

The teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses: A bibliographic and documentary narrative review

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ABSTRACT

As yet another neo-Christian religious movement, the religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses has exclusivist, proselytizing, millenarian, non-creationist, non-trinitarian, politically neutral teachings and practices that claim to accept evidence-based scientific findings, but in practice they do not. This work aims to present and discuss the main teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, as a member of this religious organization, baptized for more than 15 years. To this end, it carries out a bibliographic and documentary narrative review, under the Giftedean neoperspectivist paradigm. Catch the gap in the Theology and Science of Religion literature that there was not yet any scientific work on Jehovah's Witnesses produced and published by someone who belongs or has long belonged to this religious entity. It concludes that: its teachings start from a mainly literal interpretation of the Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Christian Scriptures (the Bible), with the exception of prophetic symbolisms; their concepts such as apostasy, *porneia*, dating, friendship, spirituality, maturity, *sexting*, sexual abuse need to be refined in the light of scientific research, since the Bible does not make them explicit in countless cases; this religious community needs to learn to respect Science and the scientific community as a whole, since they do not do it currently, believing they understand human life, of the world and of truth more than scientists; It needs to implement theocratic meritocracy for the appointment, designation or removal of its leaders, and today only the requirement of some spiritual qualifications prevails, insufficient for the fulfillment of the Christian ministry in strategic functions.

Keywords: Jehovah's Witnesses, Russellism, Neo-Christianity, Governing Body, Watchtower.

INTRODUCTION

The current religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses, known by theologians and religious scientists as a neo-Christian religious movement, had its advent around 1870, with the biblical publications of Charles Taze Russell, in the USA (BARRA, 2010). Initially called Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (*Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society*), founded in 1881 and legally registered in the State of Pennsylvania (U.S.A.) on December 15, 1884, had its name changed in 1896 to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society (*Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society*). In 1955 it had a new name change to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania (*Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania*), as it has been known so far (BOTV, 2024).

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Jehovah's Witnesses are exclusivist, proselytizing, non-creationist, non-trinitarian, Protestant, millenarian, and have their own teachings, practices, theocratic procedures, ministry of preaching and teaching, totally different from all other denominations considered Christian, because they believe that their biblical interpretation is totally consistent with that of the first Christians, and, therefore, "the truth" (BARRA, 2010; BOTV, 2024).

When researching Jehovah's Witnesses in worldwide databases such as Google Scholar, one finds many scientific works produced and published, but none by someone who is or has been a Jehovah's Witness (BARRA, 2010; BRITO *et al*, 2019). This will be the first scientific work produced by a faithful Jehovah's Witness, baptized on 11/1/2008. Among the works published about them, those produced by academics in the areas of Education and Special Education, are focused on their evangelization to the deaf, blind and mute; those produced by academics in the areas of Theology and Religious Sciences are centered on their dogmas (BARRA, 2010; BRITO *et al*, 2019).

Starting from the omniscience and omnipotence of a Creator being, it is deductively concluded that there is an absolute truth, but as the Christian Scriptures themselves say, in the words of the apostle Paul to the congregation of Rome, in Romans 3:23, 'all have sinned and do not attain to the glory of God', showing that we humans are very limited, sinful, imperfect, and, as such, we have never been able to fully understand "the truth", or the absolute truths, which only Almighty God, and his Celestial Court, are capable of understanding, because they are perfect.

That said, the following research problem questions arise: Are the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses really "the truth"? Or are they merely claiming to possess it in order to attract members, to draw attention to themselves, to exalt themselves in relation to other religious and non-religious people, or to dominate the world? Who are your leaders, whether they are elders, travelers, Bethelites, or even members of your Governing Body, to decide what is right or wrong, such as concepts of porneia, sexting, pornography, sexual abuse, apostasy, among others, when the Christian Scriptures do not always make them explicit? Why is it not tolerated for its members to question its leaders as to their qualifications and conduct? Are their leaders, by any chance, a kind of demigods, or incarnate gods?

This article aims to present and explain the main dogmas, or teachings, or even biblical doctrines, of Jehovah's Witnesses, refining them based on scientific understanding. Its specific objectives are: a) To discuss the existence of an absolute religious truth as claimed to be possessed by Jehovah's Witnesses; b) Discuss the hierarchy of knowledge, emphasizing the relationship between religious and scientific knowledge; c) Expose the coherences and inconsistencies of the teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses in the light of the Hebrew-Aramaic and Greek Christian Scriptures (the so-called Bible), and the scientific knowledge of some areas, such as Theology, Religious Sciences and Psychology.



This article is structured in five chapters. This first chapter is intended for its Introduction, addressing its theme, problematization, historical context, problem-issues, objectives and structure of the research. The second chapter briefly addresses the methodologies used. The third presents in 14 subtopics the main teachings/doctrines/dogmas of Jehovah's Witnesses, making constructive criticism about them. The fourth chapter was intended to refute 16 unsubstantiated biblical assertions by apostates from various Christian denominations, and with which I have had to deal and counter-argue for more than 15 years since my baptism. The fifth chapter was intended for the presentation of the conclusions and final considerations. And then the References are displayed.

METHODOLOGICAL FOUNDATION

As an epistemological pillar, it uses the Giftedean neo-perspectivist paradigm, which, in short, preaches the existence of an absolute, concrete, ready, finished, objective, real truth, and a subjective, partial, incomplete truth, which we humans can achieve in the algal of our cognitive, intellectual, emotional, spiritual, and social capacities, but without reaching absolute truth (BREVIÁRIO, 2021, 2022).

As a logical pillar, it uses the hypothetical-deductive method, starting from the hypothesis that well-conducted exegetical studies, and with the help of scientific research, are sufficient to refine biblical understanding (BREVIÁRIO, 2021, 2022).

As a technical pillar, it uses the procedures of a bibliographic and documentary narrative survey, known as a gateway to any theme or area of knowledge; it is simple to do, although to be of quality it requires time, effort, and skills with access to databases, and with the treatment of the data collected; but it is more practical and much less costly than participatory observational research, such as field surveys, on-site or ex loco case studies, surveys, etc. (BREVIÁRIO, 2021; RODRIGUES, 2007; SEVERINO, 2007; GIL, 1999; 2010).

KEY TEACHINGS OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

In this topic, the main teachings disseminated by Jehovah's Witnesses around the world are presented, which are:

THE GOVERNING BODY IS THE PRIMARY CHANNEL OF COMMUNICATION BETWEEN GOD AND HUMANS

The Scriptural basis used by Jehovah's Witnesses for such teaching is Matthew 24:45-47, where Jesus said that in the time of the end, or "last days," He would appoint a class of people to lead true worship here on earth, providing themselves with 'spiritual food at the proper time,' which includes quality



Bible production, adjustments in theocratic procedures, construction and maintenance of their temples (Kingdom halls, branch offices, convention and assembly halls, etc.), management of their financial resources (voluntary donations), and technological resources (websites, *Hardware*, *Software* such as Hourglass, KHS, The Secrety, and TSWIN). This class became known as "the faithful and discreet slave," formerly known as the "faithful and discreet slave."

The so-called Governing Body, now composed of 9 members, 43 assistants, and 6 committees (Coordinators, Personnel, Publisher, Service, Teaching, and Writing), is referred to as a "faithful and discreet slave" in the July 15, 2013, issue of *The Watchtower*; this team is the anointed ones who are part of the Governing Body (BOTV, 2024; w13 7/15 pp. 20-25). In this issue, there was an adjustment in the biblical understanding of Jehovah's Witnesses: it was explained that the so-called "faithful and discreet slave" is exactly and only his Governing Body, while the so-called "domestics" are all those who are spiritually fed, including other anointed ones and those who have the hope of living in an earthly Paradise. Prior to this publication, this class was believed to include all anointed ones, an understanding that had been refined (Proverbs 4:18).

The existence of such a class today in Jehovah's Organization is held by them to be proof that Jesus, the head of the congregation (I Corinthians 11:3; Ephesians 5:23), is, in fact, fulfilling his promise to feed his disciples here on earth properly, at the right time. For this reason, Jehovah's Witnesses argue that their spiritual health and relationship with Jehovah depend on this channel (Matthew 4:4; John 17:3).

In the Publications Index, from 1991 to 2023, available in the Online Library of Jehovah's Witnesses (BOTJ, 2024), searching for the term "Governing Body" you will find all the main information about this class, biographies of some of its members, their attributions, all their publications from 1970 to the present, theocratic procedures, among other subjects of interest to this religious organization. It is noted, however, that a large part of their theocratic procedures are only published internally in specific books for the elders, such as the book *Shepherd the Flock of God*, or in specific letters exchanged between the world office or national offices and their representatives; the biographies of 16 of its former members and 9 current members focus on their religious trajectory, not addressing their academic, professional, and civic trajectory; This class does not publish its curriculum in public databases, whether national or international; And, in fact, they are not scientists or gifted, they are ordinary human beings like any other.

So far so good. The big problem is that both this class and all Jehovah's Witness members believe that the Governing Body is a holy class, "the voice of Jehovah here on earth," as if their understanding were absolute, finished, ready, irrefutable. But then, as a scientist, philosopher of science, I question: If not even scientific knowledge, which is the most refined and advanced knowledge ever existing, is absolute, finished, ready and irrefutable, what is this understanding of this religious class to think they are the bearers of "absolute biblical truth"? This belief and teaching of them sounds like pride and, at the same



time, pure ignorance, typical of laymen in scientific knowledge. What is missing for this class to adjust their thoughts is precisely cutting-edge academic and professional training, and psychotherapeutic care to reduce their degree of grandiosity, coming to see themselves as mortal, imperfect and sinful human beings, very limited like any others. As for their conduct, they are not saints, 100% right, in nothing; this is no human in any religion. The members of the Governing Body even publish beautiful Bible stories about their religious organization, but they are not transparent enough to publicly report the many scandals, worldwide documented by the global media, of the cases of pedophilia and sexual abuse involving their members; not to mention the many hidden cases that the media has not been able to access and document (MADALENO, 2019).

UNDERSTANDINGS OF *PORNEÍA* OF THE GOVERNING BODY OVER TIME

As stated in the previous subtopic, it is the Governing Body that is responsible for making adjustments in the biblical understanding of Jehovah's Witnesses, even without compatible academic and professional training for this, but acceptable to its members. That said, the adjustments made by this class in the understanding of what the practice of "*porneía*", or sexual immorality, spoken by Jesus (Matthew 5:32; Acts 15:29; Galatians 5:19; Revelation 14:8; 17:2; 18:3), in chronological order:

- 1957: Artificial insemination is *porneía* (adultery) (BOTV, 2024; w57 1/7 pp. 143-156);
- 1957: Homosexuality, lesbianism, and bestiality are neither *porneía* nor adultery (BOTV, 2024; w57 1/7 pp. 143-156);
- 1972: Homosexuality and bestiality reaffirmed as *porneía* (BOTV, 2024; w72 15/5 p. 319);
- 1975: Oral and anal intercourse within the marital arrangement are *porneía* (BOTV, 2024; w75 1/5 pp. 287-288);
- 1978: "*porneía* within marriage" lacks "clear biblical instructions" (BOTV, 2024; w78 1/8 pp. 29-32);
- 1978: The Governing Body blames congregation elders for "policing" the sex lives of married couples (BOTV, 2024; w78 1/8 pp. 29-32);
- 1978: It is up to the spouse to define the meaning of *porneía* based on the lascivious and wanton practices of his or her husband or wife (BOTV, 2024; w78 1/8 pp. 29-32);
- 1983: Anal and oral sex are once again sins of disfellowshipping, but are now "unbridled conduct" (*aselgeia*) within marriage (BOTV, 2024; w83 9/15 pp. 27-31);
- 1983: Sex between a human and an animal are *porneía* (BOTV, 2024; w83 15/9 pp. 27-31);
- 1999: Deliberate fondling of another's sexual organs is *porneía* (BOTV, 2024; w99 1/9 pp. 8-13);
- 2018: *Lap dancing*, or sensual dancing, is *porneía* (BOVT, 2024; w18 November pp. 23-27);



- 2021: "*porneía* can happen even if there is no skin contact, penetration, or orgasm" - Shepherd the Flock of God Book, chapter 12.3.
- 2023: New tweaks on 11/1/23, revealed only to elders.

In the face of so many adjustments in the Governing Body's understanding of what *porneia* is, there is an incessant and exaggerated effort to try to decide what is right or wrong about sexual immorality, even though it is known that there are no clear Scriptural instructions about what is or is not acceptable regarding sexual practices within marriage. That is, the members of the Governing Body think they are deuse, holy, righteous, 100% trustworthy to that extent.

Well for this reason they have not been able to coherently define what sexting is. In the book *Young People Ask* (first version), on page 24, it is stated that sexting refers to "the practice of sending sexually explicit messages, photos or videos on the cell phone". But there are many cases not biblically condemned in which it is necessary to talk explicitly about sex, such as in gynecological, psychological or psychiatric consultations; in legal cases (resolved in the Judiciary) or judicial cases (resolved through a judicial committee in Jehovah's Organization); with the boyfriend or spouse; on grazing visits; in sexual orientation conducted by a therapist, sexologist, psychologist, etc., even if they are a brother or sister; in short, there are many biblically accepted cases, but which Jehovah's Organization vehemently restrains, oppressing the sexuality of its members, especially the unmarried (BOTV, 2024).

Cases aside, children of elders usually have perks even in this moral/sexual matter: I myself have known sisters who conduct Bible studies for men, simply because they are the daughter of an elder, while Jehovah's Organization forbids men to preach and teach women and vice versa, except when they are a leader (ministerial servant, or equivalent, upwards) (BOTV, 2024).

And this is just theory (SOARES, 2022). And now, in practice, what is the sex life of the Governing Body and the other Witnesses like? Do they respect their own teachings on sexual immorality in their daily lives? I have met brothers and sisters in this religious organization, from various geographical locations around the world, who engage in sexting, pornography, carnal intercourse, and lewd acts, with several other members at the same time, with the permission of elders, and are not punished for it. While the simplest are penalized, and, in the vast majority of cases, they do not even know about these practices of the "smartest".

MOST OF THE BIBLE IS INTERPRETED *IPSIS LITERIS*

As a Jehovah's Witness for more than 15 years, having become familiar with all his biblical publications, having read the entire Bible more than 10 times and studied it completely at least 5 times in congregational meetings, I can affirm that not all biblical interpretation of Jehovah's Witnesses is literal, as



Barra (2010) states. In the examples he cited, yes, but in texts such as those of Revelation, full of symbolism, in countless visions of Ezekiel, Daniel, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and many other major and minor prophets, the interpretation is not literal, it is subjective, connotative, interpreted according to parallel accounts, cross-references, and further studies, set forth in the appendices and appendices of the New World Translation, and in the many Bible publications available in the Watchtower Online Library (BOTV, 2024).

Apart from these cases, the others are interpreted literally. For example, the creative process of Genesis into six creative periods in which Jehovah and Jesus worked together to create heaven, all that is in it, the physical universes, the earth, and all that is in it (Genesis 1 and 2; BARRA, 2010; BOTV, 2024), and a creative period, Saturday, in which they dedicated to rest. What Barra says about Jehovah's Witnesses believing that He has always existed (Psalm 90:2) is correct, that is, He did not have a beginning, He exists from 'everlasting to everlasting'; that He is the Creator of all (Isaiah 45:18; Acts 4:24); that His first creation was His own Son, Jesus (John 3:16; Revelation 3:14); that Jesus was the master builder, executing his Father's creative plans (BOTV, 2024:). Because they do not believe in a creative process in seven literal 24-hour days, Jehovah's Witnesses are not creationists; however, they are not evolutionists either, although the various versions of the Theory of Evolution do not directly state that God does not exist, they only affirm that species transform, or evolve, in a natural, slow and gradual way (principle of natural selection), and verify that men and apes have common ancestors, scientific hypotheses that have been fully proven (ALMEIDA; FALCÃO, 2010); thus, Darwin, a renowned atheist scientist, does not go into detail where the natural laws that transform species came from, and such laws may have been created and managed by God, as I believe.

Other examples are various biblical prophecies, such as the rise and fall of various kingdoms and world powers, reported and fulfilled literally; the issue of blood, exposed in Leviticus 17 and reaffirmed in Acts 15: 22, 28, 29, also interpreted literally because it has no room for subjectivity in such biblical passages (BOTV, 2024: it-2 pp. 932-935).

THE NATURE OF THE FATHER, THE SON AND THE HOLY SPIRIT

While in Christendom – Catholicism, Protestantism, Mormonism, Kardecist Spiritism – and in non-Christian religions such as Hinduism, one believes in a trinity, that is, three gods in one person, Jehovah's Witnesses think differently. The so-called Trinitarian Christian religions believe in a God the Father, a God the Son and a God the Holy Spirit who, together, form a Supreme Being, the Creator of everything (BARRA, 2010; BOTV, 2024: rs p. 397-p. 418).

For Jehovah's Witnesses, the Father is a person, not carnal, but spirit (John 4:24), who requires his servants to worship him in spirit and truth; Jesus, his Only Begotten Son (John 1:14; 3:16-18; I John 4:9)



and Firstborn (Revelation 3:14), is a person also, spirit before coming to earth, flesh and spirit as a human on earth, and again only spirit after his resurrection; the Holy Spirit, on the other hand, is not a person, as several biblical passages confirm that He acts as an invisible force (Luke 1:35; Acts 1:8), a vital energy, capable of helping in the creative process, as reported in the first chapters of Genesis, in the fulfillment of prophecies – sometimes inspiring, motivating, teaching, mobilizing people to carry out divine purposes – contributed to biblical writing (II Timothy 3: 16; II Peter 1:21), filled 120 people with wisdom and power at Pentecost to speak in tongues and heal all kinds of pathologies (Acts 1:15; 2:36). The Father is greater than the Son in power, glory, and wisdom (John 14:28), the Son is and always will be subject to the authority of the Father (I Corinthians 15), the Father is his head (I Corinthians 11:3).

THE RANSOM IS THE ONLY MEANS OF SALVATION FOR MANKIND

As a price paid to recover a kidnapped person, the ransom made by Jesus Christ, by dying as a human, paid the price of original sin, freeing humanity from the eternal slavery of sin and death (Psalm 49:7,8; Matthew 20:28; Ephesians 1:7).

Jesus' ransom fulfilled three basic requirements of every ransom, namely: payment, deliverance, and equivalence. As stated in Bible Questions Answered, available at the Watchtower Online Library (ijwbq article 104):

Consider how these three aspects apply to the ransom of Jesus Christ.

Payment. The Bible says that Christians were "bought with a price." (1 Corinthians 6:20; 7:23) The price was the blood of Jesus, who "bought people for God from every tribe and tongue and people and nation." —Revelation 5:8,9.

Deliverance. Jesus' ransom sacrifice makes deliverance from sin possible.—1 Corinthians 1:30; Colossians 1:14; Hebrews 9:15.

Equivalence. Jesus' sacrifice corresponds to what Adam lost—a perfect human life. (1 Corinthians 15:21, 22, 45, 46). The Bible says: "Just as through the disobedience of the one man [Adam] many were made sinners, so also through the obedience of the one [Jesus Christ] many will be made righteous." (Romans 5:19) This scripture explains how the death of one man paid the ransom for many sinners. Thus, Jesus' sacrifice is a "corresponding ransom." All who do what is necessary can receive the benefits of this sacrifice. —1 Timothy 2:5, 6.

(adaptations by me)

In the King James Version, the term ransom is transliterated "redemption price" in 1 Timothy 2:6 (BOTV, 2024).

MARY IS THE MOTHER OF JESUS, BUT SHE IS NOT SANCTIFIED OR CANONIZED AS IN CATHOLICISM

Jehovah's Witnesses recognize the proper role of Mary, mother of Jesus, in the divine saving purpose (BOTV, 2024), so much so that there are many biblical publications about her available on their organizational websites (it-2 pp. 303-307).



Among the six Marys mentioned in the Bible, this is undoubtedly the main one from the point of view of Our Father Redeemer, but she is also not holy, in an absolute, full, or perfect sense, like the other Marys mentioned, just as the entire human race is not. She can be considered a saint, like other Christians in a relative sense, as a relatively pure person in a moral and spiritual sense, a Jehovah-fearing person, obedient and submissive to his guidance (it-2 pp. 962-963), but imperfect, subject to errors, failures and, sometimes, even malice like any human being.

THERE IS NO CRERICAL CLASS IN JEHOVAH'S ORGANIZATION

In fact, there is no division between clergy and laity in the religious organization of Jehovah's Witnesses as there is in the Roman Catholic Church (BOTV, 2024; BARRA, 2010). Barra (2010) tries to see a non-hierarchical organization among Jehovah's Witness preachers, however, as a member of this entity for more than 15 years, I can say that there is a hierarchy. With enough knowledge, skills, and experience to be a regular congregation elder and pioneer, you can see that I have plenty of it, but I have never been allowed to achieve these privileges, accusing me of raping my cousin when I was a teenager, something that never happened. I have realized throughout my activity from my baptism to the present time there that only those who have special privileges (auxiliary pioneer, regular pioneer, special pioneer, ministerial servant, congregation elder, circuit overseer, Bethelite, commuter, branch servant, member of the Governing Body) enjoy the respect of their members; Those who do not have these privileges are treated as mentally handicapped there, a leaning back, and nothing more than that. In fact, biblical theory and Christian practice do not go hand in hand among Jehovah's Witnesses; This religion is not "a bed of roses", imperfection and malice are present everywhere, there too; prejudice, and crimes such as insults, defamation, and slander are occasionally practiced by all of Jehovah's Witnesses, including their leaders, as occurs in any religion. The only difference there is its theocratic teachings and procedures, which are more refined than in other denominations considered Christian, have a more coherent biblical foundation, but not perfect, and can and need to be refined by existing scientific knowledge.

THE NATURE OF SATAN THE DEVIL: THE 'GOD OF THIS SYSTEM OF THINGS'

As the apostle John said, Satan the Devil is today the 'god of this system of things', a statement corroborated by the apostle Paul when he brings up that this being is the one who 'blinds the minds of unbelievers' (1 Corinthians 4:4). An angel who shines very powerfully, the third most powerful person in the Universe, second only to Jesus and Jehovah, who apostatized from divine teachings and behaviors to satisfy only his own ego, Satan is an Opposer, Slanderer, Destroyer, Father of Lies (John 8:44). He is the cause of human suffering, directly responsible for it, limiting himself to Jehovah's authorization to carry out any of his intentions (Job 1).



BELIEVE THEY HAVE EXISTED SINCE ABEL

Based on Hebrews 12:1, Jehovah's Witnesses believe that as Jehovah's people, they have existed since Abel, the first Jehovah's Witness on earth, since their parents, Adam and Eve, were not faithful to the point of death, failing to worship the Creator. Thus, its advent as a people dates back to the beginning of human creation, while its advent as a religion dates back to the year 1881 in which its world headquarters was founded, and 1884, the year in which it was registered in the USA (BOTV, 2014).

THEY BELIEVE THAT ONLY THEY KNOW "THE TRUTH" AND WILL BE SAVED

From the moment we know that we are imperfect, sinful, mortal, very limited in a spiritual, emotional, intellectual, cognitive, moral, physical sense, to the point of not being able to know the absolute truth, and yet we believe we know it, we are being reckless, ignorant and arrogant (BREVIÁRIO, 2021).

According to the Giftedean neoperspectivist paradigm, absolute, concrete, objective, real truth exists, but we imperfect humans are completely incapable of knowing it (BREVIÁRIO, 2023). We can only advance our understanding, refine it, complement it, make it more comprehensive, deeper, coherent, consistent, but we will never, in this system of things, as long as we are still imperfect, understand absolute truth, in any area, be it religious, biblical, scientific, artistic, philosophical, etc.

By nurturing such a belief without theological or scientific foundation, Jehovah's Witnesses have become exclusivists, claiming that they alone will be saved. And I present arguments here refuting this assertion: 1) No Jehovah's Witness is perfect, its members sin, often explicitly, sometimes hidden, so that they will never be approved by the Creator to be saved, regardless of whether they are active in Jehovah's Organization until the end of their lives or Armageddon (Revelation 16:14,16); b) The vast majority of Jehovah's Witnesses have little biblical understanding, insufficient to understand the religion's history, guidelines, teachings, and theocratic procedures; c) the members of the Governing Body are not scientists, theologians, philosophers, or gifted, but they put themselves in Jehovah's place by insisting on defining what is right and wrong, even for matters not spelled out in the Bible, such as the case of the *porneía* presented earlier; d) in the Great Tribulation, three great surprises will be presented: if we are there, who we think would not be there but is, and who we think would be there but is not; e) Rahab, the Canaanite prostitute, was not even a Jehovah's Witness, but was declared righteous by Him because of her works, and not because of her faith: the same saying of members considered apostates by Jehovah's Organization, and expelled from it without real reasons, like many I have known, preventing them from serving Jehovah in this religion, they are certainly much more righteous than many Jehovah's Witnesses active in this religion, showing that religion does not save anyone, but our works (w93 12/15 pp.22-25); f) it is stated that in order to serve Jehovah it is necessary to belong to a religious group, and not only that, but that this



group is unique, that of Jehovah's Witnesses, but what does this religion have to say about the people prevented by their leaders from congregating, whether for reasons of slander, defamation, injury, envy, fear of being usurped in their positions, Attributions, functions, privileges or designations?

CLAIM TO BE POLITICALLY NEUTRAL

In adherence to Jesus' words when he said that his true followers would be no part of the world (John 17:16), Jehovah's Witnesses do not participate in politics, either by running for political office or by financing political campaigns, annul their votes in elections, do not salute the national flag, do not perform military service, do not sing the national anthem, they do not celebrate holidays or other commemorative dates that defend politics, such as the Proclamation of the Republic, Flag Day, the anniversary of municipalities, states or countries, days that honor politicians of any nature (BOTV, 2024: jv chap. 14 pp. 188-201).

However, its leaders make a claim that is not consistent with the Bible regarding neutrality: they argue that it is inappropriate for a Christian to study politics, defend or be against a certain political opinion or legislation, since Jesus was not a layman in legislation or politics. When he said, "Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." (Matthew 22:21), he made it explicit that he understood the tax legislation of his time, how its political system was, the collection of its taxes, the importance of the treasury for the functioning of society in its various sectors; by comparing the rulers of his time, stating that they were arrogant, liked the first seats and boasted in public, with Christian conduct, which must be totally different from this to be approved by God, he makes it explicit again that he knew very well the political system of his time, certainly its rulers and the history of each one of them, his projects, his ambitions, so that he could teach his followers about politics with propriety (Matthew 20:25-28; BOTV, 2024: cf chap. 3 pp. 25-34). That said, from a biblical point of view, it is not inappropriate for a Christian to study Political Science, Law, the system of government, defend or oppose legislation; failure to study these matters thoroughly is ignorance, not neutrality; even I, as a Christian accountant, tax expert, know exactly what to defend or oppose in political or legislative terms, and as a scientist I need to position myself for or against, because it is not possible to build Science by being neutral (BREVIÁRIO, 2021; 2023); Other than that, being neutral in the aspects mentioned in the previous paragraph is consistent with biblical instructions.

THEY CLAIM THAT ONLY 144,000 CHRISTIANS WILL REIGN IN HEAVEN WITH CHRIST

When the biblical passage gives room for subjectivity, connotations, uses figures of speech, uses parallel accounts, cross-references, and additional studies to understand its meaning; but when the biblical passage is objective, such as the issue of blood, for example, there is no way to relativize, it is necessary to



understand and practice it to the letter (BOTV, 2024). This is the case with the biblical teaching of Jehovah's Witnesses stating that only 144,000 Christians will reign in heaven with Jesus Christ after Armageddon (Revelation 16:14,16) in the Millennial Reign (Revelation 20).

Different from claiming that only 144,000 Christians will be saved is claiming that only this group, called the "little flock" (Luke 12:32; BOTV, 2024: w95 15/2 pp. 18-22) goes to heaven to act as rulers with Jesus (Revelation 5:10). The rest of the Christians will be governed, for if there are governors of the Kingdom, there must also be those who will be governed by the former. This remnant, Scripturally called "other sheep" (John 10:16; BOTV, 2024: w22 January pp. 20-25) will live in the earthly Paradise (Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 65:21-25).

FIGHTING APOSTASY

Jehovah's Witnesses fight against any and all apostasy. This expression, from the Greek *apostasy*, in a literal sense, has the meaning of abandoning, deserting or rebelling against a teaching, group, entity, people. Based on Proverbs 11:9, Acts 21:21, and II Thessalonians 2:3 (BOTV, 2024: it-1 pp. 157-158), Jehovah's Witnesses consider all their disfellowshipped and disassociated persons (people who have been expelled or who have voluntarily disengaged from the religion, respectively), as apostates. But are they really? By studying scientific works on the disfellowshipped (MENDES, 2012), and having met and talked to several of them, I realized that not all of them are apostates. Because apostates from Jehovah's Organization – or from any other religion – are those who are against its dogmas, theocratic procedures, conducts, seek to prevent other people from becoming its adherents, often they often defame or slander its members or the religion as a whole, and I realized that not all disfellowshipped or dissociated people do these things (MENDES, 2012). Therefore, much more caution is needed on the part of the Services and Legal Department of the branches and similar of this religious organization when stating that a person is or is not an apostate, because such a statement internally destroys its reputation, harming its spiritual, psychic and social development.

OTHER RELEVANT TEACHINGS

There are many teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses, but there is not enough space in this work to address all of them. Other relevant teachings are: the defense of the sanctity of blood as life, and that makes these Christians not accept transfusions of the four primary components of blood (platelets, plasma, leukocytes, red blood cells), only leaving as a matter of personal decision the use of blood fractions and specific surgical procedures that use blood (Leviticus 17; Acts 15:22,28,29; BOTV, 2024: it-2 pp. 932-935); advocate alternative therapeutic methods, such as phytotherapy, massage therapy, reflexology, EFT, accumpuncture, vitamin supplements, hydrotherapy, homeopathy, chiropractic, among others (BOTV,



2024: g00 22/10 pp. 6-11); they defend the mortality of the soul (Ezekiel 18:4), as being different from the spirit, which returns to God as a force, a spark of life, when we die (Ecclesiastes 12:7); among many others.

REFUTING VARIOUS APOSTATE ARGUMENTS

APOSTATES SAY: THE TEXT OF ISAIAH 43:11 RESERVES TO JEHOVAH ONLY THE WORK OF MAN'S SALVATION: "APART FROM ME THERE IS NO SAVIOR." TITUS 2:13 TEACHES THAT JESUS CHRIST IS THE SAVIOR, THUS ESTABLISHING HIM AS THE JEHOVAH OF ISAIAH, CHAPTER 43

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: "There is one God and one mediator between God and men, one man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all —that is what is to be witnessed in his own particular times." —I Timothy 2:5,6.

The apostle Paul pointed out two destinies for faithful humans, namely: a resurrection to live in a Paradise right here on earth when it is restored from Armageddon, and a resurrection, apart from the first, exclusive to 144,000 faithful humans carefully selected by Jehovah to live in heaven and there to play the role of corulers and fellow priests of Jesus Christ for a period of a thousand years (Luke 12:32; Revelation 5:10; 14:1-3).

Christendom teaches that all good people go to heaven, a view that distorts the general view, with Jesus being considered an intermediary for all such people. But what does the Bible indicate? More information on this topic can and should be found at w89 15/8 pp. 30-31.

Exegetical studies point out that the term 'mediator' used in this passage has a legal meaning (BOTV, 2024). Therefore, it has the meaning of a proxy, negotiator, which is the role played by Jesus both for all Christians, anointed or other sheep, since He died for "many" and not all (Matthew 20:28). It is not mandatory to be a lawyer to be an attorney, and mediator refers to the action of mediating, enforcing a legal contract that is acceptable and beneficial to the litigating parties, and not necessarily defending it. But Jesus, in addition to being a mediator, is also our advocate, our public defender for all causes and moments of life (I John 2:1).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE ABSOLUTE AND UNIQUE DEITY OF JESUS CHRIST. THE SCRIPTURES DEMONSTRATE THAT THE LORD JESUS CHRIST IS JEHOVAH

Apostate bases: Isaiah 41:4, 44:6, and 48:12 state that the attribute of being the "first and last" belongs to Jehovah alone. Revelation 1:7-8, 11, 17 and 22:13-14 present Jesus Christ with exactly this



same attribute, thus making Him Jesus Christ, the Jehovah of these passages, and of the entire Old Testament.

Isaiah 45:22-25 speaks of universal worship that all mankind will one day render to Jehovah. Philippians 2:9-11 applies this passage from Isaiah to Jesus Christ. Isaiah 44:22-23 presents Jehovah as the Redeemer. Ephesians 1:7 establishes Jesus Christ as that Redeemer. At Isaiah 45:24 and 54:17 Jehovah is our righteousness. In 1 Corinthians 1:30 Jesus Christ is our righteousness.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: Jehovah is the one and only Almighty God (Isaiah 44:6). Although Jesus is a god, He is not the Almighty (1 Timothy 1:17; John 14:28). Because He is also a god, Jesus was given many titles similar to Jehovah's, such as "the First and the Last," "the Savior," "the Redeemer," "the Lord," "the resurrection and the life," which does not make Him the Creator, eternal both forward and backward (Psalm 90:2), the Almighty, being subject to the authority of the Father (1 Corinthians 11:3; 15).

Although His moral and spiritual qualifications are very similar to those of the Father to the point that He says that whoever sees Him also sees the Father (John 14:8-21), this is the same as saying, "Like Father, like Son" or "Face of one, snout of another". More information can be obtained in re chap. 6 pp. 27-32 (BOTV, 2024).

Redeemer means forgiver, characteristic not only of Jehovah but also of Jesus Christ, of all seraphim, cherubim, messenger angels, and all human servants of Jehovah. If the fact that both Jehovah and Jesus are Redeemers were the criterion for saying that they are one, then we would have to say that They, all angelic spirit creatures, and all human servants of Jehovah would also be one. But are they all one? No. Therefore, Jehovah and Jesus are not one because they are both Redeemers.

The same reasoning holds true for any analogous characteristics, such as justice, love, wisdom, power. Both Jehovah, Jesus, all spiritual creatures, all Jehovah's servants here on Earth, have them, at different levels, of course, in descending order here, respectively, Jehovah being the Being who stands out the most in all attributes, for being the All-Perfect and the Almighty, then Jesus, and so on. But just because they all have them doesn't mean they're the same person. In topic 2.3.5 I explain more refuting the anti-biblical trinitarian doctrine.

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES TEACH THAT JESUS CHRIST IS A CREATED BEING—SIMPLY ANOTHER GOD

Apostate bases: This doctrinal error was created by Jehovah's Witnesses through their weird "New World" Translation which presents John 1:1 as follows: "And the word was a god." Isaiah emphatically denies this error in 43:10, 44:6, and 45:5,12, and proves that his translation of John 1:1 is illegitimate.



Four times Jehovah declares the impossibility of there being "another god" or "a god" besides Himself. Any honest student of the Scriptures should appreciate Jehovah's unique uniqueness.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: In *Septuagint* Greek (Septuagint Bible), the transliteration of Genesis 49:3 is: "Reuben, you are my firstborn [*Protótokos*], Thou art my strength, and the first [*Arkhé*, "beginning"] of my children." Something similar occurs in Deuteronomy 21:17, in the *Septuagint* Greek.

It was on the basis of these exegetical researches that Jehovah's Witnesses, both in the New World Translation and in several of its publications, such as g79 10/22 pp. 28-29 (BOTV, 2024), affirm with biblical coherence and consistency that Jesus was Jehovah's first creation, for this reason called the firstborn, or the beginning, of God's creation, in Revelation 3:14.

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PERSONALITY AND DIVINITY OF THE HOLY SPIRIT

Apostate bases: Of the many biblical references that demonstrate that this is not true, John 16:13-14 is the main one. Eight times the Lord Jesus refers to the Holy Spirit using the masculine personal pronoun "HE." The Greek word "SPIRIT" is neuter, but the pronoun used is not neuter but masculine. Christ was theologically right in this, recognizing the personality of the Spirit. If the Holy Spirit were not a person, the neuter pronoun would be used and the grammar of the passage would be intact. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, NEVER MADE A MISTAKE.

Even the Witnesses' own "New World" translation recognizes the personality of the Spirit in the translation of these two verses. The divinity of the Holy Spirit is clearly demonstrated in the following references that the honest student should study with great care: Acts 5:3-4, 1 Corinthians 3:16, 2 Corinthians 13:14. In 1 Corinthians 12:4-6 the Holy Spirit is called Lord, v. 5, and God, v. 6. By placing Isaiah 6:8-10 together with Acts 28:25-27, it becomes evident that the God of Isaiah 6 is the Holy Spirit.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The first apostate paragraph in question addresses a grammatical doubt in the early years of Elementary School. We call a book, computer, cell phone, car, a "he", and, for example, a house (immovable), a camera, a suitcase, a pen, a "she", and these objects are not people. To characterize a person textually, it is necessary to expose, present sufficient information about his spirit, his psyche and his social life. For example, when the Bible speaks of women or men, all their characteristics, in general, are addressed, their five pillars in general: the spiritual, the emotional, the intellectual, the physical, and the material. Historical, archaeological, geographical, biological, chemical, physical, etc., records prove that in fact these people existed, were real. In the case of Jehovah's Holy Spirit, the Bible only, from afar, alludes to him using a masculine pronoun, or some characteristic that



may bring to mind something like a person, but he is the active force of Jehovah, the source of his vibrations, energetic frequencies, spark (spark) of life (II Peter 1:21).

Refined exegetical studies of the Greek word *Tire* (spirit) and the Hebrew word *Ru'ach* (spirit), leave evidence that they basically refer to the breath of life, but in certain biblical contexts they can mean wind, vital force in living creatures, spiritual people, divine active force, Holy Spirit of Jehovah (BOTV, 2024). The common of all these meanings is that the terms mentioned refer to something invisible to humans and provide evidence of force in action, capable of producing visible effects. More information can and should be found in it-1 pp. 864-873.

Texts such as John 14:16,17,26; 15:26; 16:13, personify the Holy Spirit of God, but it is only the use of figure of speech, as is also done with the terms wisdom, sin, death, water and blood (BOTV, 2024: rs p. 397-p.418). The references made to the Holy Spirit in Luke 1:41, Matthew 3:11, and Acts 10:38 do not fit a person.

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE BIBLICAL DOCTRINE OF THE TRINITY

Apostate bases: Although the truth of the Trinity is considered entertaining by the Witnesses, it is nevertheless part of God's revelation. The Bible student discovers that there is a Person in the Scriptures, known as the Father, who is God, Ephesians 1:2. There's another Person in the Scriptures, called the Son, Jesus Christ, and that's God, Titus 2:13. There is yet another Person called the Holy Spirit, who is God also, Acts 5:3-4. The Greek word *Theos*, "God." was used in relation to all three of these Persons, thus bestowing the same divinity upon each of them. The careful student also notes the fact of the Trinity in, Isaiah 48:17, 28:19, 2 Corinthians 13:14. The conclusion is simply that there is only one God manifested in the three Persons known as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, and since each of these Persons is God, they are equal.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The Pauline letter to the Corinthian Christians says in II Corinthians 13:13 "We cannot justly infer that they possessed equal authority, or the same nature." Regarding the Bible passage from Matthew 28:18-20 it is said: "This text, however, taken in isolation, does not decisively prove either the personality of the three personages mentioned or their equality or divinity." The distinct difference between the power of Jehovah and that of Jesus is stamped at John 14:28. At the end of the Millennium, the theocratic government, led by Jesus, will be returned to Jehovah, who is all things about Jesus, is His authority (1 Cor 15; 1 Cor 11:1-34). More information is found in itself pp. 210-214 (BOTV, 2024).



APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PHYSICAL AND BODILY RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Apostate bases: Their false doctrine declares, "The man Jesus is dead, only His spirit is risen." The testimony of Jesus Christ is completely different, Luke 24:36-45. Even a cursory examination of v. 39 dispels any doubt concerning the bodily resurrection. Thomas met the physically resurrected Christ, John 20:24-29, as well as the other disciples who ate fish with Him, John 21:12-14. Paul testifies of the physical resurrection of Jesus Christ in 1 Corinthians 15:3–19. The grave guards, the chief priests, and the Sanhedrin would never have stayed in Matthew 28:11,15 if "only His spirit should rise."

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: This assertion is false. Jehovah's Witnesses argue, based on exegetical studies of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that he did indeed rise from the dead. It is well known that many scientists, theologians, philosophers, exegetes, atheists, etc., do not believe that Jesus rose bodily from the dead, appeared to his disciples, talked and ate with them, but Jehovah's Witnesses have published many articles defending the physical and bodily resurrection of Jesus Christ (BOTV, 2024: it-2 pp. 78-99; w70 15/5 pp. 293-297).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PHYSICAL AND VISIBLE RETURN OF JESUS CHRIST

Apostate bases: They say, "We must not wait for Him to come back as a human being." The return is more properly translated as presence and refers to the invisible presence of the Lord. In contrast, the Bible student discovers that the truth is that JESUS CHRIST WILL COME BACK again, physically and literally. In Revelation 1:7, "every eye shall see him." In 1 Thessalonians 4:16-17, "the Lord Himself... he will come down from heaven" And in Acts 1:10-11, "so it will come in the way you saw him ascend." The testimony of these passages is irrefutable.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: In Revelation 1:7, the apostle John said: "Behold, he comes with the clouds, and every eye shall see him, and those who pierced him, and all the tribes of the earth, shall beat themselves with grief because of him." The meaning of the expression "shall see" in this verse is to discern, perceive, understand, and not to see with the physical eyes. Ephesians 1:18 speaks of these "eyes of your understanding." When Jesus ascended to heaven, as recorded in Acts chapter 1, he initiated it in a visible way to his disciples, that is, in a physical, bodily form, but there is no biblical basis for believing that he maintained his material form after the clouds entrenched him; on the contrary, I Peter 3:18 says that he died in the flesh but was made alive in the spirit, and I Corinthians 15:50 states that flesh and blood do not inherit the Kingdom of God. Therefore, by stating that at His second coming it will be the same as at His going to heaven, this shows that His return is not a physical, corporeal, material appearance, visible to human eyes, but rather that His disciples here on Earth will understand, with the



eyes of faith, that He is present as the head of the congregation of God (I Corinthians 11:3). More information is found in pe chap. 17 pp. 142-147 (BOTV, 2024).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE BELIEVER'S PRESENCE WITH CHRIST AFTER DEATH

Apostate bases: According to 2 Corinthians 5:8, Philippians 1:21-24, and Luke 16:20-22, the believer, immediately after death, passes into the presence of Christ. The body lies on the ground, John 11:11-14, awaiting the resurrection, 1 Corinthians 15:20-23, while the soul and spirit, now separated from the body, James 2:16, enter heaven.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The first point to consider is that while the Greek word *Tire* (spirit) and the Hebrew word *Ru'ach* (spirit) basically means breath of life, spark (spark) of life, energy or force that gives life, the Hebrew word *Nefesh* (soul) and the Greek word *psykhé* (soul) means animals, people as a whole (both the physical and spiritual parts), the life of a person or an animal. Therefore, soul and spirit are not the same thing. Ezekiel 18:4 says that the soul dies, while Ecclesiastes 12:7 says that the spirit does not die, it returns to God, as an active vitalizing force, when we die. This return of the human spirit to God is energetic, it is the same process as the return of electrical energy to a transformer or to an electric power plant when it is turned off at some point in a city, for example. Indeed the body (a part of the soul) returns to the ground, and the spirit returns to God (Genesis 2:7; Ecclesiastes 12:7). As for those who have died, their spirit, that is, their life energy, is with God, which means that any chance of new life, or resurrection, is in His hands. Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the faithful dead will be resurrected to live on a paradise earth when it is reestablished from Armageddon (Psalm 37:29; Isaiah 65:21-25).

APOSTLES SAY: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DISAPPROVE OF THE BELIEVER'S HOPE OF GOING TO HEAVEN

Apostate bases: John 14:1-3, Philippians 3:20-21, 1 Peter 1:3-5, and Revelation 3:12 are just a few of the many biblical passages that speak of the "living hope" of being with Christ forever.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The so-called Christian regions, Christendom, affirms that the good when they die go to heaven and that the bad go to hellfire. But is this what the Bible teaches? It is not. In Psalm 37:29 it is stated that the righteous will live on earth, not in heaven. In Isaiah 65:21-25, it says that the resurrected righteous will build houses, plant vineyards, activities that are not carried out in heaven. John 5:28,29 and Acts 24:15 reaffirm that the resurrection will only be for the faithful, who can be just or unjust, from the divine point of view, while only the wicked do not have this same hope, because they will be definitively destroyed. But the Bible reveals a select group of Christians, carefully selected by God, who were given the hope of being resurrected to live in heaven with Christ for a thousand years,



playing with him the role of rulers and priests. It is the group that the Bible calls the "little flock" in Luke 12:32 and points to as the 144,000 Christians chosen to live in heaven (Revelation 5:10; 7:4; 14:3,4). More information is found in w88 1/2 pp. 30-31.

Corroborating this Scriptural understanding, in Revelation 7:9,10 the apostle John claims to see a great crowd of people, whom no man could number, evidently not referring to the 144,000 anointed ones mentioned in verse 4, but to the remnant of faithful Christians here on earth at the time of the Great Tribulation (Matthew 24:21). So, in short, the 144,000 who will go to heaven will be rulers and priests with Him, during the Millennial Christocratic Reign, after which we do not know what functions they will exercise or where they will go (whether they will continue in heaven or return to Earth), since the Bible does not answer this question; and the remnant of faithful Christians will live right here on earth when it is properly restored. More information is found in w70 10/15 pp. 629-635.

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE REALITY AND ETERNITY OF FUTURE PUNISHMENT

Apostate bases: Scripture speaks of the reality of hell. The Lord Jesus Christ spoke more of hell than of heaven and informed us that hell is a furnace of fire, Matthew 13:49-50, a place prepared for Satan and his emissaries, Matthew 25:41, of fire that is not extinguished, Mark 9:42-48. In addition, He insisted on the fact that hell is eternal. The Greek word *aionios*, which translates "that which has no end." and which was used to describe the eternal life mentioned in John 3:16, and the eternity of God in Romans 16:26, was deliberately used by Christ to describe the duration of hell, Matthew 18:8, and by John, in Revelation 14:11. *Aionios* does not have a double meaning. If it means that God is eternal and the life the believer receives is eternal, then it must mean that hell is also eternal.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: Refined exegetical studies point out that the original Greek word transliterated hell was *Ge'en·na*, as at Mark 9:47, referring to a garbage dump outside the city of Jerusalem known as the Valley of Hinnom and called "the Valley of Slaughter" at Jeremiah 7:30-34, where the garbage was incinerated, that is, completely destroyed by fire. This place was used to dispose of corpses en masse, not to torture living people. When Jesus said that anyone who did not faithfully worship Jehovah would be thrown into that place, *Ge'en·na'na*, he used, not denotative (literal) but connotative (symbolic) language, meaning that they would be destroyed definitively and completely, as if by fire. But religious laymen in biblical themes, created the legend that the unfaithful dead will be eternally tormented in a fiery hell, a teaching that does not harmonize with divine love and justice (I John 4:8). More information is found in w08 1/11 pp. 5-8.



APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY THE PERFECT SALVATION OF THE CROSS OF CHRIST

Apostate bases: Without any Scriptural justification, the Witnesses teach that the Millennium, the thousand years of Christ's reign on earth, will provide all mankind from Adam onward, who will be resurrected, an opportunity, under favorable conditions, to receive eternal salvation. Where can I find a single Bible verse that supports such a thing? The Lord Jesus Christ purchased our salvation on the Cross, Romans 3:21-26, and it remains for man to believe and be saved, Ephesians 2:8-9 and Acts 16:30-31. Salvation is wholly apart from any human endeavor, Romans 3:27-28.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The Bible makes it clear that the death of Jesus Christ provided the ransom that opens up the opportunity for everlasting life for those who exercise faith in him (John 3:16; Matthew 20:28). But exercising faith is not credulity, but it is believing and maintaining a Christian conduct consistent with biblical guidelines. As James 2:17,18 points out that faith without works is invalid, it has no value in God's eyes. So how can a Christian want to be saved without any effort? IF there is no practice of Christian teachings, fidelity to God in your life trajectory, what is the value of your knowledge or your faith? Therefore, there is no salvation wholly apart from any human effort such as apostates claim.

Another issue is the belief that Jesus died on a cross, and the Greek word *staurós*, transliterated cross by Christendom, actually originally means a pole or a stake. And it was on a torture stake, not a cross, that Jesus Christ was murdered by the Romans. In this way, the expression "torture stake" conveys the full meaning of the original word, since it is also used to indicate the torture, suffering, and humiliation that Jesus' followers would face (Matthew 16:24; Hebrews 12:2).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DENY PATRIOTISM AND FLAG SALUTE

Apostate bases: Scripture commands believers to be loyal citizens. The careful student will see this in Romans 13:1-7, 1 Peter 2:13-15, and Matthew 22:21.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The salute to the national flag is associated with patriotism. For this reason, it is common for people who are not Jehovah's Witnesses, and who naturally salute the flag, sing the national anthem, to be emotionally disturbed by the fact that they are not imitated by these religious people. But there is a coherent and consistent biblical foundation for this conduct. Reflection Questions: Although most people think differently, shouldn't they grant the minority the freedom not to do something contrary to their religious conscience? Respecting the religious conscience of a certain minority would show appreciation for the freedoms represented by the flag, wouldn't it? (BOTV, 2024). More information is found in g73 8/1 pp.9-13 and w85 1/10 pp. 29-30.



APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE CONFUSED ABOUT THE 144,000

Apostate bases: Through good works and sincere effort, one of Jehovah's Witnesses hopes to become a member of the group of 144,000. In the two chapters in which the 144,000 were mentioned, Revelation 7 and 14, the student of Scripture notes that the 144,000 are indeed; Jews of the tribes, with no Gentiles among them, 7:4-8, are all men, 14:4, will serve during the Great Tribulation, 14:6-13, and will not receive their position by works, but will be appointed by God, 7:3. No matter how hard you force your imagination. No acceptable biblical interpretation can guarantee this Gentile sect a position among the 144,000.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The first aspect is that the 144,000 cannot be referred to literal, fleshly Israel, since their listing of Revelation 7:4-8 differs from their tribal listing (Numbers 1:17,47). For the same reason, since they do not refer exactly to the Jews of the tribes, it makes no sense to believe that Gentiles are not admitted among them or that they are only men. Jehovah is not prejudiced about gender (male or female), which is why he extended this heavenly hope to both men and women; initially it was intended for the Jews, yes, but because they rejected the pure worship of Jehovah they were refused, rejected also by Him; the illustration of the King's wedding feast, referring to Jesus as King in the Millennium along with the 144,000, recorded at Matthew 22:7-10, shows that this hope has been extended to the Gentiles of all nations and of various times, including the present one, in which Christians are still being anointed for heavenly life until the predestined fixed number is completed (BOTV, 2024: w75 1/7 pp. 405-406). They will act as Jesus' fellow warriors during Armageddon (Revelation 19:14; BOTV, 2024: re chap. 39 pp. 279-286).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES USE A DISTORTED TRANSLATION OF THE BIBLE

Apostate bases: The "New World" Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures is a clumsy translation of the New Testament that has no reputation among the Greek teachers. The translation was altered to fit the heresy. For example, the word *allos*, "other," does not appear in the Greek text of Colossians 1:16-17, but it has been inserted four times in its translation so that Christ appears to be part of creation and thus fits into their doctrine that He is a created son, another god. "?. for through Him all things were created." This and dozens of other passages make the "New World" translation a caricature of God's Word.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: The New World Bible Translation Committee at the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses published its original English version between 1950 and 1960. The Christian Greek Scriptures were published in 1950 and the complete version in 1961.



Because of the language changes that have occurred since then, the world branch decided to make several revisions to the New World Translation in order to make its text easier to understand by means of easier terms, the addition of explanatory notes, cross-references, an index, a glossary, appendices, and appendices. It also contains illustrative tables and many suggestions for Bible reading.

Far from being misrepresented as claimed by apostates, such Bible translation is conducted by qualified professionals in Greek, Aramaic, Hebrew (especially those that are the originals) and in more than 240 other languages into which the translation is done, both at the world office, which is located in Warwick (U.S.A.), and at the national offices, located at its branches around the world. Some of them have a university degree in Letters, but most have learned other languages in professional courses to help voluntarily in the work of evangelization, in this specific case in the translation departments.

Several revisions were carried out and several publications were made: in 1950 and 1961, the original versions; in 1984 a large type edition was published, with an extensive appendix, 125,000 marginal references, 11,400 clarifying footnotes, and a concordance; in 2013 it was republished and in 2015 there was the most recent publication of this translation, with a reissue in 2023. Today it is available in more than 3 thousand different languages and more than 5 billion copies have already been printed (BOTV, 2024; If lesson 5).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES HAVE A DOCTRINAL SYSTEM THAT IS BASED ON THE INTERPRETATIONS OF CHARLES TAZE RUSSELL

Apostate bases: In 1874, a Brooklyn shirtman named Charles Taze Russell announced that he owned the truth. In his many works Russell "left almost no great truth or fundamental doctrine untouched by his heretical and unjustified conclusions." Dr. Win. E. Biederwolf. As a careful study can reveal, Russell's works serve as a fundamental basis for the structure of Jehovah's Witnesses. Today's Jehovah's Witnesses are following the bankrupt conclusions of a scoundrel who divorced his wife, got into trouble with the courts, and deceived his followers by selling them "miracle wheat" at an exorbitant price, which he claimed produced 15 times more than ordinary wheat.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: Just as Martin Luther and John Calvin were used as instruments by Jehovah's Holy Spirit to protest the pagan, unbiblical, doctrines and practices of Catholicism, Charles Taze Russell was used as an instrument by Jehovah's Holy Spirit to expose/protest the doctrinal and conduct inconsistencies of original Protestantism. Many scientific discoveries and human inventions are also inspired by Jehovah's Holy Spirit, which does not mean that they are "the absolute truth," or beneficial to all human beings. What needs to be evaluated is how refined, coherent and consistent the biblical interpretation is; if it is more coherent and consistent with the Holy Scriptures than those of other religions, then it is the one that must be followed, isn't it? Because we are all intelligent, and



we want to learn to think and act in the most refined, intelligible, mature, ethical way possible. Those who truly seek to please God in the way He approves undoubtedly seek out and find a group of people who serve Him in an organized way, guided by theocratic teachings, practices, and procedures acceptable to the Creator (Hebrews 10:24,25; I Corinthians 16:19; John 13:35; I Peter 2:17).

APOSTATES CLAIM: JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES NEGLECT THE VAST AREA OF BIBLICAL TRUTHS

Apostate bases: A careful analysis of the various books, pamphlets, and magazines published by the Watchtower reveals that only a small percentage of Biblical books were used by them. They quote no more than 7% of Scripture, leaving the rest of God's Word unmentioned.

The truly Christian biblical bases clarify: Of the more than 5 billion Bible printings made worldwide, of which the New World Translation accounts for more than 244 million, all Bible verses, chapters, and books are used, cross-referenced, and have refined explanations in its thousands of Bible publications produced by the Watchtower. The entire Bible is studied in as much depth as possible by Jehovah's Witnesses, and not just a small percentage as claimed, even though they are not well educated in universities.

As for the relative (percentage) or absolute amount of Scripture quotations that Jehovah's Witnesses make, it is enough to consult the many biblical publications produced and made available on their institutional websites, the jw.org and the Watchtower Online Library (BOTV, 2024). But 7% as stated is an arbitrary, superficial, lay percentage. Numerous Bible versions/translations are used as citations in exegetical research carried out by Jehovah's Witnesses. However, it is worth noting that they do not have many textual foundations, only a theological trend followed by the committees of the Governing Body, whose members are not theologians, philosophers, scientists in any field of knowledge, nor gifted; for this reason, the New World Translation is not perfect as any other Bible translation is.

CONCLUSIONS AND FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

The teachings of Jehovah's Witnesses are, in my view, the finest among Christian teachings up to the present time. However, they are not, and never will be, as long as their members are imperfect, as long as we still live under this oppressive commercial and political system, absolute, perfect, ready, finished, definitive, irrefutable. Thus, all the biblical understanding that Jehovah's Witnesses possess needs to be refined in the light of scientific knowledge, which is the most advanced knowledge ever in existence. Religious and scientific knowledge, in this case, are complementary; but the religious-scientific knowledge is much more refining than the religious-traditional (or common sense) knowledge of Jehovah's Witnesses. In order for them to produce a state-of-the-art theological framework, their members



must be well qualified academically and professionally, especially their leaders, their Governing Body. Spiritual qualifications are relevant, but they are insufficient to hold such strategic positions in a global religious organization, which values ethics, honesty, candor, respect and commitment to society.

The Hebrew-Aramaic and Christian Greek Scriptures (the so-called Bible) is a book that presents generic, relatively specific contents (some more and some less), apparently deep and comprehensive in time, but not as comprehensive and profound as it seems to be. Its narrative temporal scope is from the creation of the Earth (Genesis 1:1) and everything on it, especially human beings, until the end of the Millennium (Christocratic government). Its temporal scope is not from everlasting to everlasting, although the Bible centers on Jehovah, who had no beginning and will have no end (Psalm 90:2). Its spatial scope is planet Earth (the world in 3D as we know it).

The Christian Bible is neither complete nor profound as it seems. For example, it does not tell about human ancestors (*homo sapiens*, etc.) and other creatures that lived on Earth before us, such as dinosaurs, even though their existence has been scientifically proven. Jehovah himself created the dinosaurs and the common ancestors among humans and apes included in the Theories of Evolution, but this is not reported in the Bible; it is not complete. Its historical, physical, chemical, biological, legal, and medical accounts are superficial, shallow, without depth; only science can explain these aspects of the biblical contents with the necessary breadth and depth, in order to elucidate and refine them.

The Bible does not explain what *porneía* is within a marriage; it does not define exactly what dating, friendship, apostasy is, so there is a lot of subjectivity in its definition, and each religion that uses it as a manual defines these concepts and behaviors as they see fit; She does not specify when the development of love begins *Érus* in a novel, it does not typify the various types of existing relationships, it does not classify or go into detail on the types, levels and phases of human relational intimacies; the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses unfortunately continues to put itself in the place of the Most High by incessantly and overzealously seeking to define what is right or wrong when the Bible is not explicit on some subject, and by penalizing its members on the basis of these foundations, and not on biblical foundations.

As for being inspired by Jehovah's Holy Spirit (2 Peter 1:21), it is (2 Timothy 3:16), but its writers (more than 40 in all) were all imperfect, with a low degree of education and suggestibility, which is why biblical writing has all the aforementioned limitations. Even if the Creator Jehovah wanted to transmit, through the heavenly court (Jesus, the seraphim, the cherubim and the messenger angels) more comprehensive and profound temporal-spatial understandings, the biblical writers would not be able to understand and transmit them, transcribe them.

Science, even partially, is also inspired by Jehovah's Holy Spirit. All scientific discoveries that benefit or have benefited in any way Jehovah's servants, Christians as a whole around the world, have the



action of His "finger" to cement themselves. The various Bible translations have all been guided by His Spirit, whether their translators are from any religious denominations, ethnicities, races, socioeconomic conditions, colors, sexual orientations, etc. Even the Protestant Reformation was provoked by the Holy Spirit of Jehovah, because without this historical phase, which marked Theology and the Sciences of Religion, the various Protestant denominations, Mormonism, Kardecist Spiritism and Jehovah's Witnesses would not exist, which can also be considered Protestant as they protest worldly teachings and practices and those of other religious denominations.



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