

Christianity, Cult's and Religions – A comparative Look at the World we live in.

During this study, we'll look at 8 distinctive areas that separate and define each of 20 different religions or cults that exist in the world today. This is not to be considered an exhaustive study nor is it to be considered inclusive of all the world's religions or cults. But it is only an overview of some of the major influences in the world today. There are many more sub-cultures and "sects" of each of these that we will not have the time to discuss. Therefore let me encourage each of you to determine to investigate and learn for yourselves what those influences are and how they may affect you and your personal Christian belief system and Christian walk with God.

Jehovah's Witness:

Founder: Charles Taze Russell (1852-1916); later Joseph Rutherford (1869-1942)

Date: 1879

Location: Headquarters – Brooklyn, New York

Followers: Jehovah's Witnesses

Key Writings: The Watch Tower Publications; the New World Translation of the Bible only; *"Reasoning from the Scriptures"*; *"What Does the Bible Really Teach?"* 2 Tim 3:16; Heb 4:12; 2 Peter 1:20-21

Who is God?: One-person God, called Jehovah. No trinity. Jesus is not part of God. Romans 1:18-20;

Who is Jesus?: Jesus is the first thing the Jehovah created. Jesus is not God. Thus, when Jesus said, "I and the Father are one," he was speaking, not of a mysterious Trinity, but of a wonderful unity—the closest bond possible between two persons. Before he lived on earth, he was Michael, the Archangel. Jehovah made the universe through him. On Earth he was a man who lived a perfect life. After dying on a stake (not at cross), he was resurrected as a spirit; his body was destroyed. Jesus is not coming again; he "returned" invincibly in 1914 in spirit. Very soon, he and the angels will destroy all non-Jehovah's Witness. John 10:30; 17:11;

Who is the Holy Spirit?: The Holy Spirit is impersonal. Not God, but rather an invisible, active force from Jehovah. 2 Tim 1:14; Matt 1:18; John 14:26;

How to be Saved: You must be baptized as a Jehovah's Witness. Most followers must earn everlasting life on earth by door-to-door work. Salvation in heaven is limited to 144,000 "anointed ones". This number is already reached. Romans 10:13-15, 17; John 3:16

What happens after Death?: The 144,000 live as spirits in heaven. The rest of the righteous, the "great crowd" live on earth, and must obey God perfectly for 1,000 years or be annihilated. Jehovah's Witnesses are not Protestants for the same reason that they are not Catholics—they recognize certain teachings of those

religions as unscriptural. For example, they say the Bible does not teach that God — the very personification of love— tortures people forever in a fiery hell. Nor does it teach that humans have an immortal soul or that Christians should meddle in politics. *John 14:1-6*

Other facts, beliefs, and practices:

1. They are also known as the International Bible students Association.
2. They meet in Kingdom Halls instead of churches.
3. Active members are encouraged to distribute literature door-to-door.
4. Once a year, the Lord's Evening Meal (communion), only the "anointed ones" can partake.
5. They do not observe holidays or birthdays.
6. Forbidden to vote, salute the flag, work in the military or accept blood transfusion.