

Jehovah's Witnesses and the Lord's Evening Meal: who should partake?

JW Case: why you shouldn't partake

Purpose of the annual Jehovah's Witness memorial: Jesus commanded his followers to respectfully observe the Lord's Evening Meal. Partaking is reserved only for the 144,000 anointed Jehovah's Witnesses with a heavenly hope.

Why don't most Jehovah's Witnesses today partake?

1. JW's teach that a small number of humans will gain heavenly life while the rest of God's faithful servants will be rewarded with everlasting life on earth.
2. Luke 12:32 – Jesus spoke of a "little flock" who receives heavenly life (i.e. the kingdom).
 - a. These number 144,000 (Revelation 14:1-4)
3. Those who served Jehovah faithfully before Jesus' death did not go to heaven, but will enjoy life forever on the earth (Matthew 11:11).
4. John 10:16 – Jesus spoke of "other sheep" who are "not of this fold." These are ones who will later on have paradise earth as their eternal destiny.
5. God's intended purpose for mankind is life on an earthly paradise (Psalm 37:20, 29; Matthew 5:5)
6. Jesus makes his sacrifice and forgiveness available to all (John 6:51-54). But like the Egyptians who joined Israel and only received some of the benefits of the Old Covenant (Exodus 12:37-38; 16:13-18), so today most Jehovah's Witnesses aren't in the New Covenant, but receive some of its benefits (e.g. forgiveness of sins, eternal life, etc.).
7. Luke 22:20, 28-30 – Jesus makes his covenant with his disciples so that they and those living after Christ's death could share ruler ship in his kingdom (Rev. 5:10). This excludes all Jehovah's Witnesses who have an earthly hope. This "earthly hope" became available in 1935. JW's seek to obey Luke 22:20 by attending the Lord's Evening Meal each year as respectful observers.

Christian Case: why you *should* partake

1. Luke 22:19-20
 - a. What is the "do this" referring to? Partaking. "Respectfully observing" without partaking is not what Jesus commanded.
2. Matthew 26:28-29; Jeremiah 31:33-34
 - a. To be forgiven of your sins is to participate in the New Covenant. Following Christ's death, forgiveness could only be received through participation in the New Covenant.
 - b. Matthew 26:29 – JW's think "eating and drinking with Jesus in the Kingdom" is only for the 144,000 in heaven. If that's the case, then how can "Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and all the prophets" be in the Kingdom of Heaven with Jesus? (Matthew 8:11; Luke 13:28).
3. Matthew 11:11 - JW argument is that if the "least in the kingdom of heaven" is greater than John, then John will not be in heaven. Therefore, none of the Old Covenant Saints will be in heaven.
 - a. This is not what Jesus is saying. He's contrasting the present age with the age to come as in Mark 10:30-31.
4. Luke 12:32; 22:29 – JW argument: the kingdom of heaven is granted to only a select group of Christians.
 - a. Matthew 25:34 – the kingdom is inherited by all Christians.
 - b. Luke 12:32 – why refer to them as a "little flock"? Jesus speaks to many thousands of people (Luke 12:1) and then in 12:22 speaks to only his disciples. There is no theological significance of "little flock" as it is only intended to contrast the disciples with the many thousands Jesus spoke to.
5. John 10:16 – JW argument: the "other sheep" is the "great crowd" of Revelation 7 who have an earthly hope.
 - a. Jesus is not contrasting two classes with separate eternal locations. Instead, he's speaking of Jews and Gentiles.
 - b. Ephesians 2:13-14 – parallels those who are "not of this fold" and "joined together" with John 10:16. That is, Jews joined together with Gentiles.
6. Paradise Earth – JW argument: since some texts speak of a heavenly hope and others an earthly hope, there must be two eternal destinations for Jehovah's Witnesses.
 - a. Paradise Earth is a biblical teaching (Psalm 37:20, 29; Matthew 5:5; Genesis 13:14-16; 22:17-19; Romans 4:13).
 - b. All the "going to heaven" texts either refers to the intermediate state (Rev. 6:9-10) or can be easily interpreted as life on the new earth.
7. Revelation 14:1-4 – JW argument: 144,000 will rule and reign in heaven with Christ over the "great crowd" living on the paradise earth.
 - a. John "sees" this group (14:1) but "hears" a voice "from heaven" (14:2), strongly implying the vision is actually earthly
 - b. If "before the throne" (14:3) means that they are in heaven, then this could also be said of the "great crowd" in Rev. 7:9. Yet, JW's believe the great crowd will never go to heaven.
8. John 6:51-54 – JW argument: this is a general statement made for all Christ's followers who are not all included in the covenant made at the Lord's evening meal.
 - a. The contrast is a baseless assumption. There's no indication in any text that someone can receive the benefits of the New Covenant without actually being in it.
 - b. The Egyptians in the Exodus alongside the Hebrews is a poor parallel because aliens could enter into the Old Covenant through circumcision (Exodus 12:48; Numbers 9:14).
9. Revelation 5:10 – JW argument: this refers to the 144,000 and not to those with an earthly hope.
 - a. This text doesn't say anything about being in heaven.
 - b. Why can't all Christians rule and reign with Christ?

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Please feel free to email mike@theapologeticfront.com with any questions