

Reference Document

"3 Things Jehovah's Witnesses Just Did That They Swore They Never Would"

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.

Verification levels:

- **PRIMARY** — Sourced from court rulings, legislation, official Watchtower publications (including the organization's own magazines and internal forms), or other government/regulatory records. Primary sources can stand on their own.
- **SECONDARY** — Sourced from established advocacy or legal-resource sites, academic researchers, or reputable journalism. Secondary sources support claims and are strongest when paired with a primary or an independent secondary.

A note on the wedding-vow segment: the revised vow wording is drawn from a leaked, non-English congregation announcement and has not yet been confirmed against an official English-language form. It is identified as reported throughout the video and below.

SECTION 1: The Words They Quietly Changed (Wedding Vows)

Claim: The standard Jehovah's Witness marriage vow is a scripted text printed in the wedding talk outline, used essentially unchanged for decades, with only local legal modifications.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, March 1, 1996, "Living Up To Your Marriage Vow!", pp. 19–22
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1996164>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the organization's own magazine reproduces the vow verbatim.
- **Key quote:** "I — take you — to be my wedded (wife/husband), to love and to cherish (Bride: and deeply respect) in accordance with the divine law as set forth in the Holy Scriptures for Christian (wives/husbands), for as long as we both shall live together on earth according to God's marital arrangement."

Claim: The bride alone vowed to "deeply respect," and the word "obey" never appeared in the Witness vow for either spouse.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, March 1, 1996, pp. 19–22
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1996164>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — confirmed by the verbatim text; "deeply respect" is bride-only and "obey" is absent.

Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses do not write personalized wedding vows; the practice of couples composing their own vows has been framed by the organization as a worldly trend to avoid.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower*, October 15, 1974, "What Kind of a Wedding?"
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/d/r1/lp-e/1974765>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the organization's own publication discourages self-composed vows and notes a body of elders reviews the ceremony.
- **Note:** There is no published absolute rule forbidding self-written vows; the point in the video is that they are neither offered nor encouraged, which this article supports.

Claim: At the end of May 2026, a revision to the wedding talk outline (S-41) and the vows began circulating, reportedly adding an explicit lifelong-faithfulness line, simplifying “to be my wedded wife” to “as my wife,” and replacing “divine law as set forth in the Holy Scriptures” with “biblical principles.”

- **Source:** Leaked congregation announcement (non-English), reported via the ex-JW community (see Additional Sources)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — single leaked source, not yet confirmed against an official English-language form.
- **Note:** Treated as reported throughout the video. The leak URL is listed under Additional Supporting Sources.

Claim: The reported new vow removes the phrase “together on earth,” which previously framed the promise within earthly life under “God's marital arrangement.”

- **Source:** Comparison of the verified 1996 vow against the reported May 2026 wording
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — the “before” text is PRIMARY (1996 Watchtower); the “after” is the reported leak. The significance drawn from the removal is editorial analysis.

Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses' baptism candidates affirm, in the second baptism question, that their baptism identifies them as Jehovah's Witnesses in association with God's organization — wording the organization has revised more than once.

- **Source:** *The Watchtower* baptism-question wordings (1985 introduction; 2019 revision)
- **URL:** <https://www.jwfacts.com/watchtower/baptism.php>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — the wording history is documented and widely reproduced from the organization's publications.
- **Note:** 1985–2019 wording referenced “God's spirit-directed organization”; the 2019 change produced “in association with Jehovah's organization.” The video paraphrases rather than quotes, to avoid pinning an exact phrase to the wrong year.

Claim: Adding “honor” to the husband has a scriptural basis.

- **Source:** 1 Peter 3:7 (Bible)
- **URL:** <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1%20Peter%203%3A7>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — direct scriptural reference.

SECTION 2: The Court Fight Over Government Money (Sweden)

Claim: Sweden ties state funding for religious communities to “democracy conditions,” and for years denied Jehovah's Witnesses on that basis before granting funding in 2019.

- **Source:** Library of Congress, Global Legal Monitor, “Sweden: Jehovah's Witnesses Have Right to State Funding”
- **URL:** <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2017-02-24/sweden-jehovahs-witnesses-have-right-to-state-funding/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — neutral government (.gov) legal-research record.
- **Note:** If the live page is temporarily unavailable, a Wayback Machine capture of the same URL shows the identical record.

Claim: On February 20, 2017, the Swedish Supreme Administrative Court ruled that the Witnesses' beliefs on blood were not contrary to democratic values and ordered the government to reconsider.

- **Source:** Library of Congress, Global Legal Monitor (Case No. 2310-16, Högsta förvaltningsdomstolen, Feb. 20, 2017)

- **URL:** <https://www.loc.gov/item/global-legal-monitor/2017-02-24/sweden-jehovahs-witnesses-have-right-to-state-funding/>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — cites the court ruling and case number directly.
- **Key quote:** "not providing such support would violate articles 14 and 19 of the European Convention on Human Rights"

Claim: Sweden passed a new law in 2024 (the 2024:487 Act) tightening the democracy conditions, which religious-liberty advocates argue was crafted to exclude the Witnesses; out of 45 applicant communities, only the Witnesses received doctrinal questions on homosexuality, shunning, and corporal punishment.

- **Source:** Bitter Winter, "Jehovah's Witnesses and State Subsidies in Sweden: A Law Designed to Exclude"
- **URL:** <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-and-state-subsidies-in-sweden-2-a-law-designed-to-exclude/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — religious-liberty publication reporting on a public-records disclosure.
- **Note:** This is the account of a religious-liberty outlet sympathetic to the Witnesses; the "45 applicants" figure originates from a disclosure request and is presented as their reporting.

Claim: On October 24, 2025, the Swedish Authority for Support to Faith Communities (SST) rejected the Witnesses' application under the 2024:487 Act.

- **Source:** AvoidJW, "Sweden Denies State Aid to Jehovah's Witnesses"
- **URL:** <https://avoidjw.org/news/sweden-state-aid-rejection-ostracism/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — established ex-JW legal/news resource documenting the SST decision.

Claim: In a judgment dated May 7, 2026 (case no. 23674-25), the Administrative Court of Stockholm overturned the October 2025 refusal and held the Witnesses entitled to a state grant, leaning on the European Convention principle of state neutrality toward religious doctrine. The agency has appealed.

- **Source:** Bitter Winter, "After Norway, Sweden Also Rediscovered Neutrality and Religious Freedom"
- **URL:** <https://bitterwinter.org/jehovahs-witnesses-after-norway-sweden-also-rediscovered-neutrality-and-religious-freedom/>
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — the most detailed available report of the May 2026 ruling, citing the judgment date and case number.
- **Note:** Court record citation: Förvaltningsrätten i Stockholm, mål nr 23674-25, dom 2026-05-07. The reporting outlet is sympathetic to the Witnesses; the video presents the ruling as defensible and supplies the counter-argument separately.
- **Key quote:** "the Jehovah's Witnesses are entitled to a state grant under the Act (2024:487) on State Grants to Faith Communities"

Claim: Around the same time, the Norwegian Supreme Court ruled in the Witnesses' favor on the related question of shunning and state funding/registration.

- **Source:** EXJW Analyzer prior coverage of the Norwegian Supreme Court verdict (HR-2026-1009-A, April 30, 2026)
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — based on the published Norwegian Supreme Court decision examined in the channel's earlier video.

SECTION 3: The Social Media Launch (JW Pressroom)

Claim: Jehovah's Witnesses launched official social media accounts under the name "JW Pressroom" on TikTok and Instagram, with the TikTok bio identifying it as the official pressroom of Jehovah's Witnesses.

- **Source:** Official JW Pressroom accounts (the primary artifact)
- **URL:** https://www.tiktok.com/@jw_pressroom
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the accounts themselves; the Instagram account is at [instagram.com/jw_pressroom](https://www.instagram.com/jw_pressroom).

Claim: The launch was confirmed by an internal announcement form (S-147) read to congregations, describing a pilot program aimed at a secular audience — journalists, researchers, and government officials.

- **Source:** Leaked June S-147 congregation announcement, reported across the ex-JW community (see Additional Sources)
- **Verification:** SECONDARY — multiple independent insider reports describe the same form; the congregation-level announcement was rolling out by region.

Claim: The official accounts launched with comments disabled and follow zero accounts.

- **Source:** Official JW Pressroom accounts (direct observation)
- **URL:** https://www.instagram.com/jw_pressroom/
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — observable on the live accounts.

Claim: For roughly 25 years the organization warned members against the dangers of the internet and social media, framing it as a channel for “apostates” and bad associations.

- **Source:** Watchtower publications cautioning against internet/social-media use (late 1990s onward), including the “Young People Ask” material on social networking
- **URL:** <https://wol.jw.org/en/wol/lv/r1/lp-e/0>
- **Verification:** PRIMARY — the organization's own published cautions.
- **Note:** Paraphrased in the video rather than quoted; specific article titles and years are catalogued for viewers who wish to search the organization's own library at the link above.

SECTION 4: Additional Supporting Sources

The following ex-JW community discussions are where the leaks and rank-and-file reactions described in the video surfaced. They are provided so viewers can read the original reports and reactions for themselves; they document community response rather than serving as primary proof of any institutional fact.

Wedding vows — community discussion of the revised vows

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1tt0wp4/the_governing_body_has_approved_revised_wedding/
- **Contains:** The original post detailing the reported S-41 vow revision and the leaked new wording, plus community reaction.

Sweden — community discussion of the court ruling

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1tt1tty/sweden_administrative_court_overturns_decision/
- **Contains:** Community discussion of the Administrative Court overturning the funding denial, with the Sveriges Radio report.

JW Pressroom — elder reaction to the account

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1tsrv9a/elder_reaction_to_the_jw_pressroom_account/
- **Contains:** First-hand account of an elder's disbelief, then reversal after checking the official announcement form.

JW Pressroom — the algorithm/search backfire

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1tsupyu/i_installed_tiktok_just_to_see_the_pressroom/
- **Contains:** A user installing TikTok to find the Pressroom account and being served ex-JW and activist content.

JW Pressroom — breaking the news to a fellow elder

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1trpy9u/i_broke_the_news_to_a_fellow_elder_who_is/
- **Contains:** An elder strongly opposed to TikTok softening to “I’ll think about it” after reading the S-147 item.

JW Pressroom — general reaction to the new accounts

- **URL:** https://www.reddit.com/r/exjw/comments/1tr8dub/jw_new_social_media_reaction/
- **Contains:** Reports of believing family members insisting the accounts were fake or apostate-made before the announcement reached them.

Where a claim rests on a source sympathetic to a particular side, the video identifies that openly and presents the opposing view. Viewers are encouraged to follow the links and judge the evidence for themselves.