

Jehovah's Witnesses have used dates to establish or legitimize their existence since they began in the 1870's. All the dates they used back then have been gradually discarded as time went by, and evidence proves all those dates to be Biblically and historically untenable. This, in itself, should be a red flag for any serious Bible-believing Christian. Why?

“Watch out for false prophets” (Matthew 7:15 NIV)

“Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name claiming . . . ‘The time is near’. Do not follow them” (Luke 21:8 NIV)

“When a prophet speaks in the name of Yahweh and the thing does not happen and the word is not fulfilled, then it has not been said by Yahweh” (Deuteronomy 18:22 NJB)

There are many sources available to get the details of the history of Jehovah's Witnesses and their date setting, if one wishes. The date 1914 was put forward originally in the 1800's as the date of Armageddon, and the end of the world, etc. These facts, in themselves, that is, the setting of dates, are a critical violation of the scriptural principles of:

“About that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father” (Matthew 24:36 NIV).

“It is not for you to know the dates and times the Father has set by his own authority” (Acts 1:8 NIV).

The Witnesses revised their assertions about 1914, and since 1943 they have loudly proclaimed 1914 to be the date of Christ's coming into 'full Kingdom power', and the beginning of 'the last days'. Even though they have revised exactly what all that meant many times, they have held to the 1914 date ever since. How do the JW's arrive at the 1914 date? Their own sources reveal a rather complex patchwork cobbling together of various scriptures

combining with some historical events to calculate a starting point of the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians about 600 years before Christ, which begins a time period of 2,520 years, culminating in the year 1914. Again, you can easily check the JW sources themselves at jw.org. This entire framework of setting the 1914 date is unscriptural, but the starting point of this 2,520 year time period, is completely unscriptural, and also contradicts historical facts. The JW's for many years used a 3 1/2 year period they asserted from scripture, 'prophesying in sackcloth' ([Revelation 11:2,3](#)), to apply from the fall/1914 to the spring/1918, and claimed the first "anointed ones" were then resurrected to heaven. Since 8 prominent JW leaders were imprisoned in the summer of 1918 until spring/1919, the JW's claimed the "three and a half days" of being killed and lying dead on the streets of "Sodom and Egypt", the world, and then coming back to life spiritually with their release from prison ([Revelation 11:7-11](#)). The JW's still assert a spiritual 'cleansing' during this period of time, marked by their being commissioned by God, as they now assert, as his "faithful and discreet slave" class of leaders ([Matthew 24:45](#) NWT). But this entire framework/patchwork of scriptures/time periods has been hinged on the 607 BCE date being accurate.

There is much documented historical evidence, which is fairly easy to check, to support the date of 587/586 BCE as the date of Jerusalem's destruction by the Babylonians, including the glorious temple built by Solomon. The JW's, however, assert that this destruction occurred in 607 BCE, without any supporting evidence, using only their own conjecture. The JW's accept the historically verifiable date of 539 BCE as the date of Babylon's fall, with the takeover of the Medo-Persian Empire. The problem for the Witnesses? The 587/586 date and the 539 date are both supported by much of the same prolific documentary evidence. But here's the kicker for the JW's—the 586/587 BCE date that the Witnesses reject, has even stronger evidence than the 539 BCE date, which the JW's accept, and the 607 BCE JW date has none!

The following two quoted paragraphs give the Witnesses' line of reasoning to arrive at their 607 BCE date for Jerusalem's destruction. Notice that they insist on a literal 70 year period from the return from exile, which they assume was in 537 BCE, back to 607 BCE.

The pivotal date for counting back to Adam's creation is that of Cyrus' overthrow of the Babylonian dynasty, 539 B.C.E. Cyrus issued his decree of liberation for the Jews during his first year, before the spring of 537 B.C.E. [Ezra 3:1](#) reports that the sons of Israel were back in Jerusalem by the seventh month, Tishri, corresponding to parts of September and October. So the autumn of 537 B.C.E. is reckoned as the date of the restoration of Jehovah's worship in Jerusalem.*

This restoration of Jehovah's worship in the autumn of 537 B.C.E. marked the end of a prophetic period. What period? It was the "seventy years" during which the Promised Land "must become a devastated place" and concerning which Jehovah also said, "In accord with the fulfilling of seventy years at Babylon I shall turn my attention to you people, and I will establish toward you my good word in bringing you back to this place." (Jer. 25:11, 12; 29:10) Daniel, who was well acquainted with this prophecy, acted in harmony with it as the "seventy years" drew to a close. (Dan. 9:1-3) The "seventy years" that ended in the autumn of the year 537 B.C.E. must have begun, then, in the autumn of 607 B.C.E. The facts bear this out. Jeremiah chapter 52 describes the momentous events of the siege of Jerusalem, the Babylonian breakthrough, and the capture of King Zedekiah in 607 B.C.E. Then, as [Jer 52](#) verse 12 states, "in the fifth month, on the tenth day," that is, the tenth day of Ab (corresponding to parts of July and August), the Babylonians burned the temple and the city. However, this was not yet the starting point of the "seventy years." Some vestige of Jewish sovereignty still remained in the person of Gedaliah, whom the king of Babylon had appointed as governor of the remaining Jewish settlements. "In the seventh month," Gedaliah and some others were assassinated, so that the

remaining Jews fled in fear to Egypt. Then only, from about October 1, 607 B.C.E., was the land in the complete sense "lying desolated . . . to fulfill seventy years."—2 Ki. 25:22-26; 2 Chron. 36:20, 21.— "All Scripture is Inspired of God and Beneficial," pg. 285, para. 5-6

In the following commentary on Isaiah's prophetic book, they take the 70 years "that Tyre must be forgotten", which they say start to run after Jerusalem's destruction, to not be a literal 70 years. This 70 year period, should be nearly identical to the period when Judah and "all the surrounding nations", "will serve the king of Babylon seventy years" (Jeremiah 25:8-12 NIV).

Isaiah goes on to prophesy: "It must occur in that day that Tyre must be forgotten seventy years, the same as the days of one king." (Isaiah 23:15a) Following the destruction of the mainland city by the Babylonians, the island-city of Tyre will "be forgotten." True to the prophecy, for the duration of "one king"—the Babylonian Empire—the island-city of Tyre will not be an important financial power. Jehovah, through Jeremiah, includes Tyre among the nations that will be singled out to drink the wine of His rage. He says: "These nations will have to serve the king of Babylon seventy years." (Jeremiah 25:8-17, 22, 27) True, the island-city of Tyre is not subject to Babylon for a full 70 years, since the Babylonian Empire falls in 539 B.C.E. Evidently, the 70 years represents the period of Babylonia's greatest domination—when the Babylonian royal dynasty boasts of having lifted its throne even above "the stars of God." (Isaiah 14:13) Different nations come under that domination at different times. But at the end of 70 years, that domination will crumble. What will then happen to Tyre?— "Isaiah's Prophecy - Light for All Mankind," pg. 253, para. 21

We see the JW's are using the same prophecy of [Jeremiah 25](#), "these nations will serve the king of Babylon the seventy years", applying it to both Tyre and Jerusalem/Judah. But they apply the "seventy years" with a rigid literalness in the case of Judah/Jerusalem, and with somewhat less literalness in the case of Tyre. This double standard violates the principle:

"One weight here, another there; this is abhorrent to Yahweh, false scales are not good"—[Proverbs 20:23](#)

Why do the Jehovah's Witnesses hold so steadfastly to the [1914](#) date? Likely because they

have so much invested in it! What happened in 1914, according the Witnesses was in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, and they were the ones that God used to proclaim this to the world, both before and after 1914. Never mind that they have changed their story about exactly what happened 'in fulfillment of prophecy' numerous times. As a matter of fact, none of the things the JW's predicted to occur in 1914 came true. Please check neutral sources for details. The one big event that did occur was the outbreak of World War I, which is something that the JW's did not predict. However, the way the Witnesses spin the story, they claim they predicted WWI to fulfill Bible prophecy. The Witnesses now rarely ever admit that the Bible was not the only calculator for 1914. they also used astrological symbols and measurements from the Great Pyramid in Egypt (which they did not discard until 1928) to arrive at 1914.

The main point of this article is to make clear that the Witnesses own publications are inconsistent on the use of the 70 year time period from [Jeremiah 25](#). This is the time period the JW's use to extrapolate from the historical date they accept, 539 BCE, allowing 2 years for the return of Jewish exiles to Judea in 537 BCE, then extrapolating the 70 years from there back to 607 BCE as the date of Jerusalem's destruction. The 537 BCE date is a little bit conjectural, as there is no proof that 537 is the exact date of the return, although it couldn't be more than a year or so off. Much more problematic for the Witnesses, however, is the 607 date for Jerusalem's destruction, which has zero historical proof, whereas the 587/586 date has abundant historical proof. The real kicker for the Witnesses, by their own admission, is their own [Isaiah's Prophecy Volume 1](#) book, which admits the 70 year time period in [Jeremiah 25](#) isn't necessarily a literal 70 years.

The JW's, while loudly proclaiming their strict adherence to Bible principles, have in reality, violated them, **"prophecy out of their own imaginations"** ([Ezekiel 13:17 NIV](#)). The 607 BCE to 1914 CE time period is an example of that. Near the beginning of this article are scriptures that condemn date-setting by Christians, which the Witnesses have consistently violated. In this, they have been like **"the one who hears (Jesus') words and does not put them into practice"**. The problem? This **"is like a man who built a house on the ground without a foundation"** ([Luke 6:49 NIV](#)), that is, without scriptural foundation.

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May we not fall into this unscriptural trap!