

Reference Document

“Jehovah’s Witnesses Are Trained to Question Every Religion But One”
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. Nearly every source here is the Watchtower’s own published literature, free to read in full on its official online library at wol.jw.org — so you can always check a quote in its surrounding context, which is exactly what this video asks you to do.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from official Watchtower publications and broadcasts (including the Watchtower Online Library) or from sworn testimony in an official government inquiry. Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from peer-reviewed or institutional research (e.g., the Pew Research Center) and reputable reference works. Secondary sources support claims and are strongest when paired with a primary source.

SECTION 1: The Hook — The 2026 Meeting Workbook Question

Claim: The Meeting Workbook Jehovah’s Witnesses are studying in 2026 prints a question warning members about confirmation bias: do they trust only information that confirms what they already believe, or do they keep their biases in check?

- **Source:** *Our Christian Life and Ministry—Meeting Workbook*, May–June 2026, part 8, “Protect Your Heart From Misinformation” (week of June 8–14, 2026)
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the Watchtower’s own meeting workbook.
- **Note:** The same workbook part discusses misinformation, “customized” online feeds, and deepfakes — all framed as outside dangers to guard against.
- **Key quote:** “ASK YOURSELF: ‘Do I tend to trust only information that confirms what I want to believe? Or do I keep my biases in check?’”

SECTION 2: The Outward Blade — Watchtower Trains Witnesses to Examine Other Religions

Claim: A 1968 study book the Watchtower used for decades, *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life*, contains a chapter titled “Why It Is Wise to Examine Your Religion,” urging readers that millions simply inherit their beliefs and that a lover of truth should investigate rather than assume.

- **Source:** *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* (1968), chapter “Why It Is Wise to Examine Your Religion”
- **URL:** jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Claim: A 2001 *Awake!* told readers not to leave their choice of religion to chance or inheritance, but to make “an informed one based on a careful examination of the Scriptures.”

- **Source:** *Awake!*, June 8, 2001, “Are All Religions Different Roads Leading to God?”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “Some people have inherited their religion, while others just go along with the majority in the community. . . . should you leave your choice of religion to chance or let others make this decision for you? Your choice of religion should be an informed one based on a careful examination of the Scriptures.”

Claim: A 1960 *Watchtower* scolded people for being “uncritical” about religion, invoked the rule “Make sure of all things,” quoted a philosophy professor that if religious leaders admitted what they really believed “organized religion would crumble,” and answered that the crumbling of what is false should not be feared.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1960, “Does the Bible Teach What You Believe?”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Note:** The professor quoted is Walter Kaufmann of Princeton University. “Make sure of all things” is the article’s rendering of 1 Thessalonians 5:21.
- **Key quote:** “millions of persons are uncritical even when it comes to the vital sphere of religious beliefs; they accept what they hear without investigation. . . . Should the crumbling of what is false be feared? Of course not, for Jesus Christ said: ‘The truth will set you free.’”

Claim: The Watchtower’s door-to-door field manual, *Reasoning From the Scriptures*, flatly defines the Trinity as “Not a Bible teaching” and arms Witnesses with an encyclopedia statement that the word and explicit doctrine do not appear in the New Testament.

- **Source:** *Reasoning From the Scriptures* (1985/1989 ed.), topic entry “Trinity”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Note:** The encyclopedia quoted is *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* (1976).
- **Key quote:** “Neither the word Trinity, nor the explicit doctrine as such, appears in the New Testament, nor did Jesus and his followers intend to contradict the Shema in the Old Testament.”

Claim: *Reasoning From the Scriptures* applies the same approach to the immortal soul, questioning the origin of the belief and tracing it to Greek philosophy rather than the Hebrew Scriptures.

- **Source:** *Reasoning From the Scriptures* (1985/1989 ed.), topic entry “Soul”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “What is the origin of Christendom’s belief in an immaterial, immortal soul?”

Claim: The Watchtower published an entire brochure, *Should You Believe in the Trinity?*, whose opening dares the reader to examine a centuries-old central doctrine for themselves.

- **Source:** Brochure *Should You Believe in the Trinity?* (1989), opening section “Should You Believe It?”
- **URL:** jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Note:** The video also argues this brochure relies on cherry-picked partial quotations whose fuller context often supports the Trinity. That is the creator’s analysis; a viewer can test it by comparing the brochure’s excerpts against the full original works it cites. The point made in this section does not depend on it.
- **Key quote:** “After all, it has been the central doctrine of the churches for centuries. In view of this, you would think that there could be no question about it. But there is. . . . Therefore, why not examine it for yourself?”

Claim: A 1971 *Awake!* aimed at Jewish readers, under the heading “Examine the Evidence,” urged them to examine the evidence about Jesus personally and not let prejudice hinder them.

- **Source:** *Awake!*, December 8, 1971, “Obstacles Affecting the Jewish View of Jesus”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “would it not be an indication of wisdom on your part to examine the evidence about Jesus personally? Surely you would not want prejudice to hinder you.”

SECTION 3: The Inward Sin — The Same Examination, Turned on Watchtower

Claim: A January 15, 1983 *Watchtower* carries the subheading “Avoid Independent Thinking” and frames independent thinking as something Satan promoted from the outset of his rebellion.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1983, “Exposing the Devil’s Subtle Designs,” subheading “Avoid Independent Thinking”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “From the very outset of his rebellion Satan called into question God’s way of doing things. He promoted independent thinking.”

Claim: A companion article a few pages later in the same January 15, 1983 issue carries the subheading “Fight Against Independent Thinking.”

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, January 15, 1983, “Armed for the Fight Against Wicked Spirits,” subheading “Fight Against Independent Thinking”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.

Claim: A 2011 *Watchtower* (Study Edition) holds up as a cautionary tale a member who was led astray after thinking that merely “a quick look at an apostate Web site” would not be dangerous.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* (Study Edition), February 15, 2011, “Do You Really Appreciate Your Blessings?”, ¶9
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “He felt that having a quick look at an apostate Web site would not be dangerous.”

SECTION 4: The Smoking Gun — “Examine the Organization You’re Associated With”

Claim: The body of that same 1968 chapter does not stop at other religions: it instructs the reader to examine the teachings of “any religious organization with which we may be associated,” and promises that a lover of truth has “nothing to fear from such an examination.”

- **Source:** *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life* (1968), chapter “Why It Is Wise to Examine Your Religion”
- **URL:** jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Note:** The identical passage was reprinted verbatim in *The Watchtower*, March 15, 1969 (wol.jw.org, ¶13).
- **Key quote:** “It is important for each one of us to examine his religion. We need to examine, not only what we personally believe, but also what is taught by any religious organization with which we may be associated. . . . If we are lovers of the truth, there is nothing to fear from such an examination.”

Claim: If a Witness does examine the Watchtower’s teachings and rejects them, the organization directs that the person be removed from the congregation and shunned — a cutting-off that extends to their own family.

- **Source:** “*Keep Yourselves in God’s Love*” (2008), Appendix, “How to Treat a Disfellowshipped Person”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication (current public edition).
- **Note:** The appendix applies the no-association direction to disfellowshipped relatives who do not live in the immediate household. (In 2024 the Watchtower updated its terminology, referring to such ones as “removed” from the congregation.)
- **Key quote:** “We do not have spiritual or social fellowship with disfellowshipped ones.”

Claim: The 1960 *Watchtower* answered its own challenge by saying the false has nothing to fear from scrutiny — a standard the video turns back on the organization itself.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, April 15, 1960, “Does the Bible Teach What You Believe?”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “Should the crumbling of what is false be feared? Of course not, for Jesus Christ said: ‘The truth will set you free.’”

SECTION 5: The One Claim It All Rests On — The Exclusive Channel

Claim: A 1957 *Watchtower* describes the organization as Jehovah’s established “channel of communication” through which God deals with his people.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, June 15, 1957, “Overseers of Jehovah’s People”
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — official Watchtower publication.
- **Key quote:** “Jehovah has established a very definite channel of communication through which he deals with his people.”

Claim: Asked under oath whether the Governing Body sees itself as God’s spokesman on earth, Governing Body member Geoffrey Jackson testified that it would be “presumptuous” to say they are the only spokesperson God is using.

- **Source:** Royal Commission into Institutional Responses to Child Sexual Abuse (Australia), Case Study 29, transcript, Day 155 — sworn testimony of Geoffrey Jackson, August 14, 2015
- **URL:** [Royal Commission transcript \(archived\)](#)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — sworn testimony in an official government inquiry; official transcript.
- **Note:** Jackson’s testimony was given August 14, 2015; the Royal Commission’s findings on this case study followed in 2016.
- **Key quote:** “That I think would seem to be quite presumptuous to say that we are the only spokesperson that God is using.”

SECTION 6: Additional Supporting Sources

Claim: Watchtower Online Library — the organization’s own full-text publication archive, where every Watchtower quotation above can be read in full context.

- **Source:** Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society
- **URL:** wol.jw.org
- **Verification:** PRIMARY
- **Note:** Free, official, and fully searchable, so any reader can repeat these citations and read the surrounding paragraphs.

Claim: Jehovah’s Witnesses have one of the lowest membership retention rates of any major U.S. religious group — context for the video’s point that the organization is losing younger, internet-connected members raised inside it.

- **Source:** Pew Research Center
- **URL:** pewresearch.org
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — institutional survey research.
- **Note:** Pew’s 2008 U.S. Religious Landscape Survey found that “only slightly more than a third (37%) of adults who were raised as Jehovah’s Witnesses still identify themselves as Jehovah’s Witnesses,” and named the group among those “with the lowest retention rates.” Pew’s later 2014 study found a comparable figure (about a third).

Claim: The religion began in the 1870s as a group of Bible Students (around Charles Taze Russell) who believed the established churches had drifted from the Bible — the starting point the video contrasts with the organization it later became.

- **Source:** Encyclopædia Britannica, “Jehovah’s Witnesses”
- **URL:** britannica.com
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — reputable reference work.
- **Note:** The video’s closing points viewers to the creator’s documentary *From Kooky to Cult: The History of Jehovah’s Witnesses* for the full account of how the movement changed over time.