

## Glossary: Jehovah's Witnesses worldview traditions

This glossary is also available on our website. We also have an accompanying in-depth subject knowledge essay, available both on our website and for download.

[In-depth subject knowledge essay](#)

[Glossary](#)

### Assembly Halls

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Assembly Hall

**DEFINITION:** Larger than a kingdom hall and are used for meetings of around 20 congregations. Assembly Halls, which typically have a built-in baptismal pool, are also used for baptisms. There is no set age at which baptisms occur – generally when the young person is considered competent enough to make the decision. This is often around the mid teens.

### Elders

**DEFINITION:** Individual Jehovah's Witness congregations are led by elders, who are responsible for their governance and spiritual oversight, but without special titles, and without being paid for their work. Elders are always men. Elders are assisted by ministerial servants.

### Jehovah's Witnesses

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Jehovahs Witnesses,

A millennial, restorationist and non-trinitarian Christian movement with roots in 19th century America. They believe in God, whom they refer to as Jehovah, and the complete Bible (the Old and New Testaments which they call the 'Hebrew-Aramaic Scriptures' and the 'Christian Greek Scriptures') as his 'inspired message'. Jesus is believed to be the Son of God and the saviour, but not part of a Trinity. The holy spirit is seen as God's active force for accomplishing his will. The holy spirit is hence another aspect of the universal God and not a separate entity. The name, Jehovah's Witnesses, adopted in 1931, is said to identify both their God and their mission referring to Isaiah 43:10 where God says 'you are my witnesses'.

### Kingdom Hall

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Kingdom Halls

Jehovah's Witnesses meet together in purpose-built buildings called Kingdom Halls. All meetings which take place in Kingdom Halls are open to the public. Congregational life

is of the utmost importance to Jehovah's Witnesses. Families stay together for worship and meetings, although families with very small children may make use of a 'mother and baby room', which typically has glass panels and a sound system so they can follow the service. Children do not attend 'Sunday school' type meetings in a separate room, unlike some other Christian groups.

The Kingdom Hall is not considered a sacred building, and it has no religious symbols.

## **Memorial of Christ's Death**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Lord's Evening Meal

This is an annual event and the most important date in the Jehovah's Witness calendar as the only religious festival celebrated. The service takes place after sunset on the 14th day of the Hebrew month of Nisan, around the time of the Jewish Passover. Nisan 14 is in March or April, on the first full moon after the spring equinox.

It is the commemoration of Jesus' death and ransom sacrifice on behalf of humankind. It is comparable to the Eucharist or Holy Communion in other denominations. Unleavened bread and red wine are passed around the congregation in remembrance of Jesus' last meal with his disciples. The bread and wine are called 'emblems' by Jehovah's Witnesses to signify their symbolism.

Consumption of the emblems is reserved for the chosen 144,000 who, it is believed, will live with Jesus in heaven.

## **Ministerial Servants**

**DEFINITION:** Ministerial servants assist Elders in the congregation. They fulfil practical tasks such as welcoming attendees to services, handing out literature, and operating the sound system, in order for the elders to be able to focus on their teaching and shepherding duties

## **New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** NWT

**DEFINITION:** The translation of the Bible used by Jehovah's Witnesses. The names of its compilers remain anonymous, in the belief that credit should only be given to Jehovah himself. It is distributed worldwide in more than 150 languages without charge and is also available online.

## **Publishers**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Publisher

**DEFINITION:** Jehovah's Witnesses who are engaged in 'witnessing' for Jehovah and they are asked to report their preaching activity to their local congregation each month. The name derives from Isaiah 52:7, which mentions "publishing salvation".

## **Restorationist**

**ALTERNATIVE SPELLINGS:** Restorationism

**DEFINITION:** The belief in the necessity of returning to first-century Christianity as lived and taught by Jesus and the Apostles.