

WHY DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES REFUSE BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS?

—Did they also prohibit vaccinations and organ transplants?

“I am interested in the Jehovah's Witness religion. However, I am curious why Jehovah's Witnesses refuse blood transfusions. I am aware of the verse in the Bible that talks about not eating blood, but **can you explain how eating blood refers to blood transfusions?** I have also heard that **Jehovah's Witnesses used to ban vaccinations and organ transplants.** Is this true?”

OUR RESPONSE:

Dear Friend,

Your question is a good one because there is a major inconsistency between the Jehovah's Witness interpretation of the Biblical passages condemning the eating of blood and the actual act of transfusing blood into the body. Orthodox Jews are much more meticulous about following these Scriptures in the Law of Moses than the Jehovah's Witnesses are. Yet, they have no problem accepting blood transfusions, and of all the Christian churches and denominations that claim to uphold the Bible's principles, the Jehovah's Witness religion is the **ONLY** religion that claims that these verses (Genesis 9:3-4; Leviticus 17:13-14; Acts 15:28-29) that speak of not physically eating blood also apply to the transfusion of human blood into the veins of the body.

CHANGES IN WATCHTOWER MEDICAL POLICIES:

The banning of blood transfusions is not the only medical stipulation that the Jehovah's Witness religion has misapplied Scripture to support its unique views. The Watchtower Society once condemned vaccinations as a “devilish practice” and organ transplants as a “cannibalistic” practice. See the following quotes:

- **VACCINES REJECTED FROM 1921 TO 1952:**

- **1921:** “**Vaccination never prevented anything and never will, and is the most barbarous practice...** We are in the last days; and the devil is slowly losing his hold, making a strenuous effort meanwhile to do all the damage he can, and to his credit can such evils be placed...Use your rights as American citizens to forever **abolish the devilish practice of vaccinations.**”—*The Golden Age*, October 12, 1921, p. 17
- **1952:** “Is vaccination a violation of God's law forbidding the taking of blood into the system? ... After consideration of the matter, **it does not appear to us to be in violation of the everlasting covenant made with Noah, as set down in Genesis 9:4,** nor contrary to God's related commandment at **Leviticus 17:10-14.** Most certainly it cannot reasonably or Scripturally be argued and proved that, by being vaccinated, the inoculated person is either eating or drinking blood and consuming it as food or receiving a blood transfusion. **Vaccination does not bear any relationship to or any likeness to the intermarriage of angelic ‘sons of God’ with the daughters of men, as described in Genesis 6:1-4.** Neither can it be put in the same class as described at **Leviticus 18:23-24, which forbids the mingling of humans with animals.** It has nothing to do with sex relations.” — *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1952, p. 764

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The refusal of Jehovah's Witnesses to accept blood transfusions stems from a misunderstanding of the Biblical Scriptures at Leviticus 17 and Acts 15:29, both of which speak of not "eating" blood. The context of these Scriptures was in reference to animal sacrifice where God told Israel to pour animal blood out on the ground because the life of the flesh is in the blood. Once the blood was removed, Israelites were allowed to eat the meat of the animal that was sacrificed.

Nothing in these Scriptures speak of human blood, nor do they speak of non-sacrificial, blood transfusions where the blood is replaced in the human body with other human blood and not eaten. Thus, we conclude that the Scriptures Jehovah's Witnesses use to support their blood refusal policies are taken completely out of context.

Furthermore, scientists affirm that one is not "eating" blood when the blood enters the body through the veins because the blood that is transfused into the veins functions like an organ of the body and merely replaces the blood lost during a surgical procedure or an injury. The body does not digest blood, so there is no connection whatsoever with the Biblical policy forbidding the eating of animal blood.

ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESS NO-BLOOD SUBSTITUTES AN EFFECTIVE ALTERNATIVE?

We have several newspaper reports of the Jehovah's Witnesses whose lives have been lost over the Watchtower policy against blood transfusions. If their substitute bloodless surgery options were so good, why are so many dying? One report we have is about a mother who died after giving birth due to birth complications that resulted in serious loss of blood.¹ The volume expanders that the Watchtower policy provided for her could not save her life because these volume expanders do not carry oxygen as only human blood can. Here again, we see a clear example where a blood transfusion would have saved the woman's life. Yet, Jehovah's Witnesses are taught to view this tragedy as a "test of loyalty" claiming that the mother forfeited her physical life to gain spiritual life with Jehovah. We say that this is a sick twisting of the carnage this Scripture-twisted Watchtower policy has wrecked upon many lives.

Jehovah's Witnesses elders often show up at the hospital to pressure Jehovah's Witness relatives to stay true to the Jehovah's Witness policy against blood. When court orders have been issued overruling a Jehovah's Witness' parent's objection to blood transfusions for the life of their baby, Jehovah's Witness elders have even tried to pressure the family to go against hospital/court rules to smuggle their babies out of the hospital.²

INCONSISTENCIES IN THE WATCHTOWER'S BLOOD POLICY:

The ironic thing is that the Watchtower current position against blood transfusions is incredibly inconsistent because they admit that blood transfusions are Organ Transplants³ and they allow organ transplants of **all other organs, except blood.**⁴ Why the inconsistency? They appeal only to the Scriptures they misinterpreted above,

¹ See **The Charlotte Observer**, Friday, June 25, 1999, p. 7

² See the testimony of Ex-Jehovah's Witness Paul and Pat Blizzard at: <http://www.geocities.com/Heartland/2919/test.html>

³ See *Awake!* August 22, 1999, p. 31

⁴ See *How Can Blood Save Your Life?*, 1990, p. 28

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but it is noteworthy to consider how these very same Scriptures were used originally to condemn the taking of vaccinations that they now accept.⁵

Furthermore, the Watchtower does not allow transfusions of white blood cells,⁶ yet the Society allows transfusions of **all** of the parts that make up white blood cells.⁷ Again, why the inconsistency in position? They claim that these “factors” of blood transfer from mother to child naturally in the womb.⁸ Yet, they ignore the fact that whole white blood cells also transfer naturally from mother to child in the Colostrum milk a mother feeds her newborn.⁹ So, it appears that the Watchtower picks and chooses what evidence it will accept and reject to support its policies.

We can point to more examples of the problems with the Jehovah's Witness policy against blood transfusions and many of these are detailed on our website in the articles listed below. Not only does our ministry take a stand against this Watchtower policy, but some of the Watchtower's own Hospital Liaison Committee of Jehovah's Witness elders have even come out publicly on the Internet voicing their concerns over the current Jehovah's Witness policy against blood. You can view this dissident Jehovah's Witness website at: <http://www.ajwrb.org/> For more articles from our website exposing the issue of Blood and Jehovah's Witnesses, see:

- **DOES GOD'S LAW ON BLOOD REQUIRE NO BLOOD TRANSFUSIONS? PART I / PART II**
http://www.4jehovah.org/wdgr_s03q01a.php / http://www.4jehovah.org/wdgr_s03q01b.php
- **BLOOD TRANSFUSION SECRETS JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES ARE NOT TOLD: 12 Questions for Jehovah's Witnesses on The Use of Blood**
<http://www.4jehovah.org/jehovahs-witness-blood-transfusion.php>
- **NANCY'S STORY - How The Watchtower Policy On No Blood Transfusions Impacted My Family** - <http://www.4jehovah.org/exjw-nancy.php>
- **WHY JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES DIE RATHER THAN ACCEPT A BLOOD TRANSFUSION**
<http://www.4jehovah.org/help-jw-child-custody.php#blood>

Before you consider studying further with Jehovah's Witnesses, you might also want to consider some of the other articles on our website that expose other serious Scriptural errors of the Watchtower Society:

- **I'M STUDYING WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. WHAT DO I NEED TO KNOW BEFORE I GET BAPTIZED?** - <http://www.4jehovah.org/help-jw-become.php>
- **I WANTED TO LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BIBLE, SO I STARTED STUDYING WITH JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES. HAVE I BEEN DECEIVED?**
<http://www.4jehovah.org/help-jw-study-blind.php>

⁵ See *The Watchtower*, December 15, 1952, p. 764 (quoted above) where the Society corrects these misapplied Scriptures when it reversed its original position against vaccinations.

⁶ See *The Watchtower*, June 15, 2000, p. 29

⁷ See *How Can Blood Save Your Life?*, 1990, p. 27

⁸ See *The Watchtower*, June 1, 1990, pp. 30-31

⁹ See *Breastfeeding - A Guide for the Medical Profession*, 4th edition, by Ruth A. Lawrence (Mosby - Year Book, Inc 1994), p. 154