

## What “Jehovah’s Witnesses” Do With Psalm 104:5

by Bill Crews

The people who call themselves “Jehovah’s Witnesses” were founded by Charles Taze Russell in 1879. They have undergone many changes in doctrine and organization since that date. At first, Russell and his successor, Joseph Franklin Rutherford, pretty well controlled both doctrine and organization, as well as activities, but then things changed. Now they have a rather tight-knit organization controlled from the top down (the “pioneers,” who go door to door are assigned so many hours monthly in their field). And all doctrines and so-called “Bible studies” are determined by the writings of an anonymous board of editors at “headquarters.” The members are allowed to read and teach nothing else.

These leaders appeal to **Psalm 104:5** (*“the earth shall not be moved for ever”* — the wording of the KJV, NKJV, ASV, NASB [*“forever and ever”*] Amplified and YLT) in an attempt to prove their doctrine that the righteous (except for the 144,000 who will be allowed to live in heaven — their take on Revelation 7:1-8 and 14:1-7) will live forever on this very earth after it has been restored to its original condition. However, the Bible speaks of *“a new heaven”* and *“a new earth”* and speaks of the fate of this old heavens and earth in 2 Peter 3:1-12 (*“reserved for fire until the day of judgment and perdition of ungodly men”; “the heavens will pass away with a great noise, and the elements will melt with fervent heat; both the earth and the works that are in it will be burned up”; “all these things will be dissolved”; “the heavens will be dissolved, being on fire, and the elements will melt with fervent heat”*; this does not support the idea that the earth that now is will be restored to its original condition before the sin of Adam and Eve).

The Hebrew translated *“for ever”* in **Psalm 104:5** is **OLAM**. It is far and away the most common Hebrew word thus translated. It is also rendered *“everlasting,” “perpetual”* and *“eternal.”* But then it is also translated *“evermore,” “ancient time,” “old,” “ancient,” “lasting,”* etc. In the KING JAMES VERSION it is rendered *“ever”* 267 times with the word *“for”* preceding it (*“for ever,”* not *“forever”*). That the word does not mean endless or without an end should become clear in that many other things are said to be *“for ever”*:

1. The observance of the seventh day of the week as a day of *“Sabbath”* (*“rest”*). **Exodus 31: 12-17**
2. The land of Canaan and even more (from Egypt to the Euphrates) was to be given to Abraham and his seed for ever. **Genesis 13:15; Exodus 32: 13; Psalm 105:8**
3. The covenant of circumcision was to be an everlasting covenant. **Genesis 17: 13**
4. The Passover was to be observed by an ordinance for ever. **Exodus 12:14, 24**
5. The feast of unleavened bread was to be kept by an ordinance for ever. **Exodus 12: 17**
6. A slave, who was a Hebrew who did not wish his freedom, in his seventh year was to be marked on his ear and then serve his master for ever. **Exodus 21 :2-6**
7. The apparel appointed for the high priest and the priests was a statute for ever. **Exodus 28:40-43**
8. The breast of the wave-offering and the thigh of the heave-offering were to be the portion of Aaron and his sons (the priests) as their portion for ever. **Exodus 29:26-28; Leviticus 7:28-34**
9. The washing of hands and feet by the priests before ministering at the tabernacle is called a statute for ever. **Exodus 30:17-21**
10. The Israelites were neither to eat the fat nor the blood as a *“perpetual statute throughout your generations.”* **Leviticus 3:17** (THE LIST COULD GO ON AND ON; I HAVE A LIST OF 17 MORE OF THESE.)

In all of these passages the Hebrew word rendered *“for ever”* or otherwise is the word **OLAM**, the same as the word in Psalm 104:5, **BUT** the translators (who are never identified) of the *New World Translation*, the official translation of the Jehovah’s Witnesses organization, have rendered **OLAM** *“to time indefinite.”* This they did because they knew that not one of these things was to continue without coming to an end. All of them ended when Christ died on the cross and a new covenant was given (Jeremiah 31:31-34; Hebrews 8:6-13; Colossians 2:13-17). The *New World Translation* of Psalm 104:5 reads: *“He has founded the earth upon its established places; it will not be made to totter to time indefinite or forever.”* Why did they not add *“forever”* to all of these other passages that use the same **OLAM**? The answer should be obvious. It would show the fallacy of their doctrine about living without an end on this physical earth.