

The 11 Beliefs You Should Know about Jehovah's Witnesses

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The following is a brief overview of what Jehovah's Witnesses believe, along with what the Bible really teaches, printed among the many articles and resources in the back of the [ESV Study Bible](#).

1. The divine name.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that God's one true name—the name by which he must be identified—is Jehovah.

Biblically, however, God is identified by many names, including:

- God (Hb. 'elohim; [Gen. 1:1](#)),
- God Almighty (Hb. 'El Shadday; [Gen. 17:1](#)),
- Lord (Hb. 'Adonay; [Ps. 8:1](#)), and
- Lord of hosts (Hb. yhwh tseba'ot; [1 Sam. 1:3](#)).

In NT times, Jesus referred to God as “Father” (Gk. *Patēr*; [Matt. 6:9](#)), as did the apostles ([1 Cor. 1:3](#)).

2. The Trinity.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that the Trinity is unbiblical because the word is not in the Bible and because the Bible emphasizes that there is one God.

Biblically, while it is true that there is only one God ([Isa. 44:6](#); [45:18](#); [46:9](#); [John 5:44](#); [1 Cor. 8:4](#); [James 2:19](#)), it is also true that three persons are called God in Scripture:

- the Father ([1 Pet. 1:2](#)),
- Jesus ([John 20:28](#); [Heb. 1:8](#)), and
- the Holy Spirit ([Acts 5:3-4](#)).

Each of these three possesses the attributes of deity—including

- omnipresence ([Ps. 139:7](#); [Jer. 23:23-24](#); [Matt. 28:20](#)),
- omniscience ([Ps. 147:5](#); [John 16:30](#); [1 Cor. 2:10-11](#)),
- omnipotence ([Jer. 32:17](#); [John 2:1-11](#); [Rom. 15:19](#)), and

- eternality ([Ps. 90:2](#); [Heb. 9:14](#); [Rev. 22:13](#)).

Still further, each of the three is involved in doing the works of deity—such as creating the universe:

- the Father ([Gen. 1:1](#); [Ps. 102:25](#)),
- the Son ([John 1:3](#); [Col. 1:16](#); [Heb. 1:2](#)), and
- the Holy Spirit ([Gen. 1:2](#); [Job 33:4](#); [Ps. 104:30](#)).

The Bible indicates that there is three-in-oneness in the godhead ([Matt. 28:19](#); cf. [2 Cor. 13:14](#)).

Thus doctrinal support for the Trinity is compellingly strong.

3. Jesus Christ.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was created by Jehovah as the archangel Michael before the physical world existed, and is a lesser, though mighty, god.

Biblically, however, Jesus is eternally God ([John 1:1](#); [8:58](#); cf. [Ex. 3:14](#)) and has the exact same divine nature as the Father ([John 5:18](#); [10:30](#); [Heb. 1:3](#)).

Indeed, a comparison of the OT and NT equates Jesus with Jehovah (compare [Isa. 43:11](#) with [Titus 2:13](#); [Isa. 44:24](#) with [Col. 1:16](#); [Isa. 6:1-5](#) with [John 12:41](#)).

Jesus himself created the angels ([Col. 1:16](#); cf. [John 1:3](#); [Heb. 1:2, 10](#)) and is worshiped by them ([Heb. 1:6](#)).

4. The incarnation.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that when Jesus was born on earth, he was a mere human and not God in human flesh.

This violates the biblical teaching that in the incarnate Jesus, “the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily” ([Col. 2:9](#); cf. [Phil. 2:6-7](#)).

The word for “fullness” (Gk. *plērōma*) carries the idea of the sum total. “Deity” (Gk. *theotēs*) refers to the nature, being, and attributes of God.

Therefore, the incarnate Jesus was the sum total of the nature, being, and attributes of God in bodily form.

Indeed, Jesus was Immanuel, or “God with us” ([Matt. 1:23](#); cf. [Isa. 7:14](#); [John 1:1, 14, 18; 10:30; 14:9-10](#)).

5. Resurrection.

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that Jesus was resurrected spiritually from the dead, but not physically.

Biblically, however, the resurrected Jesus asserted that he was not merely a spirit but had a flesh-and-bone body ([Luke 24:39](#); cf. [John 2:19-21](#)).

He ate food on several occasions, thereby proving that he had a genuine physical body after the resurrection ([Luke 24:30, 42-43](#); [John 21:12-13](#)).

This was confirmed by his followers who physically touched him ([Matt. 28:9](#); [John 20:17](#)).

6. The second coming.

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the second coming was an invisible, spiritual event that occurred in the year 1914.

Biblically, however, the yet-future second coming will be physical, visible ([Acts 1:9-11](#); cf. [Titus 2:13](#)), and will be accompanied by visible cosmic disturbances ([Matt. 24:29-30](#)). Every eye will see him ([Rev. 1:7](#)).

7. The Holy Spirit.

Jehovah’s Witnesses believe that the Holy Spirit is an impersonal force of God and not a distinct person.

Biblically, however, the Holy Spirit has the three primary attributes of personality:

- a mind ([Rom. 8:27](#)),
- emotions ([Eph. 4:30](#)), and
- will ([1 Cor. 12:11](#)).

Moreover, personal pronouns are used of him ([Acts 13:2](#)). Also, he does things that only a person can do, including:

- teaching ([John 14:26](#)),

- testifying ([John 15:26](#)),
- commissioning ([Acts 13:4](#)),
- issuing commands ([Acts 8:29](#)), and
- interceding ([Rom. 8:26](#)).

The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity ([Matt. 28:19](#)).

8. Salvation.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that salvation requires faith in Christ, association with God's organization (i.e., their religion), and obedience to its rules.

Biblically, however, viewing obedience to rules as a requirement for salvation nullifies the gospel ([Gal. 2:16-21](#); [Col. 2:20-23](#)). Salvation is based wholly on God's unmerited favor (grace), not on the believer's performance.

Good works are the fruit or result, not the basis, of salvation ([Eph. 2:8-10](#); [Titus 3:4-8](#)).

9. Two redeemed peoples.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe there are two peoples of God: (1) the Anointed Class (144,000) will live in heaven and rule with Christ; and (2) the "other sheep" (all other believers) will live forever on a paradise earth.

Biblically, however, a heavenly destiny awaits all who believe in Christ ([John 14:1-3](#); [17:24](#); [2 Cor. 5:1](#); [Phil. 3:20](#); [Col. 1:5](#); [1 Thess. 4:17](#); [Heb. 3:1](#)), and these same people will also dwell on the new earth ([2 Pet. 3:13](#); [Rev. 21:1-4](#)).

10. No immaterial soul.

Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe that humans have an immaterial nature. The "soul" is simply the life-force within a person. At death, that life-force leaves the body.

Biblically, however, the word "soul" is multifaceted. One key meaning of the term is man's immaterial self that consciously survives death ([Gen. 35:18](#); [Rev. 6:9-10](#)). Unbelievers are in conscious woe ([Matt. 13:42](#); [25:41, 46](#); [Luke 16:22-24](#); [Rev. 14:11](#)) while believers are in conscious bliss in heaven ([1 Cor. 2:9](#); [2 Cor. 5:6-8](#); [Phil. 1:21-23](#); [Rev. 7:17](#); [21:4](#)).

11. Hell.

Jehovah's Witnesses believe hell is not a place of eternal suffering but is rather the common grave of humankind. The wicked are annihilated—snuffed out of conscious existence forever.

Biblically, however, hell is a real place of conscious, eternal suffering ([Matt. 5:22; 25:41, 46](#); [Jude 7](#); [Rev. 14:11; 20:10, 14](#)).