



WIN Program: Witnessing in Neighborhoods

Advanced Class on Jehovah's Witnesses

Week One: The History of Jehovah's Witnesses

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Jehovah's Witnesses History

The Jehovah's Witnesses was begun by Charles Taze Russell in 1872. He was born on February 16, 1852, the son of Joseph L. and Anna Eliza Russell. He had great difficulty in dealing with the doctrine of eternal hell fire and in his studies came to deny not only eternal punishment, but also the [Trinity](#), and the [deity of Christ](#) and the [Holy Spirit](#). When Russell was 18, he organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1879 he sought to popularize his aberrant ideas on doctrine. He co-published *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour and by 1884 Russell controlled the publication and renamed it *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). The first edition of The Watchtower magazine was only 6,000 copies each month. Today the Witnesses' publishing complex in Brooklyn, New York, churns out 100,000 books and 800,000 copies of its two magazines--daily!

Russell claimed that the Bible could be only understood according to his interpretations. A dangerous arrangement since he controlled what was written in the Watchtower magazine. This kind of assertion is typical among leaders of cult religions.

After the death of Russell on Oct. 31, 1916, a Missouri lawyer named Joseph Franklin Rutherford took over the presidency of the Watch Tower Society which was known then as the International Bible Students Association. In 1931 he changed the name of the organization to "The Jehovah's Witnesses."

After Rutherford's death, Nathan Knorr took over. After Knorr, Frederick William Franz became president.

The Society was led by Mr. Henschel who died in 2003. The group has over 4 million members world wide. The Watchtower Society statistics indicate that 740 house calls are required to recruit each of the nearly 200,000 new members who join every year.

The Jehovah's Witnesses have several 'book studies' each week. The members are not required to attend, but there is a level of expectation that gently urges converts to participate. It is during these 'book studies' that the Jehovah's Witness is constantly exposed to counter Christian teachings. The average Jehovah's Witness, with his constant Watchtower indoctrination, could easily pummel the average Christian when it comes to defending his beliefs.

The Jehovah's Witnesses vehemently portray the doctrine of the Trinity as pagan in origin and that Christendom, as a whole, has bought the lie of the devil. Along with denying the Trinity is an equally strong denial of the deity of Christ, the deity of the Holy Spirit, the belief in hell, and eternal conscious punishment in hell.

Written by CARM

Jehovah's Witnesses in a Nutshell

According to Jehovah's Witness' theology, God is a single person, not a [Trinity](#), who does not know all things and is not everywhere. He first created Michael the Archangel through whom He created all "other things," including the universe, the earth, Adam and Eve, etc. This creative work took God 42,000 years. At one point, The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society taught that God ruled the universe from somewhere in the Pleiades star system. They have since modified this to say that the "Pleiades can no longer be considered the center of the universe and it would be unwise for us to try to fix God's throne as being at a particular spot in the universe."¹

Such changes and even [contradictions in teaching](#) are frequent in the Watchtower organization and when a doctrine changes, they tell their followers that the light of truth is getting brighter.

After Adam sinned, the paradise which God had created for them, was ruined. So, God instituted a system of redemption which was revealed in the Bible and would ultimately lead to the crucifixion of Jesus the messiah. But, in the meantime, God needed to have a visible, theocratic organization on earth to accurately represent Him. Throughout history, this true organization had a remnant of faithful Jehovah's Witnesses (Noah, Abraham, Moses, David, etc.) but it wasn't until the late 1800's that Charles Taze Russell formerly began what is now known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society which is run out of Brooklyn, New York. This organization claims to be the only true channel of God's truth on earth today and that it alone can properly interpret God's word since it is the angel directed, prophet of God on earth.

When it came time for the savior to be born, Michael the Archangel became a human, in the form of Jesus. Jesus grew and kept all the laws of God and never sinned. Finally, when Jesus died, it was not on a cross, but on a torture stake, where he bore the sins of mankind -- but this did not include Adam's sins. Jesus rose from the dead as a spirit, not physically (his body was dissolved and taken by God) and during his visitations to people on earth, he manifested a temporary physical body for them to see and touch. Thus began the true Christian church of Jehovah's followers.

Throughout history there have been faithful Jehovah's witnesses who have managed to keep The Truth in spite of the "demonic" doctrine of Trinitarianism that has permeated the Christian church in "Christendom." Christendom is filled with pastors who are antichrists, in churches run by Satan, and who support the earthly governments which are all of the devil. In other words, all of Christianity is false and only the Jehovah's Witness "theocratic" organization lead by several men in Brooklyn, New York, is true.

In the late 1800's, a young man of 18 years, by the name of Charles Taze Russell, organized a Bible class in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. In 1879 he sought to popularize his ideas on doctrine so he co-published *The Herald of the Morning* magazine with its founder, N. H. Barbour and by 1884 Russell controlled the publication and renamed it *The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom*, and founded Zion's Watch Tower Tract Society (now known as the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society). Russell served as the teacher and guide for the organization which taught that Jesus returned invisibly in 1914 and is now reigning in heaven. When Jesus finally returns physical to earth, which will happen at the time of the Battle of Armageddon, He will set up his earthly 1000 year kingdom. During this 1000 year period, people will be resurrected and have a second chance to receive eternal salvation by following the principles of Jehovah's Organization on earth known as the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. After the millennium, those who reject God and His organization will be annihilated; that is, they will cease to exist. The rest of the

Jehovah's Witness who have faithfully followed God's organization on earth will be saved from eternal annihilation and reside forever on Paradise earth. Heaven, however, is a place for a special group of 144,000 Jehovah's Witnesses -- the only ones who are "born again" and who alone are allowed to take communion in their annual communion service. These are the ones who have "immortal life," all other Witnesses have "everlasting life." Those with immortal life do not have resurrected bodies. They have "spirit bodies." Those on Paradise Earth have everlasting life and consists of a resurrected body that must be maintained through eating, rest, etc.

When you study with the Jehovah's Witness, you agree to attend five meetings a week where you are taught from Watchtower literature. You cannot be baptized until you have studied their material for at least six months and have answered numerous questions before a panel of elders. Men are not supposed have long hair or wear beards and women are to dress in modest apparel. They refuse to vote, salute the flag, sing the "Star Spangled Banner, celebrate birthdays or Christmas, won't take blood transfusions, and they can't join the armed forces. A schedule of door-to-door canvassing is required where you distribute the Watchtower literature, acquire donations, and forward all monies to the headquarters in Brooklyn, New York.

If you ever leave the Jehovah's Witness organization, you are considered an apostate and are to be shunned.

1. Watchtower 11/15/53, page. 703.

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