

# Reference Document

## “Shopping the Bible — How Watchtower Reverse-Engineers Scripture to Demand Your Obedience”

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 are organized in the order they appear in the video. Scripture references can be read in any translation; the New World Translation (the one quoted in the broadcast) is available free at [jw.org](http://jw.org).

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from the organization’s own publications and broadcasts, the Bible text itself, or other official records. Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from published biblical scholarship and reputable reference works (academic, mainstream, and conservative commentaries). Secondary sources support the claims and are strongest when several independent traditions agree.

### SECTION 1: The Broadcast and the Talk

---

**Claim: On the June 2026 JW Broadcast, at the graduation of the 159th class of Gilead (the organization’s missionary school), Governing Body member Jacob Rumph gave a talk on making peace, urging that members support decisions even ones they disagree with.**

- Source: JW Broadcasting — June 2026 monthly program (159th Gilead graduation), talk by Jacob Rumph
- URL: [JW Broadcasting \(jw.org\)](http://jw.org)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own broadcast.
- Key quote: “Work hard at supporting the decision, even the decision that you weren’t in agreement with.”

**Claim: Jacob Rumph is a member of the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses, appointed in October 2024.**

- Source: [jw.org](http://jw.org) — “Two New Members of the Governing Body” and the current Governing Body roster
- URL: [jw.org](http://jw.org) — [Two New Members of the Governing Body](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own announcement (October 5, 2024) and roster list Rumph among the Governing Body.

**Claim: The Governing Body states that it is not inspired and not infallible.**

- Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), February 2017, “Who Is Leading God’s People Today?”
- URL: [jw.org](http://jw.org) — [February 2017 Watchtower](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the article states the faithful slave is ‘not inspired’ and answers that it is not infallible.

### SECTION 2: Abraham and Lot (Genesis 13–14)

---

**Claim: Abraham offered Lot the first choice of land, proposing they separate — if Lot went one way, Abraham would go the other.**

- Source: The Bible — Genesis 13:8, 9
- URL: [Genesis 13:8-9](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.

- Key quote: “If you go to the left, then I will go to the right.”

**Claim: Lot chose the well-watered district of the Jordan, near Sodom, and the two men separated.**

- Source: The Bible — Genesis 13:10-12
- URL: [Genesis 13:10-12](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.

**Claim: Lot was later taken captive in a regional war, and Abraham armed his men and rescued him.**

- Source: The Bible — Genesis 14
- URL: [Genesis 14](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.
- Note: The text does not record Abraham’s opinion of Lot’s move to Sodom; the rescue is an act of aid, not a recorded endorsement of Lot’s choice.

## SECTION 3: Korah (Numbers 16)

---

**Claim: The Watchtower uses Korah’s rebellion as a warning against challenging those taking the lead, applying it to how members should respond to the decisions of the elders.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2002, “Loyally Submit to Godly Authority”
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication.

**Claim: Korah was a Levite who already held a sacred position and was reaching for the priesthood — an insider seeking office, not an ordinary member raising a question.**

- Source: The Bible — Numbers 16:8-11; and the Watchtower article’s own heading “Must You Men Also Try to Secure the Priesthood?”
- URL: [Numbers 16:8-11](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text, and the organization’s own framing of Korah as seeking the priesthood.

**Claim: Biblical scholarship across traditions reads Korah as coveting priestly office, not as a model of honest questioning.**

- Source: U.S. Conference of Catholic Bishops, Numbers 16 notes; David Guzik, *Enduring Word* commentary on Numbers 16
- URL: [USCCB — Numbers 16](#)
- Verification: SECONDARY — Catholic and evangelical commentaries agree Korah sought the priesthood.

## SECTION 4: The Faithful and Discreet Slave (Matthew 24:45-47)

---

**Claim: In 2013 the Watchtower narrowed “the faithful and discreet slave” to the Governing Body — a small group of anointed men at headquarters functioning as a composite slave.**

- Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), July 15, 2013, “Who Really Is the Faithful and Discreet Slave?”, pp. 20-25
- URL: [jw.org — July 15, 2013 Watchtower](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication.

**Claim: The Watchtower teaches that members’ relationship with God depends on this channel.**

- Source: *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), July 15, 2013, p. 20

- URL: [jw.org](http://jw.org) — July 15, 2013 Watchtower
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publication.
- Key quote: "Our spiritual health and our relationship with God depend on this channel."

**Claim: The Watchtower has taught that God's wisdom can become known only through this channel.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, October 1, 1994, "The Bible—A Book Meant to Be Understood," p. 8
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publication.
- Note: Searchable by date in the Watchtower Online Library. The article calls the faithful and discreet slave Jehovah's channel of communication.

**Claim: Matthew 24:45-47 is a parable in a series of readiness parables — followed immediately by the ten virgins and the talents — addressed to all of Jesus' followers, not an identification of one modern institution.**

- Source: The Bible — Matthew 24:45–25:30 (the faithful servant, the ten virgins, the talents)
- URL: [Matthew 24:45–25:30](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text. The three parables run continuously; the chapter break between 24 and 25 was added later.
- Note: Standard commentaries read the 'faithful and wise servant' as any entrusted disciple and the question as one hearers apply to themselves — a call to readiness, not a prophecy of an organization.

## SECTION 5: Miriam (Numbers 12)

---

**Claim: The Watchtower uses Miriam's leprosy as a warning against speaking against those appointed to take the lead.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, August 1, 2002, "Loyally Submit to Godly Authority" (cites Numbers 12 alongside Korah)
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publication.

**Claim: Miriam and Aaron spoke against Moses over his Cushite wife; only Miriam was struck with leprosy, and the text stresses that God spoke with Moses in a unique way.**

- Source: The Bible — Numbers 12:1, 8, 10
- URL: [Numbers 12](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.
- Note: Commentaries note the episode concerns Moses' unique role and likely involved prejudice over the Cushite wife; only Miriam, not Aaron, was struck.

**Claim: One chapter earlier, Moses welcomed others sharing the prophetic gift, saying he wished all of God's people were prophets.**

- Source: The Bible — Numbers 11:29
- URL: [Numbers 11:29](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.
- Key quote: "Would that all the LORD's people were prophets."

## SECTION 6: Wait on Jehovah — Saul (1 Samuel 13)

---

**Claim: The Watchtower uses Saul's failure to wait for Samuel as a lesson about impatience — running ahead instead of waiting.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1995, “Patience—Why So Rare?”, p. 9
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication.
- Key quote: “Fear of man caused Saul to run ahead of Samuel in offering the sacrifice.”

**Claim: Saul’s sin was disobeying a specific, prior command to wait seven days for Samuel — a particular order on a particular occasion, not a general rule.**

- Source: The Bible — 1 Samuel 10:8; 13:8-14
- URL: [1 Samuel 13:8-14](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text. The seven-day instruction is given earlier at 1 Samuel 10:8.

**Claim: The Watchtower explicitly defines “running ahead” as running ahead of the faithful and discreet slave (the organization), and states that members who grew impatient with organizational changes and left were foolish and shortsighted.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, May 1, 1988, “The Challenge of Following in His Footsteps”, p. 13
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication.
- Key quote: “running ahead of ‘the faithful and discreet slave’”

## SECTION 7: Romans 13 — The Reversal

---

**Claim: In 1929 the Watch Tower declared that the long-held reading of Romans 13 — that the ‘higher powers’ are earthly governments — had been misapplied, and redefined the ‘higher powers’ as Jehovah God and Jesus Christ.**

- Source: *The Watch Tower and Herald of Christ’s Presence*, “The Higher Powers,” Part 1 (June 1, 1929, p. 163) and Part 2 (June 15, 1929, p. 183)
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library — organization’s own confirmation of the 1929 articles](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the 1929 articles (bound volume). The organization’s own later article (‘Flashes of Light’) confirms the June 1 and June 15, 1929 articles taught this view.
- Key quote: “Applying these words to earthly governments has been misleading and wrongful so far as Christians are concerned.”

**Claim: From 1929 until 1962 the organization taught that the superior authorities were Jehovah God and Jesus Christ.**

- Source: *This Means Everlasting Life* (1950), p. 197
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication identifies the superior authorities as Jehovah and Jesus.
- Note: Confirmed by the organization’s own retrospective articles cited below.

**Claim: The organization’s own later article admits the 1929 reading helped members maintain a neutral stand toward worldly governments during that era.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, “God and Caesar”
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization’s own publication.
- Key quote: “helped God’s people to maintain an uncompromisingly neutral stand”

**Claim: In 1962 the organization reversed course and returned to the original reading — that the superior authorities are earthly governmental authorities.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, late 1962 (series on Romans 13); confirmed in the organization's retrospective articles
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publications document the 1962 reversal.

**Claim: In 1990 the organization described this reversal as the result of increasing light, citing Proverbs 4:18.**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, November 1, 1990, "The Christian's View of the Superior Authorities," p. 11
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publication.
- Key quote: "light increased, and this view was adjusted"

**Claim: The reading that the 'higher powers' are earthly governing authorities is the consensus of biblical scholarship; the 1929 reading identifying them as God and Jesus is not held by recognized scholars.**

- Source: Creator analysis, supported by the organization's own 1962 return to the earthly-authorities reading and the consensus of standard commentaries on Romans 13
- Verification: SECONDARY — the mainstream and conservative scholarly consensus reads Romans 13 as referring to governing authorities.

## SECTION 8: Accountability — Meribah and James 3:1

---

**Claim: God told Moses to speak to the rock; instead Moses struck it and spoke as if the power were his own, and for this he was barred from entering the Promised Land.**

- Source: The Bible — Numbers 20:8-12
- URL: [Numbers 20:8-12](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.
- Key quote: "Must we bring water out of this rock for you?"

**Claim: Biblical scholarship across traditions reads Moses' sin at Meribah as overstepping his bounds and taking credit that belonged to God.**

- Source: GotQuestions (Numbers 20); Theology of Work commentary; St. Paul Center
- URL: [GotQuestions — Moses striking the rock](#)
- Verification: SECONDARY — Catholic, evangelical, and mainstream sources agree the sin was overreach and failing to honor God as holy.

**Claim: The Bible warns that those who become teachers will be judged more strictly.**

- Source: The Bible — James 3:1
- URL: [James 3:1](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the Bible text.
- Key quote: "we who teach will be judged with greater strictness"

## SECTION 9: Additional Supporting Sources

---

**Flashes of Light—Great and Small (Part 2)**

- Source: *The Watchtower* (organization's own history of doctrinal changes)
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own account.

- Contains: Confirms the June 1 and June 15, 1929 articles taught the Jehovah-and-Jesus reading and that it was corrected in 1962.

### **The Proud Rebel Korah**

- Source: *The Watchtower*, November 15, 1978
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own publication.
- Contains: The organization's own profile of Korah, noting he was a Levite who witnessed Moses' demonstrated authority.

### **Insight on the Scriptures — “Samuel,” “Saul,” “Korah,” “Miriam”**

- Source: *Insight on the Scriptures* (organization's own Bible encyclopedia)
- URL: [Watchtower Online Library](#)
- Verification: PRIMARY — the organization's own reference work.
- Contains: Background on the figures used in the video, including the organization's own description of Saul's disobedience.

---

All scripture references can be verified in any Bible translation. All Watchtower references can be verified in the organization's own publications, most freely available at [jw.org](#) and the Watchtower Online Library.