

The Martyring of Matthew Barrie

Part Three: The Judicial Appeal

Transcribed by F.V.

“As one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you have continually said to us you refuse to comment.” - Chairman of the Appeal Committee (Podcast 12 – 48:37)

“...how much worse could this get for you?” Because, let us just say the decision eventually comes to the fact that you’re disfellowshipped. Surely that means that from the standpoint of Jehovah, if Armageddon comes imminently, you’ve had it! So, how much worse can it be for you?” - Appeal Overseer Two (Podcast 12 – 49:32)

“So, what is it you’re saying, that because I’m already under sentence of death that I might as well just say everything you want to hear?” – Matthew Barrie, accused and convicted of thought-crime; ‘stubbornly holding on to’ heretical thoughts, ‘disseminating’ such to congregation elders on pastoral visits, and eating lunch and playing soccer with a disapproved person. Decision to disfellowship upheld because Matthew refused to answer a question he had a conscientious objection to. (Podcast 12 – 49:59)

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Podcast 11

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Notice: While I have endeavoured to record conversations accurately, the purpose of adding bold lettering is to highlight what I personally feel are major ethical issues that are explained and analysed in my essay: **The Martyring of Matthew Barrie – A Study in Ethics.**

Author’s Note: Names have been changed.

Transcript begins: (00:00)

Appeal Chairman: Now just before we start off, Matthew, you’ll be aware that, in such a hearing as this,...(indistinct)...there’s no recording devices permitted. So, you may have notes in your Bible, and that’s fine, but if you would like to...

Matthew: Yeah, I left it in the car. (0:15)

Appeal Chairman: You’ve left it in the car. So there’s nothing else there. That’s fine, ‘cause we’re...we’re the same; we don’t have any recording devices at all. So, I would still might be suggest if you have your Bible and your notes there, but just pop your bag outside.

Matthew: Well, I’ve just got notes and stuff in here.

Appeal Chairman: Just got notes...

Matthew: Just a couple of reference Bibles and some notes and stuff, that's all I have in it. You're welcome to have a look if you want to.

Appeal Chairman: That's good, no. Thank you very much. So I'm (The Appeal committee chairman). This is (Appeal Overseer Two) and (Appeal Overseer One). So we've been assigned by Jehovah's Organisation just to hear the appeal...okay? (0:50)

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: So what we're going to do is start with a prayer upon our hearing and then we'll just have a look at a scriptural thought and then...

Matthew: (Rummages around in his bag). I'm just going to sit over here.

Appeal Chairman: That's fine. So we're just going to ask I... to say a prayer, please.

Appeal Overseer One: Dear heavenly Father Jehovah, we're meeting here to make sure that your Will and purpose is accomplished. That's why we have met to discuss the deliberations of the judicial committee have had, the conclusion they've reached, and how Matthew feels about things. So in this meeting, Heavenly Father, we ask that your holy spirit permeate our discussion because we ask it in the authoritative name of your Son, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Matthew, Appeal judges, and original Judicial Hearing Committee members:
Amen.

Appeal Chairman: So we understand, Matthew, from the initial committee-hearing that you had with these brothers here, that it was on the *charge of apostasy, and their decision was to disfellowship. And you've appealed against that, so that's why we're here.*

Just to set things off, it would be good to have a look at Deuteronomy chapter 1. It's just to assure you of something, Matthew. It's quite important to do this. (2:00)

Appeal Chairman looks up a scripture.

Deuteronomy 1 and verses 16 and 17. You'll remember that there was judges put in place, wasn't there?, for the nation of Israel to work under Jehovah's direction, and it says there, it says: 'And I went on to command your judges at that particular time, saying, "When having a hearing between your brothers, you must *judge with righteousness between a man and his brother or his alien resident.* You must *not be partial in judgement.* You should hear the little one the same as the great one. You must not become frightened because of a man. For the judgement *belongs to God;* and the case that is too hard for you, you should present it to me and I must hear it.'"

So you maybe see the reason why we're using those verses, Matthew. You may be feeling a bit nervous or apprehensive tonight, but it's to give you an assurance that we are here to be *impartial judges*; that's why we're here. We're going to listen to your case of appeal *impartially*, because Scripturally we're bound to do that. So *we don't have preconceived ideas* here, okay? We want to hear what *you* have to say or what the original judicial committee has to say and when we present any witnesses – what they have to say as well. But we will listen to you *impartially*, okay?

So, probably the best thing for us to do first of all with that in mind – your letter of appeal, you just mentioned that you felt that there was a serious miscarriage of justice. I think that's how you phrased it, wasn't it?

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Chairman: So, please explain to us why you feel that's the case.

Matthew: Well, some of the reasoning that I used at the original judicial committee was based upon why the action had been taken against me in the first place and, having listened to the testimony of the two brothers, particularly (Prosecution Witness One), it's my feeling that (Prosecution Witness One) reacted in a way that I felt was the catalyst for this judicial committee to start, because I had a conversation with (Prosecution Witness One) down at the Hall. (4:12)

We had to come down, speak to him about a matter, I felt he'd done some wrong towards me, and I felt like that was the catalyst for all of these judicial proceedings to be implemented. So, some of the things that (Prosecution Witness One) took from that ***discussion from listening to his testimony he was upset about, and I believe that as a result of that, (Prosecution Witness One) wanted some action taken.***

And that's what I believe was partly the ***miscarriage of justice***; that the initial charge that was made, that a person who's an apostate is spreading things or teaching things to people, I felt that (Prosecution Witness One) held that personal view because he made another statement to me at the Hall in the same conversation, a false statement. He accused me of something that wasn't true: that I had been teaching someone else, without any foundation. So I feel that that then ***stressed what (Prosecution Witness One)'s will was towards me and as a result of what the testimony he gave at the Kingdom Hall that that what has put this in motion.***

Now, having said that, some of the testimony that the brothers gave, they did mention things that were discussed in a shepherding setting. Now, I did express some of my ***opinions*** and some views which they would have shown me some scriptures about. That was used at the judicial (hearing) as well as the conversations that I had with (Prosecution Witness One) and (Prosecution Witness Two)...

Appeal Chairman: Okay.

Matthew: ...So, I felt that on the basis of that, that's why I felt I had to appeal.

Appeal Chairman: Okay, okay. And we will hear that. We need a little bit more detail on what you've just mentioned there, Matthew. For example, what were the things that were discussed?

Matthew: Well, what I must make clear, as I made clear at the original judicial-meeting, I came down to the Kingdom Hall because ***(Prosecution Witness One) had visited my mother-in-law who's one of Jehovah's Witnesses, and as a result of (Prosecution Witness One) not following theocratic procedure, he brought up some private matters and some matters which could be said to have been of a judicial nature.*** And he said in ***front of his wife*** and in front of my mother-in-law to ***warn her off associating with myself and my wife***, who has disassociated herself. So, as a result of some of the things that he said, ***that is why I found myself as per Matthew 18:16 (15) down to speak to him.*** (6:26)

But as a result of that conversation, (Prosecution Witness One) initiated a spiritual dimension to the conversation, because one of the things that (Prosecution Witness One) said was, to my mother-in-law, was ***that we didn't believe Jehovah was God. I found that quite offensive, that (Prosecution Witness One) would have said that.*** He didn't remember saying that, but that was what my mother-in-law said they had said. Now, ***I'm quite sure if you were to get (Prosecution Witness One's wife) in, who was there, and assist in questioning them, they might be able to provide a better testimony as to what was actually said.***

So, as a result of that particular issue being raised, (Prosecution Witness One) asked me, "Well, do you believe that Jesus is God? So (Prosecution Witness One) was actually

pursuing a line of questioning which was challenging me to give him an answer. So I said to him I believed Jesus is the Son of God, and the conversation developed on to the theme of Jesus receiving worship. What (Prosecution Witness One) stated at the judicial committee was...he was so disturbed by what I'd said he had to go home and research it.

Now, I believe (Prosecution Witness One)'s a genuine brother. He's a very charismatic and sometimes *emotional brother, and I feel that, as a result of him being disturbed*, he felt that if he could be put in that position, then I must represent some danger to the congregation, despite the fact that there are *no members from any of the congregations here, not even close friends of mine are Jehovah's Witnesses, to say that I've been teaching them things that were wrong*. So I felt that from that, (Prosecution Witness One) got the idea that I was trying to teach him something false.

Appeal Chairman: Okay, okay. With regard to what was discussed about Jesus and worship, what was said?

Matthew: (Prosecution Witness One) said to me, he asked me a question; Do you believe Jesus is God? And I said I don't believe Jesus is God. I believe he's the Son of God. I've actually written down what (Prosecution Witness One) said, if you'd like me to...

Appeal Chairman: It's up to you if you want to present that...

Matthew: It's probably better to...it'll be more accurate. I'll just see if I can find it now. (*Matthew looks for and finds his notes*)

The first part of the conversation was really into me saying to (Prosecution Witness One) *I felt that what he said was wrong; it was an inaccurate piece of information*. Then I said to him the bit about him saying I don't believe that Jehovah is God, and he said, 'While we're on the subject, do you believe that Jesus is God?' And I said, 'I believe Jesus is the *Son of God*.' And (Prosecution Witness One) mentioned about, 'You were saying that Jesus and God were on an equal...on an equal footing.' And I said, 'Well, does the Bible describe Jesus being worshipped? And (Prosecution Witness One) said, 'Yes.' So I asked him, 'Well, why is it you don't give any worship whatsoever to Jesus? Because *(Prosecution Witness One)'s previously made this statement to me: 'I don't worship Jesus.'*

So I asked him, well, why is don't give Jesus *any* worship? And (Prosecution Witness One)'s response was that he believes it's a *relative worship* of Jesus. And I said, 'Well, listen, R..., you're welcome to your own beliefs. All I'm doing is sticking to what I find in the Bible. I said *I haven't been associating with the congregation for nine or ten months, so I'm not trying to influence anyone else.* (9:46)

It was then that (Prosecution Witness One) said, 'Yes you are, you're teaching (A...) – that's my mother-in-law – that Jehovah and Jesus are the same.' Now, that was an untrue statement. *I haven't even had any spiritual discussions with my mother-in-law at any time.* I can't speak for my wife because she's disassociated herself, but *I certainly haven't.*

So to me, it demonstrated that *(Prosecution Witness One) had a preconceived idea* about me and he was also willing to make a false accusation. What I said to him was purely based on what I found in the Bible regarding the worship of Jesus. Now, if that disturbs (Prosecution Witness)'s personal faith or he doesn't know what Jehovah's Witnesses believe on the matter, then I can't be held responsible for that.

Appeal Overseer Two: Can you just run that by me again, Matthew, the point you made about the dispute about the relative worship. Use your notes if you want if it helps. Just explain that again, w...what really that was about.

Matthew: Well, I said to (Prosecution Witness One), ‘Why is it you don’t give any worship whatsoever to Jesus? And he said, ‘Well, I believe it’s a relative worship.’ And I said, ‘Well, what does that mean, (Prosecution Witness One)?’ But he never got around to explaining his definition of it. But, I just said, ‘Well, I would rather...*what I found in the Bible to be the ultimate authority rather than you saying to me what you believe or me saying what I believe. Why don’t we just stick to what the Bible said.*’ And I quoted a few scriptures to him.

Appeal Overseer Two: What scriptures did you quote?

Matthew: I quoted Hebrews chapter 1, verse 6 to him. I’ve actually...I actually can turn it up to you if you wish, you know. I don’t have my Bible on me, but I’ll read you what I found regarding the scripture. It’s Hebrews chapter 1, verse 6. And it’s...the discussion is... Verse 5 sets the scene where God is saying, ‘For example, to which one of the angels did he ever say: “You are my son; I, today, have become your father”?’ And again: “I myself shall become his father, and he himself will become my son”?’ But when he again brings his Firstborn into the inhabited earth, he says: “And let all God’s angels do obeisance to him.”’ And if you look in the footnote, it says there, “Or, “*let...worship.*” So, that was all I said to (Prosecution Witness One). (12:06)

Appeal Overseer Two: Did you use any other scripture, Matthew?

Matthew: I quoted a scripture in Revelation where it describes all the creatures worshipping the One seated on the Throne and the Lamb. So I said to him, ‘What setting is being described here if all creation in heaven and earth are rendering worship to Jehovah and Jesus – Jesus being the Lamb – then why is it you feel it’s inappropriate to even discuss the subject of Jesus being worshipped?’

Appeal Overseer Two: And how did you – when you researched the Faithful and Discreet Slave Class’s comments on these scriptures – how does that influence your thinking?

Matthew: Well, it’s a long time since I’ve researched the actual material in question. As I say, it wasn’t...*I didn’t come down to present a challenge to (Prosecution Witness One)’s faith or even engage in a spiritual discussion.* All I was down was to discuss with (Prosecution Witness One) the relative merits of the truth of what he’d said, and as a result of (Prosecution Witness One)’s question, this is the path it took me, because obviously I’m not just going to say to (Prosecution Witness One), ‘Well, I’m not telling you what I think, or anything like that, because I was being honest with him.

Appeal Overseer Two: Had you researched subsequent to that conversation just to make sure you were in line with the Faithful Slave?

Matthew: Yes I have. I would like to ask the brothers here, Do you feel that it’s appropriate for Jesus to receive worship as Jehovah’s Witnesses...Do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jesus is to be worshipped?

Appeal Chairman: You’ve mentioned you’ve done some research on that? What have you found in your research?

Matthew: I would just like to establish what you brothers feel first; if you feel that... Do Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jesus is to be worshipped?

Appeal Overseer One: Didn’t you just say that the term ‘worship’ in the Greek expression, the alternative rendering of obedience is the idea of awe and reverence? And so, yes, he is held in high esteem in that standing. But when you use the expression, ‘worship,’ do you mean the type of worship that’s given to Jehovah should be given to Jesus?

Matthew: Well, that was part of the discussion that (Prosecution Witness One) and I had, and I said, I quoted a scripture – I think it's John 5. I've actually got a little note of it if you'll give me a little second, I'll see if I can find it (*Matthew looks through his notes*). (14:10)

I quoted John 5:22, 23, where it says: 'The Father judges no one at all, but he has committed all the judging to the Son in order that all may honour the Son just as they honour the Father. He that does not honour the Son does not honour the Father who sent him.' So the point I was making to (Prosecution Witness One) was that, as Revelation describes the praise, the honour, the respect, the glory, is given to Jesus in equal measure in Revelation, it's described, as it's described by Jesus himself in John 5:23. (14:48)

Now, as I said, the brothers in the initial judicial meeting, there was nothing that I felt I had said to (Prosecution Witness One) that was out of line with either Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs or what the Scriptures actually say. Now, as I say, I can't be held responsible if (Prosecution Witness One) feels upset at that. (15:05)

Appeal Overseer One: It's just to clarify. It's not a terminology you would use commonly here, Jesus regarding worship, because it's usually misconstrued with the teachings of Christendom about images etcetera, that type of worship.

Matthew: So, what word then would you say? Do Jehovah's Witnesses believe in that?

Appeal Overseer One: Well, you're a Jehovah's Witness. That's why we think you're here, because you want to continue to be one of us. 'Course, if you want to go off on a different tangent in different beliefs, that's entirely up to you. So when you use the expression, 'worship,' for reverence and obedience and according dignity to be bestowed on Jesus, and then he uses the word 'worship' for Jehovah, what's the difference to you? (15:46)

Matthew: Well, I think that, given the fact that *Jesus is our Saviour* and he's the *Chief Agent of our faith*; that puts him quite an important role, because the Scriptures describe *Jehovah committing all the judging to the Son*, and the Apostle Paul says in Timothy that he's our saviour. So, therefore, I feel that Jesus is in an important position. However, *Jehovah is our Eternal Father; so therefore, he's the one who's provided the Ransom in the first place*. So, it's not for me to define exactly the whys-and-wherefores of how that worship or respect or honour is administered, and certainly (Prosecution Witness One) and I didn't discuss that. It was a whole...it was (Prosecution Witness One)'s concept of worship that seemed to be... He made the statement to me previously that he doesn't worship Jesus, so therefore, to say to me at a later time that it's relative worship, to me, those *two statements are incongruent*.

Appeal Overseer One: You said to me that you had to do more research on, like Questions from Readers. I mean, do the angels worship Jesus? etc. It's always terminology...

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: ...of the original writings. But just...I want to just, for my own sake, see what the differences that you see between the two. (16:59)

Matthew: Well, this is only research I have done on it and it's from the Bible itself...

Appeal Overseer One: Just for example, just to help you along those lines, er, worship to Jehovah is worship to God Almighty as the Creator, the only one...,

Matthew: Yes, yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: ...you don't feel that way about Jesus?

Matthew: This is what I found from the Bible, Revelation 5:12 -14, and it says: ‘The *one sitting on the throne and the Lamb* are to be blessed and the honour and the glory and the might forever and ever. And the four living creatures went saying, ‘Amen’ and the elders *fell down and worshipped towards the Lamb and the one seated on the throne.*’ Then, as we already discussed John 5:22, and then... (17:43)

Appeal Overseer One: That wasn’t the question I asked you.

Matthew: What about it?

Appeal Overseer One: The question was, The worship that Jehovah gets as God Almighty the Creator, you don’t attribute that to Jesus, do you?

Matthew: Well, all I can say is what I found in the Scriptures of what it says about equal honour, equal glory, and equal praise, from what I read in John 5.

Appeal Overseer One: What about Revelation 4:11, ‘You are worthy to receive the glory and the honour and power because you created all things’?

Matthew: Yeah,

Appeal Overseer One: ‘...because of your will...’ and they say that heaven in acknowledgment to Jehovah. So, from that basis – is that the separation you see between Jehovah and Jesus?

Matthew: Yes. That’s right. But that’s what I see, because Jesus himself said that the Father is greater than he was. So, from the point of view of relativity there is a distinction there, because remember when Satan was trying to tempt Jesus, Jesus said, ‘It is your heavenly father you must worship,’ so it would have been wrong for him to give worship to Satan, obviously. (18:39)

Appeal Overseer One: Mmmm

Matthew: But by the same token, Peter refused worship....

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: ...and the Greek word was ‘proskyneō,’ but then when Jesus healed one of the people who, during the time of his ministry, it was the same term ‘proskyneō’...

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: ...that was used and the person did obeisance to Jesus....

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: ...but he didn’t turn that down in the same fashion that Peter turned it down. (19:01)

Appeal Overseer One: So, you gain a little bit of insight into the terminology and usage of the word, which, of course, could be misleading some brothers who might not have researched it as well. But it is clear and I have got this thought in mind, that when it comes to the exclusive worship that the Bible speaks about pertaining to Jehovah, you see that distinction...

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Overseer One: ...between him and Jesus?

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Overseer One: And that he alone should be worshipped by that distinction.

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Overseer Two: So how would you say that affects your view of worship of Jehovah, Matthew?

Matthew: Well, I mean...

Appeal Chairman: We can sit and discuss these finer points, which is fine to do, but t...t...that's not essentially why we're here, is it? How does it affect your worship?

Matthew: Well, I'll tell you how it affects my worship. If someone disfellowships me on the basis...I'll just read this, if you don't mind. It was explained to me that I was called to the judicial committee meeting on the accusation of apostasy. *Apostasy* was defined as '**holding to, or promoting teachings contrary to Jehovah's Witnesses.**'

The chairman of the judicial committee stated that the primary reason I was being disfellowshipped was because I had left the teaching of the Christ by promoting the worship of Christ. So my question would be to you brothers in this room, **Do Jehovah's Witnesses believe it is proper to worship Jesus in any way, yes or no?** (20:24)

Appeal Overseer One: *We've already explained that.*

Matthew: So, *what would that be – a yes or a no?*

Appeal Overseer One: *It's not a yes or a no. We've already explained that.*

Appeal Overseer Two: *We've discussed that.*

Matthew: So, the question I would have then is, If I was speaking about Jesus being worshipped in any capacity, then would that be out-of-line with Jehovah's Witnesses?

Appeal Overseer One: Since you don't know the distinction, that's why we have these Questions from Readers, because some of the brothers at different levels of understanding. And because such a word can be misconstrued, you've got to use the wisdom of what words to use in what company and when, is that not true?

Matthew: Yeah, but the *brothers in the Organisation have used the same terminology...* (20:57)

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: *...respecting Jehovah and Jesus...*

Appeal Overseer One: You never hear the Governing Body, when they're giving talks, talking about worshipping Jesus, because they're ...(indistinct)... misunderstood unless the subject was particularly about that.

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: That's why they don't go about using that.

Matthew: I'm not saying that... That's not my purpose to do that.

Appeal Overseer One: You can see the concern if somebody goes about saying we should be worshipping...

Matthew: Problem is, **I wasn't going about saying that.** I happened to have a discussion with (Prosecution Witness One) in which I presented what the Bible said regarding the worship of Jesus. **(Prosecution Witness One) was then upset by that.**

Appeal Overseer One: Well, I think we've covered that. If you don't mind, Matthew, we've covered that point, 'cause I can see us getting into...

Matthew: Can I present one more thing to you?

Appeal Overseer One: *...semantics* here, which is not...

Matthew: I understand what you're saying. This is...I've just taken the liberty of copying this out for you. This is the *Watchtower Bible and Tract Society's Legal Charter*, which is still in force. This is what it says on the second page; that part of the purpose of the organisation is, 'for the *public Christian worship of Almighty God and Christ Jesus*, to arrange for and hold local and worldwide assemblies.' So that's the legal charter there, and it says...it doesn't make any distinction as to the relativity of the worship...

Appeal Overseer One: No, but it talks about God Almighty ...(indistinct). There's only one God Almighty.

Matthew: Yes, all it says in that key sentence, '*the public Christian worship of Jehovah God and Christ.*' (22:17)

Appeal Overseer One: Jesus is not called God Almighty.

Matthew: What's that?

Appeal Overseer One: Jesus is not called God Almighty.

Matthew: No, I'm just saying it says there, 'Jehovah is...' It says, 'God Almighty and Jesus Christ.' So my question would be, *If* I'm speaking to a brother, like (Prosecution Witness One), and I happen to speak about the subject of the worship of Jesus, and then I'm subsequently given the primary reason for my disfellowshipping as not holding to the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses – *it's in the Legal Charter of Jehovah's Witnesses!*

Appeal Overseer One: Well, we've got your testimony...

Matthew: You can check it if you want, that's an authentic document...

Appeal Overseer One: (Indistinct)...it says the same thing. (22:50)

Matthew: So that's all I'm saying. That was all I presented to (Prosecution Witness One) and how (Prosecution Witness One) deals with that... *It would be different if I had a soapbox in the kingdom Hall telling everyone, 'worship Jesus, worship Jesus,'* and making that sole statement that it was a very defined part of the conversation, which, as I say, was not an issue to myself.

Appeal Overseer One: Well, I think...I think we've got the drift of that. We appreciate the points you make.

Appeal Overseer Two: Just a couple of things that just may be germane at this point... Matthew, you seem to be...if I picked you up as saying the reason why you basically appealed is because the charge of apostasy was *not proved by this point about the worship of Jesus.*

Matthew: Well, that's the specific charge that they...that was the primary charge that was given to me; that I deviated from the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses; that it was improper to worship Jesus. It's in the Legal Charter and it's in the Bible...

Appeal Overseer Two: Okay...

Matthew: ...that Jesus is worshipped! So...

Appeal Overseer Two: Do you...would you say about yourself that you adhere closely to the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses which you accepted when you were baptised?

Matthew: Well, I haven't attended the meetings for about nine or ten months, so...

Appeal Overseer Two: Is there a reason for that?

Matthew: I've fallen by the wayside, but, the thing is, because *I've not been at the meetings for nine or ten months,* as you know, there are things that change within the publications and the teachings and beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. I explained this to the brothers at the previous judicial committee.

For instance, the teaching of the Generation. When I was still attending meetings, the teaching of the Generation wasn't the Anointed, it was a previous explanation. So, if I was to hold to that previous teaching, that would put me contrary to the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. So, if you're not attending the meetings you're not going to keep in touch with everything that's getting taught. (24:29)

Appeal Overseer One: Well, even those of us who have to get things clarified sometimes have to look back....

Appeal Overseer Two: So, people that know you, Matthew, would still identify you as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses.

Matthew: Well, I don’t associate with people in the congregation per se and I’ve moved house into a new part of the community. None of the people in my window-cleaning work know that I’m a Jehovah’s Witness, so I wouldn’t say I’m particularly well-known as a Jehovah’s Witness. And, the fact is, that none of my close friends – one of my friends is in another congregation, (congregation member) – and he actually asked me why I wasn’t going to the meetings anymore, and I said, ‘Look, it’s personal reasons,’ and he pressed me on it, ‘Can you not just tell me.’ I said, ‘Listen (...), you’re taking a Bible study with (another congregation member)’ I said, ‘I don’t want to disrupt your life. If you’re happy taking a Bible study and you’re quite happy in the Organisation,’ I said, ‘That’s good enough for me.’ I said, ‘I don’t want to disrupt that.’ (25:22)

So, to me, that demonstrated what my attitude was to people who do wish to come to the meetings on a regular basis. So it’s contrary to that what (Prosecution Witness One) was accusing me of; that I was well-known as a person who’s...

Appeal Overseer One: Just so we don’t get...(indistinct)...

Appeal Overseer Two: I wanted to come back...I’ve got a few things...

Appeal Overseer One: It’s just I wanted to... It’s...it’s doctrinal points like the Faithful and Discreet Slave to you. *Is the Governing Body in Brooklyn the spokesman of the Faithful and Discreet Slave to you?*

Matthew: Yes. (25:55)

Appeal Overseer One: And the issues that come up sometimes – medical, about blood and that, er, as a Jehovah’s Witness, how would you feel if the doctors were saying you needed a blood transfusion?

Matthew: I’ve written away about it to the Organisation in the past and I got a response back about it. So I was quite happy about the response that I got back along with another issue. *So, what I decided from then on was, if I had any views on things then I’ll pretty much keep them to myself, because I’ve spoken to my brother about it, and then some of the things I was concerned about I raised at the shepherding visits.*

Now, it appears that what I expressed I can’t prove what my opinion is to be correct. So, all it was, was an expressed view...,

Appeal Overseer One: That’s all right...,

Matthew: ...an expressed opinion.

Appeal Overseer One: ...because we’re allowed to have views on different things in Jehovah’s organisation. If you want to remain a Jehovah’s Witness we all have the same view and opinion of *doctrinal matters*. So on the point of the blood, would you accept a blood transfusion if the doctor said that your life was at risk? (26:55)

Matthew: I wouldn’t accept a blood transfusion.

Appeal Overseer One: So you believe (what) in the Bible says, ‘abstaining...

Matthew: Of course.

Appeal Overseer One: It’s just you didn’t give me the answer...

Matthew: No, that’s because I believe some things are a personal matter that are quite private. It’s not that I’m trying to avoid answering it.

Appeal Overseer One interrupts Matthew (indistinct).

Matthew: That's a clear Acts 15:28, I can see that. But other things that people may have. I mean, I'm sure every single brother in this room at one time or another has read something in the publications they're not quite certain about.

Appeal Overseer One: I've sometimes sat down and said, 'I don't know...I don't know whether I kind of get that or not' but I'll follow what the Faithful and Discreet Slave says, because usually they're right, and I've got it wrong (he laughs), and on a rare occasion I've got it right.

Appeal Chairman: Yeah. (He laughs) The kind of things that you're mentioning, Matthew, concerns that you might have. What do you think it's appropriate to do with those concerns? You mentioned that you might research them... (27:43)

Matthew: Yeah, well...

Appeal Chairman: What else might it be appropriate to do?

Matthew: My initial concerns were a number of years back and I wrote away about them. I discussed it with my brother. I composed a letter to the Organisation, I wrote away about it. Some of the answers I was given were fair enough, some of the answers were basically, 'Well, that's what we're teaching at the moment. It may change.'

Appeal Chairman: Yes.

Matthew: I can't send them another letter: 'That's not good enough, explain that to me.'

Appeal Chairman: (Indistinct) ...that clarification about that, which was fascinating about...(indistinct)...you mentioned one there about...

Appeal Overseer Two: Unborn children.

Appeal Chairman: Recently there was a change of viewpoint or they couldn't dogmatically say so. So we appreciate that you will have views and, sometimes..I mean, we have views and, because we know each other we say, 'What do you think about this? Toss things back and forward, what may not be in line with the recent written thing, but it's just a developing thing, 'what do you think?'

But we don't go around and talk to others... I know you've said you don't go around talking to others, but I wanted you to understand that, if we think about things...I've even had calls from brothers about, 'they we'll be as the angels in the coming system of things,' 'cause they're worried about their mate who has passed away, and they were wondering, will they see them again. So, some things you do have discussions about, but not everything is per se written down and we're not criticising anyone having those views. Do you appreciate that? (28:59)

Matthew: Yeah. The other thing I would like to say with regard in that was, the two conversations that were outside of the shepherding visits – because I objected strongly in the initial meeting that I hadn't been at the (Kingdom Hall) meetings for a number of months. The brothers wanted to come up and see me. They asked me some questions, they showed me some scriptures. *I expressed an opinion and a viewpoint*, which, some of it may have been a little bit different to what they understand.

Now, I objected that that sort of *ecclesiastically-privileged environment* would be used against me in a judicial (hearing). It would be different if I had admitted to some gross sin, or something like that.

Appeal Overseer Two: What was that expression, Matthew – 'ecclesiastically-privileged'?

Matthew: ...privileged. You know how the brothers have organ...have argued in the past that *confidentiality* issues would not be appropriate to be discussed. They've argued it through the courts on the basis of *ecclesiastical privilege between the elders* and maybe a brother in the congregation.

Appeal Overseer Two: It's quite a legalistic term to use, Matthew. (29:55)

Matthew: Yeah, but they have used it in a legal setting, brothers. So I'm only repeating what I've read in...

Appeal Overseer Two: It's interesting you use that expression.

Matthew: So the brothers explained to me that there were other occasions. Now, the two occasions that they quoted were the *conversation with (Prosecution Witness One), which we've already discussed, and a subsequent conversation with my brother.*

I do my brother's windows for him, I clean his windows. And I had a discussion with my brother which started out in a general discussion, but because some of the things were tied in, I explained to him partly what I was discussing with (Prosecution Witness One). And I said various things which were essentially the same thing. So those two occasions were to two occasions outside the shepherding arrangement.

Appeal Overseer One: It's such a pity you've fallen away because to find a student of the Bible...

Appeal Chairman: ...someone who does their research. I was just briefly going to ask you, with this kind of idea of ecclesiastical privilege, and I'm not disputing that at all, but just maybe to ask a wee scenario of how that works, because it's important to understand how that works. You don't need to be legalistic about this, you know, we want to look at the Scriptural basis for it.

If I can maybe use a 'what if,' purely a scenario with you, Matthew – you go to one elder and you mention to him that, er, you've been smoking, yeah? (31:17)

Matthew: Uh, um.

Appeal Chairman: Now, what do we know about what the Bible's standard on smoking?

Matthew: Well, the application is 'presenting your body as a clean sacrifice,' so therefore, to defile it in any manner, by doing something like *smoking or abusing drugs*, or whatever, would be considered a violation of that principle.

Appeal Chairman: Yes, you recognise that as one of Jehovah's Witnesses. So – you were to say that to one...one elder, for example, (Prosecution Witness One). How would that ecclesiastical privilege work in that case?

Matthew: Well, as I understand it, the apparatus at the moment is that if an elder's told something that may be constituted wrong, then he's obliged to tell the presiding overseer about it. So, I can understand why the brothers feel we have to do that.

Appeal Chairman: Okay.

Matthew: So I can see it working *in that direction*, yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Now, just to get you thinking that the Scriptural reason why that is, Matthew. James helps us to see that. (*They look up a scripture*) Just bear with us on this, James chapter five. Because you've mentioned...you're quite right, you mentioned the *functionality* of that in speaking to the presiding overseer and then things would be in place. It's good to get a Scriptural reason *why* that's the case. It says there in verse fourteen. It says, 'Is there anyone *sick* among you, let him call the older men of the congregation *to him*. Let them pray over him, greasing him with oil in the name of Jehovah.'

You see the point there, Matthew? So why, why would...rather than that elder just keep that to himself, why would he speak with the presiding overseer? Why would you have a couple of fellows to speak with you? (33:23)

Matthew: Yeah, I understand what point you're making there. You're obviously saying that the...

Appeal Chairman: It's not just me, is it? It's the Scriptures there...

Matthew: Well, obviously you've directed me to the verse, but the point you're making is the person be in a position where the elders will be trying to help the person in some capacity or another.

Appeal Chairman: Yes, yeah. So, would that still uphold the ecclesiastical privilege?

Matthew: Yeah – I'm not necessarily saying that doesn't mean the brother shouldn't pass any information on – I wasn't saying that. What I was saying was that in this specific instance, because, after all, I hadn't been attending the meetings and the *brothers came to me. I invited them into my house.* If they were to come in and ask, 'Read me a scripture and I say, 'what does this mean? And I sat there with my arms folded and don't answer them, then what's the point in having the visit in the first place? So, I was honestly answering my opinion was at the time, because as I said, no one can say for sure, 'this is exactly the case and it will never change.' So all I did was give my opinions on a few things. (34:25)

Appeal Overseer Two: Just maybe sort of in line with, Matthew... *So are you still convinced that Jehovah's Witnesses are the one, true organisation and there is no other organisation that Jehovah God is using?*

Matthew: Well, I said to the brothers before at the previous judicial meeting *I didn't want to discuss any aspect of my personal views any longer*, because I felt...*I felt let down* by what happened at the judicial (hearing). So from this point on I made a vow to myself that I wouldn't discuss my personal views with anyone, because I thought, based on what (Prosecution Witness One) and my own brother, (Prosecution Witness Two), said to me, that it was fine to discuss things.

Like my brother (Prosecution Witness Two) said to me, some of the things I'd spoken about he got the impression that I was trying to persuade him, but he said he didn't have a problem with that, because if I couldn't speak to one of the elders then who could I speak to? So he led me to believe that it was okay to speak to him about things, the questions that I had or maybe a different viewpoint about things. So, because I've realised that's not the case, then *I'm not going to discuss my own personal or private preferences any longer with anyone.* The reason I came down to the first judicial (hearing) was obviously to defend the accusation and *the reason I've appealed is because the judgment wasn't fair.*

Appeal Overseer Two: But with the greatest respect, we have the right to feel the reason you've appealed is because you wish to remain one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Matthew: Yeah, that's right. Why would I want to disassociate myself?

Appeal Overseer Two: Well, then, surely, then it's quite logical to say, 'Yes, I do believe that.' (35:50)

Matthew: Yeah, but that's the thing, though. *For me to express any further opinions to anyone would put me in the same category as it did before*, because I've got into this position of being a judicial hearing *because* I've expressed opinions. So for me to comment on *any* aspect of Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs – I'm not...*I'm not going to do that.*

Appeal Overseer Two: Say somebody...I mean. I take it you're not active in the field service at this point?

Matthew: I've not been out for a long time.

Appeal Overseer Two: But, say in the course of some kind of informal situation, maybe one of your customers said to you, you know, 'I really think all religions are rubbish and, you know, every religion's terrible and... Would you defend Jehovah's Witnesses... (indistinct)?

Matthew: I said previously I don't... My customers aren't aware that I'm a Jehovah's Witness. So, what I would do in a situation like that is I would have a bit of a Bible discussion with someone. I would share some of the hope that we all have for the future from the Bible. But I...

Appeal Overseer Two: Then what would you do after that?

Matthew: Well, that's what I'm saying. I don't...It's just my own personal decision that I've not let my customers know...

Appeal Overseer Two: Would you try and direct them to...(indistinct)...to call on them...?

Matthew: Well, that's what I'm saying to you. I wouldn't mind sharing some Bible truth with people about what we all hope for the future. I wouldn't mind doing that. It's just a personal business decision that I wouldn't discuss things.

Appeal Overseer Two: And what if they said to you, Matthew, 'That's really interesting. I want to find out more about that.' What then are you to do? (37:18)

Matthew: Well, what I would say on that occasion is, I wouldn't feel comfortable telling people, 'Why don't you go to the Kingdom Hall,' when I don't go myself. You see, I would...I'd feel that would be hypocritical. Why would I say, 'Well, Jehovah's Witnesses have got the truth. Make your way on down to the Kingdom Hall?' 'Oh, do you go?' 'No.' So that would be a silly thing to do.

Appeal Overseer Two: ...You might honestly say to someone, 'Listen, I've not got the strength.' See, my father was like that. My father was not attending meetings, but if anybody asked him, he would say, 'You should be going.' So, because he believed it was the truth, you see, it was just about selfishness finally. He wanted to do other things.

So, um, that's what many people who have been in an inactive situation to be recognised maybe they've embroiled themselves in some shameful thing although they don't, you know, feel condemned. But it's very unusual for someone who says he wants to be one of Jehovah's Witnesses not to direct an interested person to the Organisation, because that's where they're going to get life, isn't it? So, um, it seems you've got quite a struggle with that, haven't you? (38:29)

Matthew: Oh yeah, I mean, like I said before obviously people fall by the wayside all the time, so...

Appeal Overseer Two: Can I just ask: obviously your wife's disassociated, that's a great stress.

Matthew: Yeah. Well, it's been a very stressful time.

Appeal Overseer Two: How do you...how do you feel about those who have decided to take a stance against our organisation, because there's not a few that have decided to do that, isn't there? How do you personally feel about...?

Matthew: Do you mean by disassociating themselves?

Appeal Overseer Two: Or being disfellowshipped because they reject...

Matthew: Well, I work with a number of people through my business that I...that I have contact with that are ex-Witnesses. But obviously not having been at the meetings for a

while, well, your views sometimes change or your standards slip a little bit and I did say that to the brothers at the previous judicial (hearing). That has happened to me, which obviously is not the right thing to do.

But it has been a very *stressful time* because one of *my best friends disassociated themselves* last year, *then a couple in another congregation – we’ve all grown up together, we all pioneered together – both disassociated themselves*, and then, of course, towards the end of the year *my own wife disassociated herself*. So, it’s not an easy thing to go through, so I think it’s only to be expected that you’ll stumble along the way, especially if you’re not...if you’re not at the hall.

Appeal Overseer Two: Would you rather they were still all with us? (39:52)

Matthew: Well, I would like to think that we’d all be in the same position, yeah. I would like to think we’d all be in the same position, but people are obviously individuals and they make up their own...

Appeal Overseer Two: I’m just not following you. What do you mean by all being in the same position?

Matthew: Well, if we were all in the faith that would be great.

Appeal Overseer Two: In this Faith – that we all hold in common, Matthew?

Matthew: But, the thing is, people are bound to make their own personal decisions on things.

Appeal Chairman: How do you feel about that decision that they’ve made? Do you feel it’s right or wrong?

Matthew: Well, I think *it’s a shame*. That’s all I’m going to say on it, I think it’s a shame, *the way things have turned out* for the people concerned.

Appeal Chairman: Can I just mention, Matthew, and please don’t think I’m trying to coerce you in anything against your will – that’s not our purpose here, and I wouldn’t imagine you would let us do that anyway. But, you’ve mentioned your reluctance maybe to open up and discuss things because of a mistrust you feel with ones earlier. Now, you really only just met (my fellow appeal judges) and I, so it’s maybe hard to feel you can trust us, and I respect that, I do respect that. But is there any reason to feel that you should *mistrust* us?

Matthew: No I don’t really know any of you personally. It’s only purely a decision I’ve made on my own merits, that’s all. It’s not that I’ve got anything against anyone, and just for the record, I don’t have anything against (Prosecution Witness One). I happened to feel that the way he’s handled things from the outset, I couldn’t agree with it, which is why I didn’t agree in the first place.

Appeal Chairman: I understand that, Matthew. Where I’m going with this, though, is just the idea that you’ve mentioned to me that you’d rather hold your own counsel in those matters.

Matthew: Yeah, absolutely.

Appeal Chairman: But wh...what we are keen to establish i...in the manner of impartiality that we mentioned earlier, in Deuteronomy is, we *want to know* how you feel in these matters.

Matthew: In what matters?

Appeal Chairman: The matters (he laughs) – it may sound a bit sickly, this – but the matters that you’re saying that you’d rather keep quiet.

Matthew: Well, *I am not going to discuss it* because I haven’t been influencing people at the Kingdom Hall and I haven’t been associating with them. So, therefore for me

to...for me to continue to discuss my own personal views wouldn't be in *anyone's best interests*. *It certainly wouldn't be in mine*, and if I start to discuss my views with other people...

Appeal Chairman: Why wouldn't it be in *your* own best interests, Matthew?

Matthew: Because if I *express an opinion on something like I said to you previously...if I haven't been in the meetings for nine or ten months and I express an opinion which is somehow a different opinion to what the Organisation holds, then that could put me in a bad position*. So I wouldn't do that. And the same goes for yourselves – there would be no point in me expressing what I think could be something if you all feel something different.

Appeal Chairman: *What's the worst position you could be in, Matthew? Let me ask you that. What would you say is the worst position?*

Matthew: Well, I think, given what happened last week, I think that's probably, as a Jehovah's Witness, that's the worst position you could be in.

Appeal Chairman: Well, I see where you're coming from and in a sense you're right because it might represent the worst position, but d'you know, it's not the only thing it might represent that. Keeping quiet could as well. You see where I'm going with this?

Matthew: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Have a look at Jude (*they look up the Bible book of Jude*) and this is a very important point, Matthew, for you today, *very important*. And we want to emphasise this with you, because we're concerned for your life. I mean if you...I don't mean to put that in a dramatic way, but it's what it comes down to. Jude, and it's verses 22 and 23. Maybe I..., if you could read that, 22 and 23.

Appeal Overseer One: 'Also continue showing mercy to some that have doubts. Save them by snatching them out of the fire, but continue showing mercy to others, doing so with fear, while you hate even the inner garment that has been stained by the flesh.'

Appeal Chairman: Can you see our concern here, Matthew?

Matthew: Oh, yeah, yeah. I can see that. I've only tried to work things through in my own way.

Appeal Chairman: I...i...i...s there a worry of doing that, though?

Matthew: Yeah, I think if everyone's got their own ideas, then there wouldn't be much unity. But, like I said previously, my own views are that. It's not as if I've got a soapbox out telling people what I think.

Appeal Overseer One: Okay, but it's all right, surely, to ask on doctrinal points, because that's...like somebody says to me, 'Is that your personal view?' I said, 'My personal views are the view that's there,' that's what I agree with. So when you say 'personal views' you're referring to outside of sort of established doctrinal understanding, something you wonder about or you think about; 'I wonder whether it could be that?' It's not even written about...

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: ...in clear language. Is that what you mean by personal views?

Matthew: Yeah. (44:29)

Appeal Overseer One: Oh well, we're not really interested in those, the A to Z (he laughs). We're only interested in your personal views that we'd hope would be your views

about what the Bible says when I asked you about the worship and I asked you about the Faithful...and we asked you about the blood. So please don't think we're going to...***we're not policemen*** to say, 'What videos do you watch,' 'What's your gospel view of this programme or...But that's the idea, isn't it? That's not the views we want to go into. We just want to establish how you feel and how you feel there's been a miscarriage and whether you want to continue doing in the future.

Now, we understand that it is our belief as Witnesses that if somebody disassociates or disfellowships we could tell if we're in a business contract, we, as the Watchtower says, 'as soon as possible we break off where practicable that association.' If we're not in a business relationship then we would have no, er, business with the person unless – well, we can understand with your wife you would always have to, as a husband, care for some necessary things that way. My point in this is, do you similarly because the brothers have warned you about associating, not just business, but recreational activities about...

Matthew: Yeah, I recognise that, yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: And you feel they're right? You...

Matthew: Oh, yeah, yeah. The points that they've made, you know, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, I did recognise that. If I had tried to say I wasn't then I would just have denied it. They put it to me at the last judicial hearing that they knew about it and I didn't say that it wasn't true....

Appeal Overseer One: Sorry there, Matthew. I believe one of the questions there was, Would you engage in such association in the future? And you did you say, 'I don't want to answer that,' or something?

Matthew: I don't recall that question, to be honest. I don't recall that.

Appeal Overseer One: Well, what about just now?

Matthew: Well, that's the thing. I recognise that I...that I could probably have some help in that matter because that was what the brother said the last time, so to have some kind of reproof in that matter, I recognise that for future reference. (46:32)

Appeal Overseer Two: Can I just ask you something, Matthew? I've just got something in mind. So, one of the things that basically you feel is that, um, out of ignorance on your part – I don't mean that as an offensive term – just you were saying 'I've lacked accurate knowledge.' You've expressed yourself in a way that could be construed as being at variance with our permanent understanding. But the reason for that is not because you do not believe this is the true organisation, but it's because you have not been studying the...

Matthew: I haven't...I haven't been at the meetings for a long time and, as I say, I haven't really done all that much study in the publications. So, therefore, I just developed some ideas of my own. But, as I say, I wasn't trying to subvert anyone else and I made that clear to my brother on more than one occasion and he said to me that, 'No one is suggesting that you were.'

So, he doesn't think that I was trying to subvert anyone and yet, at this moment in time, he's one of the ones that's making an accusation, and certainly (Prosecution Witness One), at the first shepherding visit, his statement was that at the end of the shepherding visit, that he warned my wife, (...), because she *had* been speaking to people. We had evidence that she'd been speaking to people and he said, 'I would ask you not to do that.' But he commended *me* for having kept my own counsel on the matter.

So, to me, again, that is a contrary viewpoint from what (Prosecution Witness One) now doing in accusing me of doing the opposite of that.

Appeal Overseer Two: By the same token, you would say that (Prosecution Witness One) was correct to say to your wife, (...), that you shouldn't be speaking about these things? Is that your belief?

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer Two: Keep them to yourself...

Matthew: 'Cause, as I said to you previously, one of my close friends is a (Jehovah's) Witness and he actually asked me what my views were on things and why I had fallen away, then I didn't want to disrupt his lifestyle, and you can ask him if you want. I've not spoken to him since then. You can ask him – he'll confirm that with you that I wasn't trying to derail his study, or anything...

Appeal Overseer Two: No, no, I understand. Because you mentioned that earlier, didn't you? That you didn't want to reply because you wouldn't want to disrupt... Why would you say your reply would disrupt him, though, Matthew?

Matthew: Because....

Appeal Overseer Two: This is a different environment as we've said, isn't it? This is an environment to be open in these things because we want to offer assistance here. Why would you feel your reply would disrupt him?

Matthew: Because sometimes people aren't aware of all the facts or they aren't aware of the existence of particular scriptures or particular organisational factors. So, for someone to become aware of that, it could perhaps trouble their current understanding. So, therefore, what happened with (Prosecution Witness One), for instance, although he's a brother who's served for many, many decades, I'm not aware that (Prosecution Witness One) knew *it's in the Watchtower's Charter that discusses the public worship of Jesus and I wasn't sure if he knew about that footnote in Hebrews 1:6 either.*

So for me to say those things, they're only a product of my own information. So, if I was to go about one-by-one speaking to everyone in the Kingdom Hall, 'Do you know that Jesus is to be worshipped?' You could see how that would cause a problem. But, by the same token, *it isn't a false teaching, because it's in the Watchtower Charter and it's in the Bible. So, therefore, sometimes it's wise, as the Proverb says, 'not to speak, there's a time not to speak.'*

Appeal Overseer Two: We don't necessarily want to go down the line of what *might seem* to appear to be semantics, although, you know, as we kind of discussed...

Appeal Overseer One: You could do the same with the cross, couldn't you? You could legitimately say...(indistinct)...Jesus originally died on the cross, because it was what that original word meant. Of course, we'd be rather misleading to most of the brothers and sisters because they would think of the cross as pictured in Christendom.

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: You can see why...it's interesting, isn't it? The scripture you used in Hebrews 1:6 and a couple of other scriptures that use the same Greek word there. Why does it mention 'worship' in the footnote?

Matthew: I have no idea why it mentions it in the footnote as opposed to in the verses.

Appeal Chairman: And that's because the context, their understanding, our studying in Jehovah's organisation helping us...helps us to see that that word is quite broad in scope and covers the idea of doing obeisance or homage as a sign of respect, which has different

degrees. So, you can see why the New World Translation uses the word ‘obeisance’ rather than the word ‘worship.’ Doesn’t try to hide anything...

Matthew: No.

Appeal Chairman: ...it’s right there in the footnote! But you can see why he uses that. So, can you see where Jehovah’s organisation gives us a good lead on that? Does that make sense, Matthew?

Matthew: Yes. Perhaps, I don’t know if you’re aware of it, the first Kingdom Interlinear translation that the brothers produced in 1969 actually said ‘Let all the angels worship him, in the main verse. It didn’t say it in the footnote. It’s only subsequently that the next interlinear and subsequent New World Translations that it’s been altered and it now reads ‘obeisance’ and reads... So, at one point, if you’re using that line of reasoning, that it did actually say in the main verse...

Appeal Chairman: That’s not my line of reasoning...

Matthew: It wasn’t explained, you know what I’m getting at? If you were saying at one point the reason why it says ‘obeisance’ here, ...(indistinct)... any way to understand it correctly. By contrast you would have to say that the reason it said ‘worship’ in the 1969 interlinear was to say the opposite of that. So, therefore, for it to be changed...

All Circuit Overseers: The ‘light gets brighter...’

Appeal Overseer Two: So, how do you feel about that?

Matthew: Well, that’s what I’m saying. That’s what I said to (Prosecution Witness One). He made some accusations against me which I felt were false and I said...all I was doing was referring to my position and I used the Bible to do so. So, from that point-of-view I can’t say exactly what the verses are meaning. All I can do is quote the verse. That’s all I did. (52:18)

Appeal Overseer Two: Okay. Can I just ask, can we have a wee bit of adjournment, M..., so that we can talk or something?

Appeal Chairman: ‘Course we can. That would be all right, Matthew?

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Brothers, if you could do that. (52:51)

Podcast 12

There is a lot of movement as the circuit overseers and original judicial committee members move back into the Appeal room. Some elders are joking and laughing. Someone yawns and says, “I’m too old,” then laughs.

Appeal Chairman: Thanks for giving us a couple of minutes. What it would be appropriate for us to do at this point is – we’ve heard your testimony, Matthew. I don’t know...just before we...we propose to do next is bring each of the witnesses in, one at a time, just to hear their testimony with regard to what you’ve mentioned, and that needs to be done, you understand that, Matthew?

Matthew: Uh, um.

Appeal Chairman: That’s what we’ve discussed and the original hearing is the basis of the decision that the brothers have come to, so we need to look at that. But just before we do, do you brothers have anything you wish to comment on before we call the witnesses in?

All six elders say, no.

Appeal Chairman: So, okay? So maybe ask, er, (Prosecution Witness One) to come in first, okay? So... (indistinct).

Prosecution Witness One comes into the Appeal room. He greets everyone with a "Hi," and whispers something indistinct.

Appeal Chairman: So, thanks very much for coming in. We've had a discussion with Matthew. So, obviously the point's relevant to what we'd like to call you in as a witness for, is basically what you did for the original committee as well. Matthew's discussed briefly his conversation with you on occasions. Maybe just to get you talking about the matter; if you could maybe just tell us what you observed and heard from Matthew that's concerned you and partly has brought us to this discussion.

Prosecution Witness One: Um, well, I've had three discussions with Matthew, two...one with (a fellow shepherding elder [different from Prosecution Witness Two]) and one with (Prosecution Witness Two) and one just alone with Matthew. And, um, and these three discussions, um, er, Matthew made very clear his beliefs, um, for instance, I..I've written the ones down so I could, er, remember them.

Um, he said, er, that he no longer believes that Jehovah's Witnesses represent God's organisation on Earth. He made it clear that he's got nothing against the brothers and sisters themselves, but he believes that true Christians are scattered all over the world in different religions that claim to be Christian. Um, he believes that the Governing Body are false prophets who have built up this organisation on the basis of false chronology, for instance – 607 BCE is a wrong date, 1914 CE; they've got no basis at all.

Um, he believes that the Faithful and Discreet Slave, um, part of the sign of Matthew 24 – it's just a simple parable representing, um, all Christians and, er, he certainly doesn't, er, believe that the Faithful and Discreet Slave is the Anointed group who are appointed by the Master to oversee the 'belongings of Christ' on earth.

Um, he made quite a thing about the Memorial, um, that everyone who is a true Christian should partake of the emblems on Memorial night if they want to be saved. And, er, he made that very clear, that, er, that's what we should be doing if we wanted to have salvation. And, er, on our own, when we were chatting on our own on one occasion, he made it very clear that Jesus should be worshipped just as Jehovah is worshipped. Um, so these were the basic ideas, er, that, um, have come across to me very clearly, er, Matthew's beliefs, yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Just one of the scriptures that we shared with Matthew, (Prosecution Witness One), was, er, Jude 22 and 23...

Prosecution Witness One: Uh, um.

Appeal Chairman: ...which, I'm sure you're familiar with, 'continue showing mercy to some that have doubts, saving them by snatching them from the fire,' so, a lot of that would be applied, of course, as the manner in things which are raised and discussed, isn't that true? With your testimony as a witness, do you feel that Matthew came to you wanting help with doubts that he had or – I don't want to put words in your mouth – how do you feel he expressed those points to you?

Prosecution Witness One: Oh, I don't...*we went to Matthew* because we...we realised he...he had doubts, Matthew and (his wife), and, um, Matthew made it very clear from these discussions that, er, we couldn't help him, that he was so definite, over a period of time, he came to the decision that Jehovah's Witnesses just weren't proved the true organisation of God. (5:51)

Appeal Chairman: Okay, so, rather than asking for help with doubts, it was stated that ... (indistinct). Now, to keep in mind you were probably, er, reminded of this in the first hearing that, er, there was an opportunity obviously to...to reply to what (Prosecution Witness One) has said, but it would be through myself as the chairman...

Matthew: Yeah, I understand that.

Appeal Chairman: Can you understand *why* that is? It's just good to establish...can you understand *why* that is?

Matthew: The arrangement of addressing the Chair, are you talking about? Yeah?

Appeal Chairman: Why do you think that is?

Matthew: I think it's a procedural thing, just to make sure things are done properly and by arrangement.

Appeal Chairman: Well it is, and the reason for that is that it preserves unity and gives us clarity of thought to hear what's being said, so there's maybe no...no cross-talk there, so it's just important that we continue to respect that arrangement. It's not just there for the sake of it, you know, it does have a purpose there. So, Phil...

Appeal Overseer Two: Can I just confirm my view that the...some of these points which are...such as Matthew, you can tell is...no longer believes that, um, we don't represent God's organisation; um, thinks that the Governing Body are false prophets; um, that everybody should be taking the emblems. (the elder at the original pastoral visit) was with you for much of that?

Prosecution Witness Two: The first, er, discussion I had with Matthew was with (the elder at the original pastoral visit), yes.

Appeal Overseer Two: (The elder at the original pastoral visit) handled that as well, I know, so, subsequently (Prosecution Witness Two)'s... (indistinct)...two of you, that's fine. Thank you.

Appeal Overseer One: Just at this meeting, um, we clarified the definition of 'worship' is...and, er, Matthew said to us that he...the idea of obeisance, worship, er, respect, etc; that Jesus would get such high respect in that way just as Jehovah does, but when we asked him, er, Would the worship as God Almighty, as the Creator, would that kind of worship be attributed to Jesus? And he said, 'No.'

So, there might have been a little misunderstanding as regards this terminology 'worship,' but one of the things that just concerned me there, we asked Matthew, um, Does he believe that the Faithful and Discreet Slave...Does he believe, like the Governing Body, is the spokesman of the Faithful and Discreet Slave is the channel? And he said 'Yes.' At this meeting he *did* say he did believe that, but at the meeting *you* had, he said to you that that Faithful and Discreet Slave is just a symbolic thing and that the Jehovah's Witnesses are no longer God's organisation. So, we've **got two different statements** at two different meetings.

Matthew: The reason I answered that question the way I did is because you asked me in this setting, what Jehovah's Witnesses believe. So that's why I answered that.

Appeal Overseer One: So you answered that because you know what Jehovah's Witnesses believe?

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Overseer One: That's not what you believe?

Matthew: Like I said previously I wasn't going to discuss my personal views on things as I did previously with (Prosecution Witness One). But, as I understand it, the primary charge of apostasy was based upon what (Prosecution Witness One) said...was...was...

Appeal Overseer One: So, you said to us these different things when we asked you, because we were asking, actually, from the point-of-view that you as a Jehovah's Witness believe the same as other Jehovah's Witnesses. If I understand you *now* in (Prosecution Witness One)'s hearing, you gave us a testimony of what *Jehovah's Witnesses believe* but not what you believe.

Matthew: Just to put it in context, the conversation that (Prosecution Witness One) is saying took place; (Prosecution Witness One)'s made some very definite statements there regarding, 'I believe this and I believe that,' and he's drawn conclusions, so he's paraphrasing to an extent of what some of the things were that we discussed. To put it in context about the Faithful Slave and Christians being around various groups, I said to (Prosecution Witness One) that I'd read in one of the publications that there were faith...other faithful minority groups, namely not Jehovah's Witnesses. I read it in the publications. So...

Appeal Overseer One: Yeah, like the Waldenses...

Matthew: Yes, exactly. That's exactly the expression that (Prosecution Witness One) used. So my reasoning, as I said, in a private setting was that if there are termed 'groups' which are faithful minority groups, then that must, by extension, mean that the members within those minority groups must be acceptable Christians to God.

Appeal Overseer One: Is there any other organisation than this one known as Jehovah's Witnesses that Jehovah God is using to disseminate Bible truth?

Matthew: Well, that would be a personal viewpoint I would be expressing, so that...

Appeal Overseer One: So why won't you answer that?

Matthew: Well, let...like I said, to put you in the picture, the reason..the setting for that discussion was that I believed that people within various groups like those ones that we discussed there, would be acceptable Christians to God, but (Prosecution Witness One)'s reasoning was that would not be the case because it's only Jehovah's Witnesses that that applies to. So, by definition, I was disagreeing with that as a statement, ***but not to say that Jehovah's Witnesses have got no Christians within them.*** That was not what I was getting at.

Appeal Overseer One: Was Jehovah using these minority groups as organisations?

Matthew: I don't believe there are any...that there were any of these groups around. My reasoning at the time...

Appeal Overseer One: The history...

Matthew: ...my reasoning at the time was that before Jehovah's Witnesses came into being in the late 1800's how would a person such as a member of the Anointed be acceptable to God when they couldn't be part of Jehovah's organisation? So, that was my reasoning, so...

Appeal Overseer One: But now...we want to know what you believe now.

Matthew: But that's what I'm saying to you; to further the discussion on it, I don't believe that this setting is the correct setting for me to start to express my personal views on it, because what I did with (Prosecution Witness One) at the time was giving ***personal observations regarding the ability for a person to be a Christian within certain contexts. So, for instance: how could a person be a Christian previously to Jehovah's Witnesses being in existence?*** That was what the setting was. But beyond that I wouldn't want to say, 'I believe A, B, or C,' because, as I said, previously...

Appeal Overseer One: Well, I would say A, B, or C right now in the twenty-first century, that I believe the only organisation God is using is that known as Jehovah's Witnesses, that there is no other. Is that what you believe?

Matthew: Yeah, well, when I stopped going to the meetings *I kept my own views to myself and when I did have contact with brothers such as (Prosecution Witness Two) and (Prosecution Witness One) and I expressed something to them, it caused me bother, so I made a vow that I wouldn't do that again...discuss that.*

Appeal Overseer One: We're not here like those brothers listening to personal views, we're here to establish, like the questions that we're told at the baptism, if you're a qualified Jehovah's Witness.

Matthew: Yeah, I understand all that.

Appeal Overseer One: So, if you have different views from the baptismal questions, then a baptismal candidate would not qualify to get baptised and become a Jehovah's Witness.

Matthew: Yep.

Appeal Overseer One: Does it make sense to you that if you didn't hold the same views that ...(indistinct)...those questions, then *you* would not be operating as a Jehovah's Witness?

Matthew: The thing is, if I'm not at the meetings and I'm not going out in the ministry, right, I'm *technically* still a Jehovah's Witness. But I've not disassociated myself or said to people, 'I don't want to be known as a Witness anymore,' and I didn't have any intention of doing that. *This procedure by necessity is forcing me to make personal declarations that I don't want to make* and it's not because I'm trying to appear obtuse, or anything like that. I decided I wouldn't do it again, no matter who it was.

Appeal Chairman: But remember we mentioned earlier, Matthew, you know, l...l...l...let's cut down to the whole crux of what this is. T...t...t...this is not just some legalistic formality, Matthew, that establishes w...what I...if I say, 'A, B, and C, then nothing will happen. What we're saying here is...what's important, what does Jehovah look at with us? What speaks spiritually here? What does Jehovah look at?

Matthew: Yeah, I understand what you're saying.

Appeal Chairman: B...but answer me. W...w...w...what is he looking at?

Matthew: He's looking at a person's heart-condition and what's an acceptable person to him.

Appeal Chairman: So, w...we've shared this scripture with you once. We shared it when (Prosecution Witness One) came in; that if you have doubts, then we...*we want to have the opportunity to show mercy, to snatch you from the fire.* You're not affording any of us the opportunity, Matthew.

Matthew: Yeah, I understand that. I was willing to allow the brothers to come up to me...up to my house on two occasions to discuss things with me. So, to me, I was expressing a willingness to discuss the things with the brothers. *Now, what has resulted from that, had I known, what was going to result from me expressing those opinions, I probably would not have agreed to the visits in the first place,* because people do fall away from the Organisation and stop going to meetings all the time as I had done.

Now, if I had been aware that it was going to cause what was happening in my life right now, then I may not have agreed to do that because I've had...if I'd not said anything at all then we wouldn't be sitting here. That's the way I see it. If I had said *nothing at all* to

(Prosecution Witness One), nothing at all to (Prosecution Witness Two), we would not all be sitting in this room. And that's the position I'm in just now. (14:50)

Appeal Overseer One: What about the Faithful and Discreet Slave...sorry, what was that one, now...the Governing Body are false prophets?

Matthew: Well, the context of that was I was asking (Prosecution Witness One) to explain...Now, I don't remember the specifics of the conversation or even what occasion it was, whether it was (Prosecution Witness One) or whether it was my (Prosecution Witness Two) that was up. But I put to him, and I said to him, 'How could it be the case that the Bible says in Deuteronomy 18 and Luke 21 and Matthew 7, that if someone was to say something in God's name and didn't prove to be accurate or it didn't come true, how could the organisation rationalise that? Because if they've a thing that conceded to be a false prediction, how does that square with us being the true religion? So I put it...

Appeal Overseer Two: What false prediction were you actually talking about?

Matthew: Well, there was a case in, I think it was the 1950s, called the Walsh Case (See essay *The Martyring of Matthew Barrie – A Study in Ethics*), and it was a chap who had some legal difference with the Organisation and the vice-president of the Society, Hayden Covington was testifying on the stand and the line of questioning led them down the route of 'false prophet,' and he asked various questions regarding the Organisation's teachings and beliefs over the proceeding decades. (16:10)

And Brother Covington answered in the affirmative: 'Is it conceded to be the case that your organisation has made false prophecies? And he said, 'Yes,' and he said, 'Would that mean that you're false prophets?' And he said, 'That is conceded to be true.' So that is the setting in which I was putting that to (Prosecution Witness One) – I can't remember whether it was (Prosecution Witness Two) or (the elder at the original pastoral visit) who was there – that was the setting. So I was asking for an explanation as to how the Organisation could rationalise on the basis of what it says in those scriptures that are quoted.

So *I wasn't saying the Organisation were a false prophet*, I was saying that the Organisation themselves in the form of Hayden Covington had admitted in the past that they had been a false prophet. So that's *not my accusation*, you understand where I'm coming from? (16:56)

Appeal Overseer Two: So, (Prosecution Witness One), could I ask you: Did you and (the elder at the original pastoral visit) take...this was a kind of doubting question... Did you take it as...? I think I've picked up that it was a strong statement of fact.

Prosecution Witness One: It must have been probably (Prosecution Witness Two) that he mentioned this case of Hayden Covington. It certainly didn't come up in the conversation I had with Matthew.

Appeal Overseer Two: You've picked up from your conversation, (Prosecution Witness One), that it was a...

Prosecution Witness One: Matthew just made a strong statement that, 'How can this be God's organisation if they're false prophets?' He gave examples of dates that haven't, um, er, worked out the way the brothers thought 'cause...that was the examples he gave when I was discussing it with him.

Appeal Overseer Two: Thank you.

Matthew: And it was in question form, as (Prosecution Witness One) said himself there: 'How can it be the case?', rather than a direct statement. (17:48)

Appeal Chairman: Was...‘cause questions can be asked, can’t they, in different form.

Appeal Overseer One: And true prophets made mistakes.

Appeal Chairman: Yes.

Appeal Overseer One: That didn’t make them false prophets. The three criteria was speaking in Jehovah’s name, wasn’t it? Turn the people to pure worship and what they say comes true. So they did...making mistakes doesn’t make you a false prophet, but continually making false predictions against Scriptural teachings, doctrinal ones – that would make you a false prophet. So that’s part of the explanation. But what concerns me, Matthew, is – all these views for somebody who has been away for a long time has got to be influenced by something else.

Matthew: All I do is read the Bible, that’s all I do.

Appeal Overseer One: And you come up with all these sort of questions and then go on the Internet and find out what these thoughts are and...?

Matthew: I don’t have Internet access. (18:39)

Appeal Overseer One: Well, you certainly wouldn’t have the old books, do you, of Jehovah’s Witnesses?

Matthew: I’ve got mostly all of the old publications on PDF file. I’ve got all of the old Watchtowers and all the old Awakes and a lot of the old publications.

Appeal Overseer Two: Where did you find those?

Matthew: Well, I used to be on the Internet years ago and I got for a research utility database where you can download all the... see, like, you remember the older magazines you’d get in reprints. I just downloaded them all from eight years ago and I’ve got them on my hard drive. But...but as I say, I don’t have Internet access now.

Appeal Overseer Two: What about the case of Hayden Covington, you mentioning – where did you find that?

Matthew: That was a thing I Googled about Jehovah’s Witnesses years ago to do with a court case. I was looking for research on something else to do with a court case and it came up, the court case in Scotland that caught my eye and you can actually just go and check out what the court case was about and stuff like that...various...

Appeal Overseer One: I know that some cases have been...

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: ...perpetrated against Russell and Magic Wheat, and all that. The truth of the matter is that a lot of it was spurious and difficulties...so, information doesn’t necessarily mean it’s true, does it?

Matthew: No, which is why I put it in question form.

Appeal Overseer Two: If I could maybe just redirect back to you, (Prosecution Witness One)...

Prosecution Witness One: Uh, um

Appeal Overseer Two: ...‘cause let’s be honest, you can ask questions in rhetorical form at times, can’t we? Dare we say even Satan did that, didn’t he? ‘Is it really so?’ And don’t take that the wrong way, Matthew. We just need to establish how that was perceived as a question. Did you perceive it, (Prosecution Witness One), as a question that merited an answer or was it...was it one qu...he was looking for an answer in your view?

Prosecution Witness One: What came over from Matthew from all the points that I've itemised was that Matthew had definite views that were contrary to what Jehovah's Witnesses believe. That's all I can say.

Appeal Chairman: Is that a fair assessment?

Matthew: Well, I'd conceded at the previous judicial (hearing) that the things that (Prosecution Witness One) bullet-pointed there were some of the things that may have been discussed. However, I would say that the caveat to that is things that I did say of what (Prosecution Witness One) just said there, I did express opinions on things as I haven't denied that.

Appeal Overseer One: Was it your belief?

Matthew: No, expressed opinions, merely expressed opinions. *Now, if it's the case that someone was to show me something which proved me wrong, I'm not a person who would say, 'Well, I'm still going to hold to that.' So I don't think it would be a reasonable position, but I would like to make it clear again that I haven't heard all the evidence in the previous judicial committee.* The single primary charge that the brothers brought against me was what we discussed at the outset. They said that I was **teaching** things or believing things contrary to the teachings of beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses. *That was the primary charge.*

Appeal Overseer One: Of course, you don't have to be teaching... (21:23)

Matthew: No.

Appeal Overseer One: ...or promulgating it...

Matthew: No.

Appeal Overseer One: ...you can withdraw from the beliefs, and that would be a similar...

Matthew: Yes, but if a person went to court, in a legal court, and they heard the evidence from a number of people, and then the jury would find a person guilty on a **specific point**. There are other things that **may not have been proven** or may not have found him guilty on.

Appeal Overseer One: Yeah.

Matthew: My point was that what was expressed to me by the chairman of the judicial committee was that I was an *apostate on the basis of believing or discussing the concept of Jesus being worshipped*, and I think I've expressed to you tonight that **that is not in disharmony with Jehovah's Witnesses' teachings**.

Appeal Overseer One: Are these kind of personal views you've expressed to (Prosecution Witness One) and one or two of the elders and, what, *family* and...?

Matthew: Well, I said my brother is family, obviously, and I've discussed a few things with him, but over a protracted number of years maybe seven or eight years, **I found it strange that (Prosecution Witness Two) had given me contrary indications by his own statements that he didn't mind discussing things with me** because he said, **'If you can't talk to the elders, who can you talk to?'**

Now, at no time did (Prosecution Witness Two) say to me, 'You'd better stop talking to me. I'm warning you, you're an apostate.' **In fact he expressed the opposite opinion.** So, for this to happen so suddenly only a few weeks after my discussion with (Prosecution Witness One), I found it **more than a coincidence**.

Appeal Overseer One: What about the one about....can I ask that one about the Memorial?

Appeal Chairman: Yes, please... (22:50)

Appeal Overseer One: I just wanted to ask the one about, ‘everyone should partake of the emblems to be saved.’

Matthew: I *honestly* don’t recall discussing that with (Prosecution Witness One) at all. I’m being honest, I don’t...

Appeal Overseer One: Was there anyone there at that time?

Matthew: I don’t recall that.

Prosecution Witness One: It wasn’t something that was discussed at length. It was just a statement, a passing statement that come up during something else. Er...

Appeal Overseer One: Was there anyone else there or was that one of the visits you had with Matthew or was it just you?

Prosecution Witness One: It was...no, it wasn’t just with Matthew and I, no, it was either when I was with (the elder at the original pastoral visit) or with (Prosecution Witness Two), but I can’t recall which.

Appeal Overseer One: Okay.

Matthew: The only recollection I have of anything being discussed in relation to the Memorial was when (Prosecution Witness Two) was up, and (Prosecution Witness Two) said to me as part of the closing part of the conversation, ‘You’re not coming to the meetings anymore, Matthew. What are you going to do about the Memorial? How are you going to observe the Memorial?’

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: That’s the only thing I can honestly remember ever discussing anything to do with the partaking of the emblems or your salvation only being assured through that. I honestly can’t remember anything other than that.

Appeal Overseer One: Have you anything else to add to...?

Prosecution Witness One: The only thing I would say on that particular subject, er, is, well, just to corroborate that that’s something that Matthew feels quite strongly about...I didn’t want to mention...I never mentioned in the first meeting, so if you don’t want me to mention this, I won’t.

Appeal Overseer One: Sometimes...other things come out...(indistinct).

Appeal Chairman: You can raise it...(indistinct). (24:14)

Prosecution Witness One: ...you can corroborate it. Er, (Prosecution Witness Two) and I haven’t discussed this but you can corroborate it with (Prosecution Witness Two), ‘cause I know he is aware of this. Matthew, um, has tried to persuade his mother and father that the only reason that they’re ever going to be saved is if they took the Memorial (emblems) and he strenuously apparently, this is what... I’m only repeating what (Matthew’s parents) have told me face-to-face, that, er, they were *so* upset at Matthew trying to persuade them that they had to take the Memorial emblems if they wanted to be saved.

Er, now, that’s just me. I know I’m only *one witness* to their discussion and the reason we never mentioned it before, um, is because it was felt that we didn’t want to involve, um, the family, mum and dad, because they’re so emotionally uptight about the situation, anyway. But, er, I have to mention that, you know. That was just another source.

Appeal Overseer Two: Okay. What is your response to that, Matthew?

Matthew: I have had *private* discussions with Mum and Dad, but what I would say is that if they had *anything to say that they felt was constituting apostasy or constituting something different from Jehovah’s Witnesses’ beliefs, then I would be happy to hear their testimony.*

Appeal Overseer Two: *Okay, but I'm asking you, Matthew.* (25:33)

Matthew: What are you asking me?

Appeal Overseer Two: *I'm asking you: What is the substance to what (Prosecution Witness One) said, what are your thoughts on that?*

Matthew: I can't actually recall the conversation specifically. I have had discussions with Mum and Dad before regarding that subject. The actual details of it I don't recall. As I say, my own views on that are just that, they're *personal views*, but if I have spoken to Mum and Dad, what they do about it or whether they want to testify that I've done something wrong, that would be their decision.

Appeal Overseer Two: You used the expression a number of times, Matthew, 'personal views,' and we mentioned earlier that there are certain aspects that we don't want... 'cause... 'cause... we all got personal views on things and we're not here to pry. But w... what we're looking at, in your own words, Matthew, is, is the charge of apostasy being a belief, yeah? Not necessarily just spreading, but *belief* in matters of teachings contrary to those of Jehovah's Witnesses. So, while we understand you saying these are personal views, can you understand our concern, that if you're *holding these beliefs* that are contrary to Jehovah's Witnesses, then... then we want to know. (26:43)

Matthew: Uh, um. Yeah, I can understand that.

Appeal Overseer Two: And we *don't say that to interrogate*. We say that because it would concern us. Trouble is, if these are beliefs that you're holding, then we would *want to help you* or we would ask: Why would you want to continue to serve as one of Jehovah's Witnesses?

Matthew: Well, all I said my mum and dad was I mentioned a few scriptures to them and I said, 'Have a read over the scriptures yourself and pray about what you think the scriptures mean.' That was all I said to them in respect to the arrangement at the Memorial. I didn't try to influence them or tell them, 'This is what you *must* do,' I just... as I said I showed them some scriptures, and I said, 'You can decide for yourself what you think of it.'

So, to me, if you're teaching someone, *you're telling them, 'This is the actual truth of the matter.* This... these are the facts, you must do this,' and you present a couple of scenarios if they *didn't do it*. Now, I didn't do that. That's all I would say on it. (27:38)

Appeal Overseer Two: So what was your basis for casting doubt on Jehovah's Witnesses ... (indistinct)...? What's the basis for your doubt in that?

Matthew: Well, in 1935 Brother Rutherford said that the class of people who were going to heaven had ceased. In other words, the number was filled. Now, it's only a belief in 2007 that the Organisation have seen fit, through the Governing Body, to say that it appears that there are people becoming Anointed who are not necessarily of those born before 1935. So, to my mind, as I said, again what I read in the literature, that was a reversal of the previous position that this 'final sealing' had taken place in 1935.

Appeal Overseer Two: Do you think your mum and dad might be of the Anointed? (28:30)

Matthew: That would be up to them; that would be a personal matter. All I said to them was what the Organisation's teaching was on the point that it was now the case that, to paraphrase it, that the heavenly calling wasn't closed.

Appeal Overseer One: These are just the 144,000 or it is for everyone?

Matthew: Well, that was the thing I was saying to them. I said to them, ‘However many people have been chosen at the moment,’ I said to them, ‘it appears that the Organisation through the Slave has said that the Final Calling hasn’t taken place in 1935.

Appeal Overseer One: But then the number’s predetermined, isn’t it?

Matthew: Yes. But I said to them, ‘what you should do is read what you found in the Scriptures yourself.

Appeal Overseer One: Do you believe that even if some ...(indistinct)... is grafted on, because some have become disloyal or whatever? And then a clear understanding of the Great Crowd, because of the Jonadab Class and the Anointed... Do you think, then, by *your understanding* of it now that *everybody* should partake of the emblems because of this clarification?

Matthew: Well, I wouldn’t discuss what my own views are on it. All I said to them, my mum and dad, was that this is *what I had concluded from what I had read in the publications*.

Appeal Overseer One: If you don’t discuss what your views are, then you leave us to *draw our own conclusions*.

Matthew: Yeah, because what I said to my mum and dad was a *private* conversation with my *own parents*. So, I viewed that what I said to them would be *between us*.

Appeal Overseer One: But we’re not interested in your conversations at this moment that you had with them. I’m interested in what your belief is now. (29:58)

Matthew: Well, I’m *not going to discuss my personal beliefs* and things, because it’s not that I’m trying to be obtuse, as I said previously, it’s just that...

Appeal Overseer One: Well, *you called this meeting!* We’re here to help.

Matthew: Yeah. I...I...I...

Appeal Overseer One: We’re looking for you to help us.

Matthew: I called the meeting to *object to the reason they gave for disfellowshipping me*, not to go through the A to Z of my *own personal views*, which is...

Appeal Chairman: The problem that we have with this, Matthew, is, you are appealing because you want to remain one of Jehovah’s Witnesses?

Matthew: That’s right, yeah.

Appeal Chairman: So, *as* one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, what do you recognise?

Matthew: Well, I recognise that what I may believe or what *personal views* I may have, if I was to express them or to be known as a person who was *teaching them*, it would put me in a position where I would perhaps not be a Witness anymore.

Appeal Chairman: Tha...tha...tha...that’s not what we believe as Jehovah’s Witnesses. That is not how we carry out our belief as Jehovah’s Witnesses, Matthew. One of your questions when you stood up to be dedicated and baptised as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses... In other words, one of the two *qualifying questions* for you to become one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, yeah?, was, Do you recognise that this identifies as one of Jehovah’s Witnesses in association with Jehovah’s spirit-directed organisation? You remember going through your questions for baptism?

Matthew: Yeah, vaguely.

Appeal Chairman: And some of the questions that looked at points as to how you show submission and how you recognise Jehovah’s Channel and Jehovah’s Organisation; that you recognise this part of Jehovah’s Channel and Jehovah’s Organisation. (31:40)

Matthew: Yeah, I can see wh...how this arrangement fits into that.

Appeal Chairman: You do? So, with recognising that, what responsibility does that put upon you?

Matthew: I'm not sure exactly, there's quite a lot of responsibilities, I would imagine.

Appeal Chairman: Well, I'll show you one of them. One of them is in Hebrews chapter 13 and we need to view this scripture as a personal thing for the few of us, that we'd rather look at it as Jehovah's arrangement in view of what we just said. Hebrews chapter 13 and verse 17, it says there: 'And be obedient to those who are taking the lead among you and be submissive,' now why? 'For they are keeping watch over your souls as those who will render an account. That they may do this with joy and not with sighing for this could be damaging to you.'

Look at all the aspects we just looked at there, Matthew. What's the first thing we're counselled to do?

Matthew: Yeah, it mentions obedience to those taking the lead.

Appeal Chairman: Good. And being?

Matthew: Submissive.

Appeal Chairman: Submissive. Now why...why, according to that verse?

Matthew: Well, it mentions in the verse that these people here described are watching over your souls.

Appeal Chairman: That's why we're here. That's why these brothers were here. And I don't...I don't base this upon an assumption upon hearing your testimony. I'm hearing (Prosecution Witness One)'s testimony, that's why (Prosecution Witness One) spoke to you and shepherded you, as well, 'keeping a watch over your soul.' Now, it mentions at the end of verse, if we don't do this, what would the effect be?

Matthew: Damaging.

Appeal Chairman: To?

Matthew: You.

Appeal Chairman: Uh, um. We don't want to sigh sitting here. But Matthew, we're struggling when you don't want to discuss matters which...which leave us with a concern as to whether you are showing submission to Jehovah's arrangement and showing that you recognise that, as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you show recognition and respect for Jehovah's Organisation on earth.

There is a lengthy pause

Appeal Chairman: How do you feel on that?

Matthew: Well, like I said previously, I feel that, *had I known the chain-of-events in advance, then I would probably have not done or said certain things*. So hindsight is a great...a great friend. But *I can't change those things now*.

Appeal Chairman: B.but, Matthew, th...that doesn't...that doesn't answer the question on the verse we just looked at there. It doesn't address the thought of showing submission to Jehovah's arrangement, because you recognise that and you respect it as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Matthew: Yeah, I understand that and I understand that what you're doing here is your own...you've got your own job to do as well. So, I would assume that from that verse that you would be in a position where what you do, you'll be accountable for also. So...

Appeal Chairman: Absolutely. And that's why we're keen for you to discuss this with us... (35:02)

Matthew: Yeah?

Appeal Chairman: Because we recognise that assignment we have.

Matthew: Uh, um.

Appeal Overseer Two: C...can I just ask for Brother... (Indistinct)...

Appeal Chairman: Could we just adjourn...

(Possible edit, indicated by a click) It seems Prosecution Witness Two has been called by the court for his testimony.

Appeal Overseer One: We appreciate that it's not easy for you being family. We do appreciate that.

Appeal Chairman: What I would like to ask you to do, (Prosecution Witness Two), if you can, is we just discussed with (Prosecution Witness One), what's concerned him with regard to Matthew and caused him to have those concerns. In other words, the statement of discussions th...that have brought us here. So if we could just ask you to do the same, (Prosecution Witness Two), if you're comfortable to do that.

Prosecution Witness Two: Okay, well, as I recall there were four things that were mentioned to the brothers last time. Matthew expressed a view to me that Jesus didn't become king in 1914, that, as soon as he ascended to the heavens. Also that the Faithful and Discreet Slave is a parable rather than an actual arrangement, and that the congregation isn't a formal arrangement, that that comprises scattered individuals throughout Christendom. And finally, the most serious thing in my mind and the most recent things was the idea that it's proper to worship Jesus. (36:27)

Appeal Chairman: Okay. What setting were these things discussed, (Prosecution Witness Two)?

Prosecution Witness Two: Well, all the things that I mentioned to you were in private settings, so they may have been some overlap with of the points during a certain visit I made with (Prosecution Witness One)... shepherding visit.

Appeal Overseer One: Did anything come up about the Memorial?

Prosecution Witness Two: *Not to me.*

Appeal Overseer One: You weren't there at the time while any discussion about the Memorial took place?

Appeal Chairman: Anything with regard to the Governing Body at all?

Prosecution Witness Two: *Not that I can remember specifically.*

Appeal Chairman: That's fine, that's fine. So, the Faithful and Discreet Slave being a parable; Jesus not being king in 1914; and the congregation being scattered – are all these the points that were raised?

In what manner would you say that Matthew raised those? You see, a scripture we've used with everyone concerned is the one in Jude. Er, we used this for a reason because it was quite important, Jude 22 and 23. You probably remember that (Prosecution Witness Two), what it just says, 'Also continue showing mercy to some that have doubts, saving them by snatching them out of the fire.' So, in your observation as a witness, did Matthew raise this as a doubt that he wanted help with, to be 'snatched out of the fire, as it were? Or maybe not recognising that's the position he was in? Or, how do you feel he raised it?

Prosecution Witness Two: Well, some of the points, er, the first three may have been mentioned by Matthew, on previous occasions too, but those times I took the view that, as the scripture says, that he was a person who had doubts, but in more recent times I felt quite strongly that he's tried to convince me of these things, especially in the last occasion when it came to the discussion about the worship of Jesus.

Appeal Chairman: What made you feel convinced on that, if you don't mind me asking?

Prosecution Witness Two: Well, I didn't feel convinced that he would ... (indistinct).

Appeal Chairman: No, sorry what made you feel he was trying to convince you?

Prosecution Witness Two: Well, just *the manner* that he was putting it over. Um, the way I took it was that he was hoping that I would accept these things as the truth rather than things that he only had issues with.

Appeal Overseer One: So you felt that things were established?

Prosecution Witness Two: That was my impression.

Appeal Chairman: Okay. Did you feel that it was an attempt to, perhaps, undermine your convictions?

Prosecution Witness Two: Yes.

Appeal Chairman: Okay. Matthew, it's part of the process, you have an opportunity to...

Matthew: Yeah, I would like to ask (Prosecution Witness Two) as one of Jehovah's Witnesses if he believes that it was *improper for me to suggest that Jesus should be worshipped*.

Appeal Chairman: We have had a lengthy discussion on this, (Prosecution Witness Two), if you'd like to comment if you can.

Prosecution Witness Two: Yes.

Appeal Chairman: Okay, question answered. Any other comment?

Matthew: So, why did (Prosecution Witness Two) object to me discussing the subject of it?

Appeal Chairman: Well, we've kind of discussed that point, but, (Prosecution Witness Two), if you're happy to comment on that?

Prosecution Witness Two: Because I find that contrary to what *I understand* about what the Bible teaches, and *definitely* contrary to the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Appeal Overseer One: Because...did you take it that when he used the terminology until it was explained that, rather than 'obeyance' (obeisance) or, according to..., it was equality with Jehovah in worship, is that how you took it or...?

Prosecution Witness Two: I wouldn't say that, but I do feel he was trying to point out that there was a clear difference between 'obeisance,' which is the way we understand it, rather than 'worship.'

Appeal Chairman: Okay. Matthew?

Matthew: Well, my thoughts on it are, I would have to agree with what (Prosecution Witness Two) said, that the first three points – I can't recall the specifics – there may have been things (Prosecution Witness Two) and I discussed, but, the point I would make is what I said at the outset, the specific charge that was given by the chairman was that I was *promoting a false teaching contrary to Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs*, namely the *worship of Jesus*. Now, I think *I've demonstrated by the Legal Charter*, that it says in there that Jehovah's Witnesses worship God Almighty and the *public worship of Jesus*, and also the scriptures (Prosecution Witness One)...

Appeal Overseer One: ...if you don't. Forgive me ... (indistinct).

Matthew: So, that's all I would say, that *if (Prosecution Witness Two) felt that the most serious...*, and that's what I was charged with, then surely...

Appeal Overseer Two: Just hold on a wee second. You made reference... (indistinct).

Appeal Chairman consults the Judicial Chairman of the original Hearing committee (all three committee members are in attendance).

Judicial Chairman: There were really quite a few things, actually. I quoted straight from the book (*Organisational elders' 'eyes-only' manual, Pay Attention to the Yourselfs and all the Flock, published by the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1991*) and it was 'stubbornly hold to'...(indistinct)... the paragraph and I quoted exactly from the book and in my opinion, um, it was clear, um, that this was the charge; that he was stubbornly holding to teachings that were contrary to the teachings of...(indistinct)...according to...(indistinct). So, it was that first point that I want to make clear that that was said, that he stubbornly holds to these things.

Matthew: I only wrote down what (The Judicial Chairman) said, and he said, '*I did not remain in the teaching of the Christ by namely promoting the worship of Jesus, and the reason I was being disfellowshipped: Because I had left the teaching of the Christ by promoting the worship of Jesus contrary to the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses.*' That was the **primary charge**, and obviously (Prosecution Witness Two) and (Prosecution Witness One) had both picked up on that as the **primary reason for why they felt I was an apostate**. Now, I believe that it is **important what the Legal Charter does say, because it binds all Jehovah's Witnesses**. It's part of the purpose of the Organisation and also..

Appeal Overseer One: ...binds Jehovah's Witnesses ...(indistinct).

Matthew: Yes, yes. And also (*Prosecution Witness One*) **himself said that the Bible does describe Jesus being worshipped**. So my question would be, In the settings where Jesus is worshipped, namely Revelation, where does, where do these brothers see themselves, if it's such an abhorrent thing to them to give Jesus worship, then where do they see themselves within that setting? That was all..that was what I took from what they were saying that they **found morally objectionable**, because I was saying that to them. It's not my place to be their moral barometer as to what they feel is acceptable in worship or not. If they're not aware of the **Charter** or they're not aware of certain scriptures; me pointing that out to them **when I haven't pre-empted the discussion, I can't be responsible for how they react to that**, you see? That's all I'm saying.

Appeal Overseer One: It isn't just that, Matthew. It's...(indistinct) or beliefs. The charge is 'contrary to teachings,'... (43:23)

Matthew: Yeah, I unders...

Appeal Overseer One: ...not just this one.

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: Our definition of worship... It is contrary to the *beliefs*...

Matthew: I understand the charge, but what I'm saying to you is the specific thing that I was found guilty of was '*promoting the worship of Jesus.*' Now, it is true that those other things were discussed from time-to-time over the years, some of those things that have been mentioned. We went into some detail on some of them. Right, but there is a difference **between holding a private opinion and teaching something** which is contrary to Jehovah's Witnesses and that's what I felt...

Appeal Overseer One: You see, you use the word 'teaching,' and that is part ... (indistinct)...

Matthew: Because it says it in the definition.

Appeal Overseer One: ...if you hold a different belief. So it's not just teaching.

Matthew: Yeah. But as far as I'm aware, it says in the publication you have for your manual, it says there: 'holding to and spreading contrary beliefs.'

Appeal Overseer One: What do you know about...?

Matthew: Because I've been told what it says. I'm only quoting what it says. I mean, it's not a secret society, so, by the definition that's been given to me by the brothers that's what...they read it out to me at the judicial (hearing) the last time, they read it out from the *Pay Attention* book. So, I'm only repeating what they said to me, 'stubbornly holding to **and spreading**.' So I would assume from that they're assum...they're saying I was **teaching those things**, namely the worship of Jesus. (44:38)

Appeal Overseer One: Can I just ask a question there? Did you not mention, Matthew, that you actually had a copy of the book that you got from the Internet or you had a copy and you knew about it?

Matthew: I had a quotation off of it. It was just one page. Yeah, it was just one page. It was one page that I had in reference to that.

Circuit overseers talk together

Matthew: I had a printed-out sheet, yeah.

Appeal Chairman: And you're right, we're not a secret society and it does mention it's one, *one* of the qualifying factors about apostasy, but *not the only one*.

Appeal Overseer One: Ummm.

Appeal Chairman: And what (Prosecution Witness One)...er...(The Judicial Chairman) has mentioned earlier was *another one*, it's 'stubbornly holding *to*.' Not necessarily always teaching it as well, but, 'stubbornly holding *to*' it. And this is the difficulty we have here, Matthew. Because the difficulty is that every one of these points, you've come back to this first one. Because you've mentioned the wording of 'worship,' 'obeisance' and you've seen that we acknowledged that, **yes, the word 'obeisance' is translated 'worship,' but we've discussed with you already, and it still holds that the difficulty with that is, why do we not go around and say that we 'worship' Jesus?**

Matthew draws a breath to answer.

Appeal Chairman: Because we recognise what that leads people or *misleads* people to believe.

Matthew: Yes.

Appeal Chairman: So I have to ask you, Matthew, **what was your motive in raising that point?** Because you've mentioned **you've raised in on both (shepherding) calls**.

Matthew: Well, **I didn't raise it in both calls**. I actually said the opposite. I said it was **(Prosecution Witness One) who raised the subject of Jesus**. He asked *me* if I thought Jesus was God. And, as a result of that...

Appeal Chairman: That's not what I asked you, Matthew, I didn't ask...

Matthew: Well, **I didn't raise the subject of worship**.

Appeal Chairman: No, **I** asked you, why did *you* mention...or t...t...that the Bible says Jesus should be worshipped? How do you feel about that? **You** raised that.

Matthew: **That was a consequence of the conversation, because (Prosecution Witness One) said to me, Do you believe Jesus is God?** And I said, **'I believe Jesus is the Son of God.'** (Prosecution Witness One) then asked me another leading question along the lines of, 'Well, what place has God got next to Jesus?' Right? And **as a consequence of answering that question** I stated to (Prosecution witness One) that the Bible describes honour, glory, worship, on some terms being directed towards Jesus and God. So, as a

consequence of answering (**Prosecution Witness One**)’s *question*, and in regards to (Prosecution Witness Two) here; what I was having a discussion with (Prosecution Witness Two) was, was to describe what had been *said to (Prosecution Witness One)* because he was involved in part of the information that I had had to go to (Prosecution Witness One) in the first place with.

So, to say that I was actively trying to discuss that subject with both of those brothers *off of my own back isn’t true*. In the first instance it was to respond to something (Prosecution Witness One) had said and in the second instance – what I was saying to (Prosecution Witness Two), was because he was involved partly in the reason why I had to go to (Prosecution Witness One). As the discussion went on I said to him, and this is what I said to (Prosecution Witness One). So, all I was doing was repeating what I’d said to him.

But to say that I was actually teaching something, and as (Prosecution Witness Two) said himself, the explanation he gave regarding how I was viewing the worship of Jehovah compared to the worship of Jesus; he said himself that *I wasn’t* saying that they were synonymous, or they were on the same level – you heard him saying that earlier on there. So, to say that I was *promoting something* that would cause dissent within the brothers, *I don’t think that’s a fair statement* to make, because *I wasn’t doing that*. (48:12)

Appeal Chairman: We mentioned, ‘not necessarily promoting, stubbornly holding on to.’ Our difficulty with a number of these – they all form a picture, Matthew – is that in we’re asking you to discuss *any of these with regard to your beliefs*. Your beliefs as an individual – yes, but as an individual who is one of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Now, that’s why you’re here today, isn’t it?

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: *As one of Jehovah’s Witnesses, you have continually said to us that you refuse to comment.*

Matthew: *Because I’ve had my fingers burnt*, that’s why, I feel. *I hadn’t been associating at the Kingdom Hall, I hadn’t been speaking to anybody else, and as a result of this contact with the brothers, this is what’s happened! So that’s why I’m not saying anything about it.*

Appeal Overseer Two: Could I maybe just suggest something before we go any further. Do you brothers have any further questions for (Prosecution Witness Two) as a witness just now?

Circuit Overseers together: *No*

Appeal Chairman: (Prosecution Witness Two), we can just dismiss you just now, is that okay?

Prosecution Witness Two: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Thanks very much.

Prosecution Witness Two leaves the Appeal room.

Appeal Overseer Two: Er, Matthew, you’ve made this point several times and I’m not misunderstanding it, that you feel that you’ve got to this point because you...you’ve expressed certain views, um, I’ve...I...I’m saying to myself, ‘*how much worse could this get for you?*’ *Because, let us just say the decision eventually comes to the fact that you’re disfellowshipped. Surely that means that from the standpoint of Jehovah, if Armageddon comes imminently, you’ve had it! So, how much worse can it be for you?* You see what I’m getting at?

Matthew: *Yes. I see what you’re getting at.*

Appeal Overseer Two: Does that get any merit for that point?

Matthew: *So, what is it you're saying, that because I'm already under sentence of death that I might as well just say everything you want to hear?*

Appeal Overseer Two: No, what I'm saying to you is that, um, *by deciding that it causes you less trouble not to answer*, but you're struggling to see the reasoning behind that, because surely if you pursue this course, i...i...it compels, er, the responsible brothers to draw certain conclusions which *may result in you being put out of our organisation anyway*, which the belief of Jehovah's Witnesses is that if *Armageddon comes you with you in that condition, you will not live*.

Matthew: I understand that! My statement to the contrary would be that, since I *wasn't having any contact with the brothers and sisters, namely by association at the meetings or otherwise*, the brothers have *come to this information* or this idea they've formed about me from *their requested contact with me*. So, therefore, *for me to represent a danger to the congregation it would have to be a number of people within the congregation that it was demonstrated I was trying to mislead or upset or subvert* and both of those brothers *both* made statements to the contrary to me. And I even made a statement to my own friend that I don't want to do that to him because he was taking a Bible study again.

Appeal Overseer Two: The facts are that apostasy by definition is not limited to just *merely propagating*. It can be, as the brothers are labouring to try and get you to see, it can be *stubbornly holding views*.

Matthew: Believe me; *I know you're labouring the point, but I do see it*. So, why would I want to say something which would put me in a condemned state? If I said to you, for instance, 'I don't believe this, I don't believe that'...

Appeal Overseer Two: The reason is we're trying to determine whether you are either genuinely should be in this organisation or not. That's what we're trying to do, that's why we're asking you these things.

Matthew: Uh, um. If I disassociated myself, then that decision would have been made for you, but the fact that my wife has disassociated herself and I haven't, surely that would indicate that I have got a predisposition to perhaps come back at some point in the future. So for me to make contrary statements which would de-bar me from ever coming back, namely, 'I'll answer all your questions about what all my private views are,' that would be counter-productive. It wouldn't be in my own best interests.

Appeal Overseer One: Matthew, can I...sorry...

Appeal Elder Two: The thing about that, Matthew, is that...that...it's quite a suggestive comment because t...that suggests that you do hold certain views that if we clearly laid on the table before this original committee would very quickly come to a conclusion...

Matthew: *That's why I said if I was to express certain views. That's why I decided to myself that I wouldn't do it with anyone, not just in this setting*. I decided if I happen to come across to any other Witnesses and they wanted to get into a spiritual discussion with me, I would just keep my own counsel. So, to say that would represent a danger to anyone else when I've shown I'm not trying to speak to anyone else, even close friends that are still Witnesses... (52:56)

Appeal Overseer Two: So, Matthew, I'm going to ask you a question: What relationships are you worried about here tonight?

Matthew: Well, I believe that your primary relationship is with God. That's the most important relationship that you could have. And I feel my own personal standing with God, I'm in a good standing with God. (53:17)

Appeal Overseer Two: I find it interesting that you use 'God' rather than 'Jehovah.' Not that it's wrong, it's just usually we'd see someone that wants to build a personal relationship to use the name 'Jehovah.' Any reason why not, Matthew?

Matthew: There's no reason. You're just picking up on a turn-of-phrase. *I have used the name 'Jehovah'* several times tonight and the name 'Jesus.'

Appeal Overseer Two: Yep, I know, I appreciate you used it and I recognise that. It usually denotes a closer relationship, you know, that we use God's name, Jehovah. Well, it's commendable to hear you say that you're concerned about your relationship with Jehovah.

Appeal Overseer One: Can I ask something?

Appeal Overseer Two: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: Being a Jehovah's Witnesses, it's incumbent upon us as you get stronger – 'cause you said you'd been away – but it's to preach the Good News of the Kingdom. With all these *personal views that you have contrary to our preaching of the Good News of the Kingdom, those details about Jesus etc.*, how would you be able to preach the Good News?

Matthew: Well, as I understand it, I had this discussion with the brothers before about the Gospel message, and I said to (Prosecution Witness One) that I believe the Gospel message is a very simple one, that namely; redemption of sins through Jesus' Ransom Sacrifice and a subsequent hope for everlasting life. I believe that the Gospel message is a very clear one and it's an appealing one. So if I was to discuss that Gospel message that's found in the Bible with someone I would do it on that basis. (54:42)

Appeal Overseer One: But you start a study with them. You explain to them that the anointed 144,000, the organisational body it's using, what the Faithful and Discreet Slave... How are you going to detail all these points and help them understand them?

Matthew: I think everyone must come to an accurate knowledge based upon their own experience and where they may find themselves. As you know, there are some people who believe some very crazy things, but they base their beliefs on the Bible. So, therefore, how you develop your understanding of the Scriptures doesn't necessarily have to be what my view of it is. I'm sure you could understand that.

Appeal Overseer One: You're the teacher. You're the one who's imparting...

Matthew: Yes, but if the person is learning things from the Bible, what I would say is the most important are the salvation issues...

Appeal Overseer One: But I mean, if you were saying to them, 'Do you know that this is the only true organisation,' but you don't believe that in your heart; you have doubts about that, how are you going to teach it?

Appeal Overseer Two: Can I just add something, Matthew? Actually, the belief of Jehovah's Witnesses is that the most important issue is the sanctification of Jehovah's name, not salvation issues – that's a teaching of Christendom.

Matthew: Yeah, but it was the primary reason of Jesus' sacrifice as well as...seeks redemption, wasn't it?

Appeal Overseer One: No, it says in the Scriptures, 'he came to minister *and* to give his soul a ransom.

Appeal Overseer Two: The primary reason Jesus came, according to Jehovah’s Witnesses, was to uphold the issue of Universal Sovereignty.

Matthew: Yeah, I can understand that, but what....

Appeal Overseer Two: You said a minute ago that you didn’t believe that...

Matthew: No, what I said was from the brother’s question point-of-view, if you’re speaking to a person who has no knowledge of God, from their point-of-view, their eternal salvation and their future is what they would be concerned about. So that’s what I was getting at.

Appeal Overseer Two: That’s not really the way that Jehovah’s Witnesses do the field ministry, because one of the points that was mentioned about 1914 and the reason why we feature the Kingdom in our ministry, it’s not primarily to save people, it’s to promote the fact that Jehovah’s Universal Sovereign... So, you seem to be quite out of variance with the mainstream belief of Jehovah’s Witnesses on quite fundamental things, Matthew.

Matthew: Well, all I was saying to you was what the Gospel message was, that all I said to you, from what the New Testament says about the Gospel message.

Appeal Overseer Two: What you’ve said to us is what *you* believe the Gospel message to be. You haven’t said to us that you believe what Jehovah’s Witnesses teach the Gospel message to be.

Matthew: Well, all I said was what I read in the Bible, what the Gospel message was, and I would say to you *again*, if a person was to read the Bible and try to figure out what the Gospel message was before 1875, how would they understand what the Gospel message was? Because...

Appeal Overseer One: If you’re...if you’re at variance with us in discussing these points, it seems to me – I maybe picked it up wrong – if you’re at variance with us in discussing these points of – because you can see our conviction of these matters which comes across as different in your idea of it – how can you recognise a structure – which you’ve lost a bit of trust in us as elders in as being submissive to the arrangement – when you have a difference of view?

Matthew: Well, *I didn’t say I had a difference of view*. You put a *hypothetical situation*, if you were to speak to someone, right?

Appeal Overseer One: Yes.

Matthew: Now, obviously *I’m not going out in the ministry and I don’t attend the meetings, so therefore, for me to pretend I’m part of a preaching campaign would be silly*.

Appeal Overseer One: But, I mean, you did at one time. (57:58)

Matthew: Yeah, so, all I’m saying to you, all I was doing was *responding to your hypothetical situation*. I wouldn’t say to someone, ‘This is...I’m going to give you the A to Z of beliefs, all I would do is say, ‘This is what the Bible says,’ and *I previously said that I would feel a hypocrite if I was to say, ‘You should go down to the Kingdom Hall,’ because if I wasn’t attending myself that would be silly*.

Appeal Overseer Two: Can I ask you a question, Matthew? Have you been to *any other* religious meetings other than Jehovah’s Witnesses since you were baptised?

Matthew: I haven’t. I haven’t been to other religious meetings.

Appeal Overseer Two: In homes or in a place of worship.

Matthew: No.

Appeal Overseer Two: Never?

Matthew: No.

Appeal Overseer Two: Okay.

Appeal Chairman: So, Matthew, the question to ask you: With your ministry, you mentioned that you pioneered before.

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Yeah? And you were obviously confident to preach the Good News, use, for example, the Bible study aids that we have? Magazines?

Matthew: Yeah, uh um.

Appeal Chairman: You seemed to express a lack of that confidence now. Is that true?

Matthew: Well, that would what would happen if you fell away for a while, you wouldn't have the same confidence in things.

Appeal Chairman: Well, okay, yeah, fair enough, same confidence. Would you disagree with using any of those tools today to help people?

Matthew: I don't have access to them, so I wouldn't...I probably wouldn't use them because I don't get the magazines.

Circuit overseers consult one another.

Appeal Overseer Two: Was that by choice you don't get the magazines, because you obviously have contact with your mother, and that.

Matthew: Well, my mum and dad used to drop the magazines in to me, which is how I know about the thing about the...

Appeal Overseer Two: But you don't ask to get them? (59:24)

Matthew: I haven't...I haven't requested them, no. So I do get them occasionally

Appeal Overseer Two: Is there a reason for that?

Matthew: No particular reason, no.

Appeal Overseer Two: You just don't bother with them?

Matthew: No, no particular reason. I sometimes get them. I sometimes get access to them and I have a read through them.

Appeal Chairman: So you'll still be familiar with what we teach and you know that the basic fundamental truths, such as the ones the brothers have mentioned: Jehovah's name, Jehovah's holiness, the Kingdom. There's no change in those fundamental Bible teachings. The light has got brighter in aspects, which is the same with all aspects. But with those that remain fundamentally the same, would you be confident to go and preach them now? Not with your ability, but with your beliefs? (1:00:08)

Matthew: I would think that if I was back at the meetings and I was strong again I probably would, yeah.

Appeal Overseer Two: So, what about some of some of these aspects you're not happy to talk to us about?

Matthew: It's only purely because I feel *I didn't get any joy in the avenues explored previously*, so therefore I feel the *best way to deal with it is just to keep it a private matter. It's not that I have any problem with certain ideas* or anything like that. It's just I feel it didn't lead me anywhere the last time.

Appeal Overseer Two: So, wh..what hope do you have to build a relationship with Jehovah if you have doubts over scriptural teachings and you have nowhere to go? See, can you remember...can you remember the occasion where Jesus had spoke about *figuratively* his body, eating the body and drinking his blood? R..r..remember what happened? With a number of those there – what happened to them?

Matthew: Yeah, they were stumbled and left.

Appeal Overseer Two: Yeah, they left. So, they didn't have an understanding, did they? And they left. Now, what about Peter and some of the apostles, did they have a full understanding of that?

Matthew: No, their conviction was based upon their faith.

Appeal Overseer Two: So what did they say to Jesus? Remember what they said? He said, 'Do you also want to go?'

Matthew: They said, 'To whom else will we go?'

Appeal Overseer Two: Yeah, 'You have the sayings of everlasting life.'

Matthew: Yep.

Appeal Overseer Two: So who has the sayings of everlasting life today, then, Matthew?

Matthew: Well, I would say that what Peter said was correct, 'To whom else shall we go? Because Jesus was the person.'

Appeal Overseer Two: Jesus was the one. So Jesus is still the one who has the sayings of everlasting life. *What channel does he use on the earth today?*

Matthew: Well, as I said brothers, *I don't want to get into a big run-down of what my own personal views are on things. I'm here because I felt something was wrong with the decision and I don't want to discuss my own views on things...*

Appeal Overseer Two: Well...

Matthew: ...I appreciate your position; you want to clarify certain things, *but that is not why I came down...I came down in the first instance, or here, to discuss things of a sort of an abstract nature.*

Appeal Overseer Two: It's part of this process which *you* initiated!

Matthew: Yeah, well I didn't actually initiate...*I didn't actually initiate the first or the appealing to the initial...*

Appeal Overseer Two: I said the appeal process.

Matthew: Yeah, that's right.

Appeal Overseer Two: Which means that *you* feel that *you* should remain as one of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Matthew: That's right.

Appeal Overseer Two: And you still feel strongly on that?

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer Two: *And yet, I just asked you the question: What channel does Jesus use in the earth today? Why not the same answer, Matthew?*

Matthew: Because of *certain things I can't answer*. There's certain things *I'm not going to answer* because of a feeling that I have that things didn't work out the way I expected them to before. So, it's *not that specific question that I'm refusing to answer*. It's *my own personal views* on the beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses *in general*. I don't want to answer, because it could be, 'What do you believe is The Generation?' It could be, 'When... how long do you believe a generation is?' It just so happens you're asking that question. It could be any question.

Appeal Overseer Two: Well, it's not, it's *that* question! (1:03:05)

Matthew: But that's what I'm saying; I don't want to answer *any doctrinal questions* about Jehovah's Witnesses' beliefs. *The ones that have been discussed with (Prosecution Witness One) and (Prosecution Witness Two), because they're in their arena to be*

discussed, I was happy to discuss the context of which those things took place in. But anything outside of that, it would be a Jehovah's Witness Q&A and that's what I don't want to do. *It's not that I'm specifically refusing to answer that one question.*

Appeal Overseer Two: We have to re-establish whether there are grounds for apostasy or not without Jehovah's Witness Q&A?

Matthew: Yeah, I understand that, but the point I'd come back to grounds for apostasy were stated as the *primary reason being of the things that were discussed and I've given my opinion as to why the brothers felt the way they did.*

Appeal Overseer Two: Well, Matthew, *you have a choice to make.* You do have a choice to make as to *whether you comment on those things or not.* But we've shown you the Scriptural-basis as to why we *push for an answer.*

Matthew: Uh um.

Appeal Overseer Two: It's your choice whether you want to follow that Scriptural-basis or not.

Matthew: Well...

Appeal Overseer Two: But that tells us something about you.

Matthew: Well, I would suggest that *even in a court of law a person is entitled to not speak.* Isn't that the case?

Appeal Overseer Two: That's where you're wrong in this country (or something similar). You're now in this country under Caesar's law unless...(indistinct)...we're going to draw a certain inference.

Matthew: Isn't it the case that *when a person's arrested the right to remain silent?* That's what I'm referring to.

Appeal Overseer Two: You're told that in a court of law you're told that if you do not answer, then the jury is entitled as instructed by the judge to draw certain negative conclusion.

Matthew: Well, that's the position you brothers find yourselves in. So, I understand that.

Appeal Chairman: The thing is, Matthew, you know, *you're not in a court of law here.* You're under Jehovah's arrangement as far as we're concerned as Jehovah's Witnesses. If you disagree with that, then you disagree with *your terms* as one of Jehovah's Witnesses if you want to put it in more mundane terms.

Matthew: I would also suggest the fact that I appeared in the initial judicial committee and the fact that I've appealed the decision on the basis that I felt it was a *miscarriage*, surely that suggests to you that I've got some common interest with you in the proceedings. (1:05:30)

Appeal Chairman: We not...we're not saying you don't, Matthew, we're not...

Matthew: But *you're implying that because I don't want to answer this, that that means that I'm showing lack of respect for the arrangement or I don't want to comply with the arrangement.* The fact that I came down to the judicial (hearing) in the first place and the fact that I've appealed shows that *I am party to the arrangement as far as I feel it becomes detrimental to me.*

Appeal Overseer Two: It shows an *element* of compliance.

Matthew: Yeah. *But no one is obliged to say certain things by anyone. You don't have to say certain things and it's not your specific questions,* it's purely...I made it clear to

the brothers in the initial judicial committee that *I didn't want to come down here for a spiritual debate about certain viewpoints.*

Appeal Overseer Two: No we don't...we don't want a spiritual debate.

Matthew: So that's what I made clear. All I'm doing is sticking to my previous stance. *It's not that I'm trying to be obtuse* to you, or anything like that *or trying to block you in* any way. Because you happened to ask specific questions, as I said, it could be anything. (1:06:26)

Appeal Overseer One: Okay, some of the difficulties we have in this deliberation, I'm sure you realise, we're working hard here to ascertain the facts. And one of the definitions in the Reasoning Book about apostasy, it states, 'Some apostates profess to know and serve God, but reject teachings or requirements set out in his word. Others claim to believe the Bible but reject Jehovah's Organisation.'

So, don't you see, it's not just this teaching again, there are all different aspects of *conduct* that a person shows that they're at difference with Jehovah's Organisation. It's not a big thing, if I could put it that way, in the sense of, er, um, how could you express it? Um, *it's like a club*, it almost sounds demeaning that, about *Jehovah's Organisation*. But, us becoming Jehovah's Witnesses or remain Jehovah's Witnesses *is voluntary*...

Matthew: Uh um.

Appeal Overseer One: ...we're not coerced. It's like *signing up to a club*, it is demanded of us, if we voluntarily want to be one, and live by certain standards that others know, that we conform to the teachings, that that becomes our belief. And that's one of the difficulties we have here, trying to determine what, and we've shown to you; everybody has personal ideas and views, but beliefs is another thing.

Matthew: That's all I have, personal views. At times I've expressed...I've expressed *an opinion* because I believe for someone to *state categorically they believe something, then it mean it's an established fact in the head*. Now, *I don't have established facts about things*.

Appeal Overseer One: But when I ask you questions like, um, you reject Jehovah's Organisation, you would say, 'I *don't* reject Jehovah's Organisation.' But if you think there are other groups about that have an equal standing with Jehovah, that's rejecting his organisation's idea, or who's using it, you know.

Matthew: Well, all I did was quote from one of the Watchtowers to (Prosecution Witness One), because...

Appeal Overseer One: That was a history lesson, we're talking about... (1:08:39)

Matthew: I said to him...I made it clear at that point within the context of that...

Appeal Overseer One: 'Scuse me, Matthew, I know that. I don't want to go back over old ground. I mean *just now*...

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Overseer One: What is your view?

Matthew: That's my stated view at the time.

Appeal Overseer One: What?

Matthew: What I just said to you.

Appeal Overseer One: And it still holds today?

Matthew: No, I don't mean regarding that. I mean my stated view regarding questions about doctrines I personally believe...

Appeal Overseer One: Oh, you still don't want to answer...?

Matthew: I still don't want to discuss it because I feel...

Appeal Overseer One: (*Appeal Overseer One verbally cuts Matthew off*) I think I've come to the end of my questions.

Appeal Chairman: I think we'll just put a wee scenario to you before we dismiss all of you, for us to have a discussion. Someone comes in here, I used the example of smoking before, and we have eyewitness testimony to smoking or two-witness testimony to a confession of that. And we speak to you and you say, 'I don't want to discuss that.' You see the difficulty with that?

Matthew: Yeah, but as far as I'm aware of someone, if there's two or more witnesses and the elders want to instigate a judicial procedure against someone, then the person isn't required to give an answer or even attend a judicial (hearing). A person could be disfellowshipped with all the available evidence. (1:09:51)

Appeal Chairman: That could be the case. Do we have any more to say? Brothers? Matthew? Nothing?

Matthew: No, I don't have anything else to say.

Appeal Chairman: If we could just dismiss you, but please all stay here.

Matthew: See you later. Nothing personal, brothers, I don't hold anything against you...what you've done, okay?

Someone: There's nothing personal...

Matthew waits outside the appeal courtroom.

Prosecution Witness One: I saw you today

Matthew: Oh, whereabouts?

Prosecution Witness One: I was waiting for Sue to come out of the pharmacy, and you were...

Matthew: Oh yeah, I was with the boys...

(Possible tape-edit [or the circuit overseers take almost no time to deliberate over their decision])

Appeal Overseers call Matthew back into the appeal courtroom.

Prosecution Witness One: Right, see you later.

Matthew: See you later.

The Verdict

Appeal Chairman: Okay, Matthew, we've reached a decision as an appeal committee and that's to ***uphold the decision of the original committee to disfellowship***. I'll show you a Scriptural-basis for why that is the case, um, Jude.

In discussing those who apostasise (apostatise), it says in verse 8, it says, 'In like manner, notwithstanding these men, too, indulging in dreams or defiling the flesh and ***disregarding lordship***, and speaking abusively of glorious ones.'

Looking at those responsible in Jehovah's Organisation, in verse 11 it says, 'Too bad for them because they have gone in the path of Cain and have rushed into the erroneous course of Balaam for reward and have perished along with the rebellious talk of Korah.'

The definition given for apostasy; one of the many points that we mentioned to you earlier, it wasn't just one – a number of them. It says, 'they may claim to serve God, but ***reject his representatives***,' and we saw that clearly both with the evidence we saw from the

eyewitnesses with regard to different points that you believe and your rejecting us as his representatives in discussing these, which was your choice.

What we'd like to say is this doesn't mean that we do not want you to consider these things and to try and return to Jehovah's Organisation. So, how would you do that? Well, you've got to examine what you believe. It would be appropriate to seek help using the publications of Jehovah's Witnesses. If you get the magazines, look at them, read them, study them, consider them, and then an appropriate ... (indistinct), **come to these brothers, come to these elders of the judicial committee and ask for help on these matters**, making your way back, showing respect, showing submission to Jehovah's Organisation, and we would certainly encourage you to do that.

Do you have a current Medical Alert Card?

Matthew: No. (1:12:49)

Appeal Chairman: Because, as being no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses, you're not entitled to carry that. You may choose to make one of your own because of your decision to believe that. The only announcement that will be made will simply be that you're no longer one of Jehovah's Witnesses. That's all ... (indistinct)...

So that's our decision. We would encourage you to make your way back. Coming to the meetings would be a very good start, very good indeed. That would help, I think.

Matthew: Yeah.

Appeal Chairman: Okay?

Matthew: Can I also encourage all you brothers, if you get the chance to, to read the first five verses of First Corinthians chapter four (*Matthew's voice is strained*) if you'll have a look at it in your own time. That's all I've got to say, but thanks for your time anyway. Okay?

Circuit overseers: Thanks for coming, Matthew.

Matthew: See you later.

Everyone gets up and leaves.

Matthew: Is there a trick to this, is there? See you later.

Judicial Chairman (of original Hearing committee): (Indistinct)... Sorry.

End of Transcript. (1:14:00)