



RELIGIONS AND CULTS OF THE WORLD

WEEK 1 – WHO ARE THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES?

- There are approximately _____ million Jehovah’s witnesses worldwide.
- Jehovah is a misunderstood interpretation of the LORD’s _____: YHWH (יהוה).
 - The consonants from YHWH + the vowels from Adonai = Yahowah -> Jehovah
- Jehovah’s Witnesses present themselves as the _____ true representatives of the Bible.
 - They describe their witnessing strategy as _____ studies, but the focus is more so on the publications of their organization: The Watchtower.
 - They _____ phrases and questions such as “What does the Bible really teach?”
 - _____ the similarity between this and “Has God really said?” (Genesis 3:1).
- They _____ in Kingdom Halls or Assembly Halls which avoid any use of symbols.

THE HISTORY OF JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

- Jehovah’s Witnesses were _____ by Charles Taze Russell.
 - He was born in 1852 and _____ a Bible study in 1870, and they called themselves the “Bible Students”.
 - He denied the doctrine of the _____.
 - He denied the reality of _____.
 - He predicted the return of _____ to be in 1874.
 - He was _____ for financial scandal and fraud.
 - Under oath, he admitted to not knowing the _____ language, although he claimed to and taught as if he did.

- He placed the authority of his own writings above the authority of the _____.
- “If you’ve read my books, and stop and then just read the Bible itself (putting my books aside), you’ll fall into darkness within two years.” Watchtower Reprints 298-299. Sept 15, 1910.
- The successor of C.T. Russell after his _____ in 1916 was Joseph Rutherford.
 - Rutherford rebranded Russell’s publications under the _____ “Watchtower”.
 - The formerly called Bible Students become _____ as Jehovah’s Witnesses.
- In 1950, the New World Translation of the _____ Testament is completed.
- In 1961, the New World Translation of the _____ Bible is published.
- There have been multiple revisions that further _____ verses to better suit JW doctrines the most famous being John 1:1.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT GOD

- They reject the doctrine of the _____.
- They are unitarians and believe God the Father should be called _____.
- They reject the deity of the _____.
- They reject the deity of the _____.
- They _____ a false Christ.
 - They _____ Jesus is a god who was created.
 - They believe Jesus and Michael the archangel are the _____ person.
 - They claim Jesus died on a _____ instead of a cross.
 - They believe Jesus was only resurrected in _____ only.
- They understand the Holy Spirit to be a _____ not a person.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT SALVATION

- They do not believe or practice in any of the _____ Solas even though they may claim to adhere to all of them.

- They believe that _____ in Jesus must be supplemented by good works. However, they would say that salvation cannot be earned.

“Salvation requires more than believing **in** Jesus as Savior” (emphasis added) Source Article: “Is Belief in Jesus Enough for Salvation?” JW.org

- They _____ adhere to the teachings of the Watchtower organization.
- They believe that salvation can be _____.

WHAT THEY BELIEVE ABOUT END TIMES

- Christ presence (aka: the invisible return) _____ in 1874. (Watchtower Magazine January 1955)
- Jesus’ _____ began in 1914.
- Only 144,000 will go to _____. This group was considered to be completed in 1935 but was reopened in 2007.
- The rest will one day be resurrected on earth which will _____ a paradise.
- They believe that _____ will cease to exist, though some will be resurrected for a second chance.
- They have many _____ prophetic predictions as individuals and as an organization.
 - 1914 was supposed to be the literal, visible return of Christ. They refused to acknowledge they were wrong and changed it to the invisible return which is still believed.
 - The end of WWI would bring the rapture.
 - 1925 was going to usher in Jesus Christ reigning from Jerusalem.
 - 1975 was the most consequential prediction of Christ’s literal reign with the slogan “stay alive till 75”. Some Jehovah’s Witnesses sold everything they owned in preparation for it, and many left the Jehovah’s Witnesses after nothing happened.
 - Armageddon would come before the 21st century.

OTHER BELIEFS OF THE JEHOVAH’S WITNESSES

- Blood transfusions are considered to be _____.
- _____ affiliations such as pledging allegiance are sinful and a form of false worship.
- They do not celebrate holidays or birthdays which are seen as being entirely _____.
- They do not participate in public _____.
- They are pacifists in times of _____.

- They previously did not allow _____, but that was changed in 2023.
- They hold an _____ memorial service of which only the 144,000 may partake.
- _____ Jehovah's Witnesses are shunned, disfellowshipped, and removed.

HOW WE CAN BE TRUE WITNESSES OF GOD

- Because some of their doctrines have _____ (though they would deny it), do not assume they believe and practice every past and present JW belief.
- _____ the Bible
 - Go beyond verse study and understand the _____.
 - You do not need to have the answer to every question or attack they have in order to share the _____ with them.
- Share the assurance and lasting _____ of salvation.
- Know that they preach a different _____ and a different Gospel.
- Take advantage of opportunities to knock on their doors like the Easter _____.
- _____ for their salvation just as someone prayed for you to be saved.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*. Bethany House Publishers, 2003.
- Bodie Hodge and Roger Patterson, *World Religions and Cults*. Master Books Publishing, 2023.
- JW.org (the Jehovah's Witness website)

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES AND NORWEGIAN GOVERNEMENT

Norwegian Government:

September 2022, subsidies and exemptions are revoked by the Norwegian government.

JW: Response

We are writing to you concerning the ongoing legal case that will be heard by the Borgarting Court of Appeal in February 2024 regarding the validity of administrative decisions based on Jehovah's Witnesses' religious teaching about limiting contact with a person who has been removed from the congregation or who has voluntarily withdrawn. We would like to inform you about a recent, worldwide adjustment in our religious practice in this area.

Summary:

- Removal as a last resort
- Elder will re-meet (instead of once) with them to encourage repentance
- It will be rarer for a minor to be removed from congregation
- Parents will still care for their children
- Removed congregants may be invited by members to return
- Removed congregants may be greeted at a meeting.

(All found in their August 2024 Watchtower Magazine)

“Christians can use their Bible-trained conscience when deciding whether to invite a person who has been removed from the congregation to a meeting or to welcome the individual to the meeting with a simple greeting” (August 2024 Watchtower Magazine p30)

JW Conclusion:

Based on the above, we hereby request that you reconsider your decision of September 30, 2022, in the appeal case regarding the denial of state subsidies for 2022, as well as the decisions of the County Governor on January 27, 2022, December 22, 2022, November 7, 2023, and June 18, 2024, regarding Jehovah's Witnesses' right to state subsidies and registration as a religious community under the Religious Communities Act. In this regard, we refer to the Public Administration Act § 35, second paragraph, cf. the first paragraph, concerning the alteration of an appeal decision.

Government Response:

March 4, 2024, Norway upholds decision to revoke JW registration as a religion with subsidies, tax exemption, and wedding officiants.

(The full Norwegian letter and English translation can be found @ <https://avoidjw.org/news/watchtowers-desperation-in-norway-chasing-state-grants/>)