

Cults

Introduction:

I like to define a cult as a group of people gathered about a specific person or person's misinterpretation of the Bible.

We need to understand something else; cults contain many major deviations from historical Christianity, but they have a strong desire to be considered to be Christians.

There are four things most cults have in common:

1. Centralized authority
2. Us versus them complex
3. Commitment for each member to proselytize the unconverted
4. Isolationism

They fail to have correct theology according to historic Christianity in the following areas:

1. The attributes of God
2. The person of Jesus Christ
3. The nature of man
4. The requirements of atonement
5. The source of revelation

My goal in this study of the cults is two-fold: one would be that we would find out about these cults and understand their teaching.

Jehovah's Witnesses

History

Started by a man by the name of Charles Taze Russell.

Russell started the Jehovah's Witnesses in the 1870s.

Russell denied the existence of hell, said the Trinity is a doctrine of demons, and denied the deity of Christ. He did not believe that the Holy Spirit was a person but only a force. He also insisted that you could not understand the Bible unless you used his interpretation of the text.

They changed their name in 1931 to Jehovah's Witnesses based on Isaiah 43:10.

"You are my witnesses," declares the Lord, "and my servant whom I have chosen, that you may know and believe me and understand that I am he. Before me no god was formed, nor shall there be any after me."

A couple of things about them:

- Military service, patriotism, and celebrating holidays or birthdays are all considered to be a part of Satan's scheme to lead people away from God.
- Another practice they forbid is blood transfusions. The Witnesses ban blood transfusions because it might cause one to lose his salvation.
- The Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Christianity is an apostate religion that has taught false doctrines and deceived people from the start.
- In fact, the doctrines of the Jehovah's Witnesses are in diametric opposition to historic biblical Christianity.

Theology of the Jehovah's Witnesses

1. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the Trinity
2. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the deity of Christ
3. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the bodily resurrection of Christ
4. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the personality of the Holy Spirit and his deity
5. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny hell

6. The Jehovah's Witnesses deny the gospel
7. The Jehovah's Witnesses have made many false prophecies
8. The Jehovah's Witnesses have their own translation of the Bible
9. The Jehovah's Witnesses teach soul sleep

The Trinity

Every major cult attacks the Trinity and the Jehovah's Witnesses are the most active in doing this. They hate the idea of the Trinity and believe it is Satanic.

Genesis 1:26

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth."

Deuteronomy 6:4

Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one

This is their proof-text, the problem is the word one, this Hebrew word does not denote absolute unity, but in many places in the Old Testament it denotes composite unity.

Genesis 2:24

Therefore a man shall leave his father and his mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.

This does not mean that a man and wife become one person, but they become one in the unity of substance and are considered one in the eyes of God.

John 1:18

No one has ever seen God; the only God, who is at the Father's side, he has made him known.

Abraham was speaking to Jesus and calls him God.

John 14:16

And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever,

See the word *another*- the Greek word used means "another of the same kind". In other words, if Christ is God, then the Spirit is God.

Matthew 28:19

Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

The Deity of Christ

Jehovah's Witnesses believe that Jesus was the first created being, in other words, he was a **creature of God**. He is known as Michael the archangel mentioned in the Bible. Michael the angel was changed into the mortal **Jesus** and when Jesus rose from the dead, **not bodily** but in the spirit, he was changed into the new and improved Michael the angel.

The witnesses also teach that Jesus earned his immortality by being **faithful on earth**.

Understand that all cults deny the equality of Jesus Christ with God the Father. **That is key to cults**. Who is Jesus?

What does the Bible say about Jesus?

God with **us**

Isaiah 9:6

*For to us a child is born,
to us a son is given;
and the government shall be upon his shoulder,
and his name shall be called
Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God,
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace*

Micah 5:2

*But you, O Bethlehem Ephrathah,
who are too little to be among the clans of Judah,
from you shall come forth for me
one who is to be ruler in Israel,
whose coming forth is from of old,
from ancient days.*

John 1:1

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

This is a key text for the Jehovah's witnesses—let me explain.

The key word is word. Remember John is writing to both Jewish and Greek people; both would see this and say “wow”.

To the Jewish people- to the Jews the word would mean “the creative power that brought the universe and everything in it into existence”.

To the Greeks- the word was the mind of God controlling the world and everything in it.

Beginning- John is saying that Jesus is not a created being, in fact he was already there when everything was created.

Word was with God- it means “an intimate connection between Jesus and God”.

The word was God- Jesus was the same in character and quality and essence and being as God.

Jesus was preexistent.

Salvation

The Jehovah's Witnesses believe you must earn your own salvation.

They believe there are three different classes of saved individuals.

1. The 144,000
2. The second group
3. The third group are good people who have led a good life and will have an opportunity to earn salvation during the millennium.

They have their own Bible- called the **New World Translation of the Bible**

This New World Translation came out in the 1950s

Colossians 1:17

And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.

They insert other

Matthew 25:46

“And these will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”

Cutting off

Acts 20:28

Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood.

The blood of His own Son.

Colossians 2:9

For in him the whole fullness of deity dwells bodily,

Divine quality