

Reference Document

“The Religion That Taught Me to Hide From the People I Loved”
EVERY CLAIM, SOURCE, AND VERIFICATION STATUS

How to Use This Document

Each entry identifies a specific factual claim made in the video, the source it is based on, where to verify it, and any notes on confidence level. Claims appear in the order they come up in the video. Links to Watchtower publications open the official Watchtower Online Library, where you can read each quote in its full context; the date and page in the Source line let you find it directly.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — The original record itself: an official Watchtower publication (including the New World Translation and internal manuals such as *Shepherd the Flock of God*) or a court ruling. Primary sources stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — A firsthand account from a named, credible witness, or an established research source. Strongest when paired with a primary source, as they are here.

SECTION 1 · The Cold Open: Who Gets Resurrected

• Watchtower teaches that those God destroys at Armageddon receive no resurrection.

Source: *The Watchtower*, March 1, 1965, p. 150

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](https://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “They are executed by Jehovah God through his executorial officer, Jesus Christ, at Armageddon, and for this reason they will have no resurrection from the dead.”

• Watchtower teaches that the unrighteous who die before Armageddon can be resurrected and given an opportunity at everlasting life.

Source: *The Watchtower*, June 1, 2014, “When the Unrighteous Are Resurrected,” p. 11

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](https://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “For many of the unrighteous, this will be, not a second chance, but their first real opportunity to gain eternal life on earth.”

• Watchtower includes even those who ‘practiced vile things’ in the resurrection of the unrighteous.

Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), September 2022, “Is Your Name in ‘the Book of Life’?”

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](https://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “the unrighteous practiced vile things before they died. They will come out to a resurrection of judgment.”

• Watchtower long taught that the people of Sodom would not be resurrected, then in 2024 reversed that to ‘we cannot say for sure.’

Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), May 2024, “Trust in the Merciful ‘Judge of All the Earth!’”, p. 3

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](https://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Note: The May 2024 article states the long-held view and reverses it in the same passage.

Key quote: “for Sodom and Gomorrah, there is no hope of a future resurrection. But further prayerful study… No, we cannot say for sure!”

SECTION 2 · The Duty to Inform

- **A 1987 Watchtower study article instructed members that they may be obligated to report a fellow member's confidential wrongdoing to the elders.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1987, “A Time to Speak’—When?”, pp. 12–15

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower study article.

Note: The article's ‘Mary’ example concerns a medical worker who learns a fellow member had an abortion.

Key quote: “Hence, there may be times when a Christian is obligated to bring a matter to the attention of the elders.”

- **The same article tells members that divine law can require them to breach a confidence.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, September 1, 1987, “A Time to Speak’—When?”, p. 15

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower study article.

Key quote: “to strain or even breach the requirements of confidentiality because of the superior demands of divine law.”

- **The same instruction is taught today, in the current study book used with new members.**

Source: *Enjoy Life Forever!—An Interactive Bible Course* (current publication)

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — current official Watchtower study course.

Note: The lesson directs the reader to Leviticus 5:1 and the duty to bring a fellow believer's serious sin to the elders.

SECTION 3 · The Proof-Text They Quietly Edited

- **Before 2013, the New World Translation rendered Leviticus 5:1 as ‘public cursing.’**

Source: *The Watchtower*, August 15, 1997, “Why Report What Is Bad,” p. 27, quoting the pre-2013 New World Translation

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “he has heard public cursing and he is a witness or he has seen it or has come to know of it.”

- **In the 2013 revision, the New World Translation changed Leviticus 5:1 to ‘a public call to testify.’**

Source: *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (2013 revision), Leviticus 5:1

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower Bible translation.

Note: The revised rendering is widely regarded as the more accurate one — a formal legal summons rather than a duty to volunteer information; the reporting practice built on the older wording was carried forward unchanged.

Key quote: “he has heard a public call to testify.”

SECTION 4 · The Asymmetry: The Elders' Manual

- **The confidential elders' manual instructs an elder to keep information even from his own wife.**

Source: *Shepherd the Flock of God* (elders' manual, 2023 edition), ch. 1

Verify: [jwfacts.com \(manual documented\)](http://jwfacts.com)

Verification: PRIMARY — internal Watchtower manual; the text is from the published 2019/2023 edition (also entered into court evidence).

Key quote: “Out of love for his wife, an elder will not burden her with information that she does not need to know.”

- **The manual sets a two-witness standard before any judicial action: a single witness is not enough.**

Source: *Shepherd the Flock of God* (elders' manual, 2023 edition), ch. 12

Verify: jwfacts.com (manual documented)

Verification: PRIMARY — internal Watchtower manual.

Key quote: “Suspicious do not constitute sufficient evidence. There must be two or three eyewitnesses, not just people repeating hearsay; no action can be taken if there is only one witness.”

- **Under that rule, if there is only one witness and the accused denies it, the matter cannot proceed.**

Source: *Shepherd the Flock of God* (elders' manual, 2023 edition), ch. 12

Verify: jwfacts.com (manual documented)

Verification: PRIMARY — internal Watchtower manual.

Note: This is the rule that turns away a lone victim with no corroborating eyewitness.

Key quote: “the matter cannot be handled judicially.”

SECTION 5 · The Two-Witness Rule and Deuteronomy

- **Deuteronomy distinguishes a crime committed where a witness was possible (a city) from one where none was (a field).**

Source: *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (2013), Deuteronomy 22:23–27

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://Watchtower Online Library (wol.jw.org))

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower Bible translation.

Key quote: “the engaged girl screamed, but there was no one to rescue her.”

- **In the field case — where no second witness was possible — the law puts the man to death.**

Source: *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* (2013), Deuteronomy 22:25–27

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://Watchtower Online Library (wol.jw.org))

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower Bible translation.

Key quote: “the man who lay down with her is to die by himself.”

- **Watchtower’s own study article reads the city case as counting the woman’s silence against her, because a witness would have heard.**

Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), December 2019, p. 14

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://Watchtower Online Library (wol.jw.org))

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “others would certainly have heard her and would have defended her.”

- **Watchtower’s own article reads the field case as giving the woman the benefit of the doubt — where no witness was possible.**

Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), December 2019, p. 14

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://Watchtower Online Library (wol.jw.org))

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Note: This is Watchtower’s published interpretation of the passage.

Key quote: “the woman was given the benefit of the doubt.”

SECTION 6 · Doubt Redefined as a Defect

- **A 1983 Watchtower ran under the heading “Avoid Independent Thinking.”**
Source: *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1983, “Exposing the Devil’s Subtle Designs,” p. 22
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “Avoid Independent Thinking”
- **That article defines independent thinking as questioning the organization’s counsel.**
Source: *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1983, “Exposing the Devil’s Subtle Designs,” p. 22
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “How is such independent thinking manifested? A common way is by questioning the counsel that is provided by God’s visible organization.”
- **A 1986 Watchtower describes members who ‘fall prey to serious questioning and doubt.’**
Source: *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1986, “Do Not Be Quickly Shaken From Your Reason”
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “some have fed their minds upon apostate reasoning and have fallen prey to serious questioning and doubt.”
- **The same article compares doubt to gangrene — ‘quick-spreading spiritual death.’**
Source: *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1986, “Do Not Be Quickly Shaken From Your Reason”
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “Like gangrene, apostate reasoning is nothing but quick-spreading spiritual death.”
- **A 2004 Watchtower tells members not to read opposing material even to refute it.**
Source: *The Watchtower*, February 15, 2004, “Fight the Fine Fight of the Faith,” p. 28
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “It would be a mistake to think that you need to listen to apostates or to read their writings to refute their arguments.”
- **A 2011 Watchtower labels apostates ‘mentally diseased’ and instructs members to ‘avoid them.’**
Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), July 15, 2011, “Will You Heed Jehovah’s Clear Warnings?”
Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)
Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
Key quote: “apostates are ‘mentally diseased’ & ‘Avoid them,’ says God’s Word.”

SECTION 7 · Right, But Shunned

- **Raymond Franz, a member of the Governing Body, resigned in 1980 after being questioned over his doubts, and was expelled in 1981.**
Source: Raymond Franz (former Governing Body member), *Crisis of Conscience* (Commentary Press, 1983)
Verify: archive.org — [Crisis of Conscience](http://archive.org)
Verification: SECONDARY — firsthand account by a named former Governing Body member; corroborated by the policy change below.
Note: The act that triggered his expulsion was sharing a meal with a friend who had left.

- **In 1981 Watchtower erased the distinction between members expelled for wrongdoing and those who simply leave.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, September 15, 1981, “Disfellowshipping—How to View It,” p. 23

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “should appropriately be viewed and treated as are those who have been disfellowshipped for wrongdoing.”

- **Watchtower once treated accepting civilian service as disloyalty, then in 1996 made it a matter of conscience.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1996, “Paying Back Caesar’s Things to Caesar,” p. 20

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “continue to regard him as a Christian in good standing.”

- **Watchtower called organ transplants a form of cannibalism in 1967.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1967, “Questions From Readers,” p. 702

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “Those who submit to such operations are thus living off the flesh of another human. That is cannibalistic.”

- **In 1980 Watchtower reversed that, making transplants a matter of conscience with no discipline.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1980, “Questions From Readers,” p. 31

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Key quote: “The congregation judicial committee would not take disciplinary action if someone accepted an organ transplant.”

- **Watchtower later reclassified specific blood fractions it had forbidden as a matter of personal conscience.**

Source: *The Watchtower*, June 15, 2000, “Questions From Readers,” pp. 29–31

Verify: [Watchtower Online Library \(wol.jw.org\)](http://wol.jw.org)

Verification: PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Note: This is a partial change: the ban on blood transfusions remains; only certain fractions became a conscience matter.

Key quote: “each Christian must make his own conscientious decision before God.”

SECTION 8 · Additional Supporting Sources

- **U.S. courts have held that the shunning of former Jehovah’s Witnesses is constitutionally protected religious practice.**

Source: *Paul v. Watchtower Bible and Tract Society of New York, Inc.*, 819 F.2d 875 (9th Cir. 1987)

Verify: [Justia — full court opinion](https://www.justia.com/courts/appellate/circuit-9th/paul-v-watchtower-bible-and-tract-society-of-new-york-inc-1987/)

Verification: PRIMARY — federal appellate court ruling.

Note: Background for the video’s point that shunning has been treated by outsiders as a protected ‘personal’ matter.

- **The structure of the resurrection, disfellowshipping, and informing teachings described in the video.**

Source: Raymond Franz (former Governing Body member), *Crisis of Conscience* and *In Search of Christian Freedom*

Verify: [archive.org — Crisis of Conscience](#)

Verification: SECONDARY — firsthand insider account, widely corroborated by the primary Watchtower publications above.

- **The video's 'telescreen' comparison is an illustrative reference to George Orwell's novel.**

Source: George Orwell, *Nineteen Eighty-Four* (1949)

Verify: [Wikipedia — the novel](#)

Verification: Literary reference — an analogy, not a factual claim about Watchtower.
