

Give me that old time religion. Dates we never hear anymore. 1874

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Russell, following Barbour and the Second Adventist, understood that when man had been on the earth for 6000 years, Jesus would come, the church would be raptured, and the thousand years of Sabbath rest would occur. Russell calculated that man's time on earth was coming to an end in 1874. He believed that this would bring about the second advent of Christ and a time of harvest.¹ Russell believed that Jesus was now a spirit creature and would not be seen by human eyes.² The Second Adventist did not believe this and thought that His return would be visible. Following 1874, Russell taught that Jesus was present, invisibly. Rutherford maintained this belief until the beginning of the 1930s. A Watchtower from 1924 confirmed 1874 as the year of Jesus' return.³ As late as 1929 a book written by Rutherford vouched for the 1874 date.⁴ However, in 1932, 1874 was ignored and the date of Jesus' return was changed to

¹ Russell, *Thy Kingdom Come* (1891), 128. "The six thousand years in which God has permitted evil to dominate the world, prior to the beginning of the great seventh or sabbatic thousand, or 'Times of Restitution, dates, from the entrance of sin into the world. And since the Times of Restitution began with October 1874, that must be the end of the six thousand years reign of Sin ; and the difference between that and the date shown in the chronology from Adam's creation represents the period of sinlessness in Eden, which really belongs to the reign of righteousness."

² Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, "View from the Tower," *Zion's Watchtower and Herald of Christ's Presence*, August 1883, 1, accessed August 5, 2018, <http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Magazines/The%20Watchtower/1883%20The%20Watchtower.pdf>. "And concerning the Lord's second coming, while we realized that he is no longer a man but is now the new creature—the express image of the Father's person—a quickening spirit, yet we failed somehow to make a proper application of this to his second coming, and unthinkingly and ignorantly, rather expected his coming to be as a glorified man, than as a spiritual being. It was not until about 1874 that these things became clearer, so that we realized that when Jesus should come, it would be as unobserved by human eyes as though an angel had come; and that it could be known only by some miracle, by some manifestation or demonstration."

³ Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, "The Outlook for 1924," *Watchtower*, January 1, 1924, 5, accessed August 5, 2018, <http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Magazines/The%20Watchtower/1924%20The%20Watchtower.pdf>. "Surely there is not the slightest room for doubt in the mind of a truly consecrated child of God that the Lord Jesus is present and has been since 1874. . . ."

⁴ Joseph Franklin Rutherford, *Prophecy* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1929), 65, accessed August 5, 2018, <http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Books/Teachings/1929%20Prophecy.pdf>. "The Scriptural proof is that the second presence of the Lord Jesus Christ began in 1874 A.D."

1914.⁵ Then in 1943 a new chronology was proposed and the date 1874 was retired. 1914 became the new date of Jesus' invisible return, and 1874 was abandoned as a significant date.⁶

⁵ Joseph Franklin Rutherford, *What is Truth?* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1932), 48, accessed August 5, 2018, [http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Brochures/1932%20What%20is%20truth%20\(wtr-E\).pdf](http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Brochures/1932%20What%20is%20truth%20(wtr-E).pdf). "The Scriptures show that he must wait until the end of the Gentile times, which times began in 606 B.C., extended over a period of 2520 years, and came to an end in the autumn of 1914. That was the period of time in which Jehovah permitted Satan to carry on his wicked work without interference. At the end of that period of time. Jesus Christ, in obedience to his Father's will, began the great work of ousting Satan and establishing kingdom. The year 1914, therefore, marks the second coming of Christ."

⁶ Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, *The Truth Shall Make You Free* (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, 1943), 152, accessed August 5, 2018, [http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Books/Teachings/1943%20The%20truth%20shall%20make%20you%20free%20\(tf\).pdf](http://www.watchtowerwayback.org/jw-wb/English/Books/Teachings/1943%20The%20truth%20shall%20make%20you%20free%20(tf).pdf). "From Adam's creation to the end of 1943 A.D. is 5,971 years. We are therefore near the end of six thousand years of human history, with conditions upon us and tremendous events at hand foreshadowed by those of Noah's day." Therefore, since 1874 was in place because it was thought to be the end of 6000 years and the beginning of the Sabbath thousand years, the rearrangement of the prophetic timeline meant that 1874 was no longer a contender for the return of Jesus. That event would logically be located in the mid-1970s except that 1914 is central to Watchtower theology and Jesus was to have returned in 1914.
