

# The Language Barrier

## Quick Facts on Scaling the Language Barrier:

- Learn the terminology of major cult systems
- Define key words and standard doctrinal phrases
- Compare definitions with contexts
- Review the importance of defining terms
- Present a clear testimony of regenerative experience with Jesus Christ

*“The student of cultism must be prepared to scale the language barrier of terminology. Unless terms are defined when one is either speaking or reading cult theology, the semantic jungle which the cults have created will envelop him, making difficult, if not impossible, a proper contrast between the teachings of the cults and those of orthodox Christianity.”* Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*

*“Loaded language are words and phrases to produce “thought-terminating clichés” which result in a narrowing and constriction of thought processes.”* Cult Expert Stephen Martin

*(Some definitions are from the glossary of the New World Translation, 2013 ed. or other Jehovah’s Witness resources.)*

**1. The Truth:** how they refer to their faith to each other (“How long have you been in the Truth?” is asked instead of “What is your testimony?”). *From the Watchtower magazine, July 2020 Pp. 8, Par. 1: “Generally, we use it to describe our beliefs, our way of worship, and our way of life. People who are ‘in the truth’ know what the Bible teaches, and they live according to its principles. As a result, they are set free from religious falsehood and they enjoy the best life possible for imperfect humans.”*

**2. Jehovah:** the proper name of God (The Father); He alone is Almighty – is not a trinity. The name is VERY important to them and is used more than any other word, ad nauseum. They are VERY proud of it and believe they are the only ones who use it. This name is in the New World Translation over 7,000 times.

**3. Jesus:** the Son of God, first created being, that existed for eons with the Father. Not God. In heaven he is Michael the Archangel though still called Jesus. He is not to be worshipped and any Scripture reference that says Jesus was worshipped is rendered as his “receiving obeisance,” meaning he receives honor and respect but is never worship (except for Revelation 5:13, 14 which might be good for evangelism).

**4. Holy spirit:** the invisible, energizing force that God puts into action to accomplish his will. Never capitalized and not a person. Usually given the pronoun, “it,” but not always.

**5. The Good News:** the good news of the Kingdom of God and of salvation by faith in Jesus Christ. (their “gospel”)

**6. The Kingdom of God:** God’s sovereignty represented by the royal government of his Son, Christ Jesus. The Anointed will rule with Christ over a paradise earth and extend the blessings of the kingdom to all “worshippers of Jehovah.”

**7. Sovereignty:** Jehovah's right to rule that was challenged in the Garden by Satan. Witnesses must uphold it by obedience. God's right to rule will be completely vindicated after the release of Satan after the Millennial Reign.

**8. Christendom:** a derogatory word referring to counterfeit Christianity (the weeds of Jesus' parable). They are part of Babylon the Great, the "world empire of false religion" that includes non-Christian religions too.

**9. The World / Worldly People:** a pejorative used to refer to the world outside of their "theocratic" organization bubble. Those in it are called worldly. Worldly can also be used to describe a Witness that is acting like someone in "the world," such as someone who is spiritually weak (not following the rules well).

**10. Torture Stake:** the rendering of the Greek word *stauros* (in their opinion), an upright stake, such as the one on which Jesus was executed. They believe the cross to be a pagan symbol and the way Christians have it displayed and wear it is idolatry.

**11. Ransom Sacrifice:** the price Christ paid by his sacrificial death to provide the *opportunity* for release to obedient humankind from sin and death. Corresponds with Adam's perfect human life, thus balancing the scales of justice (i.e. eye for eye, tooth for tooth, life for life).

**12. The Memorial:** the annual commemoration of the Lord's Supper (on the date that corresponds to Nisan 14) and Jesus' ransom sacrifice. Unleavened bread and wine are passed, but only those with the heavenly hope partake. It is treated almost like a holiday. ("Memorial" is also used in place of the term "funeral")

**13. The Other Sheep / Great Crowd:** faithful (aka obedient) people who survived through the Great Tribulation (soon to happen!) and the Battle of Armageddon; their hope is not heaven but is instead in everlasting life on a restored paradise earth. They do not partake of the Memorial emblems. Jesus is not their mediator (though many do not actually realize this is an official teaching). They will grow to perfection during the Millennial reign of Christ and the 144,000.

**14. Little Flock / the Anointed:** those chosen for the heavenly hope, numbering 144,000 total and being gathered since Jesus' death. Their salvation is not guaranteed; they must stay faithful and obedient till the end of "this system of things." They will be co-rulers with Christ over the subjects inhabiting the earth for 1000 years. Jesus is their mediator and the New Testament (they call it the Christian Greek Scriptures) is written directly to them though the Other Sheep may benefit from it practically.

**15. The Resurrection:** usually if a Witness is talking about the resurrection, they mean the "earthly resurrection" that is to happen during the Millennial Reign of Jesus in the Paradise. The "righteous and the unrighteous" will be resurrected from the dead (they believe in soul sleep) and grow to perfection there. A "heavenly resurrection" occurs when those of the anointed die and are taken to heaven; Jesus being the first of these. It is spiritual in that Jesus and the anointed are raised a spirit body, not a physical one.

**16. Unrighteous:** people that will be resurrected from the dead into the Paradise that did not get a witness about the Kingdom before their death or follow Jehovah while alive. They will be given another chance to be taught Jehovah's "righteous standards" and to conform to them. If they do not, they will be annihilated when Satan is let loose at the end of the 1,000 years and people rebel and follow him.

**17. System of things:** the rendering of the Greek word *aion* (their opinion) when it refers to the current state of affairs or features that distinguish a certain period of time. Refers to the prevailing state of affairs in the world in general and the worldly way of life. (Dispensation, perhaps). Also “this old system.”

**18. The New System / Paradise Earth / New Earth / New World:** a restored Edenic paradise after the war of Armageddon in which the faithful Jehovah’s Witnesses with the “earthly hope” will live forever in perfection. It is the “carrot on the stick” that all Witnesses dream of and work for. Many put off marriage and/or children in “this system” so they can focus on the urgent “preaching work” with the hope to have them in the New World where world conditions are much nicer. They will not mingle with God or Jesus in the New System but will be organized and ruled over by Jesus and the 144,000 co-rulers. You can be obliterated in the New System if you rebel again.

**19. The Faithful and Discreet Slave / The Faithful Slave / Faithful Steward:** a quote from their interactive study guide, *Enjoy Life Forever*: “*Today, from his position in heaven, Jesus directs his followers on earth by means of a ‘faithful and discreet slave.’ Having received an appointment from Jesus himself, the ‘slave’ would have a certain amount of authority but would remain a slave of Christ and serve Christ’s brothers. Jehovah has always used a man or a small group of men to give direction to his people. ([Malachi 2:7](#); [Hebrews 1:1](#)) After Jesus’ death, the apostles and elders in Jerusalem took the lead. ([Acts 15:2](#)) Following that pattern, today a small group of elders—the Governing Body of Jehovah’s Witnesses—provides spiritual food and directs the preaching work. This group is ‘the faithful and discreet slave whom [Jesus] appointed.’ ([Matthew 24:45a](#))*”

**20. The Governing Body:** made up of “spirit-anointed” men (11 as of 2025, but this fluctuates) who are the “faithful slave” of Matthew 24:45-47 and have the responsibility of guiding all “true Christians” (JWs) today by overseeing the “spiritual food” and the “preaching work.” A quote from their book, *Enjoy Life Forever!* – “*All members of the Governing Body are spirit-anointed Christians, who look forward to joining Christ in his heavenly Kingdom when their life on earth is over...We receive that spiritual food through meetings, assemblies, and conventions, as well as through Bible-based literature and videos that help us to understand God’s will and to strengthen our friendship with him.*” They admit they are fallible and can err in doctrinal matters, but Jehovah’s Witnesses must still obey them since they are the “channel of communication” Jehovah is using today.

**21. The Organization:** the way Witnesses refer to the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society. It is basically the leadership (the Governing Body and the 6 committees they oversee). The term is hypnotically used more than the name of Jesus in their literature and public talks.

**22. Kingdom Hall / The Hall:** place of worship for Jehovah’s Witnesses (vs the “church” associated with Christendom), yet the group of people regularly meeting at the Kingdom Hall (usually no more than 100) is called a “congregation.” Several congregations can share one Kingdom Hall. For example, the Kingdom Hall on Colonial has 2 congregations meeting there, West and Southwest; each is independent of the other but all answer to the branch (Bethel in Warwick, NY – the world headquarters). They meet twice a week (Sunday and once mid-week) for worship and instruction, and they meet other days for organizing the door-to-door work. They do not have classrooms or Sunday school; everyone is in one main room (auditorium – not sanctuary) and all hear the same message, regardless of age. Maintained by volunteers. A strict cleaning and maintenance schedule is followed.

**23. Field Service / Service / The Ministry / The Preaching Work:** the hallmark work of Jehovah's Witness and required to be an active member. Active members are called "Publishers," not members. Records are kept of return visits, publication placements, and Bible studies and are turned in every month to an elder. There is an hourly requirement for those who choose to engage fulltime as "Pioneers." This work is considered life-saving and urgent. Typically, all congregations meet on Saturday to "go out" in service (either at the Hall or private homes) and many go out during the week as well. Everyone is divided into car groups and work a territory they have checked out. Includes door-to-door work, public witnessing using the "carts" (literature stand), business witnessing, telephone witnessing, and letter writing. (The best part is break time at a coffee shop or other fun place.)

**24. Sheol / Hades:** often translated "grave" in the NWT. It is the common grave of mankind. Not hell.

**25. Gehenna / Lake of Fire:** symbolic of total destruction and annihilation, the eternal punishment of the second death. No consciousness is present there.

**26. Undeserved kindness:** NWT rendering of the word "grace" (which clearly does not carry the same weight).

**27. Exercise faith:** NWT rendering of the word "believe," in most instances. This implies works as they say that mere belief is not enough.

**28. Declared righteous:** NWT rendering of the word "justified." Is not permanent like in Christianity.

**29. Obeisance:** NWT rendering of the word "worship" in connection to Jesus.

***"Cultists are destined to find out that the power of Christianity is not in its terminology but in the relationship of the individual to the historic Christ of revelation. The Christ of Scripture is an eternal, divine personality who cannot be dismissed by a flip of the cultist's redefinition switch, regardless of how deftly it is done. The average Christian will do well to remember the basic conflict of terminology that he is certain to encounter when dealing with cultists of practically every variety."*** Walter Martin, *The Kingdom of the Cults*