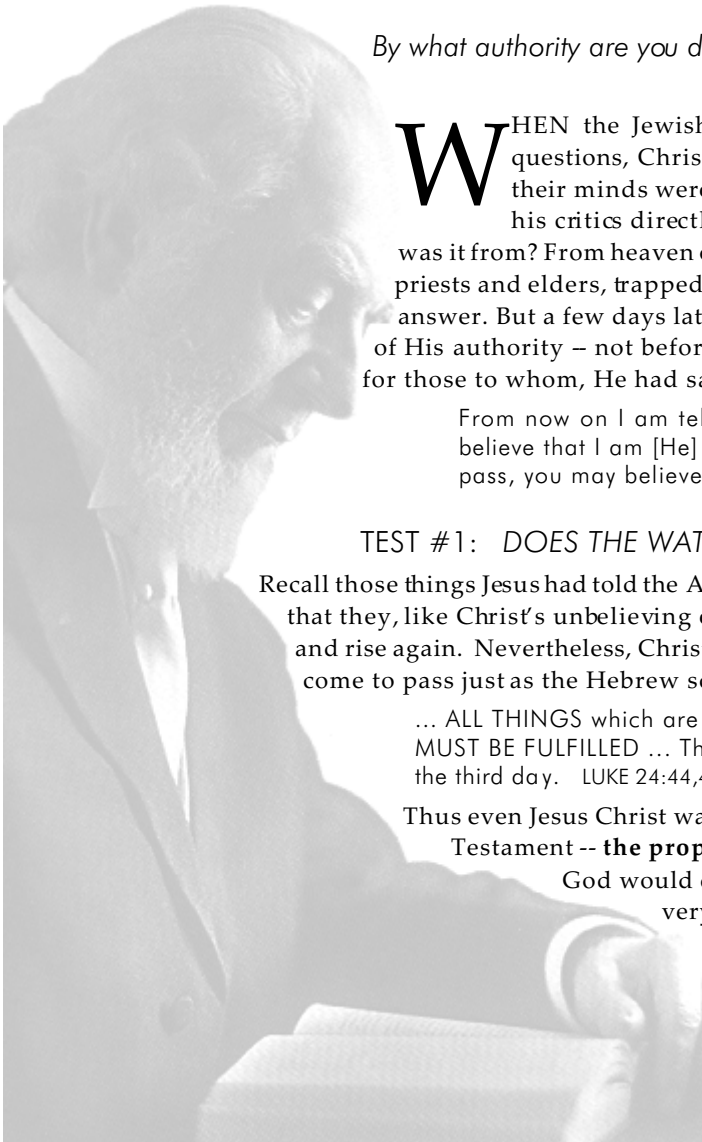


BY WHAT AUTHORITY?

WHY SHOULD ANYONE BELIEVE *THE WATCHTOWER*?

By what authority are you doing these things? And who gave you this authority? MATTHEW 21:23



WHEN the Jewish religious establishment confronted Jesus Christ with the above questions, Christ knew any answer was impossible. No matter what He would say, their minds were made up. They would not believe. So Jesus Christ did not answer his critics directly. Instead He asked *them* a question: "The baptism of John -- where was it from? From heaven or from men?" Not willing to deny John's Divine authority, the chief priests and elders, trapped between the Stone of Stumbling and the Rock of Revelation, did not answer. But a few days later, on the last night of His earthly life, Christ *did* identify the source of His authority -- not before the sealed ears and hardened hearts of His adversaries, but solely for those to whom, He had said, the *mysteries of the kingdom* were revealed:

From now on I am telling you before it comes to pass, so that when it does occur, you may believe that I am [He] ... And now I have told you before it comes, that when it does come to pass, you may believe JOHN 13:19,14:29

TEST #1: DOES THE WATCHTOWER DEMONSTRATE GOD'S OMNISCIENCE?

Recall those things Jesus had told the Apostles over the months before the last trip to Jerusalem, those things that they, like Christ's unbelieving enemies, found **impossible** to conceive -- that the Messiah must die and rise again. Nevertheless, Christ rested His divine authority on the CERTAINTY that all things must come to pass just as the Hebrew scriptures had foretold, and as He Himself was now foretelling:

... ALL THINGS which are written about Me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms MUST BE FULFILLED ... Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and rise again from the dead the third day. LUKE 24:44,46 (NASB, emphasis added)

Thus even Jesus Christ was not exempt from the standard set for God's spokesmen in the Old Testament -- **the prophet should demonstrate the omniscience of God** -- Jehovah the true God would demonstrate that He was DIFFERENT from the pagan deities in this very attribute -- **Jehovah knows all things**; He demonstrates this by giving his spokesmen the **ability to foretell the future INFALLIBLY**. (Deut.18:20-22; 1 Sam.3:9,20; 9:6; Isa.44:24-28)

IF demonstration of God's absolute knowledge of the future was the special sign of the prophet, would the Apostles display any less ability? Before Christ departed this earth he assured the Apostles, his future witnesses, that they would NOT lack His ability to foretell the future: [OVER>>>]

How to recognize a 'Divinely ordained preacher'

Pastor Russell (above) and his early followers, the International Bible Students, didn't have to labour for weeks in 'home Bible studies' to prove to people God was using *The Watchtower*. They knew enough about the Bible to boast that God had fixed an easier way to recognize whom He was using:

'When the things predicted in the entire seven volumes of the *Studies in the Scriptures* come to pass, then shall the tares [weeds, Matt.13:24ff., KJV], too late, realize that a GREAT AND DIVINELY ORDAINED PREACHER "hath been among them". [*Finished Mystery* 'Posthumous work of Pastor Russell' p.532] 'Truly there lived among us in these last days a prophet of the Lord ... his works remain an ENDURING WITNESS to his wisdom and faithfulness' [*Watchtower* June 1, 1917, p.6091]

I have many more things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now. But when He, the Spirit of truth, comes, He will guide you into ALL THE TRUTH; He will not speak on His own initiative, but whatever He hears, He will speak; and HE WILL DISCLOSE TO YOU WHAT IS TO COME. JOHN 16:12,13 (NASB, emphasis added)

Thus the Apostles, like the Prophets, would foretell the future **infallibly**, because the Spirit which would anoint them for their witnessing was infallible. Not *all* the Apostles are recorded as having foretold the future, but those who had the chief responsibility in witnessing certainly did (Peter in 2 Peter chaps.2 and 3; Paul in 1 Timothy 4 and 2 Timothy chaps.3 and 4; John in all of Revelation). Because they were the **only** group chosen to witness for Christ, the Apostles, like the Prophets and like Christ Himself, **had to demonstrate the omniscience of God.**

TEST #2: DOES THE WATCHTOWER DEMONSTRATE THE OMNIPOTENCE OF GOD?

Not all the prophets of the Old Testament are recorded as having worked miracles, but those who were given great tasks in witnessing for the true God, like Moses and Isaiah, Jeremiah and Daniel, had either the ability to foretell the future or the ability to perform miracles -- or both! Moses, at whose word even Pharaoh finally trembled, had such a great witnessing work that God gave him unprecedented powers -- powers over nature, and infallible vision of the future. Even the benighted magicians of Egypt had to acknowledge *This is the finger of God* (Exod.8:19). Because of Moses' wonder-working power *the man Moses was greatly esteemed in the land of Egypt* (Exod.11:3). The greatness of Moses' task might explain the greatness of his gifts. After all it was through Moses' ministry that Jehovah was to demonstrate His power and proclaim His name in all the earth (Exod.9:16). The law that God gave to Moses had to stand forever, and therefore extraordinary authority had to be manifest both at its origin and in its substance. Therefore in Moses must be seen Divine **power** as well as Divine **omniscience**.

It is therefore no surprise that in view of the even greater work of Jesus, the same Divine attributes were demonstrated by Him. Not only believers witnessed His wonders. The Apostles asked *What kind of a man is this, that even the winds and the sea obey Him?* But even those unwilling to follow Him had to acknowledge the extraordinary nature of His powers (John 3:2; 11:47). Thus Christ could say at the end of His mission:

If I had not done among them the works which no one else did, they would not have sin, but now they have both seen and hated Me and My Father as well. JOHN 15:24 (NASB)

Yet Christ foretold that His Apostles would do even greater works (John 14:12). That makes perfect sense in that the work that the Apostles were to do was greater in scope than that of Jesus, Who was sent to Israel only. The Apostles were to witness to *all* nations, and so would need extraordinary credentials if their witness was to be believed:

For if the word spoken through angels proved unalterable, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompense, how shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation? After it was at the first spoken through the Lord, it was confirmed to us by those who heard, GOD ALSO BEARING WITNESS with them, both by signs and wonders and by various miracles and by gifts of the Holy Spirit according to His own will. HEBREWS 2:2-4 (NASB)

The Apostles had the only gospel that could save mankind, and God made sure they obtained a good hearing! Just as the message of Moses and the prophets had the ear of Israel and even the world, so did the gospel of the Apostles. God **joined in bearing witness** (Heb.2:4, NWT) -- by demonstrating the omniscient and omnipotent Being Who was the source of the message.

HAS GOD 'JOINED IN BEARING WITNESS' WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

In view of the scope of the work that *The Watchtower* claims for its unique task -- no less than delivering the 'knowledge that leads to everlasting life' to the whole world -- we have the right to ask Jehovah's Witnesses for their divine credentials. Moses did not bring Jehovah's message *Let My people go!* before wise and powerful Pharaoh without a sign from an all-powerful, all-knowing Greater King. Jehovah did not send Elijah, Elisha or Isaiah to say *Repent or perish, Israel!*, without identifying his spokesmen with unmistakable stamp of Deity. Christ did not even make His claim to be Israel's Messiah openly -- He let His works speak for Him. And the Apostles spoke not about themselves, but about Him **declared WITH POWER to be the Son of God BY THE RESURRECTION FROM THE DEAD** (Rom.1:4). Like Christ, they did not bear witness about themselves, but let the Father bear witness of them, by miracles and by fulfilling their prophecies (John 5:31-37; Acts 3:1-16). The Apostles did not have to publish a magazine with the title *How You Can Find the True Religion*. Nor did they have to urge their hearers to *Put Faith in a Victorious Organization*. If the Apostles had preached such a message, they could not have said with Paul **we do not preach ourselves, but Christ Jesus as Lord** (2 Cor.4:5). Do Jehovah's Witnesses preach this message?