

# Why I am not a Jehovah's Witness

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## *A refuting of JW doctrines from the Scriptures*

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*John 1:1, Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6, 2 Corinthians 13:14*

### KEY SCRIPTURES

## *A refuting of JW doctrines from the Scriptures.*

This document presents the evangelical case and broader orthodox Christian response to the principal teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses. It follows the order of the doctrines as commonly set out and aims to represent the apologetic argument fairly and with its supporting texts. (See appendix at end of document, which might be read first, before the study, to aid understanding of the Scriptural refuting of them.).

## **1. God and the Trinity**

The Witness claim is that the Trinity is unscriptural and pagan in origin. The reply is that the doctrine is not a philosophical importation but a synthesis of what Scripture itself teaches: that there is one God (Deuteronomy 6:4; Isaiah 44:6), yet that the Father, the Son and the Spirit are each spoken of and act as one God.

This study argues that the word "Trinity" need not appear in

Scripture for the teaching to be biblical, just as “theocracy” or “Bible” do not appear. It is pointed out the term ‘the Triune God’ is more appropriate (See other study on this - **If God Is One, How Can There Be a Triune God?**). We find passages where the three are named together (Matthew 28:19, where Jesus commands baptism into the single “name” of Father, Son and Holy Spirit; 2 Corinthians 13:14), also note that the historic creeds carefully distinguish the one divine being from the three entities — a distinction that avoids the contradiction the Witnesses allege. On the pagan-origin claim, the doctrine arose from wrestling with the biblical data over the first four centuries, not from Babylonian or Platonic triads, which differ from it in kind.

### ***The Hebrew of the Shema (Deuteronomy 6:4)***

Witnesses appeal to the Shema, “Jehovah our God is one Jehovah,” as decisive for strict unitarianism. The word translated “one” is *echad*, which can denote a composite or compound unity rather than absolute solitariness: the same word describes the man and woman becoming “one (*echad*) flesh” (Genesis 2:24) and the spies carrying “one (*echad*) cluster” of grapes (Numbers 13:23). They contrast this with *yachid*, the term for “only” or solitary used of Isaac as

Abraham's "only son" (Genesis 22:2), and argue that had Moses meant unmitigated singularity, *yachid* lay ready to hand for him to use. The Spirit prompted *echad*. We must be careful to state the argument's limit: *echad* is the ordinary cardinal number and does not by itself prove plurality. Words can have different uses depending on context. The Shema is fully compatible with the triune unity later revealed, not that it demonstrates it — which removes the Witness objection that the Shema rules the Triune God out.

## 2. The Deity of Jesus Christ

This is regarded as the central issue. Against the Witness teaching that Jesus is a created being and was the archangel Michael before birth, this study brings together several lines of evidence.

### ***John 1:1***

The JW's New World Translation (NWT) renders the final clause "the Word was a god." This is indefensible in the Greek. The absence of the article before *theos* signals that it is functioning as a predicate describing the Word's nature, not asserting a separate lesser deity, and that monotheistic Jewish John would never affirm "a god" in a polytheistic sense. The NWT does not translate other anarthrous

occurrences, that is words without an article, of *theos* as “a god,” which is an obvious inconsistency, that demonstrates their interpretations are biased by their theology and is in error.

### ***Other texts***

- John 8:58 — “Before Abraham came to be, I am,” this is a claim to the divine name of Exodus 3:14, noting that the hearers immediately took up stones because they saw it as blasphemous – He was equating Himself with God.
- John 20:28 — Thomas addresses the risen Jesus as “My Lord and my God,” and Jesus accepts it rather than correcting him.
- Colossians 1:16–17 — all things were created “in him... through him and for him.” The NWT inserts “other” (“all [other] things”) without warrant to make Christ a creature; without the insertion the text excludes him from the created order.
- Hebrews 1 — the Father addresses the Son as “God” (v. 8) and has the angels worship him (v. 6), which is impossible if Christ is himself an angel.

- Titus 2:13 and 2 Peter 1:1 — read grammatically from the Greek, both calling Jesus “our great God and Saviour.”

### ***Jesus is not Michael***

It is noted in this study, that Hebrews 1:5 asks, “To which of the angels did God ever say, You are my Son?” — distinguishing the Son from every angel — and that Jude 9 shows Michael unable to rebuke Satan in his own authority, whereas Jesus rebukes demons directly.

### ***“Firstborn” and “beginning of the creation”***

On Colossians 1:15 (“firstborn of all creation”) and Revelation 3:14 (“the beginning of the creation of God”), The “firstborn” (*prototokos*) denotes rank and heirship, not chronological origin — as David is called “firstborn” in Psalm 89:27 though not literally first-born — and that “beginning” (*arche*) carries the sense of source or origin, i.e. Christ as the one through whom creation began.

On the word “creation” (*ktisis*) itself, we turn to the vocabulary of the letter to the Hebrews. The writer speaks of the heavenly tabernacle Christ entered as “not made with hands, that is, not of this creation” (Hebrews 9:11), and as “not

made with hands”, that is not of human construction and heavenly rather than earthly (Hebrews 9:24). This shows that “creation” in New Testament usage can denote the made, earthly order as distinct from the uncreated and heavenly — so that to call Christ the *arche* (source/beginning i.e. John 1:1) of God’s creation need not place him within it, but may mark Him as its uncreated origin, consistent with Colossians 1:16–17, where all created things come into being through him.

### **3. The Holy Spirit**

Against the view that the Spirit is an impersonal “active force,” it is argued here, that Scripture ascribes to the Spirit personal acts and attributes: He speaks (Acts 13:2), can be lied to and thereby lied to God (Acts 5:3–4), can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), teaches and bears witness (John 14:26; 15:26), and distributes gifts “as He wills” (1 Corinthians 12:11). A mere force cannot be grieved or exercise a will, and that being lied to and thereby lying to God identifies the Spirit as God.

#### ***The Lukan witness to the Spirit***

Particular weight is given to Luke and Acts, where the Spirit acts throughout as a personal agent. In the Gospel the Spirit

comes upon Mary so that the child is called holy and the Son of God (Luke 1:35), descends at Jesus' baptism (Luke 3:22), then leads and is led — Jesus, “full of the Holy Spirit,” is driven by the Spirit in the wilderness (Luke 4:1) and rejoices “in the Holy Spirit” (Luke 10:21). In Acts the Spirit speaks and gives direction (“Set apart for me Barnabas and Saul,” Acts 13:2), is lied to (Acts 5:3–4), forbids and redirects the missionaries (Acts 16:6–7), and joins the apostolic council's decision (“It seemed good to the Holy Spirit and to us,” Acts 15:28). Such speaking, willing, forbidding, being lied to and being grieved are the acts of a person, not the operations of an impersonal energy.

### ***Capitalisation in the New World Translation***

Also note that the choice to print “holy spirit” in lower case is an interpretive decision rather than a translation one. The original Greek manuscripts are written in a single case and contain no distinction between “Holy Spirit” and “holy Spirit”; capitalisation in any English Bible is supplied by translators. We argue, therefore, that the NWT's consistent lower-casing does not report a feature of the text but encodes in advance the very doctrine in dispute — that the Spirit is a thing rather than a person — and so the cannot offer this, as evidence for

it.

#### 4. The Bible and the New World Translation

The Witness' affirmation of biblical inspiration and inerrancy, is an attempt to give credence to a false translation. This study disputes the New World Translation and the claim that Scripture must be read through Watch Tower publications. The argument is twofold.

First, on the text: the study argues that the NWT renders key Christological passages in ways no standard lexicon supports (John 1:1; Colossians 1:16–17; Hebrews 1:8), and that the insertion of “Jehovah” into the New Testament some 237 times has no manuscript support, since the surviving Greek manuscripts read *Kyrios* (Lord), not the Tetragrammaton the theological term for *Yahweh*. In short, Jehovah never found in the NT. The JW website tries to explain this away saying that words have been removed that would allow them to use Jehovah. Every claim can be refuted. Here is one example they quote:

**Mar 5:19** “However Jesus did not allow him, but said to him, Go home to your friends, and tell them what great things the Lord [*kurios*] has done for you, and has had mercy on you.”  
The correct translation from Greek.

“However, he did not let him but said to him: “Go home to your relatives, and report to them all the things Jehovah (The Greek does not support this usage) has done for you and the mercy he has shown you.” The error in NWT

Many more like this defeats their claims.

### ***From Hebrew to Greek: the divine name***

There is also a point about language. The Old Testament was written in Hebrew, whose alphabet is consonantal and which represents the divine name by the four consonants YHWH (the Tetragrammaton). Greek has no letter for the Hebrew Y/yod as used here and no means of carrying these consonants across, so the Greek Scriptures — both the Septuagint tradition and the New Testament manuscripts — render the name with *Kurios*, “Lord,” (As above) rather than transliterating YHWH. Two things follow. First, the form “Jehovah” is itself a late hybrid, combining the consonants of YHWH with the vowels of Adonai (“Lord”), and so is not how the name was originally vocalised; insisting on it as the one true name overstates what the Hebrew actually preserves. Second, because the New Testament authors, writing in

Greek, used *Kurios*, the NWT's reinsertion of "Jehovah" is a modern reconstruction read back into the text (eisegesis) rather than a reading out of it (exegesis) — and one with theological consequences, since many of the passages where *Kurios* is applied to Jesus are thereby separated from the Old Testament "Lord" texts they echo.

Second, on authority: making an organisation the necessary interpreter of Scripture effectively places that organisation above Scripture, contrary to the Bereans who "examined the Scriptures daily" to test even apostolic teaching (Acts 17:11), and that the history of revised teaching (below) shows the danger of an interpretive authority that is treated as God's channel yet repeatedly corrects itself.

## **5. The Organisation and the "Faithful and Discreet Slave"**

Matthew 24:45–47 is a parable urging faithfulness, not a prophecy designating a single modern Governing Body, as JW's claim. The New Testament knows no organisation mediating salvation between the believer and Christ, who is the one mediator (1 Timothy 2:5), and that the believer is indwelt and taught by the Spirit (1 John 2:27). The repeated reidentification of the "slave" — from the anointed as a whole to the Governing Body alone (last in 2012–13) — is evidence

that the claim is a later false construction.

The positive argument runs through the headship of Christ and the leading of the Spirit. The New Testament names Christ directly as the head of the Church, which is his body, with no intervening human channel: God “put all things under his feet and gave Him as head over all things to the Church” (Ephesians 1:22–23), and “he is the head of the body, the Church” (Colossians 1:18). Christ exercises this kingship now (1 Corinthians 15:25), and He rules his people not through a bureaucratic slave-class but by his Spirit: “all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God” (Romans 8:14), and the Spirit “will guide you into all the truth” (John 16:13). This study therefore argues that to interpose an earthly Governing Body as the necessary channel of divine instruction — the one through whom “food at the proper time” must come — displaces the authority the New Testament assigns directly to the reigning Christ and the indwelling Spirit, and effectively binds the conscience to men rather than to the Lord who alone is head of the church.

## **6. The Kingdom and 1914**

The 1914 statements rests on a chain of disputable assumptions: a particular date for Jerusalem’s fall (the

Society uses 607 BC, whereas standard ancient chronology places it at 587/586 BC), the equation of the “seven times” of Daniel 4 with 2,520 years, and a day-for-a-year principle applied to a passage about Nebuchadnezzar’s madness. Daniel 4 is about the king, not a countdown to 1914, and they point to Jesus’ own words that “it is not for you to know times or seasons” (Acts 1:7) and that the Son did not know the day or hour (Matthew 24:36) — there is cautioning against precisely this kind of date-setting.

The test of the false prophet. Deuteronomy 18:21–22 gives Israel a criterion for distinguishing a true prophet from a presumptuous one: if what is spoken in the Lord’s name does not come to pass, the Lord has not spoken it. They argue that the Watch Tower’s own publications announced expectations tied to 1914 (and later 1925 and 1975) which did not occur as predicted, and that an organisation claiming to be God’s appointed channel of truth is exposed by this standard — not merely mistaken on a detail, but failing the biblical test of a true word from God. Jesus likewise warns of “false prophets” known “by their fruits” (Matthew 7:15–20) and of those who would announce times and seasons in his name (Matthew 24:23–26). The JW is a false prophetic organisation.

## 7. The Two Hopes: 144,000 and the Great Crowd

The New Testament holds out one hope and one calling to all believers (Ephesians 4:4), not two destinies. On the 144,000 of Revelation 7, there are two points. First, the text itself identifies them as drawn “from every tribe of the sons of Israel,” and then names the twelve tribes one by one (Revelation 7:4–8) — they are presented as Israelite, tribal and sealed, not as a cross-section of all faithful Christians across the centuries. This study presses the inconsistency: the Witness reading treats the tribal census as symbolic of a spiritual “Israel of God” while insisting the number 144,000 be taken with strict literalism — a selective literalism that takes the figure literally but the tribes figuratively. The whole description symbolic (12 x 12 x 1,000, the complete people of God), this study takes the view that Jewish identification is exactly what it is — 144,000 Jews; this group is not the modern anointed class the Witnesses describe.

Second, the same chapter then turns to a distinct and innumerable “great crowd... from every nation” (Revelation 7:9), standing before the throne with palm branches and serving God “in his temple” (Revelation 7:9–15) — this refutes an exclusively earthly hope for that group, as JW’s claim, since the scene is plainly heavenly. Also note Jesus’

teaching that the “other sheep” of John 10:16 become “one flock” with the rest, not a separate class. The restriction of the Lord’s Supper to a small “anointed” remnant is set against Jesus’ command, “Drink from it, all of you” (Matthew 26:27) and Paul’s instruction to the whole congregation (1 Corinthians 11:26).

## **8. Death, the Soul and Hell**

Let us grant part of the Witness case as a translation problem. The single English word “hell” has historically been made to cover several distinct biblical terms — the Hebrew *Sheol* and its Greek counterpart *Hades* (the realm or state of the dead), *Gehenna* (the place of final punishment), and *Tartarus* (2 Peter 2:4) — *Sheol* in itself often means simply the grave or the abode of the dead, not a place of fiery torment. To that extent they concede the Witnesses are right to object to the older flattening of these words into one. However, it is argued this concession does not establish the Witness conclusion that the dead simply cease to exist.

### ***The intermediate state and Abraham’s bosom***

Against “soul sleep” and non-existence of the JWs, we point to Jesus’ own depiction of the state of the dead in Luke 16:19–31. There the rich man and Lazarus are both

conscious after death: Lazarus is carried to “Abraham’s bosom” — understood as the place of the righteous dead, the redeemed at rest — while the rich man is in conscious torment, and the two are separated by a fixed “great chasm.” We argue this rules out unconscious extinction, since the dead in the account perceive, speak, remember and feel. Alongside this, Jesus’ word to the thief, “today you will be with me in Paradise” (Luke 23:43; note the NWT’s comma placement, “today I tell you,” as a textual manoeuvre), Paul’s desire “to depart and be with Christ” (Philippians 1:23) and to be “away from the body and at home with the Lord” (2 Corinthians 5:8), and the souls under the altar who cry out (Revelation 6:9–10). Non-existence is thereby demonstrated to be totally un-Biblical. Rather the Scriptures depict a *sheol* in which there are those who are in ‘Abraham’s Bosom’ and who are held separately from those destined for judgement to be excluded from God eternally. A chasm separates them.

### ***The resurrection of all and the final separation***

We affirm a general resurrection of all the dead at the last day, to two outcomes. Jesus teaches “an hour is coming when all who are in the tombs will hear his voice and come

out, those who have done good to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil to the resurrection of judgment” (John 5:28–29); Daniel 12:2 likewise speaks of many awaking “some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” On this view the dead are not annihilated at death but await resurrection, and at the last day are raised either to eternal life with God or to eternal separation from him.

### ***The nature of final punishment***

On the character of that separation, the traditional position holds that Scripture teaches conscious, everlasting exclusion from God (Matthew 25:46, where the same word “eternal” applies to both life and punishment; Revelation 14:11; 20:10). There are those in a minority of certain Christian traditions’ exegesis (annihilationists) who agree with the Witnesses that the wicked finally cease to exist, however, even these reject the Witness denial of any conscious afterlife for believers, holding firmly to the conscious intermediate state set out above. Annihilationists also cannot stand on Scripture for their minority views.

## **9. Armageddon, the Millennium and the Earthly Paradise**

It is acknowledged that there are a range of millennial views, so the response here is more about the destiny of believers

than the timetable. Against the teaching that the great crowd's hope is everlasting human life on a restored earth, it is pointed to the promise of resurrection bodies like Christ's glorified body (Philippians 3:21; 1 Corinthians 15:42–49) and to the believer's inheritance "kept in heaven" (1 Peter 1:4), while affirming with Witnesses that the creation itself will be renewed (Romans 8:21; Revelation 21). The disagreement is less about a renewed earth than about who is raised, to what kind of life, and on what basis.

## **10. Salvation: Faith, Works and Assurance**

This is regarded as a defining contrast. We affirm that salvation is by grace through faith, "not of works, so that no one can boast" (Ephesians 2:8–9), and that the believer may have assurance now: "I write these things... that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13). We argue the Witness system — requiring accurate knowledge, baptism as a Witness, ongoing obedience, field service and loyalty to the organisation, with final salvation uncertain until passing through Armageddon — amounts to a gospel of works that undercuts both grace and assurance. We affirm with James that genuine faith produces works (James 2), but argue the works are the fruit, not the root, of salvation.

## **11. Separateness, Holidays and Neutrality**

The call to be “not of the world” (John 17) concerns holiness, not withdrawal, and that Paul instructs believers to honour governing authorities, pay taxes and pray for rulers (Romans 13:1–7; 1 Timothy 2:1–2). On holidays and birthdays, Romans 14:5–6 leaves the observance of days to individual conscience, that there is no biblical prohibition of birthdays as such, and that the labelling of all other churches as “Babylon the Great” is an unwarranted identification that ignores the genuine faith of Christians across history and traditions.

## **12. Blood and Medical Care**

We need to distinguish eating blood from medical transfusion. We argue that Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:28–29 address the consumption of blood as food in a sacrificial and dietary context, not a modern medical procedure that did not exist, and that a transfusion is not “eating.” We appeal to Jesus’ teaching that mercy and the preservation of life take priority over ritual rules (Matthew 12:1–12; the Sabbath “made for man”), and express grave concern that the prohibition has cost lives — a pastoral as well as exegetical objection.

We also cite Paul’s counsel to Timothy, “No longer drink only water, but use a little wine for the sake of your stomach and your frequent ailments” (1 Timothy 5:23). We argue this is a

plain instance of an apostle commending a recognised medicinal means for the care of the body, showing that the use of available remedies to preserve health falls within — not outside — the will of God. By extension, we reason, the use of modern medical techniques such as transfusion to sustain life is consistent with this biblical regard for the body as something to be cared for and preserved, rather than something to be endangered for the sake of a ritual reading of the blood texts.

### **13. Disfellowshipping and Shunning**

This study affirms that the church may exercise discipline, including exclusion of the unrepentant (Matthew 18:15–17; 1 Corinthians 5). But it is argued here that the Witness practice goes beyond Scripture in its severity — particularly the shunning of family members and of those who simply leave or disagree — whereas the biblical aim of discipline is restoration (2 Corinthians 2:6–8, where Paul urges the church to forgive and comfort the disciplined man “so that he will not be overwhelmed”). They contend that treating doctrinal dissent as grounds for total social severance is a means of control inconsistent with the gospel’s freedom of grace enjoyed by God’s children.

### **14. The History of Changed Teaching**

Finally, the study makes an argument from the Witnesses' own history. Because the organisation presents itself as God's appointed channel of truth, we argue that its repeated reversals — the dates 1874, 1914, 1925 and 1975; the "generation" of 1914; the meaning of the "superior authorities"; the bans on vaccination and organ transplants — are difficult to reconcile with their claims. The test of Deuteronomy 18:21–22, that a prophecy which fails was not from the Lord, the "new light" of Proverbs 4:18 describes increasing brightness, not the reversal of direction seen in several of these cases.

### **A Closing Note on Manner**

This study stresses, that the goal is persuasion in love, not the winning of arguments. 1 Peter 3:15, to give a reason for the hope within "with gentleness and respect," and 2 Timothy 2:24–25, that the Lord's servant must correct opponents "with gentleness." Jehovah's Witnesses are in the main, typically sincere, devout and knowledgeable about their version of the Bible, and effective apologetics is held to depend on accurate representation of their actual beliefs, careful handling of the relevant texts, and genuine regard for the people themselves. In this see their beliefs set out in summary in the index attached.

## Appendix

### **The Basic Doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses**

*An outline of the principal teachings of the Watch Tower Bible  
and Tract Society*

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#### **1. God**

Jehovah's Witnesses are strictly unitarian. God is a single person whose personal name is Jehovah (their preferred English rendering of the Tetragrammaton, YHWH). They reject the doctrine of the Trinity as unscriptural and of post-biblical, pagan-influenced origin. Restoring and using the divine name is considered a mark of true worship, and their New World Translation inserts "Jehovah" throughout both Testaments.

#### **2. Jesus Christ**

Jesus is God's Son and the first and only direct creation of Jehovah — a created being, not God Almighty and not co-equal or co-eternal with the Father. Witnesses identify the pre-human Jesus with the archangel Michael. On earth he was a perfect man (not God incarnate), who died on an upright stake or pole rather than a cross, and was raised as a spirit creature, not in a physical body. His death is a “ransom sacrifice” that corresponds to what Adam lost, opening the way to everlasting life.

### **3. The Holy Spirit**

The holy spirit is not a person but Jehovah's “active force” — the invisible power God uses to accomplish his will. Accordingly it is usually written without capitals in Witness literature.

### **4. The Bible**

The Bible is the inspired and inerrant word of God and the sole authority for doctrine. Witnesses use their own translation, the New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures, and understand Scripture as interpreted through the publications of the Watch Tower organisation.

### **5. The Organisation and the “Faithful and Discreet Slave”**

Jehovah is held to direct his people through a visible organisation. The Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses is identified as the "faithful and discreet slave" of Matthew 24:45, appointed by Christ to provide spiritual "food at the proper time." Loyalty to the organisation and acceptance of its teaching are treated as essential to true worship; doctrinal adjustments are described as "new light."

## **6. The Kingdom of God and 1914**

God's Kingdom is a real, heavenly government with Christ as King. Witnesses teach that Christ began ruling invisibly in heaven in 1914, a date derived from their chronology of the "Gentile times" (Daniel 4; Luke 21:24). Since 1914 the world has been in its "last days," and the Kingdom will shortly destroy all human governments at Armageddon and rule over a restored earth.

## **7. The Two Hopes: 144,000 and the "Great Crowd"**

Salvation involves two distinct destinies:

- The "anointed" — a literal 144,000 (Revelation 7 and 14) — are born again, go to heaven, and reign with Christ as kings and priests.
- The "great crowd" or "other sheep" — the vast majority of

Witnesses — hope to survive Armageddon (or be resurrected) and live forever in perfect health on a restored paradise earth.

Only the anointed partake of the bread and wine at the annual Memorial of Christ's death (their only religious observance of this kind).

## **8. Death, the Soul, and Hell**

Human beings do not possess an immortal soul; the soul is the person, and at death one ceases to exist entirely (conditionalism). There is no hell of fiery torment — “hell” (Sheol/Hades) is simply the common grave of mankind. The hope for the dead is resurrection during Christ's millennial reign. The incorrigibly wicked face annihilation (“Gehenna”), not eternal torment.

## **9. Armageddon, the Millennium, and Paradise Earth**

At Armageddon God will destroy the present wicked system of things, including all who are not serving Jehovah. Christ will then reign for a thousand years, during which the earth will be transformed into a paradise, the dead will be resurrected and judged, and obedient mankind will be raised to human perfection. After a final test, the faithful will live forever on earth — the fulfilment of God's original purpose for

mankind.

## **10. Salvation**

Salvation is by faith in Jehovah and in Christ's ransom sacrifice, but faith must be demonstrated by works: accurate knowledge of the truth, baptism by full immersion as one of Jehovah's Witnesses, obedience to God's commands, and association with His organisation. Public preaching ("field service") from house to house is a central obligation of every Witness.

## **11. Separateness from the World**

Witnesses must remain "no part of the world." In practice this means:

- Political neutrality — no voting (as a body), holding political office, military service, or saluting the flag and singing national anthems.
- No celebration of holidays and customs regarded as pagan or nationalistic in origin — including Christmas, Easter and birthdays.
- Rejection of interfaith activity; all other religions are viewed as part of "Babylon the Great," the world empire of false

religion.

## 12. Blood

Based on Genesis 9:4 and Acts 15:28–29, Witnesses abstain from blood. This is understood to prohibit eating blood and accepting transfusions of whole blood or its four major components (red cells, white cells, platelets, plasma), even in life-threatening circumstances. The use of minor blood fractions and certain medical procedures is a matter of personal conscience.

## 13. Moral Life and Congregational Discipline

Witnesses are expected to maintain high moral standards — honesty, sexual morality confined to marriage between a man and a woman, and avoidance of drunkenness, gambling and tobacco. Serious unrepentant sin leads to disfellowshipping (removal from the congregation), accompanied by the practice of shunning by members, including family not living in the same household. The congregation is led by appointed male elders; there is no paid clergy class.

<b>Teaching</b>	<b>Earlier position</b>	<b>Revised position</b>
Christ's invisible presence	Began in 1874 (Russell)	Began in 1914; the date was abandoned early 1930s

Meaning of 1914	Would mark Armageddon and the end of the world system	Marks the start of heavenly rule and beginning of the “last
1925	Abraham, Isaac and Jacob would be resurrected (Millions Now Living Will Never Die); Beth Sarim built to house them	Prediction failed; Beth sold in 1948 and teaching abandoned
1975	Strongly implied as the end of 6,000 years of human history and likely time of Armageddon	Expectation dropped 1975; acknowledgment of 1980
The “generation” of 1914	The literal generation alive in 1914 would not die before Armageddon	Redefined in 1995; 2010, two “overlapping groups of anointed or
The heavenly hope	All faithful Christians have the heavenly calling	From 1935, only 144,000 “anointed” “great crowd” have earthly hope. The vision of the heavenly calling in 1935 was itself corrected in 2007
“Faithful and discreet slave”	The entire body of anointed Christians on earth	Since 2012–13, Governing Body alone

“Superior authorities” (Romans 13)	Secular governments (Russell); then Jehovah and Christ (1929)	Reverted to governments in 1962
Blood transfusions	No prohibition before 1945	Prohibited from 1945 fractions and procedures made conscience matter, policy progressively since 2000
Organ transplants	Condemned as “cannibalism” (1967)	A matter of conscience since 198
Vaccination	Condemned from the 1920s–30s as a violation of God’s law	Permitted since 195 treated as a p medical decision
The cross	Used freely in early literature and on the Watch Tower masthead	Rejected from the Jesus taught to hav on an upright stake”
Great Pyramid of Giza	Treated by Russell as God’s “witness in stone” confirming Bible chronology	Repudiated by Ruth 1928 as inspired by S
Resurrection of the people of Sodom	Position has alternated several times since Russell	Current teaching is th will not be resurrected



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*Fenland Church Bible Study Collection | "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God." — 2 Timothy 3:16 (KJV)*