The WATCHTOWER

Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

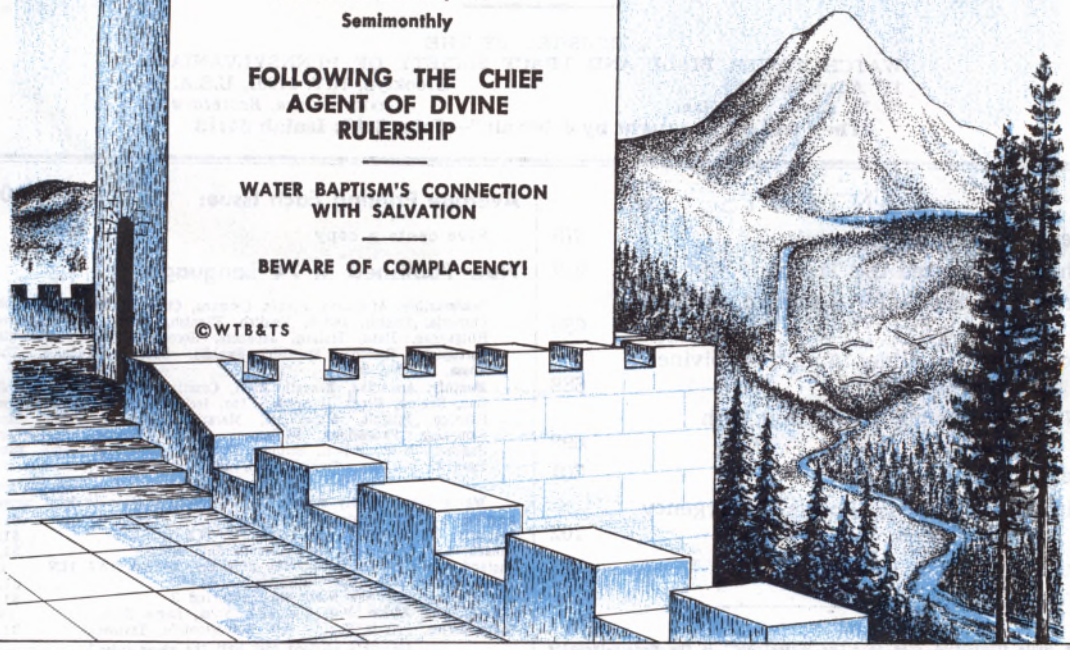
NOVEMBER 15, 1972
Semimonthly

FOLLOWING THE CHIEF AGENT OF DIVINE RULERSHIP

WATER BAPTISM'S CONNECTION WITH SALVATION

BEWARE OF COMPLACENCY!

©WTB&TS



"YOU ARE MY WITNESSES," SAYS JEHOVAH.—Isa. 43:12

THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER"

Every watchtower has its purpose. It serves as an elevated place for a wide-awake person with sharp vision. It enables him to see far ahead into the distance and tell those below for whom he is a watchman what is drawing near, whether it is a danger against which to prepare or it is something good over which to be glad with strong faith and hope.

Because of having the name "The Watchtower" this magazine justly has to render a similar useful service to the people of all nations. This is an international magazine and makes no racial distinctions, for we are all facing a common world danger; we are all hoping for a common good.

Ever since "The Watchtower" began to be published in July of 1879 it has looked ahead into the future, always striving to aid its readers to advance in knowledge and to gain a clearer picture of the glorious new order of things that is in store for righteous mankind. No, "The Watchtower" is no inspired prophet, but it follows and explains a Book of prophecy the predictions in which have proved to be unerring and unfailing till now. "The Watchtower" is therefore under safe guidance. It may be read with confidence, for its statements may be checked against that prophetic Book.

Among the many nations of today there are hundreds of differing religions. Which one does this magazine present? Not the confused religions of Christendom, but the religion of the oldest sacred Book on earth. Which Book? The Sacred Bible of the Holy Scriptures, written by inspiration in the name of the Creator of heaven and earth, the only living and true God.

The sacred, nonpolitical purpose of "The Watchtower" is accordingly to encourage and promote study of the Holy Bible and to give our many readers the needed unsectarian help to understand that Book of true religion and infallible prophecy. Thus this magazine will be helping them to prove worthy of perfect life and happiness in God's promised new order under His everlasting kingdom of righteousness.

PUBLISHED BY THE
WATCH TOWER BIBLE AND TRACT SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA
117 Adams Street — Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201, U.S.A.
N. H. KNORR, *President* — GRANT SUITER, *Secretary*

"They will all be taught by Jehovah."—John 6:45; Isaiah 54:13

CONTENTS

Beware of Complacency! 675
They Recognized the Truth 679
Producing the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership 680
Following the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership 688
Water Baptism's Connection with Salvation 698
Persistence 701
Pittsburgh Meeting Points Up Urgency of the Times 702
Questions from Readers 703

The Bible translation used in "The Watchtower" is the modern-language "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," unless otherwise indicated.

CHANGES OF ADDRESS should reach us thirty days before your moving date. Give us your old and new address (if possible, your old address label). Write Watchtower, 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, New York 11201, U.S.A.

Average Printing Each Issue: 7,850,000

Five cents a copy

Now Published in 74 Languages

Semimonthly: Afrikaans, Arabic, Cebuano, Chinese, Chishona, Cibemba, Cinyanja, Danish, Dutch, English, Finnish, French, German, Greek, Hiligaynon, Iloko, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Malagasy, Norwegian, Portuguese, Sesotho, Spanish, Swahili, Swedish, Tagalog, Thai, Xhosa, Yoruba, Zulu.

Monthly: Armenian, Bengali, Bicol, Croatian, Efik, Ewe, Fijian, Ga, Gun, Hebrew, Hindi, Hungarian, Ibo, Icelandic, Indonesian, Kanarese, Kikongo, Lingala, Malayalam, Marathi, Melanesian-Pidgin, Motu, Pampango, Pangasinan, Papiamento, Polish, Russian, Samar-Leyte, Samoan, Sango, Sepedi, Serbian, Silozi, Sinhalese, Slovenian, Tamil, Tswana, Tumbuka, Turkish, Twi, Ukrainian, Urdu, Vietnamese.

Yearly subscription rates for semimonthly editions in local currency

Watch Tower Society offices	
America, U.S., 117 Adams St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201	$1.50
Australia, 11 Beresford Rd., Strathfield, N.S.W. 2135	$1.50
Canada, 150 Bridgeland Ave., Toronto 390, Ontario	$1.50
England, Watch Tower House, The Ridgeway, London NW7 1RN	65p
Ghana, West Africa, Box 760, Accra	¢1.90
New Zealand, 621 New North Rd., Auckland 3	$1.50
Nigeria, West Africa, P.O. Box 194, Yaba, Lagos State	10/9
South Africa, Private Bag 2, P.O. Elandsfontein, Transvaal	R1.10

(Monthly editions cost half the above rates.)

Remittances for subscriptions should be sent to the office in your country. Otherwise send your remittance to Brooklyn.

Notice of expiration is sent at least two issues before subscription expires.

Second-class postage paid at Brooklyn, N.Y. Printed in U.S.A.

The WATCHTOWER
Announcing JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM
Vol. XCIII November 15, 1972 Number 22

BEWARE of COMPLACENCY!

HAVE you ever said, when spoken to by a student of the Bible: 'I feel that religion is a personal thing, not to be discussed. I don't want to get my mind all stirred up, confused'? Do you prefer to be complacent? Yet Jesus Christ himself said of our times:

> "Pay attention to yourselves that your hearts never become weighed down with overeating and heavy drinking and anxieties of life, and suddenly that day be instantly upon you as a snare. For it will come in upon all those dwelling upon the face of all the earth. Keep awake, then, all the time making supplication that you may succeed in escaping all these things that are destined to occur, and in standing before the Son of man."—Luke 21:34-36.

Of course, complacency and contentment, with peace of mind, can be good. But complacency that relies on unfounded hopes or ideas can be most dangerous.

For example, there is no wisdom in sitting in one's home in a complacent attitude when storm and evacuation warnings are coming over the radio. Certainly the Bible proverb has proved true toward many of such complacent, unheeding persons: "The simpleton turns a deaf ear and comes to grief, and the stupid are ruined by their own complacency." —Prov. 1:32, *The New English Bible.*

Some may argue with regard to warnings as citizens in some recently flooded areas did. Said a report: "A complacent public, thinking itself protected because of levees and other flood control works built after the famous 'hundred year flood' of 1946, ignored the warnings that a worse flood might be yet to come."

But what about a warning of divine origin, particularly if that warning had been given over a period of years, and if an unbiased examination of the facts proved that the warning was justified? Would complacency then not be even more foolish?

IS CHRISTENDOM NEAR COLLAPSE?

There is such a warning, and that warning is of the collapse of the religions of Christendom, together with the fabric of society into which these religions are interwoven. But do the facts justify such a warning and the need to forsake a complacent attitude, if a person belongs to one of these church systems?

Well, consider the record of the churches. Have they truly raised the moral standards of the people, even of their own members? Rather, have they not gone along with the world, abandoning Bible standards and lowering themselves to the point that to follow them would be no different from following any worldly organization? Have the churches proved able to make their members different, or better equipped to live more decent, moral lives?

What about politics, nationalistic divisions, and war? The religions of Christendom have not warned the people of the danger, in fact, the hopelessness of relying on men. Instead, they have backed man-rule and promoted nationalism. In many cases they have gone so far as to direct their members as to whom to vote for in political elections. They have fomented and encouraged wholesale slaughter of men, including civilian populations, in sanguinary warfare.

Consequently, should a person belonging to a religion in the so-called Christian part of the world feel that he is safe? Should he believe that, no matter what happens, Christendom cannot fall, to his own loss?

DANGER OF COMPLACENCY ILLUSTRATED

If anyone tends to be complacent and unheeding toward the warning message that calamity is about to come upon Christendom, let him consider a Bible illustration that should shake such a one from his complacency.

The illustration is one that would hardly be used today, especially in the Western world. Nevertheless, it is as forceful and pictorially accurate as an illustration can be.

This illustration was given to the prophet Ezekiel only about five years before the destruction of Jerusalem. Ezekiel, in vision, saw twenty-five complacent men. They were princes of Jerusalem. As prominent men of the city, counselors of the king, they were giving bad counsel to Jerusalem. Not only were they going contrary to the warnings given by the prophets Ezekiel and Jeremiah, but they were very likely encouraging King Zedekiah to rebel against Babylon and break the covenant that he had made under oath before God. (2 Chron. 36:11-13; 2 Ki. 24:18 to 25:1) They were relying on the military power of Egypt, the 'arm of flesh,' to save them. For it was within the three years after Ezekiel's vision (612 B.C.E.) that King Zedekiah did rebel, with their approval.

God actually said this to Ezekiel in the vision and illustration he gave the prophet. Ezekiel reports:

> "And a spirit proceeded to lift me up and bring me to the eastern gate of the house of Jehovah that is facing eastward, and, look! in the entrance of the gate there were twenty-five men, and I got to see in the midst of them Jaazaniah the son of Azzur and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. Then he [Jehovah] said to me: 'Son of man, these are the men that are scheming hurtfulness and advising bad counsel against this city; that are saying, "Is not the building of houses close at hand? She is the wide-mouthed cooking pot, and we are the flesh."'"
> —Ezek. 11:1-3.

These governmental princes and counselors of King Zedekiah felt complacent inside the strongly fortified Jerusalem. The city walls were like the sides of a metallic pot, unbreachable, as they thought. Like flesh cooking inside an iron pot, they would not be taken out, dispossessed. The counselors felt that they could ensure their permanent residence by appealing to the king of Egypt for help against Babylon. So they reasoned that it was time to build houses, with long-term occupancy in view.

These complacent, overconfident ones and the rest of the people in Jerusalem needed warning. Therefore God command-

ed Ezekiel to give a prophecy that proved to be very pointed and powerful. Jehovah said:

"'You people said the right thing, O house of Israel; and as regards the things that come up in your spirit, I myself have known it. You have caused your slain ones in this city to be many, and you have filled her streets with the slain ones.'" "Therefore this is what the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has said, 'As regards your slain ones whom you people have put in the midst of her, they are the flesh, and she is the widemouthed cooking pot; and there will be a bringing forth of you yourselves out of the midst of her.'"—Ezek. 11:5-7.

These men had gone so far as even to kill off those in the city who favored continued submission to Babylon. But God showed that, instead of these princes staying inside Jerusalem, as they supposed, it was the ones they had killed who would stay there. It would be the overconfident princes that would be dragged out of their homes by the Babylonians. They would see their houses burned before they fell by the sword of the king of Babylon. Ezekiel said to those princes:

"'A sword you have feared, and a sword I shall bring upon you,' is the utterance of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. 'And I shall certainly bring you forth out of the midst of her and give you into the hand of strangers and execute upon you acts of judgment. By the sword you will fall. . . . On the border of Israel I shall judge you, and you will have to know that I am Jehovah, because in my regulations you did not walk and my judgments you did not do, but according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you, you have done.'"—Ezek. 11:8-12.

Of course, these words show that Jehovah would really be the one executing judgment on these complacent schemers. But in doing so he would use the "sword" in the hands of foreign "strangers," the Babylonians, to do the actual killing. Those who survived the "sword" would not be safe inside the walls of that symbolic "pot," Jerusalem. Dragged outside, they would be judged "on the border of Israel." And it took place that way. It was at the northern tip of that territory that had been conquered by King David, namely, at Riblah toward Hamath, that the following occurred:

"Furthermore, the chief of the bodyguard took Seraiah the chief priest and Zephaniah the second priest and the three doorkeepers, and from the city he took one court official that happened to be commissioner over the men of war, and seven men of those having access to the king, who were found in the city, and the secretary of the chief of the army, the one mustering the people of the land, and sixty men of the people of the land, who were found in the midst of the city. So these Nebuzaradan the chief of the bodyguard took and conducted them to the king of Babylon at Riblah. And these the king of Babylon proceeded to strike down and to put them to death in Riblah in the land of Hamath. Thus Judah went into exile from off its soil."—Jer. 52:24-27.

JEHOVAH NOT COMPLACENT TOWARD COVENANT BREAKERS

Jehovah thereby showed that he is the unfailing Covenant Keeper. He is not complacent about the agreements he makes. He lives up to them to the letter, and he will not ignore those who are untrue to their agreements and who disobey God's laws and complacently feel that it makes no difference, and that they are safe. He said with plainspokenness to those complacent ones in Jerusalem: "I shall judge

THE NEXT ISSUE

- **The Gathering of All Nations to One Temple to Worship.**
- **Do Not Harbor a Grudge.**
- **How Much Do You Care About People?**

you." Why? "Because in my regulations you did not walk and my judgments you did not do, but according to the judgments of the nations that are round about you, you have done."—Ezek. 11:11, 12.

Has modern-day Christendom, like ancient Israel, professed to be in covenant relationship with God? Yes. She has distributed millions of copies of the Bible in more than a thousand languages. These Bibles have established his divine name as being Jehovah or Yahweh. She claims her mediator between this God and men to be Jesus Christ the Son of God, and that she is in the "new covenant" with God. (Jer. 31:31-34; Luke 22:20; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) However, she has violated his laws, broken her covenant with God. In addition to her bloodguilt she has condoned immorality among her church members, and declared that God is dead, that he has no interest in men and has no part in the historical record. Her clergymen say, in effect, that he has forgotten his new covenant. When warning is presented to them they ignore it, even scoff at it. (2 Pet. 3: 3, 4) Like the counselors of King Zedekiah of Judah, they prophesy good things for Christendom's religious, political and commercial establishments, telling the people to put their trust in the 'arm of flesh,' and actually causing their church members and others to sit back complacently. —Jer. 6:14.

Christendom does not have a stone wall around her as ancient Jerusalem did. Nevertheless, her clergymen and leaders may feel as Jerusalem's princes did, that she is in a safe place, just as flesh inside the confines of an iron vessel. Her "wall" is that in which she puts her trust, the military might of the nations. She advocates man-rule, especially through a world organization such as the United Nations. In fact, the Federal Council of Churches of Christ in America called its predecessor the League of Nations "the political expression of the kingdom of God on earth."

Will Jehovah do anything about Christendom's actions that have defamed his name? Will he shake the false religious leaders as well as those politicians who claim that the nations they are leading are Christian nations? Will they be jolted from their complacent attitude? Note what happened in Ezekiel's case:

> "And it came about that as soon as I prophesied Pelatiah the son of Benaiah himself died, and I proceeded to fall upon my face and cry with a loud voice and say: 'Alas, O Sovereign Lord Jehovah! Is it an extermination that you are executing with the remaining ones of Israel?' "—Ezek. 11:13.

In the vision, what was it that caused Pelatiah the prince to drop dead after Ezekiel had prophesied and served notice upon the twenty-five "princes of the people"? According to what he cried out in fear, the prophet Ezekiel took it to be a direct execution of judgment from Jehovah. He took it as a sign not only of impending death for the other twenty-four princes, but, alas! also of a coming extermination of all the "remaining ones of Israel." He did not, however, challenge God's right to exterminate them all.

Seeing how God viewed these men in Jerusalem who broke his covenant and complacently considered themselves safe in their materialistic trust in secular power, how does God view Christendom and her leaders? Will he let them continue to say "God is dead," ignore the laws of his new covenant in which they claim to be joined to him, and ridicule the warning from his Word the Bible, now being publicly declared?

If anyone has tended to be complacent, not really serving God and paying no attention to his Word or the warning of the nearness of the 'great tribulation,' he should beware! He should awake from any sleepy, lethargic state, sit up and give im-

mediate heed to what God has to say. If not, God will be acting entirely in harmony with justice and righteousness in destroying him at the coming crisis upon *this* world.

QUESTIONS DESERVING ANSWER

Just as Ezekiel feared the destruction of all Jehovah's covenant people during the threatening destruction of Jerusalem, a similar fear might be excited in the hearts of religiously minded persons who do not appreciate the distinction between Christendom and true Christianity. Does Christendom's attitude toward God and her failure mean that Christianity has *failed?*

Thinking on these things, a person might fearfully be moved to ask the question, 'If in the coming "great tribulation" upon the whole system of things Jehovah exterminates all of Christendom and her worldly allies, will this mean the destruction of true Christianity as a whole?'

There are those who would like to have it so. Communist and other radical elements who hate the Christianity of the Bible would like to share in wiping out, not only the hypocritical Christianity of Christendom, but also the "pure religion," the true Christian worship of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah.—Jas. 1:27, *Authorized Version.*

Will these irreligious radicals have the satisfaction of seeing Christianity erased from the earth? Or will there be a definite line of demarcation between the hypocritical false religion and true Christianity, so that Christianity will survive? Remembering that, though secular powers will be used in destroying Christendom, it is really God's judgment that is being executed, we will look forward to what the prophet Ezekiel next heard from God. This will be discussed in a forthcoming issue of this magazine. In the meantime, sincere persons will not be complacent, but will be searching to see what God's will is for them, that they may determine in what way, if any, God has provided for survival.

They Recognized the Truth

ABOUT 1,900 years ago many honest-hearted Jewish priests accepted the truth proclaimed by the followers of Jesus Christ. The Bible tells us: "The word of God went on growing, and the number of the disciples kept multiplying in Jerusalem very much; and a great crowd of priests began to be obedient to the faith." (Acts 6:7) Also today numerous clergymen are responding favorably to the activity of Jehovah's Christian witnesses.

In a Latin-American country, a man who came to a small city to shop obtained literature from Jehovah's witnesses. He and his family had some difficulty in understanding it. So they asked their Pentecostal clergyman for an explanation, but he was unable to help them. For this reason they requested that one of Jehovah's witnesses come to help them. The Witness who responded to their invitation was greeted warmly by a group of twenty-two persons, including the clergyman, assembled in the church. They wanted to know about Christ's coming. After an hour and ten minutes of Biblical discussion on this subject, they voiced their agreement, acknowledging that everything was clear.

The following week the Witness delivered the discourse "Who Are Jehovah's Witnesses?" Those hearing this talk understood that true Christians should be bearers of the name "Jehovah." Arrangements were made to study the Bible with the aid of the book *The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life.* Shortly afterward the clergyman said he wanted to get baptized because he realized that his former baptism was valueless. He was baptized in February of 1971 and eight former church members are sharing with him in proclaiming to others the things they have learned from the Bible.

Producing

The Chief Agent of Divine Rulership

"God exalted this one as Chief Agent and Savior to his right hand, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins."—Acts 5:31.

THE ONE whom the Divine Ruler of the universe exalts to be his Chief Agent and a Savior we cannot afford to ignore. If we ignored that Chief Agent and tried to come to the Divine Ruler in worship, it would not work out in salvation for us. It is only by means of his Chief Agent that the Divine Ruler gives to us the means for gaining salvation to perfect life and happiness in the blessed new order that the Divine Ruler has promised. People everywhere need to know this vital fact.

[2] Nineteen hundred years ago the highest religious dignitaries in Jerusalem needed to know that fact. Those men made up the supreme judicial court of the land, the Sánhedrin. In a judgment handed down some weeks previous, they had condemned that much-disputed person, Jesus Christ, to death. Before them they now had the twelve leading followers of that controversial person. On the witness stand Simon Peter and the other eleven followers told the Court that the man whom they had condemned to death was made God's "Chief Agent and Savior." In response to a Court order they said:

[3] "We must obey God as ruler rather than men. The God of our forefathers raised up Jesus, whom you slew, hanging him upon a stake. God exalted this one as Chief Agent and Savior to his right hand, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are witnesses of these matters, and so is the holy spirit, which God has given to those obeying him as ruler."—Acts 5:29-32.

[4] Let the high court of Jerusalem like it or not, that impaled Jesus was alive from the dead, even at God's right hand, and thus able to act as the Chief Agent and Savior for the Divine Ruler, in behalf of the nation of Israel. A "Chief Agent and Savior," to do what? "To give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins." This "forgiveness of sins" was to be *according* to a "new covenant" that the Divine Ruler had promised to establish with his chosen people.—Jer. 31:31-34; Luke 22:20.

[5] That Jerusalem Court knew that before the appearance of Jesus Christ on the

1. Why will it not work out in salvation for us if we ignore the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership?
2. In view of what recent action by the Jerusalem Sánhedrin did that judicial court need to know that fact?
3. In response to the order of the Sánhedrin, what did those twelve followers of the condemned man say about obedience and the Chief Agent?
4. The one exalted to be Chief Agent and Savior was to give what to Israel, and according to what covenant of God?
5. (a) Before Jesus' death, by whom had repentance been preached to Israel? (b) What questions were now pertinent as to repentance and forgiveness of sins and the relationship of the members of the Sánhedrin to God?

earthly scene, John the Baptist had preached: "Repent, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." Then, after John the Baptist was imprisoned, this Jesus Christ whom John had baptized took up the same message, saying: "Repent, you people, for the kingdom of the heavens has drawn near." (Matt. 3:1, 2, 13-17; 4:12-17) This continued down till Jesus' death under the instigation of the Jerusalem Sánhedrin Court. Was there now any difference in the matter of repentance on Israel's part? What were the sins that were to be forgiven? Were not the members of the Court given good cause for thought by the words of Simon Peter before them? How was their relationship with God now affected? Did this relationship rest on the same basis as before? Let us see.

6 The nation of Israel came into existence down in the land of Egypt, during the 215 years of sojourn of Jacob (Israel) and his descendants down there. (Gen. 49: 28-33) Sometime after the death of the Egyptian prime minister Joseph, the son of Jacob, the Israelites were brought into slavery, and an attempt was made to wipe out the nation. Then at God's own foretold time he brought these descendants of Jacob (Israel) "out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slaves." This was after God had ordered them to celebrate a new Supper, the Passover supper, there in Egypt on Nisan 14 of the year 1513 B.C.E. On the evening of that day the Passover lamb was slaughtered and its blood was splashed upon the doorposts and lintels of the Israelite houses, and it was then roasted whole and eaten behind blood-marked closed doorways. God accepted the sacrifice of that Passover lamb and delivered them from Egypt after their sacrificial supper. He had, as it were, purchased them through that sacrificed Passover lamb. (Ex. 12:1 to 13:18) Thus the nation of Israel was a people "whom God went to redeem to himself as a people."—2 Sam. 7:23.

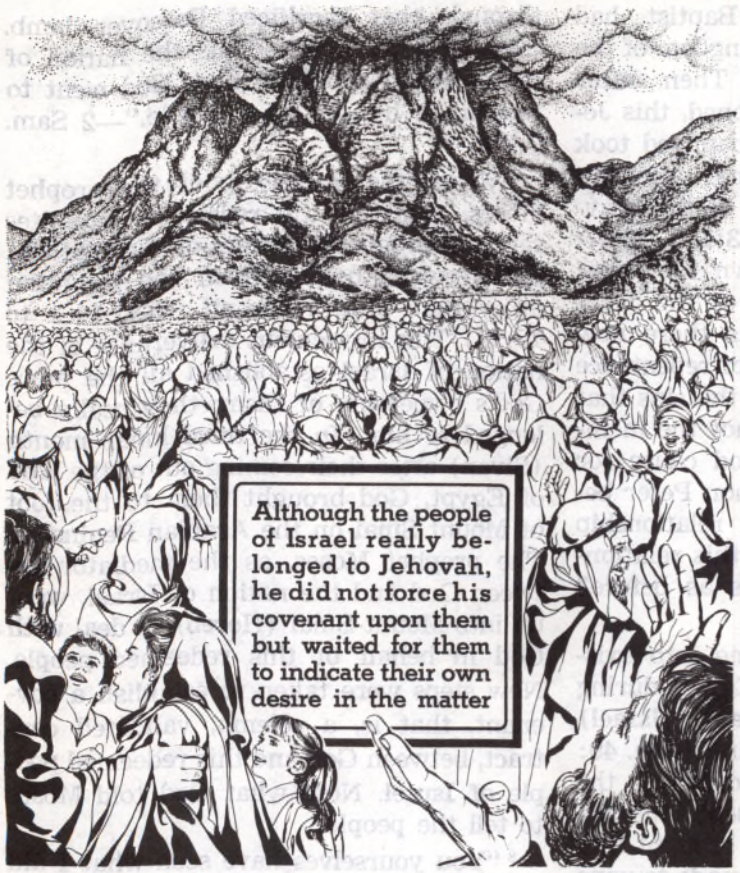
7 Under the leadership of the prophet Moses, God led the redeemed Israelites safely through the waters of the Red Sea but drowned behind them the Egyptian army that was in pursuit. (Ex. 14:1 to 15:21) This miraculous deliverance of the nation of Israel established all the more God's ownership of them; they really belonged to him. In the third lunar month (Sivan) after their coming out of the land of Egypt, God brought them to the foot of Mount Sinai on the Arabian Peninsula. The prophet Moses, as the mediator between God and the nation of Israel, went up into Mount Sinai (Horeb) to deal with God in behalf of this redeemed people. Now steps were taken to establish a covenant, that is, a solemn, validated contract, between God and this redeemed people of Israel. Note what God told Moses to tell the people:

8 "You yourselves have seen what I did to the Egyptians, that I might carry you on wings of eagles and bring you to myself. And now if you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property out of all other peoples, because the whole earth belongs to me. And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."—Ex. 19:3-6.

9 In that way the obligations of the covenant were clearly stated and the covenant was given a definite purpose, to produce a "kingdom of priests," a "holy

6. How did Jehovah become obliged to redeem his people Israel out of Egypt, and how did he do so?

7, 8. (a) How, at the Red Sea, did God further establish his ownership of the people of Israel? (b) What did Jehovah proceed to enter into with Israel at Mount Sinai, and what did he tell Moses to say as a proposal?
9. Did God proceed on the basis of his right, to bring Israel into a holy covenant with him, or how did he handle the matter?



nation," belonging to God. Here it is not to be overlooked that God did not force this covenant upon the nation of Israel. He did not say: 'I have redeemed you from slavery in Egypt and I have also delivered you from the waters of the Red Sea, and therefore you belong to me by right and purchase. I can do with you what I want, and what I say goes as law and you will have to obey it.' Instead, what God instructed Moses to tell the people indicates that God wanted to know whether his redeemed people desired, were willing, to enter into a holy covenant with him. Rather than dictatorially, tyrannically, force a covenant upon them, God waited for them to express their will in the matter. No willingness on their part, no covenant!

THE EXPRESSED WILL OF THE REDEEMED PEOPLE AWAITED

10 This was to be a bilateral covenant, that is to say, a solemn contract or engagement between two parties. Inasmuch as it was to be a covenant between the Most Holy God and imperfect, sinful human creatures who had inherited condemnation and death from Adam and Eve, this covenant required a mediator, whom God recognized as righteous because of faith, namely, Moses the son of Amram the Levite. (Gal. 3:19, 20) God, the one Party, showed his desire to enter into the covenant, but now, what was the will of the other party that was invited to enter into the covenant? The formal inaugurating of the covenant between God and Israel waited upon the expression of the will of the invited lesser party. To such an extent as this God recognized human will.

11 What attitude did the people, who were here represented by their national elders, assume toward the proffered covenant? The Bible record says: "So Moses came and called the older men of the people and set before them all these words that Jehovah had commanded him. After that all the people answered unanimously and said: 'All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do.' Immediately Moses took back the words of the people to Jehovah." (Ex. 19:7, 8) Before Jehovah God re-

10. Why did that covenant require a mediator, and what human factor did God recognize in the matter?
11. What attitude did Israel express toward the proposed covenant, and before that expression to Jehovah, what did Jehovah not state to them?

ceived that expression of willingness on the part of the people, he did not state to them from the top of Mount Sinai the Ten Commandments, the fundamental laws of the proposed Law covenant. —Ex. 19:9 to 20:22.

12 It was left to the people to express their free choice, either to accept or to reject the divine proposal. It was left to them to decide with free moral agency either to become Jehovah's "special property out of all other peoples" or to refuse to become such because of the terms laid down. So, when this redeemed people answered as one man to the divine proposal, "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do," or, literally, "we shall be doing," what were they doing? What shall we call that act of theirs, in other words? Is it too much to say that it was a committing of themselves to Jehovah God to do his will as spoken by Him? Does it parallel what the Christian apostle Paul said to the Christian congregation in Rome: "Present yourselves to God as those alive from the dead, also your members to God as weapons of righteousness"? (Rom. 6:13) *An American Translation* renders this stronger, saying: "Offer yourselves to God." *The New English Bible:* "Put yourselves at the disposal of God." The *Revised Standard Version:* "Yield yourselves to God." Moffatt's *A New Translation:* "You must dedicate yourselves to God."

13 Jehovah did not use heavy persuasion with the Israelites, saying: 'I have redeemed you from Egypt and I have delivered you from the Red Sea. Moreover, you are the natural seed of Abraham my friend. Therefore you must enter into this covenant with me.' True, it was for those reasons that God offered to them a covenant relationship with him, and he did set an inviting prospect before them for entering the covenant. But it rested with the Israelites to choose whether to become the people of Jehovah as their God. Accordingly, when they said: "All that Jehovah has spoken we shall be doing," they were dedicating themselves to Jehovah to be His people, to do His will that was to be set out in the covenant. Later, after the giving of the Ten Commandments and then the delivery of a set of laws to Moses, the covenant was validated over the blood of animal victims. And thereby the Israelites became the dedicated people of God in a binding covenant with Jehovah God. On that occasion, even with better knowledge, the people reaffirmed their determination to do Jehovah's will, for the record at Exodus 24:7, 8 tells us:

14 "Finally he [Moses] took the book of the covenant and read it in the ears of the people. Then they said: 'All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do and be obedient.' So Moses took the blood and sprinkled it upon the people and said: 'Here is the blood of the covenant that Jehovah has concluded with you as respects all these words.' "—See also Hebrews 9:18-20.

15 That covenant, inaugurated with those members of that redeemed people there at Mount Sinai, was not only binding upon those present but binding also upon their fleshly, natural descendants. It was a "covenant to time indefinite." (Lev. 24:8) This put all their natural descendants in a covenant relationship with God for as long as the covenant endured. As a consequence those Israelites who were born in the wilderness after

12. (a) So what was it left to the people to do about the covenant? (b) What shall we call that act of the Israelites toward the covenant, and what descriptive term is expressed in Romans 6:13?

13, 14. (a) Why was it that Jehovah offered to them the covenant rather than force it upon Israel, and, by their response, what were they in effect doing? (b) When did they reaffirm their will, and what did they thus become to Jehovah?

15. Of how long a duration was that covenant, and upon whom was it binding?

the inaugurating of that covenant at Mount Sinai were in that covenant with God in the fortieth and last year of their enforced wandering in the wilderness. So they continued to be a dedicated people or nation.

16 However, in that final year (1473 B.C.E.) thousands of members of that dedicated nation did not choose to remain in covenant relationship with Jehovah. They proved this on the plains of Moab. In Moses' account of this we read, in Numbers 25:1-5:

> "Now Israel was dwelling in Shittim. Then the people started to have immoral relations with the daughters of Moab. And the women came calling the people to the sacrifices of their gods, and the people began to eat and to bow down to their gods. So Israel attached itself [or, Israel paired themselves off, *AT;* or, Israel yoked himself, *RS*] to the Baal of Peor; and the anger of Jehovah began to blaze against Israel.
>
> "Hence Jehovah said to Moses: 'Take all the head ones of the people and expose them to Jehovah toward the sun, that the burning anger of Jehovah may turn back from Israel.' Then Moses said to the judges of Israel: 'Each one of you kill his men who have an attachment [who paired themselves off, *AT;* yoked themselves, *RS*] with the Baal of Peor.'"—*NW; Mo.*

17 There were twenty-four thousand who died as a result of this breaking of their engagement to do "all that Jehovah has spoken." (Num. 25:9; 1 Cor. 10:8) More than seven hundred years later Jehovah referred to this shocking incident, by means of his prophet Hosea. He first tells how desirable the nation of Israel was to him and then tells how it was that many Israelites made themselves disgusting to him. Jehovah says: "Like grapes in the wilderness I found Israel. Like the early fig on a fig tree in its beginning I saw the forefathers of you people. They themselves went in to Baal of Peor, and they proceeded to dedicate themselves to the shameful thing, and they came to be disgusting like the thing of their love." (Hos. 9:10, *NW; AT*) Moffatt's Bible translation says: "They devoted themselves to Baal the Infamous." (Also *Leeser's*) Because it was from Jehovah God that those Israelites were separating themselves to go over to another deity, the *Revised Standard Version* says: "They . . . consecrated themselves to Baal." (Also *American Standard Version; New American Bible; New English Bible*)

18 Those unfaithful Israelites had been dedicated to the only living and true God, but now they separated themselves from Him to devote or dedicate themselves to Baal. To bring out that disloyal act, the Jewish Publication Society Bible says: "They separated themselves unto the shameful thing." The vital Hebrew verb here is *na·zar',* and is used in connection with what a Jewish Nazirite did when he specially separated himself to God. (Num. 6:1-8) In the days of the prophet Ezekiel, shortly before the first destruction of Jerusalem in 607 B.C.E., there were many Israelites who acted similarly to what the unfaithful Israelites did in the days of Moses on the plains of Moab. In regard to such disloyal ones Jehovah said to the prophet Ezekiel:

> "Any man at all from the house of Israel or from the alien residents that reside as aliens in Israel, that withdraws himself [*na·zar'*] from following me and that brings up his dungy idols upon his heart and that sets the very stumbling block causing his error in front of his face . . . I must cut him off from the midst of my people; and you people will have to know that I am Jehovah."—Ezek. 14:7, 8.

16. On the plains of Moab, how did many choose not to remain in covenant relationship with Jehovah?

17. (a) How many died there for breaking their covenant with Jehovah? (b) How does Jehovah, at Hosea 9:10, speak of their attaching themselves to the Baal of Peor?

18. (a) How does the Jewish Publication Society translation of Hosea 9:10 bring out the disloyalty of their act toward Jehovah? (b) How is the disloyalty brought out in connection with the same Hebrew word in Ezekiel 14:7, 8?

19 Thus the very language indicates that those separatist Israelites were first in a covenant relationship with Jehovah God, into which relationship their forefathers had brought them by saying to the mediator Moses: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do and be obedient." (Ex. 24:7; 19:8) But now, by forsaking the covenant and going over to idolatry, they were breaking their dedication to Jehovah and dedicating themselves to the thing idolized. Numbers 25:3, instead of speaking of Israel's separating itself to Baal, says definitely: "So Israel attached itself [yoked himself, *RS; AS;* let himself be bound, *Ro;* joined himself, *Yg;** *Mo; Le; Je;*† also verse 5] to the Baal of Peor." This should be a warning to us today, if any of us have any relationship with Jehovah God. (1 Cor. 10:6, 11) We do not desire to commit the same fatal mistake. It would mean disloyalty to or rebellion against divine rulership.

LEADING THE WAY TO A NEW COVENANT

20 The covenant that Jehovah made through Moses with the dedicated people of Israel was a "covenant to time indefinite." That covenant entered into at Mount Sinai was not faultless, because of the imperfection of the Israelites and their mediator Moses. It allowed place, therefore, for a better covenant, a new covenant. Accordingly Jehovah God purposed a new covenant, and the privilege of entering into this second covenant was to be offered to the nation of natural Israel. More than six hundred years before this new covenant was inaugurated through a new mediator, Jehovah foretold it through the prophet Jeremiah in the seventh century before the coming of that better Mediator. (Jer. 31:31-34; Heb. 8:6-13) The coming of this better and greater Mediator was foretold by the prophet Moses, and he said that this coming mediator would be raised up from among the Israelites; he would be a natural Israelite.—Deut. 18:15-19; Acts 3:22, 23; 7:37, 38.

21 In the year 2 B.C.E. that better Mediator was born, as a descendant of King David and in David's city, Bethlehem. At the same time he was the Son of God, and at his birth the angel of God announced to the shepherds in the fields near Bethlehem: "I am declaring to you good news of a great joy that all the people will have, because there was born to you today a Savior, who is Christ the Lord." (Luke 2:10, 11) Being born of a Jewish mother, this one who was to be "Christ the Lord" was a natural Jew and under the Law of the covenant that Moses had mediated between God and Israel. In confirmation of this we read, in Galatians 4:4: "But when the full limit of the time arrived, God sent forth his Son, who came to be out of a woman and who came to be under law." Being under the law of the covenant with Israel, Jesus Christ celebrated the Passover supper. At his last celebration of the Passover, in 33 C.E., he pointed to himself as being the Mediator of the promised new covenant. How? He now set up what is called the Lord's Supper, and when he handed out the cup of wine to his faithful apostles he said: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be

* Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible (1862).

† *The Jerusalem Bible* (1966).

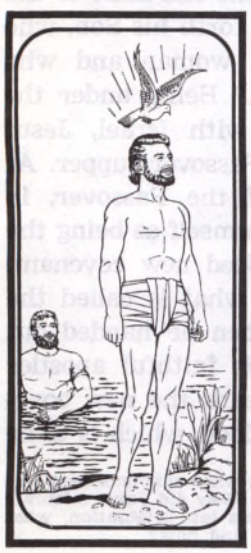
19. (a) Does the dedication of those disloyal Israelites to the Baal of Peor involve any other dedication? (b) Instead of speaking of a separating of themselves to Baal of Peor, what does Numbers 25:3 definitely say?

20. (a) Why was that first covenant not faultless, and so what did this allow for? (b) Through what prophet was the new covenant foretold, and what did Moses say about the better mediator?

21. (a) When, where and with what announcement was this better mediator born? (b) Why did Jesus celebrate the Jewish Passover, and at his last celebration, what did he identify himself to be, and how?

poured out in your behalf." (Luke 22:20) Jesus shed his own blood to validate that covenant.

[22] However, like the prophet Moses, the Lord Jesus had to undertake to become that Mediator of the new covenant. When did he undertake to do this? At the time of his baptism in the Jordan River. At the age of thirty years he left his carpenter shop in Nazareth and went to John the Baptist to be immersed in water. This was a new kind of baptism for John to perform. Up till then, as we read in Mark 1:4, "John the baptizer turned up in the wilderness, preaching baptism in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins." (Luke 3:3) But Jesus the Son of God did not come to John the Baptist to be baptized in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins. Jesus was perfect and sinless. (Heb. 7:26) He did not come to John with a bad conscience and seek to have a "request made to God for a good conscience." (1 Pet. 3:21) John knew this, and that is why we read that John "tried to prevent him, saying: 'I am the one needing to be baptized by you, and are you coming to me?' " What, though, did Jesus reply?



[23] "In reply Jesus said to him: 'Let it be, this time, for in that way it is suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous.' " (Matt. 3:13-15) What did Jesus mean by that? As a natural Jew, he had kept the law of the Mosaic covenant faultlessly. On this point he said later on in his Sermon on the Mount: "Do not think I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I came, not to destroy, but to fulfill." (Matt. 5:17) Of course, the Law covenant with Israel was God's will, but Jesus had been carrying out God's will in that respect all through his earthly life down to his baptism. So Jesus' words, "all that is righteous," meant something that went beyond the Law covenant, but something that would be in fulfillment of the symbolic features of the Law covenant. This was "all that is righteous," for it was God's will for him to carry this out. So this is what he undertook to do at his baptism.

[24] By presenting himself for baptism, Jesus really fulfilled the words of "the Prophets," just as he said. The apostle Paul indicates which of the prophecies Jesus fulfilled, in Hebrews 10:5-10, where we read concerning Jesus at the time of his coming for baptism: "Hence when he comes into the world he says: 'Sacrifice and offering you did not want, but you prepared a body for me. You did not approve of whole burnt offerings and sin offering.' Then I said, 'Look! I am come (in the roll of the book it is written about me) to do your will, O God.' . . . By the said 'will' we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all time." Jesus was thus fulfilling Psalm 40:6-8. The "will" of God called for Jesus to sacrifice himself, his "body."

22. (a) When did Jesus undertake to become the mediator of the new covenant? (b) Why did John at first object to baptizing Jesus?
23. What did Jesus reply to John, and why did he speak of its being "suitable for us to carry out all that is righteous" even though he had kept the Law?
24. According to Hebrews 10:5-10, which particular one of the prophecies was Jesus fulfilling by presenting himself for baptism?

[25] Since the prophecy called for this, well, then, Jesus would have had a bad conscience if he did *not come to do* God's special will and therefore present himself to John for baptism. It is evident that Jesus' being baptized was symbolic. His baptism was not "in symbol of repentance for forgiveness of sins." It was in symbol of Jesus' coming or presenting himself to do God's will, which divine *"will"* included the offering of Jesus' body in sacrifice once for all time. As a natural Jew he was already under the Mosaic law and was a member of the only nation on earth then dedicated to God, to do "all that Jehovah *has* spoken." Also, as the firstborn son of Mary, whose firstborn son her husband Joseph adopted as his own firstborn son, Jesus was sanctified to God and belonged to him. (Ex. 13:1, 2) For this reason Jesus had to be redeemed by Joseph and Mary in order to allow him to engage in secular work. (Num. 3:13-51; 18:14-16) So Jesus' baptism pictured, not a dedication of himself to God, but the presentation of himself to do God's will even to the point of sacrifice.

[26] Jehovah God made manifest that he accepted this presentation of his Son Jesus in that He poured out his holy spirit upon the baptized Jesus and let His voice be heard from heaven, saying: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matt. 3:16, 17) Thereafter John the Baptist announced the anointed Jesus as "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:28-36; Acts 10:37, 38) Jesus carried out God's will to the very end of his days in the flesh on earth. During his last night on earth in his natural human body he prayed to God and said: "My Father, if it is not possible for this to pass away except I drink it, let your will take place." (Matt. 26:39-44) On the following afternoon, about three o'clock, while Jesus was hanging on the torture stake, as John 19:30 tells us, "Jesus said: 'It has been accomplished!' and, bowing his head, he delivered up his spirit." Thus, according to God's will, Jesus' body was offered up once for all time.

[27] In harmony with this sacrificial offering up of his perfect human body, Jesus Christ was raised from the dead on the third day, not in a body of blood and flesh, but in a spirit body. (1 Pet. 3:18; 1 Cor. 15:42-45) On the fortieth day from his resurrection, Jesus ascended to heaven and there presented to God the value or merit of his human sacrifice in behalf of all mankind. He had said on earth that he had come "to minister and to give his soul a ransom in exchange for many." (Matt. 20:28) The apostle Paul speaks of Jesus as "having suffered death, that he by God's undeserved kindness might taste death for every man." Paul also speaks of "a man, Christ Jesus, who gave himself a corresponding ransom for all." (Heb. 2:9; 1 Tim. 2:5, 6) Thus Jesus Christ, by

25. (a) Of what, then, was Jesus' water baptism a symbol? (b) How was Jesus already dedicated and redeemed?

26. (a) How did God make manifest his acceptance of Jesus' presentation of himself? (b) To what extent did Jesus in the flesh carry out that divine "will"?

27. (a) What kind of resurrection did Jesus Christ have, and why? (b) How did he then come into possession of all mankind, with what in store for the dead?

presenting to God the life value of his human sacrifice, ransomed all mankind, purchased them, even without their requesting him to do so. On this account, there will be, under his heavenly kingdom, a "resurrection of both the righteous and the unrighteous." (Acts 24:15) Jesus Christ owns them all.

28 In this way, according to the divine "will," Jesus Christ the Son of God became the Chief Agent of salvation to all mankind. This is what we are to understand from Hebrews 2:9, 10, which reads: "We behold Jesus, who has been made a little lower than angels, crowned with glory and honor for having suffered death, that he by God's undeserved kindness might taste death for every man. For it was fitting for the one for whose sake all things are and through whom all things are, in bringing many sons to glory, to make the Chief Agent of their salvation perfect through sufferings." And in Hebrews 5:9, 10: "And after he had been made perfect he became responsible for everlasting salvation to all those obeying him, because he has been specifically called by God a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek." This one proved himself worthy to serve as the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership.

28. (a) Thus the resurrected Jesus Christ became what with respect to mankind's salvation? (b) Of what greater thing does he serve also as Chief Agent?

Following

The Chief Agent of Divine Rulership

FOR the natural circumcised Jews things were not the same after Jesus Christ ascended to the heavenly presence of Jehovah God and offered to him the precious merit of his human sacrifice. By reason of this the old Mosaic covenant was canceled, and a new covenant was validated with the blood of the Son of God, the Mediator of this covenant. The opportunity to be taken into this new covenant was first offered to the natural Jews. Their forefathers of fifteen centuries previous had declared to the mediator Moses: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." But this did not count for their descendants as respects the *new* covenant. For this latter covenant there was a new Mediator greater than Moses, namely, Jesus Christ. To be taken into the new covenant they had to answer to this better and greater Mediator: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do and be obedient." In imitation of the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership, Jesus Christ the Mediator, these natural Jews had to present themselves to Jehovah, to do his will as transmitted to them through this new and greater Mediator.

2 Truly a new situation had arisen for

1. (a) Why did the decision that their forefathers made at Mount Sinai not count for the natural circumcised Jews now when it came to the *new* covenant? (b) Whom did those Jews have to imitate, and in what way?

2. According to what Peter said to the Jews on Pentecost of 33 C.E., what had God done to Jesus that changed the situation for those natural Jews?

the natural Jews and they individually had to adjust themselves to it. The Christian apostle Peter pointed this out to them on the festival day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., after Jehovah God through Jesus Christ poured out the holy spirit upon the faithful followers of the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership. After explaining what had miraculously taken place and why, Peter said to those thousands of assembled Jews: "Actually David did not ascend to the heavens, but he himself says, 'Jehovah said to my Lord: "Sit at my right hand, until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet." ' Therefore let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom you impaled."—Acts 2:34-36.

3 How, now, under the new set of circumstances did those listening Jews declare, "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do," and thus show themselves worthy to be taken into the new covenant? It was by accepting the once impaled Jesus as their Lord and as Jehovah's Christ or Messiah and as their Mediator who was foretold and foreshadowed by the prophet Moses. Salvation could come to them through no other way. Thousands of those Jews were stabbed to the heart by what they heard Peter say. So, when they asked Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Men, brothers, what shall we do?" Peter directed them to God's Chief Agent of life by saying: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children and to all those afar off, just as many as Jehovah our God may call to him. . . . Get saved from this crooked generation." (Acts 2:37-40) If after they got immersed in water they received the free gift of God's holy spirit through Christ this meant that they were taken into the new covenant.

4 Well, then, what did their baptism in water symbolize? Inasmuch as their baptism was to be "in the name of Jesus Christ" and since it was preceded by their repentance toward Jehovah God, it symbolized their presenting of themselves to God to do his will. Doing his will included their accepting of Jesus Christ as their God-given "Lord" and as their God-given "Christ" or Messiah.

5 Without accepting Jesus Christ as "both Lord and Christ" they could not gain "forgiveness of [their] sins." These sins that God now forgave through Jesus Christ were not the sins that they had committed against the Mosaic Law covenant. That covenant with natural Israel was now past, canceled, and the promised new covenant had now been mediated by the better Mediator, Jesus Christ. So the sins over which they needed to repent toward God were primarily their sin against God by sharing in the impalement of his Son Jesus Christ together with their sins in general. Their receiving forgiveness of sins from God through Christ would result in their getting a good conscience. Regarding this we read:

6 "How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?"—Heb. 9:14.

7 This forgiveness of sins that results

3. (a) How, as illustrated by their forefathers at Mount Sinai, would those Jews show themselves worthy to be taken into the new covenant? (b) After doing what Peter and the other apostles told them to do, what would signify that those Jews had been taken into the new covenant?

4. What, then, did the water baptism of those Jews symbolize?

5, 6. (a) Their receiving forgiveness of sins would come through whom, and what were their sins that now needed to be forgiven? (b) According to Hebrews 9:14, in what would the forgiveness of their sins result for them?

7. According to the terms of the new covenant, what was promised respecting sins, and through whom were those baptized Jews taken into that covenant?

in a good conscience toward God was what He had promised in the terms of the new covenant. When Jehovah foretold the new covenant by the prophet Jeremiah, Jehovah closed this prophecy by saying: "For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more." (Jer. 31:31-34) Centuries later, when the apostle Paul wrote to the Christianized Hebrews, who were the natural descendants of Abraham, "Jehovah's friend," he quoted from Jeremiah's prophecy and went on to say: " 'For I shall be merciful to their unrighteous deeds, and I shall by no means call their sins to mind anymore.' In his saying 'a new covenant' he has made the former one obsolete. Now that which is made obsolete and growing old is near to vanishing away." (Heb. 8:12, 13) It logically follows, therefore, that the three thousand Jews who repented and got baptized in the name of Jesus Christ and received the free gift of the holy spirit were taken into the new covenant through the 'better mediator,' Jesus Christ.—Acts 2:41.

[8] Some days after that Pentecostal experience, Peter and John found themselves at the temple in Jerusalem. In addressing the crowd that gathered about them, Peter again pointed the Jews to the Chief Agent for divine rulership. Peter also pointed to their need to repent and be converted, seeking the refreshment that comes from the forgiveness of their sins from God through Christ. Peter went on to say:

[9] "The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our forefathers, has done this honor to his servant Jesus, whom you betrayed and disowned before Pilate, when he had decided to let him go. But you disowned the Holy, Righteous One. You asked to have a murderer released for you, and killed the very source [the prince, *Je;* the Chief Agent, *NW*] of life. But God raised him from the dead, as we can testify. . . . So repent and turn to God, to have your sins wiped out, and happier times will come from the presence of the Lord, and he will send Jesus, your destined Christ. . . . It was to you that God first sent his servant after he had raised him from the dead, to bless you by making every one of you turn from his wickedness."—Acts 3:13-26, *AT; Je; NW.*

[10] Before Peter and John could arrange for any repentant Jews there in the temple to get baptized, the situation changed, for we read: "Now while the two were speaking to the people, the chief priests and the captain of the temple and the Sadducees came upon them, being annoyed because they were teaching the people and were plainly declaring the resurrection from the dead in the case of Jesus." (Acts 4:1, 2) So Peter and John were taken into custody for the night, and the next day they were put on trial and released. Before the Court they declared that there is no other name under heaven that has been given among men by which to be saved except the name of the Chief Agent of Jehovah's divine rulership. (Acts 4:3-23) The apostles refused to stop following that one with such a precious name.

[11] Vicious persecution broke out later in Jerusalem and the faithful Jewish Christian Stephen was stoned to death. The disciples of Christ were scattered from Jerusalem, with the exception of the twelve apostles. Among the scattered ones was Philip the Evangelizer. He went north to the city of Samaria and "began to preach the Christ to them." Philip brought great

8, 9. Some days later in the temple, to whom did Peter point the Jews, and what did he declare that they needed to do, with what result to them?

10. Why was there no baptism of repentant Jews on that occasion, and what did Peter and John tell the Court was the only name by which to gain salvation?

11. (a) How did Philip the evangelizer come to preach in Samaria? (b) In whose name were the believing Samaritans baptized, and so whose disciples did they become?

joy to the city by what he preached and the miraculous signs that he performed. The Samaritans held to the Pentateuch or five books written by Moses, and they practiced circumcision. Accordingly, many of them accepted Jesus Christ as the 'better mediator' who was foreshadowed by Moses. In the case of these Samaritan believers, Philip carried out what Jesus had commanded to do, for we read: "But when they believed Philip, who was declaring the good news of the kingdom of God and of the name of Jesus Christ, they proceeded to get baptized, both men and women." (Acts 8:1-13; Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 1:8) Those Samaritans were baptized in the name of Jesus; they became believing, baptized disciples of him.

12 After making many disciples among those circumcised Samaritans, Philip was directed by God's angel to a circumcised proselyte to Judaism. This man, an Ethiopian eunuch, was returning from worship at Jerusalem. When Philip hailed the chariot and accosted him, the Ethiopian was reading in the prophecy of Isaiah, in what is now the fifty-third chapter. The Ethiopian asked Philip as to whom Isaiah was there describing. Then, as Acts 8:35 tells us, "Philip opened his mouth and, starting with this Scripture, he declared to him the good news about Jesus." Philip also told the Ethiopian about water baptism, and the man asked to be baptized as soon as they reached a suitable body of water. Philip baptized him, of course, in the name of Jesus. (Acts 8:36-39) Like those believing Samaritans, this circumcised Ethiopian presented himself to Jehovah God to do his will as a disciple of Jesus Christ.

12. (a) How did Philip come to preach to an Ethiopian eunuch in his chariot, and in whose name did Philip baptize him? (b) What course did that baptism indicate that the Ethiopian had taken?

"CONVERSION OF PEOPLE OF THE NATIONS"

13 Unlike the circumcised Jews who shared in a community responsibility for the putting of Jesus Christ to death outside Jerusalem, the people of the Gentile nations did not have to repent over any part in the impalement of the innocent Son of God. They were not under the curse of the Mosaic Law covenant. (Gal. 3:13) However, they were sinners who descended from sinful Adam and Eve, and they had plenty of pagan sins over which to repent and for which they were condemned to death by God. They were, as the apostle Paul said to them, "without Christ, alienated from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise, and you had no hope and were without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) They were generally uncircumcised people. But in the year 36 C.E. Jehovah God mercifully began to grant "repentance for the purpose of life to people of the nations also," through Jesus Christ. (Acts 11:18) The one with whom He started was Cornelius of Caesarea. This city was the provincial seat of Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor of the province of Judea.

14 The Italian centurion Cornelius and those whom he gathered into his house already knew something about Jesus Christ. So the apostle Peter, who was sent to preach to them, said to them: "You know the subject that was talked about throughout the whole of Judea, starting from Galilee after the baptism that John preached, namely, Jesus who was from Nazareth, how God anointed him with holy spirit and power, and he went through the land doing good and healing all those oppressed by the Devil; because God was

13. (a) How did the Gentiles differ from the Jews as to responsibility for Jesus' death and as to the curse of the Law? (b) When and with whom did Jehovah begin granting repentance to the Gentiles?
14. Did Cornelius and those gathered together in his house know already something about Jesus, and what did Peter tell them about getting forgiveness of sins?

with him. And we are witnesses of all the things he did." Peter continued on to say finally: "To him all the prophets bear witness, that everyone putting faith in him gets forgiveness of sins through his name." —Acts 10:37-43.

15 Silently, in their hearts, Cornelius and those Gentiles who were assembled with him became believers in Jesus Christ and they received this forgiveness of sins through his name and consequently a good conscience toward God. What evidence was there to that effect? The account tells us, saying: "While Peter was yet speaking about these matters the holy spirit fell upon all those hearing the word. And the faithful ones that had come with Peter . . . heard them speaking with tongues and [magnifying] God. Then Peter responded: 'Can anyone forbid water so that these might not be baptized who have received the holy spirit even as we have?' With that he commanded them to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ." (Acts 10:44-48) These became believing baptized disciples of Christ.

16 This was the start, and afterward, as time went on, other uncircumcised Gentiles were converted and got baptized in the name of Jesus. Take the case in Philippi of Macedonia, about the year 50 C.E. After the apostle Paul had healed a demonized fortune-telling girl, he and his companion Silas were imprisoned on false charges. About midnight, as they were audibly praying and praising God, a great earthquake occurred and all prisoners miraculously found themselves free of bonds. Paul called out to the frightened jailer not to kill himself, for no prisoners had escaped. What now happened? Let us read:

15. What shows whether those listening Gentiles received the forgiveness of sins, and, at Peter's command, what did they become?

16. How did Paul and Silas come to find themselves in jail in Philippi of Macedonia, and what happened there at midnight?

17 "Seized with trembling, he fell down before Paul and Silas. And he brought them outside and said: 'Sirs, what must I do to get saved?' They said: 'Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved, you and your household.' And they spoke the word of Jehovah to him together with all those in his house. And he took them along in that hour of the night and bathed their stripes; and, one and all, he and his were baptized without delay. And he brought them into his house and set a table before them, and he rejoiced greatly with all his household now that he had believed God."—Acts 16:29-34.

18 This uncircumcised Philippian jailer and his household became baptized members of the Christian congregation in Philippi, and doubtless received the holy spirit by the laying of the apostle Paul's hands upon them. (Phil. 1:1) "Believe on the Lord Jesus and you will get saved," they were told. Much must be understood in that simple expression, "Believe on the Lord Jesus." This, and also the fact that the uncircumcised Gentile Cornelius and his fellow believers in his home got "baptized in the name of Jesus Christ," cause the question to arise, Toward whom was the main action for salvation directed—toward Jesus Christ or toward Jehovah God? The answer is affected by the fact that, after simply telling the Philippian jailer how to "get saved," Paul and Silas "spoke the word of Jehovah" to him and all his household and the jailer rejoiced greatly "now that he had believed God."

19 We must remember that these uncir-

17. How did Paul and Silas tell the jailer and his household to get saved, and how did they act on the information?

18. (a) Of what group did the jailer and his household become members? (b) According to the command "Believe on the Lord Jesus," was the main action for salvation to be directed to Jesus, and how is the answer affected by what took place afterward in that connection?

19. What, according to Paul, was the religious or spiritual condition of those uncircumcised pagans, and to whom did they need to dedicate themselves for salvation?

cumcised pagans were, not only "without Christ," but also "alienated from the state of Israel and strangers to the covenants of the promise" and "without God in the world." (Eph. 2:12) They belonged to that class of pagans to whom Paul wrote, saying: "You know that when you were people of the nations, you were being led away to those voiceless idols just as you happened to be led." Also: "You turned to God from your idols to slave for a living and true God." (1 Cor. 12:2; 1 Thess. 1:9) They were dedicated to those idols or to the false gods whom those idols represented. They may have borne on their bodies markings to indicate openly to which god they were especially devoted. (Compare Ezekiel 9:4-6; Hosea 9:10.) Fundamentally, then, these ignorant uncircumcised pagans needed to hear about the one "living and true God," who is Jehovah. Then, in order to gain salvation, they needed to dedicate themselves to Him, to do his will. This God would inform them through whom this dedication to Him could be made. Obeying Him, they could be baptized.

[20] This procedure is plainly set forth by the apostle Paul in Romans, chapter ten. There, in verses five through ten, he makes the application of what Jehovah God inspired Moses to say in Deuteronomy 30:11-14. Here is the way this latter citation reads:

[21] "For this commandment that I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it far away. It is not in the heavens, so as to result in saying, 'Who will ascend for us into the heavens and get it for us, that he may let us hear it that we may do it?' Neither is it on the other side of the sea, so as to result in saying, 'Who will pass over for us to the other side of the sea and get it for us, that he may let us hear it that we may do it?' For the word is very near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart, that you may do it."

[22] Let us take note that the inspired Moses calls this a "commandment," something that they are to do toward God. From Mount Sinai onward this "commandment" in a comprehensive way has been revealed to them. As a result of this written Law code, repeatedly rehearsed to them during the forty years, they know it and can say it with their mouths, as if it were on the tip of their tongue. It had also been inculcated in their hearts, so as to help them to get the sense of it and appreciate it. Hence, all that remained now was for them to determine to do this expressed will of God. This is evidently what Jehovah helped those Israelites to do by having them make a supplementary covenant with Him through Moses. Respecting this, Deuteronomy 29:1 says: "These are the words of the covenant that Jehovah commanded Moses to conclude with the sons of Israel in the land of Moab aside from the covenant that he had concluded with them in Horeb."

[23] All that had a typical meaning, prefiguring something in connection with the Greater Moses, the 'better mediator,' Jesus Christ. The Christian apostle Paul explains to us the antitypical meaning, in his letter to the Romans, chapter ten, in order to show how we can get righteousness with God and a good conscience toward him. This calls for faith toward God, inasmuch as righteousness cannot be gained by a person's self-efforts to keep the Mosaic Law. Trusting in their own works to prove

20, 21. In Romans, chapter ten, what words by Moses to the Israelites does Paul quote regarding the availability of God's commandment?

22. (a) How did God's commandment come to be very near to those Israelites there on the plains of Moab, even in their mouths and in their hearts? (b) So what only did it remain for those Israelites to do? (c) Their doing this was indicated by their concluding what with God at that time?

23. (a) Who explains to us the antitypical meaning of that, and where? (b) How close to the Jews did God make his provision for righteousness, but why did they fail to avail themselves of it?

them righteous before God, the Jews felt no need to exercise faith in the provision that God made available for them, putting it right near them, in their midst, where they could get it. To gain salvation, Christians must do far differently from those unbelieving Jews.

CONFESSION WITH THE MOUTH

[24] In agreement with this requirement, which is according to the commandment of God, the apostle Paul proceeds to say: "For Moses writes that the man that has done the righteousness of the Law will live by it. But the righteousness resulting from faith speaks in this manner: 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?" that is, to bring Christ down; or, "Who will descend into the abyss?" that is, to bring Christ up from the dead.' But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your own mouth and in your own heart'; that is, the 'word' of faith, which we are preaching. For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."—Rom. 10:5-10.

[25] Especially by means of the apostle Paul, who was, "in reality, an apostle to the nations," and by his fellow missionaries, the "word" about God and his Christ was brought near to the people of the Gentile nations, so that they could repeat it with their mouths and entertain it appreciatively in their hearts. Also, Jesus Christ had made this information possible for them by coming down from heaven to bear witness concerning God and his purpose; and he had also been raised up from the dead by Almighty God in order that he might be a living testimony to the outworking and realization of God's purpose. It was also unmistakably proved thereby that he was the "Lord," the Chief Agent of Jehovah's divine rulership. So the lifesaving "word" was there, where these Gentiles could get it, as near to them as in their mouths and hearts. But the question was, What were they going to do with it? If they wanted everlasting salvation, there was only one thing for them to do about it. Also, what they were to do with it for salvation was commanded upon them by God himself. Remember that Moses was inspired to call that "word" a "commandment that I am commanding you today." (Deut. 30:11-14) To get saved, we must obey.

[26] Yes, Jehovah God, who sets all the terms for salvation, commands that we accept in faith the word, namely, that Jesus Christ is Lord and that God raised him up from the dead. This is exactly what Jesus told the Jews in answer to their question: "What shall we do to work the works of God?" Jesus said: "This is the work of God, that you exercise faith in him whom that One sent forth." (John 6:28, 29) This applies to the non-Jews or uncircumcised Gentiles also. There is therefore no other course left but for the informed Gentiles to dedicate themselves to God to do the will of God, to work the work of God. They must turn away from the false idolatrous gods to which they had till then been dedicated. This is in alignment with what the apostle Paul told the pagan Greeks gathered upon the Areopagus, Athens:

---

24. (a) What did Moses say regarding the Law and gaining life, but what does the righteousness that calls for faith say about the availability of God's commandment? (b) What parts do the heart and mouth play as to righteousness and salvation?

25. (a) How near did Paul make that "word" to the Gentiles, and how did the Lord Jesus specially make that information possible for us to have? (b) Now that the "word" was so near, what was the question with regard to those seeking salvation?

26, 27. (a) What "word" is it that God commands us to accept in faith? (b) What did Jesus tell the Jews was the "work of God" about which they asked, and how did Paul say to the Greeks on the Areopagus, Athens, that this is the "work" that God commands?

27 "True, God has overlooked the times of such ignorance, yet now he is telling [calls upon, *AT;* charging, *Ro;* commands, *RS*] mankind that they should all everywhere repent. Because he has set a day in which he purposes to judge the inhabited earth in righteousness by a man whom he has appointed, and he has furnished a guarantee to all men in that he has resurrected him from the dead."—Acts 17:30, 31.

"PUBLIC DECLARATION FOR SALVATION"

28 In harmony with our dedication to Jehovah God to do his will by keeping his commandments, we must obediently do as commanded: "exercise faith in your heart." We know that the heart is that from which affection or love springs and that it has power to move its possessor. With it we feel appreciation. So with the heart we must "exercise faith" in what? In that "word" that Jehovah God has brought near to us by means of Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul says that this "word" is, to quote him, "the 'word' of faith, which we are preaching." The acceptance of that "word" preached by the apostle Paul calls for the exercise of faith, and we must do this with the heart. We must fix our hearts upon that "word" preached. In our hearts we must develop a love for that "word." With our hearts we must build up a sincere appreciation of that "word." This condition of the heart will move or motivate us to put faith in that word and accept it and act upon it.

29 Regarding *what* is it required to "exercise faith in [our] heart"? Regarding this: "that God raised him up from the dead." Ah, here we see that it is not just "believe on the Lord Jesus" in order to get saved. (Acts 16:31) First of all, we must exercise faith in God. It still remains true, as Paul reminds us, that "everyone who calls on the name of Jehovah will be saved." (Rom. 10:13) It is Jehovah whom we must love with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. He is the Almighty One who raised up Jesus Christ from the dead to life immortal. Jehovah is therefore the one to whom our main action is directed. It is to him that we must make the dedication of ourselves to do His will, to keep His commandments.—Rom. 10:8, 9.

30 So our dedicated hearts, full of love and appreciation, must move us to exercise faith that Jehovah God performed the astounding miracle of raising up the impaled Jesus Christ from the dead. In that way God made it possible for Jesus Christ to ascend to the divine presence in heaven and there present the value of his atoning sacrifice for the benefit of all mankind, thus purchasing them all. By dying sacrificially, Jesus Christ went down into the "abyss," but Jehovah's spirit or active force descended into that "abyss" in order "to bring Christ up from the dead." Thus by means of a living Christ, the Almighty God Jehovah could cause the "word" to be available for us, he could give content or substance to that "word," he could make that "word" contain a life-giving message for us. All things considered, then, Jehovah is the main one toward whom we should take action by dedicating ourselves to him. But this we must do through his Chief Agent, Jesus Christ. —Rom. 10:6, 7; Heb. 2:9, 10; 5:8, 9.

31 Inevitably it follows that we must call "on the name of Jehovah" to be saved. (Rom. 10:13; Acts 2:21; Joel 2:32) This

28. (a) What are we commanded to do by means of the heart? (b) What is the "word" that we are to accept by faith? (c) How do we cultivate such faith in our hearts, so that we do what?

29. Regarding what must we exercise faith in our hearts, and so to whom is our main action directed for salvation?

30. (a) With our hearts, what must we believe that God did regarding Jesus Christ? (b) Thus in what sense did God make a substantial "word" available for us?

31. So upon whose name must we call for salvation, but why must our mouths also make a confession regarding Jesus Christ?

calls for the mouth, as motivated by the heart, to do something. With the mouth we are obliged to call upon the name of Jehovah. But now, since God brought up Christ from the dead, we cannot do this calling apart from Jesus Christ. With our mouths we must also make a confession regarding Jesus Christ. That is why the apostle Paul, when discussing the "word" of faith that he was preaching, goes on to say: "For if you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, and exercise faith in your heart that God raised him up from the dead, you will be saved. For [1] with the heart one exercises faith for righteousness, but [2] with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation."—Rom. 10:9, 10.

[32] When is it that "with the mouth one makes public declaration for salvation"? This is and must be before the dedicated believer gets baptized "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit." (Matt. 28:19, 20; Acts 16:31-33; 17:33; 19:1-7) This public declaration is a confession, as the *Kingdom Interlinear Translation* and other Bible translations show. (*RS; Mo; Je; AS*) Byington's translation and *An American Translation* render it as an "acknowledgment." This confession or acknowledgment is what we as *now* dedicated believers orally make to or before the Christian minister who presides over the baptism in water. Of course, we continue making this confession thereafter in our congregational meetings. (Heb. 10:23) Also, before governmental or judicial authorities who may demand an explanation of our Christian hope. (1 Pet. 3:15) Also, in our public house-to-house preaching and in our making return visits to the private homes of people whom we have found to be interested. But, of necessity, this confession begins before baptism. Mere oral witnessing as an undedicated person before baptism does not save.

[33] Of course, a confession means a declaring, disclosing, admitting or acknowledging of something to another or to others. So, now, what is it that we must declare, or acknowledge, by word of mouth to others? It is the "word," of course. Paul says: "If you publicly declare that 'word in your own mouth,' that Jesus is Lord, . . . you will be saved." (Rom. 10:9) Hence we cannot leave Jesus Christ out of God's purposes and arrangements, for Jesus is "the Chief Agent of their salvation." (Heb. 2:10) We must orally declare, confess, admit, acknowledge that Jesus is, not only King David's "Lord," but also our personal "Lord." (Ps. 110:1; Acts 2:34-46) We must make this declaration

The "public declaration for salvation" by dedicated believers begins before baptism when they orally answer questions of the minister presiding over the baptism

32. (a) This making of public declaration with our mouths is spoken of as what in other Bible translations? (b) When is it that this oral confession is made for salvation?

33. What does confession mean, and what is it that we must confess before others for salvation?

before others according to the "word" that was inspired by God's spirit.

[34] This is why the apostle Paul said: "Therefore I would have you [former devotees of idols] know that nobody when speaking by God's spirit says: 'Jesus is accursed!' and nobody can say: 'Jesus is Lord!' except by holy spirit." (1 Cor. 12:2, 3) God's spirit in us guides us to make the right confession, acknowledgment or declaration to others, namely, that Jesus is "Lord" by God's appointment. God raised Jesus from the dead that he might be a *living* Lord. God seated the resurrected Jesus at his own right hand and made him "Lord" higher than all other creation. If we desire eternal salvation, we are bound to hold fast to the public declaration, confession, acknowledgment that we made before our water baptism, namely, that Jesus Christ is the Lord whom Jehovah God has appointed over us and whom we lovingly accept.

DENYING ONESELF

[35] Confessing with our mouth that Jesus is our Lord lays a certain obligation upon us. Jesus referred to this after rebuking Peter for trying to dissuade him from continuing on his way to death on the torture stake at Jerusalem. We read: "Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any man would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow me.'" (Matt. 16:24, *RS*) Byington's translation reads: "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him disown himself and take up his cross and follow me." In explaining what "to deny" means, *The American College Dictionary* says, among other things: "4. To refuse to recognize or acknowledge; disown, disavow; repudiate."

[36] On the night of Jesus' betrayal by Judas Iscariot, the apostle Peter denied Jesus three times. After those who were suspicious of Peter accused him three times of being an associate of Jesus, then, as Matthew 26:74 tells us, Peter "started to curse and swear: 'I do not know the man!'" By thus denying Jesus, Peter put himself out of the associates or followers of Jesus. By doing this, Peter did not just put him by himself away from everybody else. No, rather, he put himself with or on the side of those who did not follow Jesus, but who thought Jesus ought to be brought to trial for his life. Or, to use the other word, "disown," Peter by disowning Jesus as his Leader and Teacher was claiming ownership to someone else as his leader and teacher. By disowning Jesus, Peter was not putting himself in a neutral position, a place that favors neither side of the issue, a place that just exists by itself and has no connection with anybody else. By disowning Jesus, Peter had to claim ownership of someone else.

[37] The same is true with what Jesus said to his disciples in Matthew 16:24. By denying oneself and taking up one's torture stake and continuing following Jesus, one is not just saying No! to himself as respects a personal desire now and another personal desire then. He is, in fact, saying No! to himself as respects the remainder of his life course as a selfish non-follower of Jesus Christ. By denying himself he turns his back on that self-seeking, materialistic course of life and becomes a follower of Jesus, carrying a torture stake of death the same as Jesus did. He denies himself as his own personal

34. According to 1 Corinthians 12:2, 3, under the leading of what do we confess that Jesus is Lord, and how long do we hold fast to that confession for salvation?
35. What did Jesus tell his apostles must be done by one who wants to come after him?

36. (a) When did Peter deny Jesus three times, and thereby whom was he acknowledging? (b) By disowning Jesus, to what did Peter lay claim to ownership?
37. So what does denying oneself in order to follow Jesus mean, and according to whose will is this done?

leader and decider and recognizes, acknowledges Jesus Christ as his Leader and Teacher. This step is taken, of course, according to God's will.

[38] The *New World Translation* renders Matthew 16:24: "If anyone wants to come after me, let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." What, then, in this case does disowning oneself mean? Certainly it means no longer laying claim to one's own ownership of oneself. In that case, we concede or yield over the ownership of ourselves to someone else and acknowledge, recognize, that one's ownership of us. We just do not become nobody's. Who, then, becomes our owner because of our disowning ourselves to become a stake bearer following continually after Jesus Christ? Without question, Jesus disowned himself; which meant that he recognized, acknowledged Jehovah's ownership of him, and himself as a slave of Jehovah. Consistently, then, when we, to become a follower of Jesus, disown ourselves, we concede, yield over, the ownership of ourselves to Jehovah, whose Christlike slave we become. We are no longer our own.

38. What does disowning ourselves in order to follow Jesus mean, and, like him, whose slaves do we become?

[39] What action, then, does this call for on the part of us who make this choice? It calls for our dedication of ourselves unreservedly to Jehovah God to do his will in imitation of his Son Jesus Christ. His will is for us to be the faithful disciples of Jesus Christ. His will is for us to declare, confess, acknowledge Jesus Christ as our "Lord" appointed by God. Jesus thus becomes our Master with authority to command us and to assign to us our duties. This dedication to Jehovah God we, of course, make after our repentance and conversion toward him. Our converted course of life we bring to its real objective by dedicating ourselves to Jehovah God through his Chief Agent Jesus Christ. This dedication we now symbolize by immersion in water. This is God's will, which will we have dedicated ourselves to Him to do. Before our water baptism we must make a public declaration or confession with our mouths for salvation, doing this in open expression of what we believe in our hearts. Only by doing this do we enter upon the way of eternal salvation from God through Christ.

39. (a) What action, then, does this call for on the part of those who make that choice? (b) How is that symbolized, but only after the making of what confession?

WATER BAPTISM'S CONNECTION With SALVATION

THE relationship of water baptism to salvation is commented upon by the apostle Peter in his first letter, chapter three. After telling of Jesus' being raised in the spirit and his preaching to the spirits in prison, Peter goes on to say: "The patience of God was waiting in Noah's days, while the ark was being constructed, in which a few people, that is, eight souls, were carried safely through the water. That which corresponds to this is also now saving you, namely, baptism,

1. (a) How does 1 Peter 3:20, 21 link the carrying of eight human souls through the Flood with Christian baptism? (b) How is the baptism distinguished from the water?

(not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request made to God for a good conscience,) through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." (1 Pet. 3:20, 21, *NW; RS; AT; Mo*) It is not the water that saves. Baptism is not the baptismal water. Baptism is the passing through the water by immersion therein. Baptism is an act, not water.

2 Noah was not saved by the Flood water. How he was saved, Hebrews 11:7 tells: "By faith Noah, after being given divine warning of things not yet beheld, showed godly fear and constructed an ark for the saving of his household; and through this faith he condemned the world, and he became an heir of the righteousness that is according to faith." Even before the flood "Noah was a righteous man. He proved himself faultless among his contemporaries. Noah walked with the true God." (Gen. 6:9) But the time came when Noah had to make a big decision. This was when God warned him of things to come in his generation and commanded him to build the huge ark. To do this called for faith and obedience on Noah's part. The question now was, Would Noah do God's will? He decided to do this biggest thing in his life. So he committed himself, dedicated himself to doing God's will. This led to salvation for him and his household. They were saved in that ark.—Compare Hebrews 10:7-9.

3 So that ark became a symbol of Noah's dedication of himself to do God's will and *his doing* that divine will with faith and in obedience. This ark, which was a concrete, tangible, practical expression of dedication to do God's will, was what saved Noah and seven other human souls. The Flood water did not save; it brought death to those outside the ark. Inside the ark, Noah and his household passed through the water and were saved. By dedicating himself to do God's will as respects the ark and then building it Noah got a good conscience toward God. His household *did* likewise with him. What righteousness they had up till building the ark would not alone, of itself, have saved them through the Flood. The house in which Noah and his household lived until entering the ark perished.

4 A thing corresponding to this is what occurs with those who become the baptized disciples of Jesus Christ. A good conscience toward God is not something that we are born with or that we work out for ourselves on our own terms by works of self-righteousness. The Jews tried gaining a good conscience toward Jehovah God by striving for perfection in doing the works commanded in the Mosaic Law covenant with their nation, but they failed. That is why, annually, every Atonement Day (Tishri 10), they had to have propitiatory sacrifices offered for them by Israel's high priest, to restore their good conscience toward God. Hence a good conscience is something for which we have to make a request to Jehovah God.

5 That is why Peter, when stating what baptism involves, says: "Not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the request made to God for a good conscience." (1 Pet. 3:21) How, then, do we make a request to God for that good conscience? We do this by doing like Noah, dedicating ourselves, before passing through the water. Like Noah we dedicate ourselves to Jehovah God to do his will and from then on proceed to do it. And since this has

2. (a) How does Hebrews 11:7 show the thing that resulted in Noah's salvation at the flood? (b) Despite Noah's walking with God before the flood, what decisive step did he have to take in order to be saved?
3. (a) So what was that lifesaving ark a symbol of respecting Noah and his family? (b) What inward possession did those eight souls gain for their obedience due to their faith?
4. Why, as illustrated in the case of the Jews under the Mosaic Law covenant, is a good conscience a thing that we have to make a request for to God?
5. (a) How do we make request to God for a good conscience, and get it? (b) Up till then, whose will were we working out?

to do with becoming associated with Jehovah's new covenant of which Jesus Christ is the Mediator, we must do as the people of Israel at Mount Sinai did before being taken into the Mosaic Law covenant, dedicating themselves to God with the words: "All that Jehovah has spoken we are willing to do." (Ex. 19:8; 24:7, 8) Up till then we "worked out the will of the nations" and lived "for the desires of men"; but now we dedicate ourselves to live "for God's will." (1 Pet. 4:1-3, 19) This results in our getting a good conscience, for when we know that we are doing God's will we enjoy a good conscience.

[6] Of course, we can do God's will in only an imperfect way, and for that reason we need the atoning blood of Jesus Christ to be applied by God's High Priest in our behalf, to cleanse us from the stain of sin and imperfection. As Hebrews 9:14 asks: "How much more will the blood of the Christ, who through an everlasting spirit offered himself without blemish to God, cleanse our consciences from dead works that we may render sacred service to the living God?"

[7] Thus the dedication of ourselves to God to do his will is really a "request made to God for a good conscience." The good conscience results, not from doing our own works of self-righteousness, which are "dead works," but from doing God's prescribed works, God's will. This is what we dedicate ourselves to Him to do. In order to keep this good conscience from when we first received it, we need to have recourse continually to the benefits of the shed blood of Jesus Christ as the propitiatory sacrifice of the great antitypical Atonement Day. As Hebrews 9:22 reminds us, "unless blood is poured out no forgiveness takes place." On this account we, who are forgiven through Christ, "have no consciousness of sins anymore."—Heb. 10:1, 2.

[8] Thus our dedication of ourselves to God through Christ constitutes a "request made to God for a good conscience." Why so? Because of ourselves, in our imperfect, sinful condition, we are not acceptable to God. So, because we repent of sin and turn around or get converted and dedicate ourselves to God through Christ, Jehovah applies the cleansing blood of Christ's atoning sacrifice to us, thereby relieving us of the condemnation of sin and giving us a good conscience toward Him. It may therefore be said that our baptism in water, our obediently passing through the baptismal water, symbolizes our dedication of ourselves to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ. Noah's obediently undertaking to do God's will by building the ark saved him and his household, and our dedicating ourselves to God to do his will and then faithfully carrying it out "is also now saving" us. In this connection we are calling upon the name of Jehovah to be saved. (Heb. 13:15, *RS*) We are believing on the Lord Jesus to be saved. (Acts 4:12) We are making open confession or public declaration with our mouths that "Jesus is Lord" and are believing in our hearts that "God raised him up from the dead," in order for us to be saved.

[9] On that account no one taking such positive steps as repentance, conversion and dedication has grounds for saying

6. Since we can do God's will only imperfectly now, what do we need to be applied in our behalf to retain a good conscience?
7. (a) What, then, does our dedication to God through Christ really represent, in the language of 1 Peter 3:21? (b) To keep this good conscience, to what do we need to have continual recourse?
8. (a) Because of our repenting and being converted and dedicating ourselves, what does God apply in our behalf, and with what result to us? (b) So what may our water baptism be said to symbolize? (c) What scriptures indicate whether it is water baptism alone that saves us?
9. What can one who has taken those positive steps not say later on respecting his "request made to God for a good conscience"?

later on that his "request made to God for a good conscience" was never answered and God never gave him a good conscience and so his dedication did not count and was not now binding upon him.

[10] Consequently we can now appreciate that if we want to be saved we must present ourselves for water baptism, in imitation of Jesus Christ and in obedience to his command. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Nothing could be more plainly stated, in 1 Peter 3:21, namely: "That which corresponds to this is also now saving you, namely, baptism, . . . through the resurrection of Jesus Christ." We must believe with our hearts that God resurrected him from the dead. A resurrected Jesus Christ is necessary to our salvation, for only a resurrected Son of God could act as God's High Priest in offering to God in heaven the value of his lifeblood that was poured out for us to get forgiveness of sins and a resulting good conscience. He is necessary to God's giving us a good conscience in answer to our request.—1 Pet. 3:22.

10. (a) In order that we might be saved, for what must we present ourselves? (b) Why is it "through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" that such baptism is also now saving us?

OUR MESSIANIC LEADER

[11] Even the "great crowd" that is today being gathered out from all nations, tribes, peoples and languages wash their robes and make them white in the blood of the Lamb Jesus Christ and thereby get a good conscience toward God. Good reason this is for them to be standing before the throne of God and to be waving palm branches and crying out loudly: "Salvation we owe to our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9-14) They are thus hailing Jehovah's Chief Agent of divine rulership. This one they follow as their Shepherd and Leader.

[12] All who become dedicated, baptized disciples of that Chief Agent of divine rulership must follow him. In order to do this, they need to "look intently at the Chief Agent and Perfecter of our faith, Jesus." (Heb. 12:1, 2) Our lovingly doing this will mean our everlasting salvation to the everlasting praise of the great Divine Ruler, Jehovah God.

11. Washing their robes in the Lamb's blood results in what to the "great crowd," and what good reason is there for them to hail this Lamb of God?
12. By whom on earth must the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership be followed, and what will their doing this mean for them?

PERSISTENCE

♦ Sometimes, even when one is attempting to do good for another, considerable persistence is required. This often proves true with the ministers of Jehovah's witnesses who are doing the best possible good, that of aiding people to understand and apply God's Word and thus be in line for divine blessings.

A woman minister of Jehovah's witnesses in Malaysia called on a young Chinese girl living in a garage behind a large home. She left with the girl a copy of the Bible study aid *From Paradise Lost to Paradise Regained* in the Chinese language. Arrangements were made for a return visit to establish a free home Bible study with the girl.

On the first visit the girl was busy with a big pile of ironing and had not read any of the book. Saturday was her day off from work, and so arrangements were made to call then. On the second call the Witness found that the girl still had a big pile of ironing as well as a room full of visiting relatives. Coming the next Saturday for the third call, the minister learned that the girl was behind in her ironing. But she was still interested in the free Bible study and planned on speaking with her sister to see if her fleshly sister would like to join in the study. The next call, the fourth, the girl had some good news; her sister wanted to study also, so the following week they were all to meet at her sister's home some two miles away.

Early the next Saturday a thunderstorm was brewing. But the witness of Jehovah, not wanting to fail to keep her appointment, went anyway, getting drenched to the skin in the process. She found the house locked and nobody at home. The Witness thought to herself: 'I am determined to give the girl one more chance.'

On the sixth visit the Witness went to the girl's residence and found her sincerely apologetic. Arrangements were made for the study to be held the following Saturday. On the seventh visit the Bible study actually got under way, and from then on there was no delay or interruption at all. The young Chinese girl studied well, began coming to Christian meetings of Jehovah's witnesses and is now herself an ordained minister. All of this because of perseverance in doing what is good. —Gal. 6:9.

PITTSBURGH MEETING POINTS UP URGENCY OF THE TIMES

BEFORE dawn people began gathering around the Civic Arena in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, on the first day of October. The event drawing them was the annual corporation meeting of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania combined with the graduation of the fifty-third class of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead.

The program got under way at 8:30 a.m. and, following prayer and a discussion of the daily Bible text, the audience heard encouraging reports and experiences from Society branch representatives from Germany, Switzerland, Canada, Jamaica and Mexico. Then director M. G. Henschel read greetings to the graduating class sent by brothers in many lands—Laos, Hawaii and Micronesia, and many parts of Africa, South America and Europe.

The Society's vice-president, F. W. Franz, next gave strong exhortation against letting apathy develop among God's people today. Do any of us incline to feel that God's time for taking action in judgment is yet far enough off and that we can slip back into the easy-going way of life characterizing this world? Then we need to correct our attitude, bring it into harmony with the inspired counsel at 2 Peter 3:12. According to the *King James Version* (marginal reading), Christians are there urged to be "looking for and hasting the coming of the day of God." Can we actually speed up God's time schedule for the coming of his day for executing judgment? No, but we can be "keeping *close in mind*" that day, as the *New World Translation* more accurately renders this text. Peter and other Christians of his day had no way of knowing just when that "day" would come, but they knew it was an absolute certainty, sure to come, and this was enough! Today we have abundant evidence that a generation already grown old is indeed going to experience the foretold "great tribulation" that will open the way for the entering in of God's new order. We should certainly be living each day with a consciousness of its nearness, not postponing it in mind or heart.

During the annual corporation meeting that began at 10 a.m., the Society's president, N. H. Knorr, revealed that, although as yet incomplete, the report for the 1972 service year already shows a splendid total of over 162,000 persons baptized during the year. This means that during the past five years more than 680,000 persons have been baptized world wide, and these represent 41 percent of Jehovah's witnesses today.

The graduating class now heard some final comments from instructor U. V. Glass. Noting that the class's average age was twenty-nine, he pointed out that Gilead School was also 'born' twenty-nine years ago. Basing his counsel on Hebrews 12:1-3, he urged them never to fall into the sin of lack of faith. Runners do not slow down as they near the goal. With the New Order so near the graduates should now put every ounce of strength into the race. Gilead registrar E. A. Dunlap then stressed God's warm and generous giving, urging the students never to cause God to feel 'hurt at heart' by acting unappreciatively toward his gifts.

Now the final talk, given by the Society's president on the subject "The Name in Which All Nations Are Choosing to Walk," based on Micah chapters 3 and 4. Though divided over religion and other factors, people are idolizing the ideal of their particular political nation, making it a national god. But their national

'gods' are not saving mankind from a disastrous course. In this "final part of the days," hundreds of thousands in all the earth are awakening to reality and are turning to Jehovah as the one true God in whom to trust. They 'walk in his name' by following the "law" and "word" of Jehovah out of heavenly Zion and Jerusalem, the seat of the now reigning kingdom of the Messiah.

Following the distribution of diplomas and a lunch recess, the afternoon saw a lively and colorful musical program presented in eleven languages by the forty-eight graduating students. The entire program was climaxed by a heart-searching Bible drama involving King David's sin with Bath-sheba. It stressed the fine balance of God's justice and his mercy. With good reason, the 7,614 present ended the day feeling richly rewarded.

● Why do we use the term "governing body" for the elders that preside over the work of Jehovah's witnesses?—U.S.A.

The term "governing body" as such is not found in the Scriptures. However, there is ample evidence that a body of elders serving in a governing capacity did exist in the first-century Christian congregation.

Paul admonished his fellow Christians: "Remember those who are *taking the lead* among you. . . . Be obedient to those who are *taking the lead* among you and be submissive." Or, as other translations put it, remember and obey 'those guiding you.' (*Authorized Version*, margin; Murdock's *Syriac; Rotherham*) The *Kingdom Interlinear* reads: "Be you mindful of the ones *governing* [Gr., *he·gou·me'non*] of you." —Heb. 13:7, 17, 24.

Forms of this same Greek word are found at Matthew 2:6; Luke 22:26; Acts 7:10; 15:22, where the meaning is similar, namely, that of governing, acting as chief or taking the lead. The *Septuagint* uses a form of this word in rendering Malachi 1:8: "Bring it near, please, to your *governor* [Gr., *he·gou·me'nōi*]."

Thus, it is evident that there were certain persons governing in the Christian congregation by the lead and guidance they gave their brothers in righteous works and godly principles.

The English word "govern," from the Latin verb *gubernare,* is derived from the Greek word *ky·ber·na'o,* which has the basic meaning to "steer or pilot a ship, direct, govern." (*Century Dictionary and Cyclopedia,* Vol. III, pp. 2584, 2585) For this reason a "governor" may refer to the mechanism on a machine that controls and regulates its speed or pressure. A "governing body" may, therefore, refer to an agency that administers policy and gives direction, guidance and regulation to an organization.

Commenting on the Greek word from which the English "govern" comes, the *Expository Dictionary of New Testament Words* by W. E. Vine (Vol. II, p. 168) says: "*kubernao,* to guide (whence Eng., govern), denotes (*a*) steering, pilotage [compare Acts 27:11]; (*b*) metaphorically, governments or governings, said of those who act as guides in a local church, 1 Cor. 12:28." This text, 1 Corinthians 12:28, reads: "And God has set the respective ones in the congregation, first, apostles; second, prophets; third, teachers; then powerful works; then gifts of healings; helpful services, abilities to direct [Gr., *ky·ber·ne'seis*]."

The *Septuagint,* in translating the Hebrew word *tahh·bu·lah',* meaning 'steerage, guidance,' uses this Greek word, as, for example, at Proverbs 1:5: "The man of understanding will gain direction [Gr., *ky·ber'ne·sin*]."

In the first century, the elders and overseers in the various congregations certainly exercised "abilities to direct" in the local territories, as this was necessary for good coordination of the work and for peace and unity in the flock of God. Directive guidance is an essential part of the work of a shepherd.—Compare Acts 20:17, 28; 1 Timothy 3:4, 5; Titus 1:9.

And what was true of the local congregations was clearly necessary for the directing of the Christian work in general. So it was that the apostles and other elders in Jerusalem served as a body to give guidance and counsel to all the congregations.

While "abilities to direct" are placed considerably down the list of the 'varieties of ministries and gifts' that God provided (1 Cor. 12:4, 5, 28),

yet such abilities were not inconsequential, otherwise they would not have been bestowed on the apostles and older men forming the governing body. How these men acted as a body is evident in the way they resolved the problem of food distribution by appointing a committee of qualified men to care for the matter; by their dispatching of Peter and John to Samaria to aid the new disciples there; by their action, as a body in conjunction with other elders, in sending out four "leading men," including the apostle Paul, to carry to Antioch their decision regarding the Gentile converts to Christianity; and by their counseling Paul as to the procedure he should follow among the Jews in Jerusalem.—Acts 6:1-6; 8:14; 15:1, 2, 22-32; 21:17-26.

The resurrected Jesus Christ is the heavenly Governor of his congregation of spiritual Israelites on earth. He is the one to whom the words quoted from Micah 5:2 apply: "And you, O Bethlehem of the land of Judah, are by no means the most insignificant city among the governors of Judah; for out of you will come forth a governing one [Gr., *he·gou'me·nos*], who will shepherd my people, Israel." (Matt. 2:6) By means of holy spirit and by the visible governing body composed of elders "governing" or "taking the lead" (Gr., *he·gou·me'nōn*) according to God's written Word, Jesus Christ governs the worldwide group of Jehovah's witnesses on earth today.—Heb. 13:17, *Interlinear;* also *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures,* of 1950.

From this we see that the term "governing body" is as appropriate, fitting and Scriptural as any for referring to that body of elders entrusted with the spiritual oversight of Jehovah's Christian witnesses today.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

December 10: Producing the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership. Page 680. Songs to Be Used: 61, 83.

December 17: Following the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership, ¶1-27. Page 688. Songs to Be Used: 116, 118.

December 24: Following the Chief Agent of Divine Rulership, ¶28-39, and Water Baptism's Connection with Salvation. Page 695. Songs to Be Used: 78, 109.