way. Who else was once delivered from Egypt, at one time offered sacrifices, and were to be regathered from all over the world to their homeland? The Jewish People are the true "witnesses of Jehovah."

Replacement Theology and Anti-Semitism

Judge Rutherford laid the groundwork for the rejection of one of Pastor Russell's basic teachings. The stage was now set for "replacement theology." When Judge Rutherford's second volume of "Vindication" was published, it proclaimed that "fleshly Israel," the Jews, was eternally rejected as the people of God and replaced by the New Israel—Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses! Judge Rutherford thereby embraced replacement theology—that traditional error of both Roman and Orthodox Catholics, as well as the historic Protestant denominations. Replacement theology applies all the Hebrew Scriptures that speak of future blessings to "Israel" as promises applicable to Christians only. Now Judge Rutherford applied these scriptures exclusively to Christians who were Jehovah's Witnesses. However, it is interesting to note that all scriptures pertaining to the punishment of "Israel" are retained by replacement theology as applicable to the Jewish People.

Just as replacement theology justified, if not inspired, anti-Semitism for over 1900 years of Christian history, the inevitable naturally followed. Judge Rutherford sent an anti-Semitic letter to Hitler. How did this happen? The following is a quote from the 1934 YEAR BOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: ^(vii)

In June, the president [Joseph Rutherford] of the Society visited Germany to take some action to get the Society's property restored to our [Jehovah's Witnesses'] possession and to carry on the work further. Knowing that the enemy has misrepresented the facts to the [Nazi] government, a Declaration of Facts was prepared, and on the 25th day of June, 1933, more than 7,000 of Jehovah's Witnesses assembled at Berlin and unanimously adopted the resolution, millions of which were printed and distributed throughout Germany. That resolution [in part] is as follows, to wit:

It is falsely charged by our enemies that we have received financial support for our work from the Jews. Nothing is farther from the truth. Up to this moment there never has been the slightest bit of money contributed to our work by Jews. The greatest and most oppressive empire on earth is the Anglo-American empire. By this is meant the British Empire, of which the United States of America forms a part. **It has been the commercial Jews of British-American Empire that have built up and carried Big Business as a means of exploiting and oppressing the peoples of many nations. This fact particularly applies to the cities of London and New York, the stronghold of Big Business. This fact is so manifest in America that there is a proverb concerning the city of New York which says: "the Jews own it, the Irish Catholics rule it, and the**

Americans pay the bills.” [Emphasis ours.] We have no fight with any of these persons mentioned but, as witnesses for Jehovah and in obedience to his commandment set forth in the Scriptures, we are compelled to call attention to the truth concerning the same in order that the people may be enlightened concerning God and his purpose.... [**This is plain anti-Semitism.**]

Judge Rutherford and Jehovah’s Witnesses in Germany Attempt to Curry Hitler’s Favor

“This Declaration was mailed to every high officer of the government [Nazi Germany] from the president down to the members of the counsel” explains the book, JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES IN THE DIVINE PURPOSE, published by Jehovah’s Witnesses in 1957. ^(viii) This mailing to every “high officer,” of course, included Hitler who was chancellor appointed by the president. In addition to defaming the League of Nations, the Declaration also concurred with the Nazi government when it said: ^(ix)

The present government of Germany has declared against Big Business oppressors [of America and Britain] and in opposition to the wrongful religious influence in the political affairs of the nation. **Such is exactly our position** [emphasis ours]

Incredible! Judge Rutherford said he completely agreed with Hitler’s principles! But then Judge Rutherford made a fatal mistake by saying: ^(x)

Instead of being against the principles advocated by the government of Germany, **we stand squarely for such principles, and point out that Jehovah God through Christ Jesus will bring about the full realization of these principles** [emphasis ours].

It’s incredible. Judge Rutherford actually said he believed in Hitler’s principles. But Judge Rutherford’s fatal blunder was stating that only God could accomplish “the full realization of these [Hitler’s political and economic] principles,” which implied Hitler **could not!** This was a blow to Hitler’s arrogance causing him to come down harder than ever on the Jehovah’s Witnesses. To Hitler the merits of Judge Rutherford’s anti-Semitism paled in significance compared to Hitler’s dream of his Third Reich ruling **successfully** over all of Europe.

Judge Rutherford’s attempt to ingratiate himself with Hitler backed-fire. Evidently, Judge Rutherford’s expression of anti-Semitism expressed his true feelings. In 1934, Judge Rutherford wrote on page 5 in the booklet “Favored People”: “The current men called Jews are tradesmen among whom are some of the richest men and most miserly that the world knew. Certain generals of the Great merchants are named Jews. Many are arrogant, proud and very selfish.”

In 1937 Judge Rutherford wrote in “Enemies” (p. 281): “There are extremely egotistical men called ‘Jews’ that have interest only for the lure of gain.”

Judge Rutherford Failed to Appease Hitler

On October 7, 1934, all congregations of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Germany assembled to hear a letter read that was being sent to the officials of Hitler’s government. It said: “There is a direct conflict between your law and God’s law . . . Therefore this is to advise you that at any cost we will obey God’s commandments, will meet together for the study of His Word, and will worship and serve Him as He has commanded.”

On the same day, Jehovah's Witnesses in 49 other countries met in special assemblies and sent the following telegram to Hitler: "Your ill-treatment of Jehovah's Witnesses shocks all good people of earth and dishonors God's name. Refrain from further persecuting Jehovah's Witnesses; otherwise God will destroy you and your national party." —*Awake!* 8/22/95

Judge Rutherford aroused the hostility of Jehovah's Witnesses the world over against Hitler. The national assemblies of Jehovah's Witnesses in fifty nations around the world sent telegrams to Hitler threatening that God would destroy him unless Hitler relented. Angered all the more, Hitler ordered all Jehovah's Witnesses rounded up and thrown into concentration camps.

What an unfortunate duel. How arrogant for Judge Rutherford to think that he could command the wrath of God on anyone. Also, how utterly brutal and ruthless was the mind of Hitler to trample down anyone according to his own whims.

A final word about this bizarre affair. Notice Jehovah's Witnesses from fifty countries backed Judge Rutherford in his threat to have God destroy Hitler when Hitler didn't respond favorably. This means a major portion of Jehovah's Witnesses around the world backed Judge Rutherford. Pastor Russell's Bible Students would never call for anyone's destruction by God. These were not Pastor Russell's Bible Students, but Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses.

The 1934 YEARBOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES presents the facts of what happened in 1933 and 1934 between Judge Rutherford and Hitler. As the years passed, the 1934 YEARBOOK's accurate account appeared very incriminating of Judge Rutherford. Therefore, the 1974 YEARBOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES has an article that attempted to cover up and place much of the blame for the Declaration on the head of the German branch of the Watch Tower. But you can't change the record. The 1934 YEARBOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES accurately states that the incriminating Declaration was authored by the Watch Tower President Judge Rutherford.

How Scandalous!

Many others, including Pastor Russell's Bible Students, also suffered in Hitler's concentration camps. But note the dichotomy between the lifestyles of Jehovah's Witnesses, who were especially singled out for arrest because of Judge Rutherford's bizarre deal with Hitler in 1933/1934, and of Judge Rutherford himself. Sadly, while his Jehovah's Witness followers were suffering in concentration camps, Judge Rutherford was living in luxury and opulence. He had a palatial mansion, Beth Sarim, in San Diego on a 100 acre estate, built purportedly for the Ancient Worthies to use in the Kingdom, where he lived during the summer until his death. He also had luxurious getaways in the US and overseas. And, of course, he needed two sixteen-cylinder Cadillacs to sport around in.

How scandalous! Because of obeying the decrees of Judge Rutherford, Jehovah's Witnesses were literally wasting away in concentration camps while their esteemed leader luxuriated in opulence.

Schnell, who left Judge Rutherford's Watch Tower, was an Evangelical Christian at the time he wrote his book. As such, he deeply disagreed with some of the basic doctrines of Pastor Russell and his Bible Students. Yet Schnell's writing reflected a profound admiration for their Christian spirit.

This loose-knit Bible Student movement of “rugged individualists,” as Schnell called them, is today prospering worldwide. Yes, Bible Students are a small movement of “rugged individualists” banded together in congregations that zealously guard their congregational autonomy. But if you have a small band of individualists, each of his own volition, fully consecrated to a vision of Truth, then you have activists. Thus, Bible Students, as they did in Pastor Russell’s day, impact the world to a degree that far exceeds their size.

Jehovah’s Witnesses Do Not Believe The Historic Bible Student Teachings

Pastor Russell’s beliefs were contained in the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures*, which were considered the accepted teachings of the Bible Students until Pastor Russell’s death. When Judge Rutherford gained control of the Watch Tower, within ten years Pastor Russell’s six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* were set aside. They were replaced by a series of new books written by Judge Rutherford that changed many of Pastor Russell’s basic teachings. True, the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* are in Jehovah’s Witnesses’ libraries, but they are **not** to be read. Why? Jehovah’s Witnesses had replaced many of Pastor Russell’s teachings with the new teachings of their founder Judge Rutherford. They are in Jehovah’s Witnesses’ libraries to feign historic depth, as observed earlier.

The following doctrines are an example of how the Bible Students still retain the fundamental teachings of Pastor Russell in contrast with Jehovah’s Witnesses who do not.

Salvation for All

The main teaching of Pastor Russell was that Jesus died a ransom for *all*, therefore *all* humankind would have a full, fair opportunity for salvation. All would be enlightened with a knowledge of God’s truth before they are placed on trial and judged for their eternal destiny. For the majority of mankind this would be when they are raised from the dead at the time of the general resurrection. Their final judgment would be based on their conduct while enlightened and not on their conduct in this life while in ignorance. This teaching separated Bible Students from all other religious groups. Now it separates them from Jehovah’s Witnesses as well. For decades Jehovah’s Witnesses taught that Jesus was **not** a *ransom for all* but is a *ransom for all kinds of men*—not including every man.

Purpose of Evangelism

Pastor Russell taught that now is *a* day of salvation for Christians and that another day, *the* day of salvation, awaits mankind in general. This view broke with the concept of salvation current in his day. At that time nearly all evangelicals taught a literal hell of torment for everyone who did not accept Jesus in this life. They felt hell-fire threats were necessary to restrain evil and, if need be, to bring salvation by fear. Many churches have since broadened their concept of salvation beyond this life.

But Jehovah’s Witnesses for decades believed their witnessing was fulfilling the *parable of the sheep and the goats*. Those who rejected their message could be of the goat class and suffer eternal destruction. Every Jehovah’s Witness became a missionary of life or death.

Who Are the Real Jehovah's Witnesses?

After applying the scripture "Ye are my witnesses saith Jehovah" (Isa. 43:12) to themselves, Jehovah's Witnesses declared that the Jewish people have no special role in the Divine Plan since the death of Jesus. That, in fact, they were replaced by the new Jehovah's Witnesses. Pastor Russell taught that the Jewish people and nation have a leading role in the Divine Plan for men. While they were yet a scattered and dispersed people, he said, upon the basis of God's promises, they would be regathered to their homeland and established as an independent nation. Time has proven this to be so. Although denied by Jehovah's Witnesses, Bible Students today teach that the new State of Israel, as Pastor Russell predicted, emerged in Divine providence and is the harbinger of the incoming Kingdom of God on earth.

The Credentials of Pastor Russell's Bible Students

If you don't believe in the ransom for all (1 Tim. 2:6), which was the main doctrine that separated Pastor Russell from all of the churches, you cannot be one of Pastor Russell's Bible Students. If you belong to an organization that has dictatorial rule over each congregation, then you cannot be one of Pastor Russell's Bible Students who cherishes the autonomy of every congregation of Bible Students. If you believe Jehovah's Witnesses have replaced the nation of Israel in God's plan, then you are not one of Pastor Russell's Bible Students who is proclaiming worldwide that God is regathering natural Israel to its ancient homeland.

Because of the notoriety surrounding Judge Rutherford's life, Jehovah's Witnesses are minimizing their historic identity with Judge Rutherford and emphasizing that their founder was Pastor Russell. Actually **they are a hybrid strain** that does not qualify to be Pastor Russell's Bible Students. Why? They lack the above doctrinal credentials of Pastor Russell's Bible Students, while still retaining the doctrinal credentials of Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses. Today's Watch Tower followers are, plainly and simply, Judge Rutherford's Jehovah's Witnesses. They believe his doctrines. Judge Rutherford's main doctrine was Jehovah's Witnesses have replaced the Jewish Nation as the "Witnesses of Jehovah." They still make this claim.

From these facts it can be seen that Pastor Charles T. Russell was not in structure or in doctrine the founder of Jehovah's Witnesses. He was the founder of the Bible Students who are very much on the scene today. As at the first, Bible Students remain without a central head or authority. Each congregation treasures its democratic congregational rule. Though each congregation remains independent, they are for the most part associated in inter-congregational activities and conventions. Also, several Bible Student service organizations help to promote national and international ministries. Even some congregations have become very active nationally and worldwide in Internet advertising and witnessing, publishing booklets and translating and printing the six volumes of *Studies in the Scriptures* in different languages around the world.

Pastor Russell's Bible Students have evangelical Christians running scared. Listen to one of their blogs by Robert C. Hill, ThB:

"They are growing. Their presses are churning. They are buying cable TV air time and the World Wide Web is the newest arena for the dissemination of their doctrinal error. Among other things, they promulgate Jesus' second advent as having occurred in the fall of 1874... J.W.'s? No. The Bible Students are composed of independent splinter groups directly in line

with the theological legacy (some might prefer heresy) of Charles Taze Russell and **hold no affinity to today's Watchtower Societies' Jehovah's Witnesses. [Emphasis ours]**

The Bible Students are not limited to the United States. Bible Students can be found on every continent. All sincere Christians are welcome. There is nothing to join. Do a Google search for Bible Students. Find a local congregation in your area.

i. HERZL YEAR BOOK, 190.

ii. William Schnell, THIRTY YEARS A WATCHTOWER SLAVE (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1963), 40, 41.

iii. Ibid., 41.

iv. Ibid., 42.

v. Ibid., 43.

vi. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES: PROCLAIMERS OF GOD'S KINGDOM (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1933), 155,156.

vii. 1934 YEAR BOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1933), 130,131.

viii. JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN THE DIVINE PURPOSE (Brooklyn: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1959), 130.

ix. 1934 YEARBOOK OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES, 134.

x. Ibid., 135.