

## Core Beliefs of Jehovah's Witnesses

### God (Jehovah)

- Believe in **one God**, whose personal name is **Jehovah**.
- Reject the **Trinity**; deny that God exists as Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. So, they do not believe God indwells believers.
- God is a single person, not triune.
- JW commonly appeal to Isaiah 42:8, Psalm 83:18, Joel 2:32 to support the claim that God's only name is Jehovah.
- What about other names: they are descriptive not identifying.
- They believe Jewish scribes removed the name, so their New World Translation restores "Jehovah" when YHWH appears in Hebrew texts.
- They insert "Jehovah" into the NT
- God is distant and transcendent
- Relationship with God is mediated through obedience and the Watchtower society.

### Response

- God is one Being in three Persons
- God is personal, relational, and knowable
- God has revealed Himself fully in Jesus Christ
- The Father, Son, and HS are Co-equal, Co-eternal, fully God
- God's covenant name YHWH is important
- The NT emphasizes Jesus as Lord.
- God is known relationally through Christ, not by pronunciation of a name.
- God indwells believers through the H.S.
- God is both transcendent and intimately personal.

### Jesus Christ

- Jesus is **not God**.
- He is God's **first and greatest creation**.
- Identified as **Michael the Archangel** in his pre-human existence.
- The incarnation Jesus became a perfect human, not God in the flesh. (Model) Divinity was set aside when he came to earth.
- Jesus died on a **stake**, not a cross.
- His resurrection was **spiritual**, not bodily. His body was dissolved of by God.
- He is not the object of worship

### Response

- Jesus is fully God and fully man.
- Eternal, uncreated, and equal with the Father.
- All things were created by Him and for Him.
- He is the Creator, not part of creation.
- Jesus took on human nature w/o ceasing to be God.
- Jesus died on a cross as a substitutionary sacrifice, fully satisfying God justice.

- Nothing needs to be added to Christ's work.
- Jesus was physically and bodily raised. The same body that died was glorified.
- The resurrection is central to the gospel.
- Jesus reigns as exalted Lord. Every knee will bow to Him as Lord.
- Jesus is the only mediator for all believers.

Colossians 2:8, 9 See to it that no one takes you captive through philosophy and empty deception, according to the tradition of men, according to the elementary principles of the world, rather than according to Christ. For in Him all the fullness of Deity dwells in bodily form.

John 1:14 And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory, glory as of the only begotten from the Father, full of grace and truth.

### **The Bible**

- Use their own translation: **New World Translation (NWT)**.
- Believe the Bible is God's Word but interpret it **exclusively through the Watchtower Society**. The governing body in New York is the final authority on doctrine. Bible can only be understood through the Watchtower leadership. Disagreement with official leadership is viewed as rebellion against God. The Watchtower org is the faithful and sensible slave described in Matt. 24:45.
- Concerns: The NWT has theologically driven translation choices, especial about: The deity of Christ, Salvation, The Holy Spirit. It was produced without transparency and translators lacked credentials in biblical languages. The underlying determination for translating was JW doctrine not original languages. NWT John 1:1, In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was a god.

### **Response**

- Believe the Bible is the fully inspired, authoritative, and sufficient Word of God.
- Use translations derived from accepted Hebrew and Greek texts.
- Priest of Believers, meaning every Christian can read and understand Scripture und the H.S.
- Biblical doctrine does not change, though understanding may grow.

All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, for training in righteousness.

### **Holy Spirit**

- Not a person. Does not have personal attributes such as will, emotions or personhood
- Viewed as God's **active force** or power, similar to electricity.

### **Response**

- The HS is the third person of the Trinity, fully God and co-equal with the Father and the Son.
- Affirm the HS full deity and personal role in salvation and the life of the church.
- The HS indwells believers, convicts of sin, regenerates, sanctifies, and empowers Christians
- The HS is personal, possessing intellect and will.

2 Timothy 1:14 Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.

## Salvation

- Salvation is not assured in this life. It is a future hope dependent on:
  - Faith in Jesus' ransom sacrifice
  - Obedience to Jehovah
  - Loyalty to the Watchtower organization
  - Active participation in JW work (Faithful endurance to the end)
- Reject salvation by **grace alone**.
- Salvation can be lost by disobedience or rejection of Watchtower authority.
- Salvation is a process not a completed act
- Ultimately rejects grace alone, faith alone, in Christ alone.

## Response

- Salvation is a **completed work** accomplished by Christ.
- Received **by grace alone, through faith alone**, in Christ alone.
- Not based on works, church membership, or obedience as a requirement.
- Good works are the **result** of salvation, not the cause.
- Salvation is a **gift**, not a reward.
- Jesus is **fully God and fully man**.
- His death **fully satisfied** God's justice.
- His resurrection was **bodily and physical**.
- He alone saves; nothing can be added to His work.

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### Jesus' Death as a Ransom Sacrifice (Jehovah's Witnesses)

- Teaches that Jesus' death was a **corresponding ransom** that paid the exact price for what Adam lost—perfect human life.
- Emphasizes **release from Adamic sin and death**, restoring the possibility of everlasting life.
- Views Jesus' death primarily as a **legal exchange**, not as bearing God's wrath.
- Does **not** include penal substitution; Jesus does not take punishment in the sinner's place.
- Salvation is applied through faith **combined with obedience** and continued loyalty to Jehovah and the organization.

### Jesus' Death as a Substitutionary Sacrifice (Evangelical Baptists)

- Teaches **penal substitution**: Jesus died **in the place of sinners**, bearing the penalty for sin.
- Emphasizes satisfaction of **God's justice and wrath** against sin.
- Holds that Christ's righteousness is **credited (imputed)** to believers.
- Salvation is received by **grace alone through faith alone**, not by works.
- Christ's sacrifice is complete and sufficient once for all.

Propitiation – Turning away of anger by the offering of a gift. Romans 3:25 whom God displayed publicly as a propitiation in His blood through faith. This was to demonstrate His righteousness, because in the forbearance of God he passed over the sins previously committed. Hebrews 2:17 Therefore, He (Jesus) had to be made like His brethren in all things, so that He might become a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people. 1 John 4:10 In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.

Romans 3:23, Romans 6:23, Romans 5:8, Romans 10:9 Romans 10:13, Romans 8:1, Ephesians 2:8,9

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## **Heaven, The Afterlife, and End Times (Eschatology)**

- Only **144,000** people will go to heaven and rule with Christ.
- The majority of faithful JWs hope to live **forever on a restored earth**.

JW teach **two groups of saved people**:

1. **The 144,000**
  - A small group who go to heaven.
  - Rule with Christ.
  - Only they are “born again.”
  - Only they partake of communion.
  - Jesus mediates for only this group.
2. **The “Great Crowd”**
  - The vast majority of JWs.
  - Live forever on a restored earth.
  - Not born again.

- The soul is **not immortal**; the dead are unconscious.
- Hell is not a place of torment; it is the **common grave**.
- The wicked will be **annihilated**, not eternally punished.
- Jehovah’s Witnesses will survive into God’s earthly kingdom.
- Armageddon will soon destroy all non-Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- We are currently living in the “last days.”
- Believe Jesus began ruling invisibly in **1914**.
- Armageddon will destroy the earth.
- Christ and the 144,000 rule.
- Survivors of Armageddon and resurrected unbelievers are gradually perfected.
- Earth will be paradise restored for the faithful.
- No Hell, the wicked are annihilated (cease to exist).

They base this on calculations from Daniel's prophecy of "seven times" (2,520 years), which they calculate ended in 1914, signifying the end of "the appointed times of the nations" and Christ's enthronement, despite his presence being invisible.

**Key reasons for their belief in 1914:**

- **End of "Gentile Times"**: They believe the 2,520-year period, starting from the destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C (a date derived from biblical chronology), ended in 1914, signifying that human rule over the earth was over.
- **Establishment of God's Kingdom**: In 1914, Jesus Christ was installed as King of God's heavenly kingdom, taking control from Satan.
- God's kingdom is a literal government in heaven, which will destroy all human government at Armageddon. Only JW will survive Armageddon.
- **Start of "The Last Days"**: The events of 1914 ushered in the final period of this wicked system, characterized by "wars, famines, earthquakes, [and] pestilences," which they see as fulfilling prophecies in Matthew 24 and Revelation 6.
- Judgement unfolds over time, not in a single event.
- **Invisibility of Christ's Presence**: Rather than a physical return, they believe Jesus' "presence" (Greek: parousia) began invisibly in 1914, marked by these world events.

## Response

- God's Kingdom is **already present** through Christ and **not yet fully realized**.
- Jesus reigns now at the right hand of the Father.
- The Kingdom will be consummated at Christ's **visible return**.
- Salvation is not tied to membership in one organization.
- Christ's return will be **visible, bodily, and unmistakable**. No secret or invisible return.
- Judgment is based on one's relationship to Christ, not group affiliation.
- God's justice and mercy are both displayed.
- Believers are glorified at Christ's return.
- No second chance after death.
- Bodily resurrection for all.
- Believers are raised to eternal life.
- Unbelievers are raised to judgment.
- Judgment is final and decisive.
- All believers dwell eternally with God.
- New heaven and new earth are united.
- God dwells with His people forever.
- Hell is real and eternal.
- Separation from God is conscious and just.
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