



# **Jehovah's Witnesses: Who Are They?**

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**Berean Series  
Bible Studies**

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## Jehovah's Witnesses: Who Are They?

(Contributed Address)

“**N**ow thus saith the LORD that created thee, O Jacob, and he that formed thee, O Israel, Fear not: for I have redeemed thee, I have called thee by thy name: thou art mine. When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth; even every one that is called by my name: for I have created him for my glory, I have formed him; yea, I have made him. Bring forth the blind people that have eyes, and the

deaf that have ears. Let all the nations be gathered together, and let the people be assembled: who among them can declare this, and show us former things? let them bring forth their witnesses, that they may be justified: or let them hear, and say, It is truth. **Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD**, and my servant whom I have chosen: that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the LORD; and beside me there is no saviour” — Isa.43:1-11.

**T**hose who believe the Scriptures to be the inspired Word of God will not deny that the Creator has a wonderful plan or systematic method of dealing with mankind, during various ages and dispensations, and when completed this plan will glorify God and completely satisfy the desires of all mankind. In carrying forward this plan God has graciously invited the voluntary co-operation of individuals, and groups of individuals, human and spiritual.

It is clear from the account in Genesis that God created the first human pair to live

happily and everlastingly in harmony with Him upon this planet, as we read “And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. And God blessed them and said unto them, Be fruitful and multiply” — Gen. 1:26,28.

Through lack of experience man fell from that perfect state into sin — a disobedience which has ever since brought a trail of woe and misery. This was foreseen and permitted by the Creator; therefore it is an essential part of the Divine Plan and the best means of indelibly impressing upon the characters of His human family (and angels too, by observation) the value of obedience to Him, and the desire for His protection as the only One who can supply their every need and shelter under His love and power.

Look where we will, transgression, sickness, sorrow, evil, wars and death all attest to the fall of man. This is not the natural state of man, as evidenced from the fact that all are seeking, in one way or another, relief from these things, and much study and effort is undertaken to eliminate them.

It is not the intention of the Creator to allow this state of affairs to continue indefinitely, neither is it the wish of mankind that it should continue. Evil and evildoers are allowed to demonstrate the fruits or results of their actions and misgovernment; and we are today witnessing the harvest of confusion, trouble and bitterness from the sowing of past ages and decades — “Men’s hearts failing them for fear, and for looking after those things which are coming on the earth” — Luke 21:26.

The world in general, and professing Christians also, have not taken heed to God’s counsels. As one has said — “The League of Nations failed because they did not take Christ into their council chambers.”

Nevertheless, all down the ages, the Creator has had His witnesses that He does exist and is not indifferent to the reign of evil, terror and calamities through which mankind is passing. He has declared that when these conditions have served their purpose they shall cease to exist, and the righteous and right principles only will remain active in ages to come. “There shall be no more curse” — Rev. 21:4,27; 22:3.

Our text declares — “Ye are my witnesses that I am God . . . Beside me there is no saviour” — Isa. 43:10,11. Who are these witnesses? To whom do they witness? Whence their origin? They have put their records in Books, thirty-nine of them. These Books have been written by herdsmen, by shepherds, by judges, by kings, by poets, by sages, by philosophers, by statesmen, by men learned in the wisdom of ancient Egypt, and in the schools of Babylon, by rich men, by poor men, by preachers in exile and by legislators. The facts to which they bear witness were written in times of prosperity, in times of bondage and adversity, in times of hostility in wars, in times of victory and honour, in peace, in godly times, in times of unbelief and rebellion, in times of defeat and captivity.

Being greatly favoured by the Creator, God also bearing witness to them by His overruling providence and miracles, they became a target for the jealousy and hatred of many nations, that often manifested toward them the cruel spirit of evil and murder, even to the present time. They are made the scapegoat on which to lay the blame of misfortunes or blunder-

ings, or to divert from politicians' broken promises or misgovernment.

What a stir has been made against a people so small in numbers. They, and also Christians, have been fiercely persecuted. Why? Because the great truths and principles for which both stand are more important to them than their lives. Jehovah, the only true God, is just and true — “Justice is the habitation of thy throne.” It is not likely that Jehovah would give His witnesses any law short of His own standard. Listen to His just principles — “Thou shalt not vex a stranger or oppress him . . . ye shall not afflict any widow, or fatherless child . . . I (God) will surely hear their cry . . . and I will kill you with the sword . . . if you take your neighbour's raiment to pledge, you must give it back to him before sundown — Exod. 22:21-26. And again we read — “If you meet your enemy's ox or ass going astray, you shall surely bring it back to him again . . . Thou shalt not pervert justice from the destitute when he pleads.” “Ye shall have one manner of law for the alien (stranger) as for one of your own country.” —Exod. 23:4,6; Lev.24:22. These are samples of some of their laws and standard of justice.

Can you wonder why they are hated by dictators? Even an infidel has admitted that their political system was the most practical demonstration of freedom and equality that has ever existed before or since.

Jehovah's witnesses have done more toward the civilization of the world than any other nation, and these laws were enforced hundreds of years before the rest of Europe and Asia dreamt of anything but absolute rule — dictatorship.

These witnesses were the first light in the unrelieved despotism of the east; they were the light of civil and religious toleration in remote and savage times, the pioneers of liberty and civilizations; and quite a number of them have been winners of the Nobel Prize. What we have in the New Testament is the fulfilment and perfection of the truth to which they witnessed, culminating in that perfect Witness, Jesus of Nazareth — “For to him give all the prophets witness” — Acts 10:43. He is the “faithful and true witness”, the Witness of Jehovah — Rev. 3:14.

What is it that made these people different, and their living and moral standards so much

higher than other nations around them? What is the basis of their special privileges and knowledge, and why were they severely punished for disobedience to their laws? The answer is — “To them were committed the oracles of God.” They were an enlightened people. “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” “Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen” — Isa. 43:21,10.

Jehovah takes responsibility for the existence and preservation of Israel. Their existence bears testimony that God exists, and their experiences, both of prosperity and adversity, bear testimony that Jehovah has created Israel as a nation, and is responsible for their preservation, even to this day. Verse 2 of Isa. 43 says so — “When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee; when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee.” Also verses 16,17 — “The LORD maketh a way in the sea, and a path in the mighty waters”, has been literally true in their experiences. Remember also Moses’

vision of the burning bush at the time he was called to deliver Israel from bondage; the bush that burned yet never was consumed.

In Isaiah 17:12-14 the prophet predicts the ruin of Israel's enemies who come against them like a mighty flood. The Lord is the keeper of Israel, as Isa. 43:3,4, says — "I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour . . . I will give people for thy life." The fire of persecution, hate and jealousy raged fiercely against them — "When thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be consumed"; their enemies were defeated. The witnesses of Jesus also find great consolation in this promise.

As a people they were saved out of their troubles and afflictions; they will have still more, but God's promises of final deliverance will never fail. They are His people, and His care of them is yet to be a mighty witness to His glory among all the nations.

"Ye are my witnesses, saith the LORD, that I am he" — that I exist, that I live, the self existing One. "Beside me there is no Saviour." There is no one, no dictator, no power, no nation, or combination of nations that can

destroy His witnesses. “None shall deliver out of my hand; I will work and who shall turn it back?” He alone is the preserver of Israel — “I will make Jerusalem a burdensome stone for all people; all that burden themselves with it shall be cut in pieces, though all the people of the earth be gathered against it” — Zech. 12:3.

Isa. 43:12 — “I inform, I save, I foretell.” Jehovah informed Israel; He gave them His oracles, His utterances; they were given the true religion. He informed them that all nations would be blessed through them. See Psa. 147:19,20. Jehovah had informed them that if disobedient to His instructions He would drive them out of their inheritance, lead them captive into strange lands, and scatter them among all nations until “the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” — Luke 21:24 — a punishment which all the world knows has come to pass. Israel has witnessed the glory and decay of four universal empires, Babylon, Persia, Greece and mighty Rome. But the witnesses still exist; yes, more than exist; they show definite signs of dynamic vitality which has astonished even their enemies. Truly, they

remain a separate and distinct people. Why? "I am thy Saviour", saith the LORD. "None can deliver (snatch) out of my hand." "Ye are my witnesses" — You prove that I am God, the preserver of Israel.

"I have saved." Many attempts have been made in the past, as well as in recent times, to annihilate these defenceless people, but the decree has always been — "Thus far, and no further." Suffer they did, indeed, but as a people they were never destroyed. Through one means or another the Lord delivered them out of the hands of the destroyer. You, no doubt, are aware of the two outstanding attempts made to annihilate them — ancient and modern. In the Book of Esther, chapters 3-7, a lengthy account is given respecting Haman, the prime minister of Persia, who, under a Persian monarch obtained a decree from the king to have all Jews in the realm destroyed because he hated a Jew in an honourable position at the king's court. But the plot finally failed; Haman the Jew-hater was destroyed — hung on the gallows he prepared for Mordecai. The modern attempt, as all the world knows, was made by Hitler, the

German dictator; again the destroyer was himself destroyed and his empire divided. Although millions of Jews were destroyed by Hitler, the Jews soon after became an organized nation, established in their own land. One emperor of Germany said — “Leave these people alone, no one prospers who attacks them.” Another writer has said — “Anti-Semitism is the barometer of social decay.” To the ancestor of the Jews, the Creator said — “I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee” — Gen. 12:3.

In verse 21 of Isaiah 43 we read — “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” You see, the Lord has a purpose in preserving His witnesses. They shall transmit the knowledge of the true God in future times — “The word of the LORD shall go forth from Jerusalem” — Isa. 2:2,3.

Returning to verse 12 — “I have showed.” Another translation reads — “I foretell.” The Lord has foretold many things concerning His ancient people, Israel. The history of the Jews was written in advance — their rise to fame, their disobedience, their punishment, their

scattering among the nations. Hosea 3:4,5 states — “For the children of Israel shall abide many days without a king, and without a prince, and without a sacrifice, and without an image, and without an ephod, and without teraphim: afterward shall the children of Israel return, and seek the LORD their God, and David their king; and shall fear the LORD and his goodness in the latter days.” The Lord has foretold their experiences past, present and future; no strange god or prophet could do this.

The Jewish people, God’s witnesses, are one of the most outstanding proofs of the inspiration of the Bible: they witness to the existence of a Supreme Being, the Creator and Preserver of Israel. They witness and prophesy accurately to the work, office and glory of the Messiah; no false witness or prophet could do this. If others bear witness to Jehovah, it could be only a second-hand witness, for of necessity the witness would be a repetition of the words of Israel’s recorded witness, written in their thirty-nine inspired Books. So, beware, Satan has his counterfeits in this matter too — false witnesses, and, therefore, a witness against Jehovah.

Verse 4 of Isaiah 43 states — “Thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee.” God made them honourable because He chose them and made them the depository of the precious truths of true religion; therefore, they are precious in His sight. Because of His strange and miraculous dealings and providences with His ancient people, Israel, God and his Word will be glorified in the eyes of all nations. Remember, all this applies to a people whom the Lord chose hundreds of years before the Christian dispensation.

When the Book of Isaiah was written there were no Christians; we read of them only in the New Testament, and they followed Jesus Christ. They are not referred to particularly as Jehovah’s witnesses, but as the sons of God, as Christ’s brethren, and witnesses of Jesus. Rev. 20:4 states — “I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God.” Also in Rev. 2:13 we read of “Antipas, my faithful martyr (witness)”, and so faithful Christians give their lives particularly for the witness of Jesus.

What is the present state of these witnesses of Jehovah? Verses 5 and 6 of this 43rd chapter of Isaiah tell us — “Fear not: for I am with thee: I will bring thy seed from the east, and gather thee from the west; I will say to the north, Give up: and to the south, Keep not back: bring my sons from far, and my daughters from the ends of the earth.” This is being fulfilled today; the God of Israel is re-gathering His witnesses, His afflicted people to their home. Yes, it is now time for them to go home. We quote from the “Jews in the News” as follows — “It was the power of God which brought the new Jewish State into being, for how else could such victories have been won by a handful of untrained people in the face of such overwhelming odds, with the surrounding states as enemies, and greater enemies supporting them in the background. Many believed in God and the fulfilment of their promises, and when they saw this wonderful protection even the unbelieving were conscious of miracles working on the side of Israel.”

They became established in Palestine against the will of many people. Not one

nation helped them; even as some of them approached their beloved land in unseaworthy ships they were turned back by the powers that be, to their great disappointment and anguish, but the promise still held good — “I (Jehovah) will work, and who shall hinder it” — turn it back — Isa.43:13. The Jews in Israel have a saying, that he who does not believe in miracles is not a realist. They have witnessed the greatest Divinely inspired phenomenon of our day.

But someone may say, Did not God cast away natural Israel when they rejected and put their Messiah, Jesus Christ, to death? And did not Jesus say — “Your house is left unto you desolate?” — Matt. 23:38. Therefore, does not spiritual Israel inherit the promises? This is partly true, the chief place of favour and some of the most choice promises will be inherited by spiritual Israel — “Israel hath not obtained that which he seeketh for, but the election hath obtained it.” However, natural Israel has not been cast off forever. The 11th chapter of Romans refers to this temporary casting off, and shows how the followers of Jesus of both Jews and Gentiles inherit the

best of the promises. These are referred to as the priesthood, the holy nation, being all told, a little flock.

This is the day of the Lord's preparation; the hour has struck in the Divine Plan of the ages for the deliverance and regathering of God's ancient people. The God of Israel is moving swiftly and mightily on behalf of Jacob's posterity. Isaiah 11:11,12 reads — "It shall come to pass that the Lord shall set his hand the second time to recover the remnant of his people . . . And He shall set up an ensign for the nations, and shall assemble the outcasts of Israel, and gather together the dispersed of Judah from the four corners of the earth."

In this pioneering effort, to reclaim their waste and barren land, there is of course much sacrifice, hardship and austerity among them. They do complain and grumble, and they have 65 languages in which to grumble, for they have come from about that number of countries. But beneath this surface there is a powerful, vigorous vitality, as if some invisible force is driving them on. During the first few years of being established as a nation we wit-

nessed the most spectacular migration of the 20th century. One has figured it out, and says — “Imagine 150,000,000 homeless, penniless, sick and bitterly persecuted people swarming into the United States of America during the same period of a few years, to seek a haven of refuge, and you have some idea of how many destitute newcomers, proportionately speaking, the tiny State of Israel has taken in.” And these migrants are not hand picked, as is usually done by other countries, but the poor, the rich, the lame, the disabled, the sick and the old are all taken in, even the perishing. It is astounding, and the wandering Jew is still going home, and he is there to stay. I remind you of Amos 9:14,15 — “I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them. And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the LORD thy God.” Remember this was promised to a people who were given an inheritance in a special way, the bounds of which were marked out by Divine decree; they

transgressed, they were plucked up out of their land and scattered among all nations and now are being regathered.

It does not make sense, nor harmonize the Scriptures to try and spiritualize these Scriptures, or force them to apply to a nation, or group which has not even the features of a Jew, not even the customs nor the unique experiences and promises which belong exclusively to the Jew, to Israel. Strange it is how many people and groups want to make the Jewish promises apply to themselves, their particular group, or to a Gentile nation. All of this is, of course a trick of the Adversary, to distract attention from the real people, and the purpose of fulfilment. How odd of God to choose the Jew, and still more odd of men to choose the Jewish God, yet spurn the Jew.

What does all this mean? What relationship have these things to the nations in general? It means that the Gentile Times have ended. Jesus said — “Jerusalem shall be trodden down of the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles be fulfilled” — Luke 21:24. The word “until” marks a turning point in the times and seasons of Israel’s experiences and

captivity. The time is up that was allotted to the powers that be to rule the world; the retribution and breaking down of the Gentile powers has begun; the saving and restoring of Israel is well under way, and we are witnessing these movements. It means, as stated in Isa. 43:21 — “This people have I formed for myself; they shall show forth my praise.” Jesus, the Witness of Jehovah, said — “Salvation is of the Jews” — John 4:22 — “The word of the LORD shall go forth from Jerusalem” — Isa. 2:3.

This means that the blessing of all the families of the earth through Abraham’s seed will soon take place, for the Millennial reign of Christ and His glorified saints, His joint-heirs, will soon begin. The blindness of Israel concerning their Messiah will soon depart, as predicted by Jesus — “Ye shall not see me henceforth, until ye shall say, Blessed is He that cometh in the name of the Lord” — Matt. 23:39. The word “until” marks a turning point in the religious life of Israel. There will also be a great change in human society — a desire to learn the ways of the Lord, and the beating of swords into plowshares. See Micah 4:1-4.

There are a number of Jews, some being rabbis, who are bearing testimony by word and pen that Jesus of Nazareth is their Messiah. One of them has said — “Can anyone today be such a Jew as Jesus was?” Decidedly no! In recent years thousands of New Testaments in Bulgarian, Hebrew, French, German, Yiddish, Polish and other languages have entered Israel duty free. When Benjamin Disraeli (Lord Beaconsfield) was asked if he was a converted Jew, he replied — “I am not a converted Jew, but a completed Jew.” Israel is being regathered and being made a completed Israel. Both the Old and New Testament are thoughtfully read by many in Israel, and it is reported that the New Testament is being read also in schools, not so much to believe its contents at the present time, but to become acquainted with its history.

The national blindness of Israel to the fact that Jesus is their Messiah continues only for a definite period. This hinges upon another part of God’s plan to be completed first, namely, the selection from among the Jews and Gentiles of the required number to make up

God's elect, the joint-heirs, joint-rulers with Christ; all these must first come into the Church. This number will constitute the governing body with the King of the Jews to administer the Laws of the impending Millennial Kingdom, as stated in Rom. 11:25-27 — “For I would not, brethren, that ye should be ignorant of this mystery, lest ye should be wise in your own conceits; that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fulness of the Gentiles be come in. And so all Israel shall be saved: as it is written, There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: for this is my covenant unto them (the New Covenant), when I shall take away their sins.” Note the same names — Israel and Jacob — as given in Isa. 43.

In Rom. 11:11 we have the question — “Have they stumbled that they should fall (irrecoverably)? God forbid (by no means); for through their fall (temporarily) salvation is come unto the Gentiles.” Verses 12 and 15 continue — “Now if the fall of them be the riches of the world, and the diminishing of them the riches of the Gentiles, how much more their fulness? . . . What shall the receiving of them be, but life from the dead.”

The restoration and recovery of natural Israel will yet mean, in the age to come, the enrichment of life for the whole world of mankind. Zech. 8:23 states — “Thus saith the LORD of hosts; In those days it shall come to pass, that ten men shall take hold out of all languages of the nations, even shall take hold of the skirt of him that is a Jew, saying, We will go with you: for we have heard that God is with you.”

Verses 28, 29, 32, 33 of Rom. 11 continue — “As concerning the gospel, they are enemies for your sakes (the Gentiles’ sake); but as touching the election (the original selection, or choice of God), they are beloved for the fathers’ (ancestors’) sakes,” to whom God made definite promises; “For the gifts and calling of God are without repentance (without change)”, . . . For God hath concluded them all in unbelief, that he might have mercy upon all. O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out!” The natural man cannot comprehend God’s purposes, but He has revealed them unto us by His spirit.

The Lord will do these things not because the Jews are righteous, but because of His great name's sake. Three reasons why He will do this are thus shown from Rom. 11:28,29,32. (1) Because of the fathers' sake — Israel's ancestors. (2) Because of His unchangeableness; He will honour His promises. (3) Because of His love and great mercies' sake. Are we not glad that we have gotten free from the creeds and interpretations of men, of whom Paul warns as "wise in their own conceits", for these make verse 32 read quite differently, namely — "Concluded them all in unbelief that he might condemn all everlastingly." We are glad this is wrong, and the Apostle Paul has stated it right, and presents to us a God of wisdom, justice, love and power. Then, in due time, man shall say — "This land that was desolate is become like the garden of Eden; and the waste and desolate and ruined cities are become fenced, and are inhabited. Then the heathen that are left round about you shall know that I the LORD build the ruined places, and plant that that was desolate; I the LORD have spoken it, and I will do it" — Ezek. 36:35,36.

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