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Jehovah Witnesses taught 'non-believers are controlled by the devil' according to escapee

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Karen Stanway, who was born into the religion, claims that during her childhood, she was advised by the church not to befriend people outside of her faith

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A former **Jehovah's Witness** has claimed the religion is a 'cult' - 12 years after breaking away.

Speaking out on **Channel 5 series Inside Scientology... and Escaping the Witnesses**, Karen Stanway insisted that was warned against befriending those outside of the faith during her school years.

"We were taught that people who aren't Jehovah's Witnesses are evil and are controlled by Satan," she claimed. "So whenever I'd talk to people outside of our faith, I'd think, wow I had better not get too close as this person is controlled by Satan."



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Karen Stanway reveals why she broke away from Jehova's Witnesses

"They used to show us these pictures of what Armageddon looks like; people getting killed, earthquakes, famine. Anytime I'd see anything like that on the news, I'd feel so anxious. I'd just hope that I'd done enough for the church to be one of the chosen saved ones.

"You're very much closed into this society. It was really difficult - especially at school.

"You just couldn't make friends. If you did, you'd have to come up with excuses as to why you couldn't go round their houses for dinner or for sleepovers. We weren't allowed on school trips which were overnight."



Karen claims the church scared her with Armageddon imagery

Karen left the church over ten years ago after being diagnosed with severe depression and anorexia.

The news overwhelmed her mother and she became suicidal shortly afterwards. According to Karen, her mum looked to the religion for help and a family meeting was organised with the church elders - but no good came of it.

"All that came out of that meeting was me and my mum being told we weren't good enough daughters and mothers.



Karen adds that she is 'messed up' because of her religious upbringing



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"That was the first time in my life I had done anything out of anger. I got up, stormed out of the room and slammed the door behind me."

After leaving the religion, Karen never looked back. However in the documentary, she did re-visit the church she used to worship at.

"I used to feel so safe when I came here - but I wasn't," she added. "If I hadn't have been raised as a Jehovah's Witness, I don't think I'd be so messed up now."

The members of Karen's church have denied her claims.



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