

Jehovah's Witnesses —Frequently Asked Questions



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WHO ARE JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

Jehovah's Witnesses are a well-known international and multiethnic religion active in 240 lands. They believe the Bible to be the inspired Word of God, and regard it as a reliable guide for living. They try to follow Jesus' teachings by living in peace with their fellow man. By following Bible principles, they endeavor to become worthwhile members of the community.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses—Who Are They?*



THE NAME JEHOVAH

Jehovah is the personal name of the God of the Bible, the Creator of all things. (Psalm 83:18) This name appears some 7,000 times in the original text of the Bible. The rendering “Jehovah” is the most widely used form in English of the Hebrew original.



WHAT IS THE MAIN MESSAGE OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

It is the “good news” about the Kingdom of God in the Bible. (Matthew 6:10; 24:14) The Witnesses believe that God's Kingdom will transform the earth into a paradise where people will live forever in peace. They await the fulfillment of the words: “[God] will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore.” (Revelation 21:4).—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Their Public Ministry*.

WHY DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES SHARE THEIR MESSAGE?

Jehovah's Witnesses share the good news from the Bible because they care about people. They personally benefit from their study of the Bible and wish to pass on to others what they have learned. They respect every individual's right to accept or decline the Witnesses' message. The time-honored practice of publicly and peacefully sharing one's faith is a legally recognized “right to ‘freedom to manifest [one's] religion or belief’.” (*Kokkinakis v. Greece*, European Court of Human Rights [1993]).—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Their Public Ministry*.

DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES RESPECT OTHERS' BELIEFS?

Yes. Jehovah's Witnesses recognize and respect that people have their own beliefs and opinions. (Matthew 7:12) The decision to adopt or change a religion or to not belong to any religion is up to each individual. They do not pressure people to listen. The methods Witnesses use to conduct their ministry avoid confrontation and do not disrupt public order.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Their Public Ministry*.

HOW DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES FUND THEIR ACTIVITIES?

The activities of Jehovah's Witnesses are supported by voluntary donations. (2 Corinthians 9:7) No collections are taken during religious services, nor do they pay tithes or dues. Individuals may donate anonymously in contribution boxes at meeting places or electronically on the official website of Jehovah's Witnesses, jw.org®. Voluntary donations support production of Bible-based publications, construction and maintenance of meeting places, disaster relief work, and other activities directly related to their religious work. (Matthew 10:8) In harmony with the Bible principle of “equalizing” among its worshippers, they use donated funds wherever they are needed worldwide.—2 Corinthians 8:14, 15.



WHY DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES NOT GO TO WAR?

Jehovah's Witnesses apply the words of the Bible to “beat their swords into plowshares” and not to “learn war anymore.” (Isaiah 2:4) They follow Jesus' command: “You must love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39) They are grateful when governments provide a genuine alternative civilian service program that allows them to serve their community in a way that does not conflict with their Bible-based conscience. Each individual decides for himself the types of service he can personally perform in good conscience.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Alternative Civilian Service*.

HOW DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES COOPERATE WITH CIVIL AUTHORITIES?

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that it is their responsibility before God to respect the authorities and to fully cooperate with them. They follow the Scriptural direction to “be obedient to governments and authorities.” (Titus 3:1) Officials recognize the Witnesses as peaceful, honest, law-abiding citizens who conscientiously pay their taxes and fulfill their civil obligations. The Witnesses appreciate the challenges public servants face in trying to ensure the well-being of their citizens. They do not take part in separatist movements, violent protests, or civil unrest. They pose no threat to the authority of any government or to public security.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Political Neutrality*.



HOW DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES VIEW MEDICAL TREATMENT AND THE USE OF BLOOD?

Jehovah's Witnesses cherish and deeply respect the gift of life and collaborate with health-care providers to obtain the best medical care available. They consider Bible principles when making choices that could affect their physical, mental, and emotional health. Some patients may refuse blood-based treatments for a variety of reasons. Jehovah's Witnesses base their position on the Bible's command to "keep abstaining . . . from blood." (Acts 15:29) They believe that this prohibition applies to transfusing blood or its major components. They appreciate and benefit from the advancements that have been made in the medical field to provide treatment without the use of blood.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Health Care*.

ARE THERE WOMEN LEADERS AMONG JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES?

The Bible teaches that men and women are of equal value to God. All of Jehovah's Witnesses, male and female, are ordained ministers. Women are fully involved in the public ministry, actively participate in religious services, and work as missionaries. Within the congregation structure, which is modeled after first-century Christianity, only qualified men take the lead in teaching and pastoral care.

HOW DO JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES' VIEW VARIOUS SEXUAL LIFESTYLES?

Jehovah's Witnesses acknowledge that each person has the right to choose how to live. They treat all people with respect, dignity, and decency, including those who may differ from themselves. They neither advocate for nor oppose laws involving homosexual or transgender rights. Within their community, Witnesses believe that the Bible's arrangement for marriage promotes lasting happiness and security in the family, which is the union of one man and one woman who vow fidelity to each other before God.—For more information, see *Jehovah's Witnesses and Family Life*.

