



## My Search for the Truth

My name is Kim Wilkinson, and this is My Story.

When I was about 15 or so I began to wonder what the Bible really had to say. Thus began my search for *the truth*. This search took me to many churches--Mennonite, Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, and Baptist. But, I still felt like I was not finding what I was looking for. My mother told me that if I really wanted to know what the Bible had to say, I should study with the Jehovah's Witnesses. I took her advice and got baptized in their organization and a little over a year later got married. They taught and I believed that the world was going to end in 1975 so I knew I didn't have any time to waste.

Sixteen years later, due to certain circumstances within my marriage, I became disfellowshipped by choice. Thereafter, I was a mess. I felt as if I had lost everything, and, in some ways I had. Since I chose to be disfellowshipped, I was led to believe that there was no hope for me, according to their interpretation of Hebrews 10:26-29. I had deliberately turned my back on the truth and so there was no hope for me--I would die at Armageddon which was coming at any time.

Having come from such a structured and disciplined routine within my life, I now found myself with a lot of free time. So, I did what many people do when they are confused and lonely--I turned to alcohol and sex. I had several long term relationships without being married. This tended to help me forget temporarily about the spiritual void in my life. But, I never stopped believing in God and still believed that Jehovah's Witnesses had *the truth*. I prayed to God just about every day to not let me die at Armageddon and to remember me at the resurrection.

Eventually, I decided that if I was going to die anyway at Armageddon, there was no hope for me. So why was I tormenting myself with religion? I threw away my Bible and any literature that was haunting me. By this time I was also in the habit of drinking heavily with my boyfriend of 9 years. Then one day I woke up and realized that he was truly an alcoholic with some real problems and that I was becoming just like him--content to pass all my free time by drinking. Eventually I got him out of my house. I attended a few AA meetings and I began praying and reciting Proverbs 3:5-6. These Scriptures truly proved to be my sustenance through this time, along with a book entitled *Courage to Change* and the serenity prayer.

I came to the realization that I could never go back to Jehovah's Witnesses. I felt so lost and hopeless. I decided that I would try to start a new kind of life volunteering my time and going back to school. In January, 2006, I began talking to Doug Wilkinson. Before this time, I knew who he was but didn't really know him. I just knew that he was different and I wanted to know why. During the course of one of our very first conversations, I came right out and asked him how he felt about spiritual matters. Doug told me that spiritual matters were very important to him and he told me about his church. About 6 weeks or so later I asked him if I could go to church with him. I came along nervously and with the intent to be very skeptical. After all I was about to cross over into the threshold of Babylon the Great.

During my first service, I spent the time observing everyone and everything trying to find fault. To my surprise, I saw and heard several things that got my attention. It was enough to make me want to come back. The church was not ostentatious; the members were from all age groups. I was especially impressed by the number of young people. During the sermon the pastor held up the Bible and said, "This is what we listen to and follow:

the Scriptures." Wow, he believed in teaching the Bible and only the Bible! The next week during the sermon he acknowledged *Jehovah* as the name of the true God! Also, from my very first visit, I was impressed with the way the offering was taken. The pastor said, "If you are a visitor, just pass the plate right on by. We aren't after your money." Wow, I was sure that all organized religion was big business—they only cared about money, not people's spiritual well being. But this church was different!

I also noticed the testimony tracts near the church doorway. One in particular caught my eye. It was entitled, *I Was Deceived for over 30 Years*. This caught my attention because I felt as if I had been deceived and brain-washed by the Witnesses. Because this testimony seemed to have such an effect on me, I decided that I needed to speak to Beverly Hammett about what she had written. I approached her on a Sunday in May and told her I would like to talk to her sometime. To my surprise, she said she could talk to me right then. I gave her a brief history of my background and of my fears that, based on Hebrews 10:26-29, there was no hope for me. She told me that there was still hope for me, and began to explain to me what the Scriptures there in Hebrews meant when taken in context. She also shared with me some other scriptural thoughts and suggested that we do a Bible study together, and I accepted.

I had some questions and concerns that I needed to have answered immediately from the Bible. She started with these subjects first: the trinity; the rapture; the tribulation; Armageddon; the 144,000. Coincidentally the sermons each Sunday were also addressing these concerns of mine. I was sure that someone was telling the pastor what to preach!

On July 30, 2006, the service started with a violin song entitled, "The Touch of the Master's Hand". It was the most beautiful song I had ever heard, and I began to cry silently. Then Pastor Ron Hammett preached a message about repentance and faith. I wrote down 3 main points from the message. First, we need to come *to Truth* as seen in First Timothy 2:4-5. Second, we need to come *to Repentance* as mentioned in 2 Peter 3:9. Third, we need to come *to Christ* as spoken about in John 6:37. Jesus would accept me, but I needed to cast myself at His feet. When the invitational was played, I knew it was for me, but I couldn't get my feet to move.

Thereafter, I continued to pray to God to please show me the truth, and to let me see the Scriptures as a child would. I asked Him to open my eyes and heart, and to show me the truth. I knew that I was involved in a spiritual warfare and was still confused between what I was hearing in church and what I had been taught before.

My eyes **were** being opened. One day I saw John 14:6 printed on a Bible cover, "***I am the way, the truth, and the life.***" I suddenly understood! I had just recently come to an appreciation of how that title for God, *I Am*, is tied together between the scriptures of the Old Testament and those in the New Testament. I had been reading the book of John to see how many times *I Am* is mentioned. Now I realized that the truth was before me all along. Jesus was *the Truth*! I was already led to it; all I needed to do was to accept Him. It was stated so simply; why didn't I see it before? Why did I think I needed to keep looking? It was there all along. I had found the truth and didn't realize it.

I knew I had the head knowledge. I knew I was like filthy rags—something disgusting—something that I would hold away from myself because of the stench. And, yet, I knew that despite this, God was offering to me the free gift of salvation. I knew salvation was by His grace and through faith. I wanted that free gift. I wanted to be saved; but I was concerned about my heart condition. How would I know if I was sincere? I thought salvation needed to be some major emotional experience that would just overcome me.

Then, the time came—my next Bible study was the final one. I figured it would be the one when I would know whether or not I *got* it, so I was concerned. But one of the men at church said something to me that stuck with me and still sticks with me. He said, "Just listen to the Scriptures." As we completed the lesson, Bev asked me how I felt about everything—if I saw the need to repent and if I wanted to take the step towards salvation. I was

hesitant. I knew there were changes in my life that I still needed to make to be right with God and I desperately wanted to be genuine. She asked me if I was *willing* to make the changes. I told her that not only was I willing to change, but I knew **I had to**. I also knew that salvation wasn't based on having everything just right—if I waited for everything to be right in my life before I could be saved, it would never happen. She then used an illustration to help me.

She told me to picture a young child at the top of a stairway in a dark room with the father at the bottom of the stairs telling the child to jump to him. What would the child do? Well, I knew that out of love for, belief in, and faith in him, the child would jump to the father, even though he could not see him. The child would trust his father to catch him. I got the point, and told her that I was ready to jump. On September 29, 2006, at 8:05 PM, I asked the Lord for forgiveness of my sins. I asked Him to save me; I surrendered myself to Him to do His will. I am now His, and I want to please Him with my life.

Since that time, my life has changed drastically. I have walked away from a lot and surprisingly to me it has come easily and naturally. I know I still have a lot to learn and a lot of changes to make. But I can say that my family, friends, and co-workers have seen a tremendous change in me and I am happy to tell them all why. And I feel a difference within myself. I'm calm and at peace. I can sleep at night - no more nightmares or fears about dying at Armageddon; no more fear of death; no more fear of being alienated from our Lord and God. I have been blessed in so many ways and have so much to be thankful for. I was lost, but there was hope for me, and now I am saved. What more can I say; I love Jesus with all of my heart!