

Do Jehovah's Witnesses Believe in Jesus?

The following is a typical conversation that one of Jehovah's Witnesses might have with a neighbor. Let us imagine that a Witness named Anthony has come to the home of a man named Tim.



BELIEF IN JESUS ESSENTIAL

Anthony: Hi, Tim. It's good to see you again.

Tim: It is good to see you too.

Anthony: I brought the latest issues of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* for you. I think you will really enjoy the articles in these magazines.

Tim: Thank you. Actually, I'm glad you came by today because there is something I want to ask you.

Anthony: Sure, what is it?

Tim: The other day, I was speaking with a coworker. I told him about the pamphlets you gave me and how interesting they are. But he said that I shouldn't read them because Jehovah's Witnesses do not believe in Jesus. Is that true? I told my coworker that I would ask the next time you visited.

Anthony: Well, I'm glad you asked me. It's good that you are going straight to the source. After all, what better way is there to find out what a person believes than to ask the person himself?

Tim: That's what I figured.

Anthony: The truth is, Jehovah's Witnesses most certainly believe in Jesus. In fact, we feel that exercising faith in Jesus is vital to salvation.

Tim: I thought you did, but when my coworker said that you don't believe in Jesus, it made me curious. I guess you and I never really discussed it before.

Anthony: May I show you some Bible verses

that highlight the importance of exercising faith in Jesus? These are verses that Jehovah's Witnesses often use in their ministry.

Tim: OK.

Anthony: A good place to start is with Jesus' own words recorded at John 14:6. These words are part of a conversation that Jesus had with one of his apostles. We read: "Jesus said to him: 'I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.'" According to that verse, what is the only way to approach the Father?

Tim: Through Jesus.

Anthony: Correct. And Jehovah's Witnesses firmly believe that. Let me ask you this: From what you know about God's requirements, when a person prays, in whose name should he offer the prayer?

Tim: In the name of Jesus.

Anthony: I agree. And that's why every prayer I offer is said in Jesus' name. The same is true of all the prayers of Jehovah's Witnesses.

Tim: That's good to know.

Anthony: Another scripture we might consider is John 3:16. That verse is so important that it has been called the Gospel in miniature. The idea is that if you could take everything that was written about Jesus' earthly life and ministry and boil it down to one verse, this would be it. Maybe you would like to read this scripture.

Tim: OK. It says: “For God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, so that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have everlasting life.”

Anthony: Thank you. Are you familiar with this verse?

Tim: Yes, I’ve heard it a lot, and I often see it quoted on signs and billboards.

Anthony: It is a famous verse. Looking at it carefully, notice what Jesus said. He said that God’s love makes it possible for humans to enjoy everlasting life—but only if we do what?

Tim: Exercise faith.

Anthony: Yes. Specifically, faith in the only-begotten Son, Jesus Christ. And this point—that faith in Jesus opens the way to everlasting life—is made right here on page 2 of the magazine I brought you. Regarding the purpose of *The Watchtower*, it says that among other things, this magazine “promotes faith in Jesus Christ, who died so that we might gain everlasting life and who is now ruling as King of God’s Kingdom.”

Tim: Well, there you go. Right in your own magazine is proof that Jehovah’s Witnesses believe in Jesus.

Anthony: Precisely.

Tim: So, then, why do people say that you don’t believe in Jesus?

Anthony: There are probably a number of reasons why people say that. In some cases, people say it simply because they have heard other people say it. Or they may have been taught this misconception by their minister.

Tim: I’m just thinking here—maybe some people say that you don’t believe in Jesus because you call yourselves Jehovah’s Witnesses, not *Jesus’* Witnesses.

Anthony: That could be a reason too.

Tim: Why do you talk about Jehovah so much?

“I HAVE MADE YOUR NAME KNOWN”

Anthony: For one thing, we believe that it is important to use God’s personal name, Jehovah—just as his Son, Jesus, did. Consider what Jesus said in prayer to his Father. It’s recorded at John 17:26. Would you please read that verse?

Tim: Sure. “I have made your name known to them and will make it known, so that the love with which you loved me may be in them and I in union with them.”

Anthony: Thank you. Notice that Jesus said he had made God’s name known. Why do you suppose he did that?

Tim: Hmm. I’m not sure.

Anthony: Well, maybe we could look at another scripture that sheds light on the matter. I am thinking of Acts 2:21. There we read: “Everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved.” Now, I’m sure you would agree that if calling on

Exercising faith in Jesus is vital to salvation

the name of Jehovah is a requirement for salvation, Jesus was no doubt aware of this requirement.

Tim: Yes, of course.

Anthony: So the salvation of his followers is one reason why it was important to Jesus that they know and use God’s name. And it’s one of the main reasons why we talk about Jehovah so much. We feel that it is important to make known God’s personal name and help others call on that name.

Tim: But even if people don’t know God’s name or use it directly, they still know who they’re talking about when they refer to God.

Anthony: That may be true. Even so, by telling us his personal name, God has made it easier for us to draw close to him.

Tim: What do you mean?



Anthony: Think of it this way: We didn't need to know Moses' personal name. We could have known him simply as the man who parted the Red Sea or the man who received the Ten Commandments. Likewise with Noah—why know his name? He could have just been referred to as the man who built an ark and saved his family and the animals. For that matter, even Jesus Christ could have been known simply as the one who came from heaven and died for our sins. Right?

Tim: I suppose so.

Anthony: But God made sure that we knew the personal names of those individuals. There's nothing that adds that special touch like a personal name. Even though we have never met Moses, Noah, or Jesus, just knowing their name makes these men more real to us.

Tim: I never thought of it that way before, but that makes sense!

Anthony: And that's another reason why Jehovah's Witnesses use God's personal name so much. We want to help people build faith in Jehovah God as a real Person whom they can draw close to. At the same time, we place great emphasis on the role that Jesus plays in our salvation. Perhaps we could read one more scripture that drives home this point.

Tim: Sure.

Anthony: Earlier we read John 14:6. Remember, Jesus said that he is "the way and the truth

and the life." Let's go back a few verses and notice his words found at John 14:1. Would you please read what Jesus said in the last part of that verse?

Tim: OK. It says: "Exercise faith in God; exercise faith also in me."

Anthony: Thank you. Would you say, then, that true faith is an either-or matter? Is it a question of belief in Jesus versus belief in Jehovah?

Tim: No. Jesus said we need both.

Anthony: That's right. And I am sure you would agree that it's not enough just to *say* that we have faith in God and in Jesus. Really, we need to live our lives in a way that backs up that claim.

Tim: Definitely.

Anthony: But just how does a person demonstrate that he truly has faith in God and in Jesus? Maybe we can discuss that question another time.*

Tim: I would like that. ■

* For more information, see chapter 12 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah's Witnesses. It is also available on jw.org.

Do you have a particular Bible subject that you have wondered about? Are you curious about any of the beliefs or religious practices of Jehovah's Witnesses? If so, do not hesitate to ask one of Jehovah's Witnesses. He or she will be pleased to discuss such matters with you.