

GLOSSARY OF WORDS AND CONCEPTS

Please note that these terms are presented for educational purposes to reveal vocabulary commonly used by Jehovah's Witnesses, and do not reflect the policies or beliefs of the North American Mission Board or the Southern Baptist Convention.

- Adams, Don** He was elected sixth Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (WBTS) president in 2000, at the age of 75.
- Armageddon** Jehovah's Witnesses believe that a total world battle will take place soon. All people and institutions not affiliated with them will be destroyed. King Jesus and His heavenly host will battle with Satan and his armies. Satan will be defeated.
- Anointed class** Jehovah's Witnesses believe that only a limited number of people (144,000) will live in a spiritual heaven with King Jesus. All other faithful Jehovah's Witness believers will live on a paradise-like earth.
- Awake!** A semimonthly family magazine published by the WBTS, which features articles about human interests, religion, and practical sciences.
- Back calls** The Jehovah's Witness visitor will make return calls if a person shows even a little interest or requests more information on the initial visit. The WBTS encourages persistent visitation.
- Baptism** A candidate approved by the WBTS is totally immersed in water during a public meeting—usually a circuit assembly. Mass baptisms are also conducted and candidates may number in the hundreds at one service.
- Bethel** This is the designation given to the official headquarters of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, located at 25 Columbia Heights, Brooklyn, NY.
- Bible study** Faithful Jehovah's Witnesses stress a literal belief in the Bible and seek to engage interested people in home Bible studies.
- Blood** The soul is in the blood (see Lev. 17:11, 14). Blood is sacred because life is sacred. The only proper use of blood is sacrifice (see Lev. 11). "If animal blood is sacred, how much more is that of a human, and how much more reprehensible is cannibalism."¹
- Bloodguilt** Guilt is acquired: 1) by bloodshed, including support of a blood-guilty organization such as Babylon the Great (see Rev. 3:17); 2) by eating or drinking blood in any way (see Acts 15:20); or 3) by failing to preach the good news of the kingdom (see Acts 18:6).²
- Branch committee** This committee is appointed by the WBTS and has general oversight of the Jehovah's Witnesses congregations in an entire country or group of countries.
- Christendom** This derogatory term is used to refer to Protestant and Catholic groups, which are thought to have been established in the fourth century by the un-baptized Roman emperor, Constantine the Great.

Circuit	A group of about 20 Jehovah’s Witness congregations is known as a circuit. A circuit overseer is the supervisor of the group.
Circuit assembly	Member congregations of the circuit gather at specified times for fellowship, inspiration, and indoctrination. The sessions are usually held in a public facility. Mass baptisms of new converts are often conducted at these meetings.
Circuit overseer	This official leader of the circuit visits each congregation two or three times a year, and usually stays a week at a time.
Disfellowship	A member who is judged unfaithful is rejected by the WBTS. The suspension is usually for one year, and then the offending member is given an opportunity for reinstatement.
District overseer	This leader supervises several circuits and is responsible for conducting circuit assemblies. He spends one week in the circuit for each assembly held.
Expelling	Also referred to as excommunication or disfellowship—members maybe expelled for several reasons including: adultery, homosexuality, greed, dishonesty, drunkenness, murder, idolatry, apostasy, and divisiveness. The offending member may be received back if he or she manifests sincere repentance. ³
Faith	“To maintain a firm faith requires putting up a hard fight for it, resisting men who could plunge one into immorality, combating the works of the flesh, avoiding the snare of materialism, shunning faith-destroying philosophies and traditions of men, and above all, looking ‘intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus.’” ⁴
Fasting	“Christians are neither under command to fast nor prohibited from doing so.” ⁵
Franz, Frederick W.	He was elected fourth WBTS president in 1977. He died in 1992 at the age of 99.
Gentile times	Jehovah’s Witnesses believe this is the period (from 607 B.C. to 1914 A.D.) when Jews were in disfavor with Jehovah.
Gifts of the Spirit	Paul lists nine manifestations of the Spirit. They are not to be used for selfish profit. Speaking in tongues is a lesser gift, and is only used when someone can interpret. ⁶
Good will person	This is a person who is interested in Bible study and is a prospective member of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Those who are not interested are called goats.
Governing body	This select committee of about 15 WBTS leaders determines and establishes all doctrines and practices of the Jehovah’s Witnesses.
Great crowd or other sheep	This is the multitude of people that are faithful to Jehovah, but not selected for heavenly life. They will live in the paradise established on earth after Armageddon.
Hades	The WBTS says this refers to “the common grave of all mankind, where the dead and buried ones are unseen.” ⁷ It corresponds to Sheol.

Hell	The WBTS does not believe it is a place of torment or fire. They reject the doctrine of eternal punishment, saying all non-Jehovah's Witnesses will be annihilated at the final judgment.
Henschel, Milton G.	He was elected fifth WBTS president in December 1992, at the age of 73. He resigned in 2000.
Impalement (of Jesus)	The WBTS says the Greek term <i>stauros</i> in both the classical and <i>koine</i> Greek carries no thought of a cross made of two timbers. Instead, they believe it means only an upright stake. The idea of a two-piece cross was adopted from the pagans in the third century. ⁸
International Bible Students Association	This group supervises Jehovah's Witness ministries in Canada and England.
Kingdom Hall	This local meeting house is never pretentious and is usually limited to a seating capacity of 200. Meetings are presided over by an overseer and his five assistants.
Knorr, Nathan H.	He was born in 1905 and was elected third WBTS president in 1942. He died in 1977.
Millennium	According to Jehovah's Witnesses, this is a period of 1,000 years that follows Armageddon and consists of paradise on earth for the faithful survivors and a selected group of resurrected people.
New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures (NWT)	The NWT is the official translation of the Old and New Testaments by the WBTS. One unique and disturbing feature is that, in some cases, conventional translations are changed to fit Jehovah's Witness theology.
People's Pulpit Association	The first Jehovah's Witness president organized this movement in 1909. The name was changed to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society in 1939.
Publisher	This is the name given to faithful Jehovah's Witnesses who sell WBTS literature door-to-door and serve the WBTS as directed.
Russell, Charles Taze	He was the founder and first president of the Jehovah's Witness movement. He was born in 1852 and died in 1916. He was known for his prolific writing and powerful ego.
Rutherford, Joseph Franklin	He was born in 1869 and became the second president of the WBTS in 1917. He is responsible for the present-day organization of the WBTS. He died in 1942.
Salvation	The Jehovah's Witnesses do not preach that one must personally accept Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. They dedicate their lives to Jehovah and live the lifestyle prescribed by the WBTS. They espouse a works type of salvation.
Society, the	This term is sometimes used to describe WBTS leaders who are supposedly directed by God.
Theocracy	Jehovah's Witnesses do not have a democratic organization. They submit to the rigid control of a few leaders and believe that the entire organization is under the direct rule of Jehovah. They believe they have a theocratic ministry

to perform.

Trinity

Jehovah's Witnesses reject the Trinity. Jehovah God is alone in authority and has no equal. The Holy Spirit is not a person, but an active force of God. Jesus is a being created by Jehovah.

Watchtower

First published in 1879 and now a semimonthly magazine, Watchtower is the official theological publication of the WBTS. The unsigned articles present WBTS positions on biblical doctrines.

Watchtower publication of subjects described and explained

The WBTS issues this official compilation of all materials published since 1930.

Wine and strong drink

Alcoholic drinks are regarded as gifts from Jehovah, but must be used in moderation (see Ps. 104:14-15). Drunkenness is condemned in the Bible. Habitual drunkenness is cause for expulsion from the congregation (see 1 Cor. 5:11-13). There are also times one should not drink wine or liquor (see Lev. 10:8-11; Rom. 14:21).⁹

Year

In prophecy it "is often used in a special sense as the equivalent of 360 days (12 months of 30 days each)."¹⁰ It is also called a time and sometimes a day (see Gen. 7:11, 8:3-5).

Yearbook of Jehovah's Witnesses

Published each year, it reports the worldwide statistics and service of faithful members. Daily Bible readings and comments are also included.

¹Aid to Bible Understanding (New York: Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, 1971), 244.Ibid., 245.

³Ibid., 550.

⁴Ibid., 562.

⁵Ibid., 568.

⁶Ibid., 655-656.

⁷Ibid., 701.

⁸Ibid., 824-825.

⁹Ibid., 469, 1659.

¹⁰Ibid., 1677-1678.

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