|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **Jehovah's Witnesses—Who Are They? What Do They Believe?** |
| **Who Are They?**   |  | | --- | |  |   IT IS the desire of Jehovah's Witnesses that you become better acquainted with them. You may have met them as neighbors and fellow employees or in other daily affairs of life. You may have seen them on the street, offering their magazines to passersby. Or you may have spoken briefly with them at your door.  Actually, Jehovah's Witnesses are interested in you and your welfare. They want to be your friends and to tell you more about themselves, their beliefs, their organization, and how they feel about people and the world in which all of us live. To accomplish this, they have prepared this brochure for you.  In most ways Jehovah's Witnesses are like everyone else. They have normal problems—economic, physical, emotional. They make mistakes at times, for they are not perfect, inspired, or infallible. But they try to learn from their experiences and diligently study the Bible to make needed corrections. They have made a dedication to God to do his will, and they apply themselves to fulfill this dedication. In all their activities they seek guidance from God's Word and his holy spirit.    It is of vital importance to them that their beliefs be based on the Bible and not on mere human speculations or religious creeds. They feel as did the apostle Paul when he expressed himself under inspiration: "Let God be found true, though every man be found a liar." ([Romans 3:4](javascript:showCitedScripture('Ro','3','4');), *New World Translation*[\*](http://www.watchtower.org/e/jt/article_01.htm" \l "_footnote1)) When it comes to teachings offered as Biblical truth, the Witnesses strongly endorse the course followed by the Beroeans when they heard the apostle Paul preach: "They received the word with the greatest eagerness of mind, carefully examining the Scriptures daily as to whether these things were so." ([Acts 17:11](javascript:showCitedScripture('Ac','17','11');)) Jehovah's Witnesses believe that all religious teachings should be subjected to this test of agreement with the inspired Scriptures, whether the teaching is offered by them or by someone else. They invite you—urge you—to do this in your discussions with them.  **They believe the Bible is God's Word**  From this it is apparent that Jehovah's Witnesses believe in the Bible as the Word of God. They consider its 66 books to be inspired and historically accurate. What is commonly called the New Testament they refer to as the Christian Greek Scriptures, and the Old Testament they call the Hebrew Scriptures. They rely on both of these, the Greek and the Hebrew Scriptures, and take them literally except where the expressions or settings obviously indicate that they are figurative or symbolic. They understand that many of the prophecies of the Bible have been fulfilled, others are in the course of fulfillment, and still others await fulfillment.  **THEIR NAME**  Jehovah's Witnesses? Yes, that is the way they refer to themselves. It is a descriptive name, indicating that they bear witness concerning Jehovah, his Godship, and his purposes. "God," "Lord," and "Creator"—like "President," "King," and "General"—are titles and may be applied to several different personages. But "Jehovah" is a personal name and refers to the almighty God and Creator of the universe. This is shown at [Psalm 83:18](javascript:showCitedScripture('Ps','83','18');), according to the King James version of the Bible: "That men may know that thou, whose name alone is JEHOVAH, art the most high over all the earth."   |  | | --- | | **God's personal name in ancient Hebrew** | | http://www.watchtower.org/images/jt/fp04.jpg |   The name Jehovah (or Yahweh, as the Roman Catholic *Jerusalem Bible* and some scholars prefer) appears almost 7,000 times in the original Hebrew Scriptures. Most Bibles do not show it as such but substitute "God" or "Lord" for it. However, even in these Bibles, a person can usually tell where the original Hebrew text uses Jehovah because in those places the substituted words are written in large and small capitals, thus: GOD, LORD. Several modern translations do use either the name Jehovah or the name Yahweh. Hence, the *New World Translation* reads at [Isaiah 42:8](javascript:showCitedScripture('Isa','42','8');), "I am Jehovah. That is my name."  **The name as related to a courtroom drama**  The Scriptural account that Jehovah's Witnesses draw on for their name is in the[43rd chapter of Isaiah](javascript:showCitedScripture('Isa','43','1');). There the world scene is viewed as a courtroom drama: The gods of the nations are invited to bring forth their witnesses to prove their claimed cases of righteousness or to hear the witnesses for Jehovah's side and acknowledge the truth. Jehovah there declares to his people: "Ye are my witnesses, saith Jehovah, and my servant whom I have chosen; that ye may know and believe me, and understand that I am he: before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am Jehovah; and besides me there is no saviour."—[Isaiah 43:10, 11](javascript:showCitedScripture('Isa','43','10-11');), *American Standard Version*.  Jehovah God had witnesses on earth during the thousands of years before Jesus was born. After [Hebrews chapter 11](javascript:showCitedScripture('Heb','11','1');) lists some of those men of faith, [Hebrews 12:1](javascript:showCitedScripture('Heb','12','1');) says: "So, then, because we have so great a cloud of witnesses surrounding us, let us also put off every weight and the sin that easily entangles us, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us." Jesus said before Pontius Pilate: "For this I have been born, and for this I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." He is called "the faithful and true witness." ([John 18:37](javascript:showCitedScripture('Joh','18','37');); [Revelation 3:14](javascript:showCitedScripture('Re','3','14');)) Jesus told his disciples: "You will receive power when the holy spirit arrives upon you, and you will be witnesses of me both in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the most distant part of the earth."—[Acts 1:8](javascript:showCitedScripture('Ac','1','8');).  Hence, some 6,000,000 persons today who are telling the good news of Jehovah's Kingdom by Christ Jesus in over 230 lands feel that they properly refer to themselves as Jehovah's Witnesses.   |  | | --- | |  | |