

# CULTS

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Lesson 1

Jehovah's Witnesses

Beginning with this lesson, we are embarking on what is perhaps one of the greatest challenges to the Church today, confronting the cults and world religions that would rob our friends, co-workers and loved ones of the truth and keep from them the great gift of salvation God has to offer them through Christ.

As indicated in the introduction to this study, my primary reference for this study is a great book titled "The Kingdom of the Cults" by Walter Martin (Author) and Ravi Zacharias (Editor). There are also some excellent study aids available at Rose Publishing on the Web, as well as numerous others sources easily available to you via the internet. One from Rose that you may find particularly useful is entitled "Christianity and Jehovah's Witnesses Comparison Chart".

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***So let's begin, first with a quick look at what Christ has to say about cults etc., springing up within and around the church and then this week we'll look at the Jehovah's Witnesses.***

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1. Read the following verses and note why each would apply to our study?
  - a. Matthew 7:15-23
  - b. Matthew 24:5
  - c. 1 John 2:19
  - d. 2 Corinthians 11:13-15
  
2. Write a brief definition for a cult in the space below.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
3. Who are the following people?
  - a. Charles T. Russell and J.F. Rutherford
    - i. \_\_\_\_\_
  - b. Mary Baker Eddy
  
  
  - c. Joseph Smith and Brigham Young
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
4. Who founded the Jehovah's Witnesses, and when did they take that name?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
5. What is the "Watchtower", how many copies per month are published and in how many countries?

6. How are they organized? In the space below define the roles of the following:

- a. New Member
- b. Publisher
- c. Pioneer
- d. Congregation
- e. Kingdom Hall
- f. Overseer or Elder
- g. Presiding Overseer
- h. Service Overseer
- i. Ministerial Servants
- j. Circuits
- k. Circuit Overseer
- l. Districts
- m. District Overseer
- n. Branches
- o. Zones
- p. Headquarters

7. What one holiday or special religious day do they celebrate?

8. What's their doctrinal position on celebrating Christmas, Easter, the Sabbath, and Sunday Worship?

9. When do they meet, how many times during the week?

10. Who is the authority of the church for all spiritual matters including Bible interpretation and teaching?

11. What is their belief about the Bible as The Word of God?
12. What is their teaching about Christ?
13. What do they teach about the doctrine of the Holy Trinity?
14. What do they teach about life after death?
15. Related to the previous question, what do they teach about the wicked and eternal torment in hell?
16. What is their position on the doctrine of salvation by grace?
17. How is one "saved" in the Jehovah's Witness?
18. What do they believe about the 144,000 witnesses referenced in Revelation 7:4-8 and 14:1-3?
19. What do they believe about Armageddon and Christendom?

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As you can see from our first study it will be difficult to limit ourselves to just one study a week, but we'll try. You will begin to notice common themes running through these false religions. You will quickly see each follows the thoughts, interpretations and writing of a person or persons as the ultimate authority, not the Bible. You'll see works as a central figure along with the concept of earning your way up levels etc., and you'll see a common theme that man can become God, or like God, and so on.

But most importantly you will notice how subtle the lies and false teachings are. They will bend the truth just enough so that it perverts sound Bible doctrine, but to the untrained will sound like, and look like, the genuine article.

As Walter Martin wrote in his book "we must be able to recognize and reject false teaching." To do means we must know the truth – let's cling to Bible as God's Holy and inerrant word – that will be our source of truth as we examine these false religions masquerading as followers of Christ.

May God strengthen us in the days ahead with wisdom so that we may discern the truth and lead others to Him and away from these false teachers and prophets.

Thanks for studying with us.

In Christ,

**Wes**

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