In a world where the search for spiritual truth is more urgent than ever, it is crucial to discern between teachings that build up the faith and those that, though well-intentioned, may lead us away from the fullness of divine revelation. Jehovah's Witnesses are one of the most recognized and active religious groups today, but their interpretation of the Bible and their doctrines differ significantly from traditional Catholic faith. This article aims to provide an in-depth, educational, and apologetic look at this movement, debunking its theological foundations and contrasting them with the richness of Catholic tradition.

Origin and History of Jehovah's Witnesses

Jehovah's Witnesses have their roots in the 19th century, in a context of religious fervor and a quest for reform within Christianity. Their founder, Charles Taze Russell (1852–1916), an American businessman, began to question traditional Christian doctrines, particularly those related to the Trinity, the immortality of the soul, and hell. Russell founded the movement originally known as "Bible Students," which later evolved into what we now know as Jehovah's Witnesses.

After Russell's death, Joseph Franklin Rutherford took the reins of the movement and reorganized it, giving it a more structured and proselytizing character. It was under his leadership that the name "Jehovah's Witnesses" was adopted in 1931, based on a particular interpretation of Isaiah 43:10: "You are my witnesses, declares the Lord, and my servant whom I have chosen." Rutherford also introduced significant doctrinal changes, such as the denial of Christ's divinity and the promotion of an exclusivist focus on the name "Jehovah" as the only valid name for God.

Key Doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses

1. **The Denial of the Trinity**: Jehovah's Witnesses reject the doctrine of the Trinity, claiming it is a later invention not found in the New Testament. Instead, they teach that Jehovah is the only true God, that Jesus is a created being (the archangel Michael), and that the Holy Spirit is not a person but an active force of God.From a Catholic perspective, this denial clearly contradicts biblical teachings and apostolic tradition. Jesus declared, "I and the Father are one" (John 10:30), and the Council of Nicaea (325 AD) dogmatically defined the divine nature of Christ. Furthermore, the Holy Spirit is revealed as a distinct person in passages like John 14:26: "But the Advocate, the Holy

Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will teach you all things."

2. **The Immortality of the Soul and Hell**: Jehovah's Witnesses teach that the soul ceases to exist after death and that hell is not a place of eternal punishment but simply the common grave of humanity. This view is based on a literalist interpretation of certain biblical passages, such as Ecclesiastes 9:5: "For the living know that they will die, but the dead know nothing."However, the Catholic Church, based on biblical revelation and tradition, teaches that the soul is immortal and that, after death, each person faces a particular judgment. Jesus spoke clearly of hell as a place of eternal punishment (Matthew 25:46), and the parable of the rich man and Lazarus (Luke 16:19–31) shows that the dead are conscious.
3. **The Rejection of Blood Transfusions**: Jehovah's Witnesses prohibit blood transfusions based on a strict interpretation of passages like Acts 15:20, which mentions abstaining from blood. This doctrine has generated controversy and medical difficulties for their followers.The Catholic Church, on the other hand, values life as a sacred gift and permits blood transfusions, interpreting these passages in their historical and cultural context, not as an absolute medical prohibition.

The Current State of Jehovah's Witnesses

Today, Jehovah's Witnesses are a global movement with millions of members worldwide. Their focus on door-to-door proselytism and their rejection of many social and political practices (such as military service and birthday celebrations) set them apart from other Christian denominations. However, their hierarchical structure and control over their members' lives have been the subject of criticism, especially in cases of expulsion (or "disfellowshipping"), which can lead to the breakdown of family and social relationships.

Additionally, their insistence on the imminence of the end of the world has led to failed predictions in the past, generating skepticism even among some of their followers. Despite this, their message of a future earthly paradise continues to attract many people seeking hope and certainty.

A Traditional Catholic Response

In response to the doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses, the Catholic Church offers a deeper and more balanced vision of the Christian faith. The Trinity, far from being an invention, is the

very heart of the mystery of God, fully revealed in Jesus Christ. As St. Augustine said, "If you do not believe, you will not understand." The Catholic faith invites us to delve into this mystery with humility and trust.

Moreover, the Catholic Church emphasizes the importance of Tradition alongside Scripture. As St. Paul wrote, "So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter" (2 Thessalonians 2:15). Jehovah's Witnesses, by rejecting Tradition, lose sight of the richness of biblical interpretation that has guided the Church for two millennia.

Conclusion: An Invitation to the Fullness of Faith

Debunking the doctrines of Jehovah's Witnesses is not an exercise in confrontation but an invitation to discover the beauty and truth of the Catholic faith. In a world full of uncertainty, the Church offers a secure anchor in God's revelation, faithfully transmitted through the centuries.

If you have ever encountered Jehovah's Witnesses or had doubts about their teachings, remember that truth is not imposed but proposed with love and clarity. As Jesus said, "The truth will set you free" (John 8:32). May this article serve as a guide to deepen your faith and share it with others, always with charity and respect.

In the richness of Catholic tradition, we find not only answers but a path to the fullness of life in Christ. May Mary, Mother of the Church, guide us on this journey of faith and unity. Amen.