

Jehovah's Witnesses published an article entitled "An Attack Coming From the North" (The Watchtower-Study Edition, April 2020), in which they admit that their prior explanation of the prophecy of **Joel 2:7-9** was out of context, and therefore inaccurate. To accurately understand Bible prophecy, we must consider the context!



How can we understand Bible prophecy?

Their new explanation of this prophecy is very similar to the one that what they call "Christendom" has explained for a long time, that is, the Babylonians would invade Judah and Jerusalem from the north and take over. Unfortunately for the JW's, however, they still hold to their **607 BCE** date for the destruction of Jerusalem, since it fits in with their ill-fated 1914 date.

In their explanation, the Witnesses make an astounding statement: ***"To understand a prophecy correctly, we generally have to consider its context" (The Watchtower, April 2020, Study Article 14, paragraph 2).*** —**"Generally"???**—Why would we not always need to "consider its context"? Would there ever be a Bible prophecy that we could take out of context, and come up with an explanation that is correct?—Absolutely not. It would be like trying to float a ship on dry land.

Then they go on to make another equally astounding statement. ***"If we focus on only one aspect of the prophecy and ignore the rest, we may draw the wrong conclusion".*** —***"May draw the wrong conclusion"???*** This is unbelievable. If we ignore every aspect of a Bible prophecy except one, how could we not draw the wrong conclusion?

At least the JW Organization admits they were wrong about **Joel 2:7-9**. However, they seem to downplay a vital point about wise decision making. Wise decision makers take into account all relevant facts—not just one—before making a final decision. This also applies to understanding Bible prophecy.

Why would they make statements such as these? It appears that it may be to cover up for a number of erroneous prophetic interpretations that they have made, including their most important ones; namely, **Matthew 24:45** and 1914.

Jesus gave his great long range prophecy that is recorded in **Matthew 24, 25**. He concludes this with four parables that exhort each Christian to be faithful, always active, and working for Christ and his Kingdom's interests (**Matthew 24:45-25:46**), all the while without any figuring out when the Master will return, since Jesus admitted he didn't know that date himself (**Matthew 24:36-44**).

It is the parable of the faithful and wise servant (**Matthew 24:45-51**) that the Witness organization has long used out of context to assert that their leaders fulfill this prophecy. The way the JW's explain it, their leaders, guided by Almighty God, have been dispensing "spiritual food at the proper time since the year 1919". If that is so, then why have the Witnesses had to change their explanations so many times? When they change their explanation, the former explanation becomes obsolete, or no longer correct.

"God, who cannot lie" (Titus 1:2 NASB) never makes a mistake, **"his work is perfect" (Deuteronomy 32:4 NASB)**. Therefore, he doesn't give out tainted spiritual food. This one fact means that God is not the one 'guiding the witness leaders'. The JW's glossing over this one fact, among others, contributes to the wrong explanation of the parable of the faithful and wise servant, applying it to only a select few Christians, instead of each and every Christian.

The Bible makes clear that **"interpretations belong to God" (Genesis 40:8 NRSV)**. **"He**

reveals deep and hidden things.” “There is a God in heaven who reveals mysteries” (Daniel 2:22,28 NIV). From these scriptures we learn that Almighty God reveals the right, or accurate, interpretations of prophecies. But how? **“In the past God spoke to our ancestors the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1,2 NIV).** Jesus is God’s final prophet, and God has spoken to us through him. How? In that everything we to know about Jesus has been **“written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name” (John 20:31 NKJV).**

Today, all we need to know is written down in God’s Word, the Bible. This is further confirmed by, **“the faith that was once for all entrusted to God’s holy people” (Jude 3 NIV),** that is, written in the Bible. We are warned, **“not to go beyond what is written in Scripture” (1 Corinthians 4:6 GWT).** Any interpretation that goes ‘beyond the scriptures’ should be rejected.

Therefore, to properly understand Bible prophecy, we must consider the context in the Bible, both the remote and the local contexts..