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THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



Who Are The "MINISTERS OF OUR GOD" Today?

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A WATCHTOWER enables a person to look far into the distance and announce to others what is seen. Likewise, this magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses, aids the reader to see what the future holds. Since it began publication in 1879, "The Watchtower" has held faithfully to God's Word as its authority. It stays clear of all political involvement. It points to the Bible prophecies showing that Jesus Christ is God's means for restoring peace and harmony to this globe. It shows that this Son of God, on the basis of his shed blood, will release mankind from sin and death to enjoy eternal life in happiness on a paradise earth. Because Jehovah God will accomplish all this soon through his kingdom by Jesus Christ, "The Watchtower" announces that kingdom as the real hope for mankind.

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Only a word should be sufficient

"A WORD to the wise is sufficient." So goes the proverbial saying. A wise person is one who listens to advice or correction with an open mind, holding no prejudices. He weighs what he hears and adjusts his thinking. He acts on the basis of principles and facts, or truth. An individual who uses tactics such as pressure or threats is not successful with a wise person.

The Bible expresses the idea in slightly different words. It says: "A rebuke works deeper in one having understanding than striking a stupid one a hundred times." —Prov. 17:10.

If a person who has understanding makes a mistake and it is called to his attention, he immediately sees the damage his mistake can or does cause and, particularly, the strain that it can put on his relationship with God. He does not put on a show of indignation or anger, or brush aside the rebuker, trying to make himself appear right in the matter. The understanding person is immediately affected in his conscience by a rebuke. Thereafter no more needs to be done, for his conscience will move him to make efforts toward getting the matter straightened out if possible. He will also seek forgiveness from the person wronged and from God.

David, anointed to be king of ancient Israel, demonstrated, in many instances, that he was a man of understanding. When he was being hunted down by his bitter enemy, the reigning King Saul, David twice

had the king in his power. But David refrained from killing Saul, leaving the matter in God's hands. (1 Sam. 24:2-7; 26:5-11) On another occasion David showed understanding. Nabal, a man of very harsh and bad practices, had seriously wronged David. As David was on the way to avenge himself on Nabal, he was met by Nabal's wife Abigail. She called his attention to the fact that he was in great danger of bringing bloodguilt on himself by taking the matter into his own hands and killing all the men of Nabal's household. 'Wait upon God to execute justice,' she pleaded. David responded, expressing appreciation to God and to Abigail for saving him from disaster as a result of his own wrong thinking. (1 Sam. 25:20-35) Again, David showed understanding when he treated with kindness Mephibosheth the son of his friend Jonathan, though Mephibosheth was a grandson of his enemy Saul.—2 Sam. 9:1-7.

Later, a time came when David had to be rebuked. He had sinned gravely against God and against his fellowman in the adulterous affair with Bath-sheba. When God sent the prophet Nathan, who by an illustration brought David's guilt home to him, David immediately responded: "I have sinned against Jehovah." (2 Sam. 12:13) The fifty-first and thirty-second psalms reveal how deeply David was affected by Nathan's rebuke. David did not need strokes, only a rebuke to bring him to his senses and to the acknowledgment of his wrong.

THE STUPID PERSON

On the other hand, the stupid person (not a merely ignorant person) is one who has no understanding of his relationship to his fellowman and to God. He may even have knowledge of God's Word, but no appreciation or balanced reasoning. Words of counsel, even of rebuke, have no effect on him. Appeal to conscience does not move him to acknowledge and rectify his wrong. Even his being beaten with a hundred strokes would not change him. With no regard for God or for other persons, he thinks only of himself. His heart becomes harder and his conscience is seared by his resistance to rebukes and strokes. "The wise one fears and is turning away from badness, but the stupid is becoming furious and self-confident," says the wise writer of Proverbs.—Prov. 14:16.

Pharaoh of Egypt was one of those stupid persons. The plagues that he suffered only served to make him exhibit the stubbornness of his heart and to solidify his determination, until finally the outcome was his own destruction.—Ex. 11:9, 10; 14:5-9; Ps. 136:15.

A CONTRAST

The apostle Peter and the traitor Judas provide a good contrast between the understanding man and the stupid one or the fool. Peter had been told by Jesus that he would deny his Lord three times. (Luke 22:31-34) Later, when Jesus was being tried before the high priest, Peter did deny the Lord, but immediately afterward, when he saw Jesus turn with a meaningful look toward him, Peter went outside and wept bitterly. (Luke 22:54-62) Peter, though deeply hurt, profited from what was conveyed to him by a "look." His deeply heartfelt response to this helped Peter to be a tower of strength to his brothers later on.

But Judas, though he had been with Jesus and the apostles for about two years and had received the instruction and correction of Jesus and had seen his marvelous works, was not moved. His heart was not touched by all the healings that Jesus had performed, and the kindness of Jesus' training and discipline. To the contrary, he was progressively hardening himself because he was feeding his greedy desire by stealing from the funds that Jesus and the apostles had set aside for their expenses and for aid to the poor. (John 12:6; 13:29) How Judas lacked appreciation! When Jesus, on that last night before his death, said to him: "What you are doing get done more quickly," Judas did not respond as did Peter at Jesus' mere glance. (John 13:27) He went on, determined to carry out his wicked scheme. Even when his sin rebounded upon him, he did not go to God in prayer, nor to the apostles, but back to the criminals to whom he had betrayed Jesus. He cringingly tried to give back the 30 pieces of silver, as if that could somehow lessen the heavy guilt that lay upon him. Being rebuffed and rejected by his partners in crime, he went out and hanged himself.

These examples highlight the importance of seeking always to be understanding, having an open mind, listening to appeals, reproofs, even a "word" of rebuke from others who are trying to help. Not only does a failure to be deeply affected and moved by a rebuke strain a person's relationship with God and his associates, it can also result in the worst possible condition: a hardened heart and an insensibility even to disciplinary "strokes," or hardships that should bring him to his senses. If strong moves are not taken to correct the condition, it will result in his own complete ruin.



"BE PERFECT": LOVE YOUR ENEMIES

AFTER declaring that his hearers should "not resist him that is wicked," Jesus added: "You heard that it was said, *'You must love your neighbor and hate your enemy.'*"—Matt. 5:39, 43.

Those present for the Sermon on the Mount were Jews who had "heard" God's command: "You must not take vengeance nor have a grudge against the sons of your people; and you must love your fellow as yourself."—Lev. 19:18.

However, the religious leaders of Israel stressed the fact that "the sons of your people" and "your fellow" referred only to Jews. They also emphasized that other commands of God's law required the Israelites to remain separate from other peoples. (Deut. 7:1-4) Though this referred to Israel's separateness as a nation from other national groups, eventually the viewpoint arose that all non-Jews were 'enemies,' to be hated as *individuals*. An example of this attitude can be seen from the following statement in *The Mishnah*:

"Cattle may not be left in the inns of the *gentiles* since they are suspected of bestiality; nor may a woman remain alone with them since they are suspected of lewdness; nor may a man remain alone with them since they are suspected of shedding blood. The daughter of an Israelite may not assist a gentile woman in childbirth since she would be assisting to bring to birth a child for idolatry, but a gentile woman may assist the daughter

of an Israelite. The daughter of an Israelite may not suckle the child of a gentile woman, but a gentile woman may suckle the child of the daughter of an Israelite in this one's domain."—Tractate Abodah Zarah ("Idolatry") 2:1.

"However, I say to you," declared Jesus in refreshing contrast, "*Continue to love your enemies and to pray for those persecuting you.*" (Matt. 5:44) Here we see further evidence that the Son of God came, "not to destroy, but to fulfill" the written Law of God, for that Law commanded considerate, kindly treatment of foreigners.—Matt. 5:17; Ex. 22:21; 23:4, 5; Lev. 19:33, 34; Deut. 10:19.

But Jesus did not intend to limit this principle to Gentile enemies of Israel. He desired his followers to act lovingly toward all persons who would show hostility to them. Writing especially for non-Jews, Luke records Jesus' words in this way: "*But I say to you who are listening, Continue to love your enemies, to do good to those hating you, to bless those cursing you, to pray for those who are insulting you.*"—Luke 6:27, 28.

According to Jesus, those who were "listening," that is, really taking his sayings to heart, must meet a threefold aspect of hatred with a corresponding threefold expression of love: (1) "To do good to those hating" them, responding to an enemy's feelings of animosity with kindly deeds. (2) If hatred erupts into verbal

abuse, "to bless those cursing" them. Rather than returning curse for curse, followers of Jesus should speak kindly and considerately to their opposers. (3) If enmity goes beyond verbal abuse to actual "persecuting" of Christ's disciples through physical violence or other "insulting" mistreatment, they should "pray for" the persecutors, lovingly petitioning God that their opposers have a change of heart and come into God's favor.—Compare Romans 12:14-21; 1 Corinthians 4:12; 1 Peter 3:8, 9.

Jesus then gave a powerful reason for showing love to one's enemies: "*That you may prove yourselves sons of your Father who is in the heavens.*" (Matt. 5:45a) For the benefit of his Gentile readers, Luke replaces the phrase, "your Father who is in the heavens," with "*the Most High.*"—Luke 6:35a.

Persons who heed Jesus' advice become "sons" of God in the sense that they imitate him by reflecting his impartial benevolence toward friend and foe alike. (Compare Matthew 5:9; Ephesians 4:31-5:2; 1 John 3:9-12.) God sets a perfect example in that "*he makes his sun rise upon wicked people and good and makes it rain upon righteous people and unrighteous*" (Matt. 5:45b); "*he is kind toward the unthankful and wicked.*"—Luke 6:35b.

To stress how important it would be for his hearers to 'continue to love their enemies,' Jesus added: "*For if you love those loving you, what reward do you have? Are not also the tax collectors doing the same thing? And if you greet your brothers only, what extraordinary thing are you doing? Are not also the people of the nations doing the same thing?*"—Matt. 5:46, 47.

Persons who desire to imitate God must not limit their expressions of love to individuals who reciprocate. This would merit no special "reward" or favor with God. Even "tax collectors" were accustomed to

display love to those loving them, although the Jews considered these as among the most despised of people.—Luke 5:30; 7:34.

The common greeting among Israelites included the word *shalom* ("peace"), which implied a wish for the health, welfare and prosperity of the person greeted. Restricting such a greeting to persons viewed as "brothers" would be no "extraordinary thing," for something similar could be observed among "people of the nations," whom the Jews viewed as godless, unclean and to be avoided.

Luke's Gospel, written with non-Jews in mind, replaces the expressions "tax collectors" and "people of the nations" (which in this context would be meaningful only to Jews) with the more general term "sinners." We read: "*And if you love those loving you, of what credit is it to you? For even the sinners love those loving them. And if you do good to those doing good to you, really of what credit is it to you? Even the sinners do the same. Also, if you lend without interest to those from whom you hope to receive, of what credit is it to you? Even sinners lend without interest to sinners that they may get back as much.*"—Luke 6:32-34.

Jesus concluded this portion of the Sermon on the Mount with the statement: "*You must accordingly be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*"—Matt. 5:48.

This is not a command for disciples of Jesus to become physically and morally flawless, for at present that is impossible due to inherited sin. (Rom. 3:23; 5:12) Rather, these words encourage people to imitate the "heavenly Father," Jehovah, by perfecting their love, bringing it to full measure and making it complete by including their enemies in its embrace. In line with this, Luke's parallel account reads: "*Continue becoming merciful, just as your Father is merciful.*"—Luke 6:36.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

- A former instructor of transcendental meditation says that it brought him into "slavery to occult, satanic forces," reports the Toronto "Star." When he

Slavery to Satanic Forces

struggled to leave the practice, after seven years of meditating, sometimes for 16 hours a day, he admitted that he experienced "withdrawal symptoms"

worse than those experienced by alcoholics or drug addicts.

Regarding the results of his transcendental meditation, the former Toronto businessman explained: "You think you are controlling other, hidden forces in the universe. But, frighteningly, I now believe they are actually controlling you." He said that his mind was "wiped so clear" by the prolonged meditation that the idea of thinking for himself was "totally out of the question."

In one three-month period during which he engaged in such meditation, yoga exercises and special breathing techniques, he was alarmed at the frequent attacks by invisible forces that he experienced, without warning. On occasion, he was aware of shadowy forms and faces around him.

The Bible, at Ephesians chapter 6, identifies the existence of "wicked spirit forces in the heavenly places," Satan the Devil and his demons. God's Word urges us to resist these "world rulers of this darkness." "Oppose the Devil, and he will flee from you," counsels James 4:7. How? By filling our minds with the protective truths in God's Word, not by 'wiping the mind clear' and immersing ourselves in procedures that invite demonic forces to control our minds.—Luke 11:24-26; Eph. 6:11-18.

- When the television series "Holocaust" was shown in the United States, many viewers expressed horror at the wanton disregard for life shown by the Nazi regime during World War II. Especially horrifying to many was the murder of innocent children.

Modern Holocaust

However, there is a type of modern "holocaust" taking place that each year kills more innocents than the Nazis did in all their death

camps during the entire period of World War II. This modern holocaust is the killing of unborn babies by "legal" or "illegal" abortions.

It is acknowledged that each year about one million abortions are performed in the United States, a million and a half in Japan, and an estimated five million in India. When the toll of additional millions of abortions in other countries is added, it can be seen that the taking of innocent lives is now on such a massive scale that, in numbers, it even dwarfs the victims of Nazi horror.

Nazi war criminals were called to account by international courts. So, too, many others will have to 'render an account to God' for this wanton disregard of human life.—Rom. 14:12; Ex. 20:13.

- For centuries both Catholic and Protestant religions have used the terms "Old Testament" and "New Testament" to describe the Hebrew and Greek language parts of the Bible. In this regard the "National Catholic Reporter" said recently: "The term 'Old Testament' inevitably creates an atmosphere of inferiority and outdatedness," and so "needs a new name."

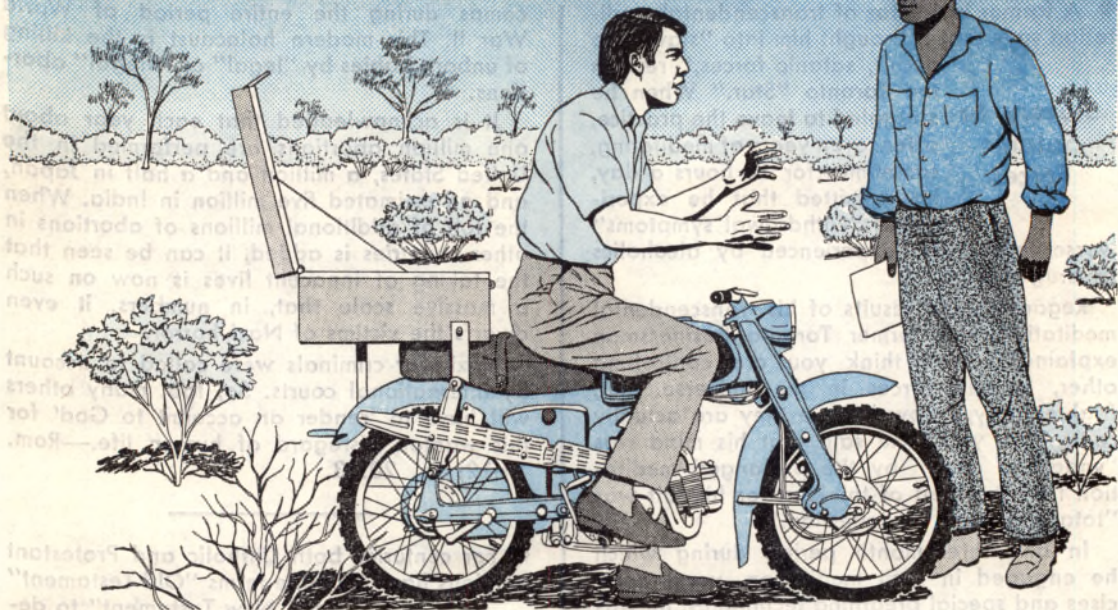
"Needs a New Name"

That is true, for God's Word states: "All Scripture is inspired of God and beneficial for teaching, for reproving, for setting things straight." (2 Tim. 3:16) So the Bible is one complete work. Its message is consistent from beginning to end. The Hebrew Scriptures form the foundation for the Greek Scriptures. Both parts include prophecies being fulfilled in our day, or that are yet to be fulfilled in the future. No part is outdated, or "old."

The Catholic publication suggests: "'Hebrew Scriptures' . . . is far preferable to 'Old Testament.'" It also suggests the term "Christian Scriptures" for the Greek portion.

This view has long been held by Jehovah's Witnesses. That is why in their "New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures," and in all their publications, they have long used the terms "Hebrew Scriptures" and "Christian Greek Scriptures" for those parts of the Bible.

THE "GOOD NEWS" REACHES A "Most Distant" Part of the Earth



AUSTRALIA, the "island continent," called the land "down under," is larger than any country in western Europe. Yet it is home to only some 13½ million persons of varied nationalities.

In this sparsely inhabited land of almost three million square miles (7,770,000 square kilometers) the terrain and climate vary considerably. These range from the tropical north to the desert interior, from the largest coral reef in the world—the Great Barrier Reef, teeming with life—to mammoth, barren Ayers Rock, in desolate surroundings. The eastern side of Australia is rich in crops such as sugarcane, wheat and other cereals. Here about 61 percent of the population is to be found.

But when the traveler crosses the Great Dividing Range stretching from north to south along the eastern coast, the scenery changes from lush coastal country to rolling hills and then to plains and semidesert. In the heart of Australia, where Ayers

Rock is located, salt lakes and deserts abound. The dry conditions of the great Australian plain have made this island continent ideal for wool production and favorable for cattle raising. In the "out-back" areas, the landholdings, or "stations," as they are called, are very large.

For these reasons the fulfilling of Jesus' command to be 'witnesses of me to the most distant part of the earth' has been a challenge that is being faced. (Acts 1:8) Let us go back some 70 years or so to the beginning and relive the experiences of some of those who have shared in preaching the "good news" in this distant part of the earth.

Toward the end of the 19th century, with colonization only about 100 years old, some Bible-oriented individuals received, from relatives and friends overseas, copies of publications of the International Bible Students, as Jehovah's Witnesses were then known. Also, about this time, Bible

Students emigrating from Britain arrived in Perth, Western Australia, and Brisbane, Queensland, and formed congregations in these cities.

HEADQUARTERS OFFICE AND PRINTERY

A branch office of the Bible Students was established in Melbourne, Victoria, in 1904, to care for the work in Australia and New Zealand. At an assembly in Melbourne in 1915, 250 were in attendance and 14 were baptized. By 1935, 30 radio broadcasting stations were reaching the remote parts of Australia, as well as the populated centers, with Bible truth.

The headquarters office was moved from Melbourne to Sydney in March 1929. It was enlarged in 1932. Then a large printery was erected on the site in 1972, to publish the *Watchtower* and *Awake!* magazines. At the present time the facilities are being further expanded. Some 60 men and women serve at this branch office.

It has taken much effort and the enduring of hardships to reach the people in remote parts. Even today, only one road links the east of the country with the west—a distance of some 2,500 miles (4,000 kilometers). Apart from the most populated east coast region, the only links between the north and the south are a route through the heart of the continent and a very isolated road up the mineral-rich west coast.

"ROUGHING IT" IN THE "OUTBACK"

The late Bert Horton began to associate with the Bible Students in 1921, in the mining town of Kalgoorlie in Western Australia. Horton related: "I sent in my application to be a 'pioneer' (as a full-time proclaimer of the Kingdom is called). Back came my assignment—the entire state of Western Australia!" Horton, along with Frank Rice and two other men, equipped a two-bedded van with cooking facilities and other necessities for life

on the road. They brought their van across the immense Nullarbor Plain, visiting all the outlying towns in the state. One of the men recounts: "There were no roads then, so we got some blueprints from an oil company and traveled from tank to tank (isolated places where water was available). We carried two 44-gallon drums of petrol and supplies of water and food. We called at the stations on the way and spoke to them about the Bible."

Another "pioneer" who spent much of his time in the outback is Arthur Willis. He set out with two companions in 1933, to cover the remote north of Western Australia, across the top of the country. Willis reports: "In those days the traveler was entitled to free meat. Into whatever station we went we could take our choice. Among the station people and the towns we found some who heard and accepted the truth." Leaving Darwin in the extreme north, they traveled south to Katherine and then turned east for Queensland and the coast. "At that time there were no bitumen roads in the area," he recalls, "and I remember coming across western Queensland, where we were three days going 100 miles [160 kilometers] through the black soil. The mud would accumulate on the wheels until they just wouldn't turn. Then we had to take off the mudguards [fenders] in order to travel at all."

Arthur Willis and Bill Newlands undertook an even longer trip in 1936, to reach the outback areas of the country. In a 30-hundredweight truck they set off from Sydney on a journey that was to cover 12,000 miles (19,300 kilometers) and take more than a year to complete. Driving due west from Sydney, they eventually reached the center of the country and turned north for Darwin, then down the west coast to Perth. While on this journey, 500 miles (800 kilometers) inland and to the north of Adelaide in South Australia,

they met Charles Bernhardt. This man had come in contact with the Kingdom message about three years earlier, when two "pioneers" endured the heat and isolation to journey from Adelaide to Alice Springs and return. When Willis and Newlands came through, Bernhardt wished to be baptized. He owned two hotels at Coward Springs and William Creek, and many were the ones who learned of the "good news" through him from that time forward. At the age of 85 years, Bernhardt still serves as a "pioneer," making several trips in a four-wheel-drive vehicle to the remote areas of South Australia each year.

This same spirit is shown in the following experience of another of these "out-back pioneers," Joe Bell. Having an assignment 300 miles (480 kilometers) northwest of Brisbane at the time, Bell cycled to outlying "stations." It was rough, hot work, he says. "I had to carry my bicycle in many places because I ran into continuous banks of sand where there was practically no roadway. Some of these journeys were very perilous. In the open country the only living creatures to be seen were roving herds of bullocks. They could be dangerous under some circumstances, as they are very curious and would come to see what was approaching them. It was necessary on a number of occasions to take refuge in a tree and wait for hours until they grazed away, giving me the opportunity to continue my journey."

Another "pioneer," Aubrey Baxter, cycled thousands of miles through central and northern Queensland. He recalls his experience: "We encountered some interesting situations. I was guest for a night at a big cattle station and spent the next night miles away with a kangaroo hunter, sleeping on the dirt floor of his little hut surrounded by hundreds of odorous kangaroo hides. Trying to sleep with packs of howling dingoes [native wild dogs] around was not easy, either."

MISSIONARIES ARRIVE

In the latter part of the 1940's some graduates of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, a missionary school of the Witnesses established in the United States, arrived to aid in spreading the "good news." Two of those graduates were John Cutforth and Donald MacLean, from Canada. Both men served as traveling circuit overseers for many years. MacLean reminisces: "What a shock it was to learn that my first Australian circuit was located at the antipodes of Gilead School—southwestern Australia! I was being sent to the most distant part of the earth!" Relating one of his experiences MacLean said: "We newcomers experienced some fascinating moments while traveling through remote areas. My first encounter with a group of emus [huge, ostrichlike birds] was interesting but disconcerting. On my way through an out-back area on the motorcycle, I met a family of emus blocking my passage. They are extremely curious birds and were apparently fascinated by the flashing of my chrome mirror and handlebars in the sunlight. Not knowing how to treat an emu, I felt hesitant to rush through the flock and possibly risk my life, so I stopped the vehicle. Having no intention of moving, the big birds stood there for some time, so I decided to make a move. I blew the horn and roared the engine. The emus only moved closer, their curiosity increasing. This was rather unnerving, to say the least! I decided to take my chance and charge through the flock, which only parted slightly to let me through. Then the birds began to give chase alongside the road and when I increased my pace to 35 miles [56 kilometers] an hour, I found that the emus continued to outpace me. It was only when I reached 40 miles [64 kilometers] an hour that I was able to leave them behind, much to my relief!"

MacLean recalls his first visit to the

provision store and hotel of Charles Bernhardt, mentioned earlier: "Arriving at William Creek I found that the train stopped for a considerable time, while the men made a mad rush to get to the bar and obtain their supply of cold beer. On entering the bar, I was amazed to find a sign on the wall inviting the men to 'Read *The Watchtower* announcing Jehovah's kingdom, the hope of the world.' A second sign urged 'Read *Awake!*' Magazines, booklets and bound volumes were available on the bar counter. When everyone had finally been served and satisfied, Bernhardt called for the men's attention: 'Gentlemen, may I have your attention, please? I invite you to have copies of the finest magazines on earth today.' Each of the men thereupon accepted copies of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, contributing for them, placing them in his pocket, throwing a sack of beer over his shoulder, and returning to the train. While drinking at Bernhardt's bar not one man used profanity or foul language, out of respect for the Christian reputation of the manager. Bernhardt would then present the 'good news' to all on the train, beginning with the engineer."

Today, the whole of Australia hears the "good news" regularly through the efforts of 525 congregations. Traveling overseers visit all parts of the country, and there are more than 28,000 active witnesses of Jehovah in the land.

ABORIGINES HEAR THE "GOOD NEWS"

According to a census in 1971, there are only some 106,000 Aborigines (indigenous natives), living for the most part in the country and outback areas. Great efforts have been put forth to reach them. Ben Brickell, who spent 44 years in the full-time work until his death several years ago, covered many hundreds of thousands of miles by push-bike, motorcycle and car, speaking to Aborigines on sta-

tions and in settlements. In order to make clear the message, he used illustrations and charts. On one visit to the Wave Hill area in Northern Territory, Brickell spent about an hour with 80 aboriginal folk sitting cross-legged on the ground as he explained God's purpose to them, with the aid of paintings depicting Bible events and promises. Brickell became well known in Australia for his work among the Aborigines and in the outback. On another occasion, a few miles from Alice Springs, in the heart of the country, he spoke with a group of Aborigines numbering over 100 persons. A few Aborigines have become faithful Kingdom proclaimers.

Australia, with its vast distances, largely inhospitable interior and sparse population, has presented a challenge, but the seeds of God's Word scattered among its inhabitants over the years have borne fruit, sometimes in amazing ways.

From the densely populated and industrialized cities on the coast, to the "red heart" of the continent, the good news of God's incoming world government is being preached. There was a ratio of Jehovah's Witnesses to population of 1 to 2,764 about 1940. But now 1 out of 483 persons in Australia is an active witness of Jehovah. So here, in one of the most distant parts of the earth, Jesus' command is being fulfilled.

In Coming Issues

- ◆ "Why Does God Permit Wickedness?"
- ◆ Can You Endure Trials Successfully?
- ◆ Sex Without Marriage —Why It Hurts

First Kings— A record of glory and disgrace

THE Israelite kingdom attains its greatest glory, then is divided by a political and a religious revolt, and both kingdoms thereafter repeatedly experience disgrace. This record of glory and disgrace is preserved in First Kings. According to Jewish tradition, Jeremiah compiled the account. The book itself names certain sources that were used for this purpose—"the book of the affairs of Solomon," "the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Judah" and "the book of the affairs of the days of the kings of Israel."—1 Ki. 11:41; 14:19; 15:7, 23; 16:14.

The account of First Kings opens with a glimpse of the declining days of King David's life. The bedridden king simply cannot keep warm, and so arrangements are made for him to be cared for by the beautiful virgin Abishag. Meanwhile Adonijah, evidently the eldest of David's living sons, takes advantage of his father's weakened state. Backed by powerful Joab and priest Abiathar, Adonijah holds a sacrificial feast to have himself proclaimed king.

SOLOMON'S ANOINTING AND HIS REIGN

The prophet Nathan's quick intervention thwarts Adonijah's plan. As a result, while Adonijah and his supporters are feasting, David's son Solomon is anointed as king. Jerusalem's inhabitants give way

to such great rejoicing that the sound of it can be heard at the place where Adonijah and his supporters are banqueting. When Abiathar's son Jonathan brings them news about the meaning of the excitement in the city, all disband in fear, and Adonijah runs to the sanctuary. There he takes hold on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and refuses to leave until such time as Solomon gives him an oath-bound promise not to kill him. Solomon agrees to let him live, provided that Adonijah does not become a wicked plotter.

Shortly before his death, David counsels Solomon to remain faithful to Jehovah God and to take action against Joab and Shimei. It is after David's death that Adonijah, likely at the instigation of Joab and Abiathar, asks Bath-sheba to request that her son Solomon give him the beautiful Abishag as a wife. Solomon understands this as part of a scheme for usurping the throne and, therefore, commands that Adonijah and Joab be put to death. Out of respect for the fact that priest Abiathar suffered along with his father David, Solomon does not execute him but banishes him from the priestly office. Later, when Shimei disregards the restrictions placed on his activity, he is executed. In thus ridding the realm of dangerous influence from Adonijah, Joab, Abiathar and Shimei, Solomon makes his kingship secure.

Recognizing his limitations, Solomon humbly requests wisdom from Jehovah. He is granted outstanding wisdom along with riches and glory. He displays this wisdom in handling the case of two prostitutes, both of whom claim to be the mother of the same baby boy. By commanding that the child be cut in half and divided between the two women, Solomon arouses the emotions of the real mother. This enables Solomon to identify her and to give her the baby.

During his reign the people enjoy peace and prosperity. The entire royal household lives in grand style. Produce is furnished for its maintenance from twelve districts. Based on the amount of food prepared daily, one might conclude that the royal establishment may have numbered some 15,000 or more. Solomon's rule is also distinguished by notable architectural works, the most outstanding of these being the construction of Jehovah's temple on Mount Moriah. At the dedication of that temple, Solomon prays in a most moving manner. Later he receives a divine revelation indicating that Jehovah has given favorable recognition to his petition. From far and wide, rulers come to listen to the king's wisdom. Among these notable dignitaries is the queen of Sheba. Tribute in the form of gold, silver and other precious items keeps pouring into Jerusalem. So great is Israel's prosperity under Solomon that 'silver becomes as common as stones in Jerusalem.' Truly the Israelite kingdom is in its golden age.

THE DISGRACE OF A DIVIDED KINGDOM

However, the glorious rule ends in disaster. Solomon's disregarding God's law about not multiplying wives for himself proves to be his undoing. Marriage alliances with nonworshippers of Jehovah leads to Solomon's tolerating idolatry on a large scale. Therefore, Jehovah decrees the di-

vision of the Israelite kingdom, with only the tribes of Judah and Benjamin remaining loyal to the house of David. Meanwhile, having lost Jehovah's blessing, Solomon experiences increased troubles from marauder bands.

Through the prophet Ahijah, the Ephraimite Jeroboam learns that he is Jehovah's choice for the kingship over 10 tribes of Israel. Jeroboam is instructed to remain faithful to Jehovah and is assured that it will then go well with him. Since Solomon seeks to kill him, Jeroboam flees to Egypt.

After Solomon's death, his son Rehoboam ascends the throne. Ignoring the counsel of older men and accepting the advice of younger men, Rehoboam declares that he will impose a heavy yoke on the nation. In fulfillment of the word of Jehovah through Ahijah, the 10 tribes then revolt and make Jeroboam their king. Next, Rehoboam prepares for war to bring the rebellious tribes under subjection, but, in obedience to Jehovah's word through Shemaiah, drops his plans.

UNFAITHFULNESS LEADS TO DISGRACE FOR BOTH KINGDOMS

Instead of trusting in Jehovah's promise that the kingdom would be secure as long as he remained faithful, Jeroboam institutes calf worship. His purpose is to prevent his subjects from going to Jerusalem for worship. He faithlessly reasons that political independence hinges on religious independence. Through his prophets, Jehovah declares that eventually a Judean by the name of Josiah will forcefully bring idolatrous worship to its end and that the house of Jeroboam will perish in disgrace.

The two-tribe kingdom also fails to remain loyal to Jehovah. Humiliation comes during the fifth year of Rehoboam's reign when Egypt's Shishak invades Judah and

seizes precious treasures from Jerusalem. Additionally, both Israelite kingdoms war with each other during the reign of Rehoboam and his son Abijam. Like his father, Abijam proves to be disloyal to Jehovah. However, Abijam's son Asa, who next attains rulership in the two-tribe kingdom, takes positive steps to clear out idolatry from the realm. But when threatened by the northern kingdom's monarch Baasha, Asa faithlessly appeals to the Syrian king Ben-hadad for help.

Israel's king Baasha has seized the throne by destroying the house of Jeroboam, including the reigning monarch Nadab. This fulfills Ahijah's prophecy against Jeroboam. Baasha, however, does not reverse the plunge into idolatry begun by Jeroboam. His record, too, proves to be one of disloyalty to Jehovah. Hence, through Jehu the son of Hanani, Jehovah decrees doom for Baasha and his house. The prophecy is fulfilled when Zimri conspires against Baasha's son Elah and annihilates the whole house of Baasha. But Zimri's success is short-lived, as the Israelites make army chief Omri king. After ruling just seven days, Zimri commits suicide. Later, Tibni, another rival for the throne, is killed. Omri continues doing what is bad in Jehovah's eyes and is finally succeeded by his son Ahab.

It is Ahab who makes the most shameful record of all. Besides continuing the calf worship started by Jeroboam, Ahab tolerates large-scale Baal worship to please his Sidonian queen Jezebel. Jehovah expresses his displeasure by having his prophet Elijah announce a severe drought. During the drought, Jehovah provides for his prophet, and Ahab's efforts to find Elijah are in vain. But finally Elijah presents himself before the faithless king and makes it clear that Ahab's support of Baal worship is responsible for the drought and famine. At Elijah's suggestion, a test is

held on Mount Carmel to determine whether Jehovah or Baal is the true God. The results of that test are decisive, and Elijah orders the prophets of Baal to be slain. Shortly thereafter a tremendous downpour brings the divinely sent drought to its end. On learning what has happened, Jezebel threatens Elijah's life, prompting the prophet to flee to Mount Horeb.

Elijah, though, is given work to do. Jehovah sends him back to his assignment in Israel and instructs him to anoint or commission Hazael as king over Syria, Jehu as king over Israel, and Elisha as his own successor.

The murder of Naboth at the instigation of Jezebel seals Ahab's doom. Through Elijah, Jehovah tells the king that Jezebel will be devoured by scavenger dogs and that the whole house of Ahab will perish ingloriously. This message hits Ahab very hard so that he humbles himself. Thereafter he is assured that the calamity will not strike in his day.

During his reign Ahab forms a marriage alliance with the royal house of Judah. His daughter Athaliah becomes the wife of Jehoram, King Jehoshaphat's first-born. Later, while in Samaria on a friendly visit, Jehoshaphat is induced to join King Ahab in warring against the Syrians with a view to recapturing Ramoth-gilead. In fulfillment of the words of Jehovah's prophet Micaiah, Ahab does not return in peace. Despite his having taken the precaution to disguise himself, Ahab dies from a mortal arrow wound. Ahab is succeeded by Ahaziah, who continues to make a bad record for himself.

Truly the inspired account of First Kings makes it clear that, apart from faithful service to God, there can be no real glory. All who abandon true worship are bound to suffer disgrace. May we take this to heart and strive to serve Jehovah God with a complete heart.

Idolatry—

downfall of the Israelite kingdoms

THE 10-tribe kingdom of Israel got off to a bad start when its first king, Jeroboam, instituted calf worship. That plunge into idolatry was never reversed and eventually resulted in Jehovah's permitting the Assyrians to bring the northern kingdom to ruin. Instead of profiting from this warning example, the inhabitants of the two-tribe kingdom also became steeped in idolatry. Hence, Jehovah withdrew his blessing from the nation. Finally, the capital city was reduced to ruins, along with its beautiful temple built by King Solomon. The Bible book known as Second Kings continues the historical record begun in First Kings and makes it clear that the Israelites could have avoided calamity if they had heeded the words of the prophets.

Among the prominent prophets in the northern kingdom were Elijah and Elisha. When Elijah was miraculously removed from the scene, Elisha carried forward Elijah's commission. One of the outstanding features of that commission was the anointing of King Jehu. After Elisha sent one of his attendants to do this, Jehu lost no time in executing Jehovah's vengeance against the idolatrous house of Ahab, including wicked Jezebel.

Next, Jehu set himself to the task of clearing out Baal worship from his realm. He gave the impression that he would promote Baal worship on an even grander scale than did Ahab and had all the idolaters assemble at the house of Baal. After making sure that not a single worshiper of Jehovah was in their midst, Jehu commanded his men to slaughter the assembled idolaters. Because of taking this positive action, Jehu was assured that four generations of his sons would succeed him as kings. These proved to be Jehoahaz, Jehoash, Jeroboam II and Zechariah.

Nevertheless, Jehu failed to eradicate calf worship. The Bible record reports: "Jehu himself did not take care to walk in the law of

Jehovah the God of Israel with all his heart. He did not turn aside from the sins of Jeroboam with which he caused Israel to sin."—2 Ki. 10:31.

None of Jehu's descendants nor any other later rulers in the 10-tribe kingdom undertook to put an end to calf worship. The account of Second Kings provides this commentary on the situation and its outcome: "The sons of Israel went walking in all the sins of Jeroboam that he had done. They did not depart from them, until Jehovah removed Israel from his sight, just as he had spoken by means of all his servants the prophets. So Israel went off its own soil into exile in Assyria down to this day." (17:22, 23) Elijah and Elisha were not the only prophets who warned the Israelites. Among the others were Micaiah, Jonah, Oded, Hosea, Amos and Micah. Yet the people paid no attention to the prophets' urgings for them to repent.

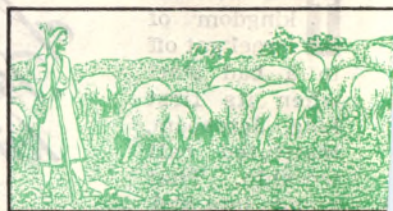
In the two-tribe kingdom, things were not much better. Despite the fine efforts of such good rulers as Jehoshaphat and Hezekiah, time and again idolatry got a firm grip on the Israelites. Hezekiah's own son Manasseh revived idolatry. During Manasseh's reign the people became so degraded in their idolatrous practices that later efforts to reverse the trend had little success. Their conduct came to be worse than that of the Canaanites whom the Israelites had dispossessed. Manasseh took the lead in false worship. He made his own son pass through the fire, practiced magic, used divination and fostered spiritism. Additionally, he shed much innocent blood.

Even the sweeping campaign against idolatry conducted during the rule of Manasseh's grandson Josiah could not save the two-tribe kingdom from calamity. Josiah himself died in battle while trying to turn the Egyptian forces back at Megiddo. The last four Judean kings—Jehoahaz, Jehoiakim, Jehoiachin and Zedekiah—did not imitate faithful King Josiah. All of them were bad rulers and idolaters. Because the rulers and their subjects refused to listen to the prophets and to abandon idolatry, Jerusalem was finally destroyed and the land of Judah turned into a desolation.

God's viewpoint of idolatry has not changed since the time Second Kings was committed to writing, presumably by the prophet Jeremiah. Idolaters cannot hope to escape the execution of God's adverse judgment. Hence, we do well to heed the Bible's admonition: "Flee from idolatry."—1 Cor. 10:14.

"MINISTERS OF OUR GOD"

PIONEER VITAL RESTORATION Work



"And strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be."—Isa. 61:5, 6.

MINISTERS of State participated in the great reconstruction work that was made necessary by World War I. Much of what they shared in restoring was again destroyed by the far more disastrous war of 1939-1945. Reconstruction work became necessary once more, but on a far grander scale. Today public servants are making strenuous efforts to keep things from falling into a state of disrepair. The ministries of governments are in perplexity.

² However, a more important restoration work of another kind began in the postwar year of 1919. In spite of the destructiveness of World War II, it con-

tinued on determinedly, yes, irrepressibly. It was restoration work of a spiritual kind, backed by a power such as the ministerial departments of human governments did not have. It is true that, according to what is written in Romans 13:4, the superior authorities of this world serve as God's public ministers even for the good of Christians. But those who have pioneered the restoration work of the spiritual kind have been God's public servants of a higher order. The work pioneered by such ministers was foretold by God's inspired prophet Isaiah as follows:

³ "And they must rebuild the long-standing devastated places; they will raise up even the desolated places of former times, and they will certainly make anew the devastated cities, the places desolate for generation after generation. And

1. Ministers of State are today making strenuous efforts to do what, and in what frame of mind?

2, 3. (a) What more important restoration work of another kind has progressed despite World War II? (b) With what descriptive language was it foretold in Isaiah 61:4-6?



strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be. The resources of the nations you people will eat.”—Isa. 61: 4-6.

⁴ The first-century restoration worker Jesus Christ showed when those words of Isaiah’s prophecy would begin to come true. The time for this would be when a centuries-old nation was breaking down and a new and better nation was to be brought into being. The new nation would be made up of the disciples of Jesus Christ, who were begotten by the spirit of God. It would be a spiritual Israel. But how did Jesus Christ indicate the time

for the fulfillment of Isaiah’s prophecy quoted above? He did this when he quoted from the words that lead up to this prophecy and applied those words to himself. Jesus was then visiting the synagogue of his hometown, Nazareth, sometime after the Passover of 30 C.E. He stood up to read. He unrolled the scroll of Isaiah’s prophecy to what is now sectioned off as chapter 61 and read at least part of what is verses one and two. Then he said to his audience: “Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.”—Luke 4:16-21.

⁵ Luke, the historian who recorded this incident, made Jesus’ quotation from Isaiah’s prophecy read according to the way

4. At what time of change would Isaiah’s prophecy come true, and how and where did Jesus Christ indicate this?
5, 6. (a) The Greek-writing historian Luke worded Jesus’ quotation from Isaiah to read according to what translation? (b) In the original Hebrew text, how does Isaiah 61:1-3 read?

it is set out in the Greek translation known as the *Septuagint Version*. But how does the prophecy read in the original Hebrew text, which was doubtless what Jesus as a Palestinian Jew read? This way:

⁶ “The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, for the reason that Jehovah has anointed me to tell good news to the meek ones. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to those taken captive and the wide opening of the eyes even to the prisoners; to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God; to comfort all the mourning ones; to assign to those mourning over Zion, to give them a headdress instead of ashes, the oil of exultation instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of the downhearted spirit; and they must be called big trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, for him to be beautified.”—Isa. 61:1-3.

⁷ Then follow the words about restoration work: “And they must rebuild the long-standing devastated places; they will raise up even the desolated places of former times, and they will certainly make anew the devastated cities, the places desolate for generation after generation.”—Isa. 61:4.

⁸ Let us take note that at the time for Isaiah’s prophecy to be fulfilled there would be “meek ones,” “brokenhearted” ones, “those taken captive,” also “prisoners” and “those mourning over Zion.” These would urgently need proper attention. The time would be ripe for this, because it was the time period called “the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah.” The arrival of the one anointed with the “spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah” would inaugurate that year of His goodwill. That symbolic “year” would be fol-

7. What words of restoration work then follow?

8. At the time for the prophecy’s fulfillment, what kinds of persons would there be, emotionally, and why would the giving of attention to them be urgent?

lowed by "the day of vengeance on the part of our God." This made the work of the spirit-anointed proclaimer of deliverance and liberty a very urgent one indeed.

⁹ Jesus had changed his earthly occupation. Till he became 30 years old he had been a carpenter in Nazareth, Galilee. There the synagogue was in which Jesus read the significant words of Isaiah's prophecy. This change of profession he announced to his Nazarene audience when he finished reading Isaiah 61:1, 2 and said: "Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled." Then he demonstrated this fact by giving a Bible talk that his fellow countrymen thought the former carpenter incapable of giving. They had heard that Jesus had become a physician. So they wanted him to 'cure himself' by performing cures in his "home territory" on his own townspeople. By means of Bible illustrations Jesus explained why he would not do so. At this they became highly displeased and tried to kill him. They forcibly proved themselves to be people not "meek" enough to accept "good news."—Luke 4:21-30.

¹⁰ Despite such treatment at his hometown, Jesus went right ahead with carrying out the purpose of his being anointed with "the spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah." In the autumn of 29 C.E., he had left Nazareth and gone to the Jordan River to be baptized by John the son of Zechariah the priest. Immediately after Jesus came up out of the baptismal waters John the Baptizer saw the holy spirit descending upon him under manifestation of a dove. At the same time he heard Jehovah's voice from heaven say: "This is my Son, the beloved, whom I have approved." (Matt. 3:13-17; Luke 3:21, 22;

9. What change did Jesus announce to his Nazarene audience, and how did they show themselves not "meek" enough to accept "good news"?

10. On what occasion had Jesus been anointed with holy spirit?

John 1:29-34) That same spirit impelled Jesus to retire into the wilderness of Judea for 40 days.

¹¹ After those 40 days of fasting and communing with his Father Jehovah, Satan the Devil set before him three temptations. If Jesus had succumbed to those temptations, he would have lost the spirit of anointing. But, by resisting the Tempter, he retained the spiritual anointing. So he still had it when he gave his talk in the synagogue of Nazareth.—Matt. 4:1-13; Luke 4:1-21.

¹² The anointing of Jesus with holy spirit in 29 C.E. occurred 565 years after Jesus' people had been released from Babylonian captivity in 537 B.C.E. and had returned to their devastated homeland, the province of Judah. They had 'made anew the devastated cities' of the land, including Jerusalem, the temple of which they rebuilt. They had 'raised up the desolated places' of the former 70 years of their lying waste and had converted the land into somewhat of a paradise. At the three annual feasts of the Jews Zion, or Jerusalem, would teem with millions of worshippers. Why, then, when Jesus was anointed, should there be any brokenhearted Jews or Israelites? Why any "taken captive"? Why any "prisoners"? Why any "mourning over Zion"? Why any poor, humble, "meek" needing "good news"? Why any of such kind in 29 C.E.?

THOSE NEEDING "Good News," LIBERATION AND COMFORT

¹³ It was because of the spiritual state into which the nation of Israel had come. True, Jehovah had executed a "day of

11. Why did Jesus still have the spirit of anointing when he gave his talk in the synagogue at Nazareth?

12. In view of what took place in the land of the Jews since 537 B.C.E., what questions arise about the Jews at the time of Jesus' anointing?

13. After the Jewish "prisoners" were released from Babylon and returned home, into which kind of bondage did they come?

vengeance" on the Babylonian Empire, whose rulers had refused to 'open the way homeward to the prisoners.' (Isa. 14:17; Jer. 50:15, 28; 51:6, 11, 36) When restored thereafter to their homeland those Jewish "prisoners" did not come into bondage to idolatry with literal graven images. Yet they came into a greater bondage, that to the religious system of Judaism. This was a system dominated by precepts and traditions of men, things that made invalid the Law and the commandments of Jehovah God. The official scribes and Pharisees became prominent in this religious system. They blinded the people to the truth by taking away "the key of knowledge," hindering them from entering into the kingdom of God, and binding heavy loads on the common people that they themselves would not touch. —Luke 11:52.

¹⁴ Moreover, those leaders in Judaism, like blind guides, led the blinded Jews in the way that ends up in the ditch of national destruction. They maneuvered Zion, or Jerusalem, into rejecting the real Messiah, Jesus, and having him put to death on a stake as if he were a false Christ. Those religious leaders kept Jerusalem on the path of being a killer of prophets and a stoner of those whom her God sent. (Matt. 23:1-37) So, did the "meek" ones of such a nation need to have "good news" told to them? Were those "taken captive" needing to have liberty proclaimed to them? Were there "prisoners" that needed to have a "wide opening of the eyes" by being brought out of the dungeon of religious darkness? Was Zion, or Jerusalem, as the center of Jehovah's worship in such a religiously devastated state that there was real cause for mourning over her? Yes, indeed! And the anointed Jesus saw that there was then a remnant of such "mourning ones" among the Jews.

14. In Jesus' day, why was there reason for a remnant of the Jews to be "mourning over Zion"?

¹⁵ Jesus met the needs of those mourners, those "taken captive," those "prisoners," those poor "meek" ones. He comforted those mourners by preaching the good news of "the kingdom of the heavens," besides curing the sick and even raising the dead. (Matt. 4:17; 11:4-6) But still greater comfort and liberty were ahead for those mourners over Zion. This came by Jesus' death and resurrection and his ascension into heaven to present the value of his sin-atonement sacrifice to God. By thus fulfilling the Bible prophecies concerning him, Jesus Christ became a pioneer of life and salvation for those who accepted his life-giving ministry. John the Baptizer had gone in advance of Jehovah's Messiah and had prepared the way, and so John could also be called a pioneer. (Luke 1:76, *New World Translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures*, 1950) Jesus, however, did more than John in order to pioneer the way to life and salvation.

¹⁶ It was just as the apostle Peter boldly told the Jews in the temple at Jerusalem some weeks after Jesus' ascension to heaven: "You killed the pioneer of Life. But God raised him from the dead, as we [Peter and John] can bear witness."—Acts 3:15, *Moffatt*.

¹⁷ Later, before the bloodguilty Sanhedrin at Jerusalem, that was then composed of Sadducees, Pharisees and scribes, the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ testified: "God lifted him up to his right hand as our pioneer [Greek: *arkhegos*] and saviour, in order to grant repentance and remission of sins to Israel."—Acts 5:31, *Mo*.

¹⁸ In writing to the remnant of Hebrews (Jews) who accepted Jesus as the Mes-

15. In what way did John the Baptizer serve as a pioneer, and how did Jesus become a pioneer of life and salvation?

16. According to Moffatt's translation of Acts 3:15, what did Peter at the temple in Jerusalem call Jesus?

17. According to Acts 5:31, what did the twelve apostles call Jesus before the Jerusalem Sanhedrin?

18, 19. What did the apostle Paul call Jesus at Hebrews 2:10 and 12:2?

siah, or Christ, and who became spiritual sons of God, the Hebrew apostle Paul said: "For it was fitting that he, for whom and by whom all things exist, in bringing many sons to glory, should make the pioneer [arkhegós] of their salvation perfect through suffering."—Heb. 2:10, *Revised Standard Version*; also *Moffatt*.

¹⁹ Also: "Looking to Jesus the pioneer [arkhegós] and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising the shame, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God."—Heb. 12:2, *RS*; *Mo*.

²⁰ Jesus is thus declared to be a "pioneer" for his disciples, the pioneer of life, the pioneer of salvation, the pioneer of our faith. He brought to reality hundreds of Bible prophecies concerning the Messiah, or Christ. In this way he introduced a new and essential element into our faith toward Jehovah God. So he became the pioneer of the rounded-out faith that true Christians now have. Correctly, then, he is called "the pioneer . . . of our faith." (Heb. 12:2, *RS*; Gal. 3:24, 25) At the same time our faith regarding Jehovah's Messiah finds its perfecting or finale in Jesus Christ. The Jews who rejected Jesus Christ and who kept holding fast to Mosaic law alone had their faith left incomplete.

"BIG TREES OF RIGHTEOUSNESS"

²¹ To build up the faith of his disciples Jesus Christ appeared many times to them during the 40 days after his resurrection. He comforted those who were mourning over the hoped-for Messiah. What happened to those whom the resurrected Jesus Christ comforted? According to the prophecy of Isaiah 61:1-3, the anointed

Jesus was to "assign" to them "a head-dress instead of ashes, the oil of exultation instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of the downhearted spirit." Because of this they would experience a spiritual growth so that they would be called "big trees of righteousness, the planting of Jehovah, for him to be beautified."

²² Whether any of Jesus' apostles or disciples had put ashes on their heads and had worn sackcloth we are not told. Evidently the prophetic expressions "head-dress," "ashes," "oil," and "mantle" were meant figuratively. Jesus' resurrection appearances did indeed reverse the disciples' feelings on the matter. Ah, yes, but on the day of Pentecost that followed, the Sovereign Lord Jehovah used his Son Jesus Christ to pour holy spirit upon the waiting disciples in Jerusalem. In manifestation of the outpoured spirit, miraculous flames of fire hovered above their heads. This manifestation was only temporary, and was not the permanent "head-dress" foretold in Isaiah's prophecy. Rather, their heads were crowned with the joy of divine approval, like the joy of a priest bridegroom on a wedding day. (Isa. 61:10) It was as if a soothing oil had been poured on their heads, refreshing them to the point of exultation. Gone was the downhearted spirit, and the praises of Jehovah God identified them as with a "mantle of praise." Observers of that Pentecostal spectacle said: "We hear them speaking in our tongues about the magnificent things of God."—Acts 2:1-11.

²³ From all of this, what do we today observe? This fact, that, in keeping with his own anointing, Jesus Christ pioneered a restoration work toward those who be-

20. In what way did Jesus become "the pioneer . . . of our faith," as well as its perfecter?

21. As a result of Jesus' appearing to his disciples and comforting them after his resurrection, they were to experience a spiritual growth to what extent?

22. In Isaiah's prophecy, how were the words "head-dress," "ashes," "oil," and "mantle" to be understood, and how did they fit the disciples from Pentecost forward?

23. (a) What kind of work did Jesus pioneer for his disciples? (b) By their anointing through him, what were the disciples commissioned to do?

came his disciples. Jehovah used him to pour out holy spirit on his baptized disciples, so that these recipients of holy spirit themselves became persons anointed with the spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. (2 Cor. 1:21; 1 John 2:20, 27) Now they also were commissioned to tell "good news" to the "meek" ones in the nation of Israel, to proclaim liberty to the captives and a release for the prisoners, and to comfort all those mourning over Zion. In this way they could help others whom they were used to comfort and liberate into exulting over "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah" and into praising him for restoring them to his favor and service by means of his anointed ones.

²⁴ That outpouring of the spirit made all the difference in the world for those anointed with it. Instead of being like frail plants drooping for lack of nourishment, they became like "big trees of righteousness" that only Jehovah could plant and make grow up through Christ. Man's original "Paradise of Pleasure" had been adorned by trees of various kinds. (Gen. 2:7-9) But from Pentecost onward Jehovah planted "big trees" in the spiritual

estate of his dedicated people that their enemies had devastated and desolated. Such figurative "big trees" were the stalwart, steadfast, immovable Christians that reared themselves up loftily for the righteousness of Jehovah God. He, as their Planter, was "beautified" by their presence in the newly established Christian congregation.

²⁵ On the day of Pentecost, besides the original congregation of about 120 disciples, thousands of others became anointed ones after their repentance, their acceptance of the Messiah and their baptism in water at the hands of the 12 apostles. (Acts 2:37-42) These also came under the obligations of the anointing with Jehovah's spirit through Christ. Their Leader, Jesus, had pioneered the way for them to get the perfected faith and life and salvation. They became "ministers of our God." (Isa. 61:6) As such, they must now pioneer the way for yet others who sought relationship with God to gain reconciliation with him through Christ. (2 Cor. 5:20) In this manner they would have a joyful part in God's work of restoration.

24. From Pentecost onward, how was the spiritual estate of Jesus' disciples adorned similar to how Paradise was adorned, and for whom to be beautified?

25. Under what obligation did those baptized at Pentecost come, and in what work did they have to serve as pioneers?

"MINISTERS OF OUR GOD" AND THEIR ASSISTANTS TODAY

GOD'S WORK of spiritual restoration and rehabilitation is the greatest public service that is being rendered to mankind today. Those whom he is using as his public servants in this work are not politicians, but those who are prophetically designated as "the ministers of our

God." (Isa. 61:6) Their Leader and Exemplar was the foremost Public Servant of Jehovah God. This one was Jesus Christ, who, in his days on earth 19 centuries ago, performed an astounding work of rehabilitation on poor mankind.

² Back there the public ministry of Je-

1. What is the greatest public service that is being rendered to mankind today, and those sharing in it are called what prophetically?

2. Why did Jesus and his apostles not engage in an environmental rehabilitation of the land of Palestine?

sus Christ and his apostles did not bring about the environmental restoration of the land of Palestine in which they preached the good news of God's kingdom. To work for such a thing would have been in vain, for the anointed Jesus taught his apostles that "the day of vengeance on the part of our God" was to come upon the Jews, which did come in 70-73 C.E. by means of the Roman legions, and reduce the province of Judea to a devastated condition. The fortress of Masada by the Dead Sea was the last Judean stronghold to fall to the Romans. But what about the spiritual rehabilitation work pioneered by Jesus and carried forward by his apostles? It continued advancing onward through all that trialsome period and beyond, until the foretold "apostasy," or rebellion, set in after the death of the apostles.—2 Thess. 2:3.

³ In the prophecy of Isaiah, chapter 61, the work of spiritual rehabilitation was likened to the rehabilitating of a long-desolated land and its devastated cities. So, after first telling how the Sovereign Lord Jehovah would be "beautified" by his producing "big trees of righteousness" in a spiritual paradise, Isaiah's prophecy goes on to say: "And they must rebuild the long-standing devastated places; they will raise up even the desolated places of former times, and they will certainly make anew the devastated cities, the places desolate for generation after generation." (Isa. 61:4) The rebuilders here spoken of are those referred to in the preceding three verses who receive comfort and who are given religious liberty and restored to the favor and "goodwill" of Jehovah. These are set to restoration work.

⁴ The province of Judea and Jerusalem,

3. According to Isaiah 61:1-4, who are the symbolic "big trees of righteousness," and in what activity are they set to work?

4. Did Jesus apply the fulfillment of Isaiah 61:4 to the province of Judea after the Babylonian captivity, and for how long does the prophecy's fulfillment extend itself?

in which Jesus Christ and his apostles did much preaching of God's kingdom, had long before been rehabilitated by the remnant of faithful Jews after their release from Babylonian captivity and their return to their homeland in 537 B.C.E. But did the anointed Jesus apply the prophecy of Isaiah 61:4 to that past accomplishment on the literal land of Judah? No! When he quoted the first two verses of Isaiah, chapter 61, in the synagogue of Nazareth, he pointed to the fulfillment of that chapter as beginning with him, in his day. He showed that it had a spiritual significance and did not apply to a restoration of the natural, physical, environmental conditions of the people. So the fulfillment of the prophecy extends down to our 20th century, to our day.

⁵ World War I of 1914-1918 had a devastating effect on the anointed remnant of Jehovah's dedicated, baptized servants. Their earthly organization was crippled in many ways. When that first total war ended, a number of anointed Christians who had been foremost in the service and worship of Jehovah God found themselves still in prison under long sentences of confinement. But in 1919 came release, not only from literal imprisonment, but, more importantly, from Babylon the Great (including apostate Christendom). Restoration work of a spiritual kind got under way without delay.

⁶ In 1919 the first convention of the International Bible Students Association at Cedar Point, Ohio, proved meaningful. It notified the world that the true Christian remnant anointed with the spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah was again alive, as if from the dead. They had been restored to his favor and were once more openly active in 'preaching this good news

5. Why was there need of spiritual restoration work with regard to Jehovah's people after World War I, and when did it get under way?

6. Of what fact did the 1919 Cedar Point convention notify the world, and what did Jehovah then establish for his anointed remnant?

of the Kingdom for a witness to all the nations' as foretold in Matthew 24:14. The effect of that pioneering effort at spiritual rehabilitation shows up on a worldwide scale even at this late date. To his own praise, Jehovah God has established a spiritual paradise for his spirit-anointed remnant.

Who Designates The "Ministers Of Our God"?

⁷ Strange as it may sound, the spiritual rehabilitation of Jehovah's anointed remnant was due to excite international attention. Isaiah's prophecy foretold this. After having considered Isaiah 61:4, we read on: "And strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers. And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be. The resources of the nations you people will eat, and in their glory [riches] you will speak elatedly about yourselves. Instead of your shame there will be a double portion, and instead of humiliation they will cry out joyfully over their share [their lot]. Therefore in their land they will take possession of even a double portion. Rejoicing to time indefinite is what will come to be theirs."—Isa. 61:5-7, NW; RS.

⁸ Let us not fail to note this: Those upon whom this encouraging prophecy is fulfilled must first suffer shame and humiliation, the denial to them of their "portion" and "share." During World War I such disagreeable, unjustified things did befall Jehovah's anointed remnant, even at the hand of war-mad Christendom. Yes, down to this day the clergy of Christendom persist in heaping shame and humili-

ation on the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites.

⁹ However, those spiritual Israelites are no longer in the land of Babylon the Great, suffering captivity, imprisonment and religious slavery there. In the spring of 1919, when the Babylonish clergy of Christendom no longer had martialled nations to use as henchmen, Jehovah liberated his faithful anointed remnant. He restored them to what Isaiah's prophecy calls "their land." In that God-given estate was where they were no more to suffer shame, humiliation and lack of spiritual provisions. Theirs was to be a spiritual paradise, in which they would have a "double portion."

¹⁰ Of course, the clergy of apostate Christendom and her worldly paramours still have their way of designating the restored remnant as an existing religious body. But what did Isaiah's prophecy say the restored anointed remnant would be called? Isaiah 61:6 is addressed to the restored remnant and says: "And as for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be. The resources of the nations you people will eat." What Jehovah designates his anointed remnant to be is what counts with them, not what religious opposers call them.

¹¹ In the nation of the prophet Isaiah and of Jesus Christ, the prophecy of Isaiah 61:6 could never be fulfilled. Why not? Because the qualified male members of only the family of Aaron, the brother of Moses, were anointed as priests. The rest of the tribe of Levi served as assistants to the Aaronic priests at the temple. The 12 other tribes of Israel brought their

9. In what location were the anointed remnant no longer to suffer shame, humiliation and lack of provisions, and how did they get there?

10. As to how the restored anointed remnant are designated by religious opposers and by Jehovah, what is it that counts with the remnant?

11. In ancient Israel, who were included in the priesthood, but to whom is the prophecy of Isaiah 61:6 about priests addressed?

7. According to Isaiah 61:5-7, how much attention was the spiritual rehabilitation of the anointed remnant to excite?

8. When and how did the adverse things prophesied come, and at whose instigation?

sacrifices and offerings to the Aaronic priests and were aided also by the temple Levites. Did those 12 tribes feel that they had been discriminated against because they were barred from the priesthood and Levitical services? No! They submitted themselves to those designated by the Sovereign Lord Jehovah. So, under the Mosaic law, Israel could never become a priest nation, a nation made up entirely of priests. However, in the case of Christ's anointed disciples, to the *entire* Christian Israel made up by them it is said: "The priests of Jehovah you will be called."

¹² All the members of this spiritual Israel are "priests" by Jehovah's designation of them. Jesus Christ their Pioneer is Jehovah's High Priest, under whom the nation of "priests" serve God.

¹³ The prophet Isaiah was inspired to foretell this fact. Later, the inspired apostles of Jesus Christ confirmed that this arrangement of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah applied to the anointed disciples of the heavenly High Priest Jesus Christ. To such disciples, the apostle Peter writes: "You yourselves also as living stones are being built up a spiritual house for the purpose of a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ. But you are 'a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies' of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light." (1 Pet. 2:5, 9) Furthermore, the apostle John wrote to those loved by Jesus Christ: "To him that loves us and that loosed us from our sins by means of his own blood—and he made us to be a kingdom, priests to his God and Father—yes, to him be the glory and the might forever."—Rev. 1:5, 6.

12. In spiritual Israel, how many are priests, and who is the High Priest?

13. How did the apostles Peter and John confirm that this arrangement of Jehovah applied to the anointed disciples of the High Priest Jesus Christ?

¹⁴ John further records the acclamation in heaven that was given to the Lamb of God, Jesus Christ, and that involves the priesthood, in these words: "With your blood you bought persons for God out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and you made them to be a kingdom and priests to our God."—Rev. 5: 9, 10.

¹⁵ During the Middle Ages the Protestant Reformers applied these words to their religious congregations. On page 681 of Volume 22 the 1977 copyrighted edition of *The Encyclopedia Americana*, under the subheading "Priesthood of All Believers," says:

"A central doctrine of the Reformation was the priesthood of all believers. Believing that salvation is by God's free grace, accepted in faith, the Reformers argued that no professional clergy is necessary to mediate salvation through preaching and the sacraments. Any believer can act like a priest, telling the good news of salvation, and the hearer can respond in faith. Furthermore, inasmuch as good works are serving one's neighbor, any work that benefits society is seen as a Christian vocation. What is known as the 'Protestant work ethic' grew out of seeing daily work as the prime area in which to serve God."

¹⁶ In the 1927, 1929 copyrighted Volume 17 of *The Encyclopedia Americana*, at the top of page 753, under "Luther," we read:

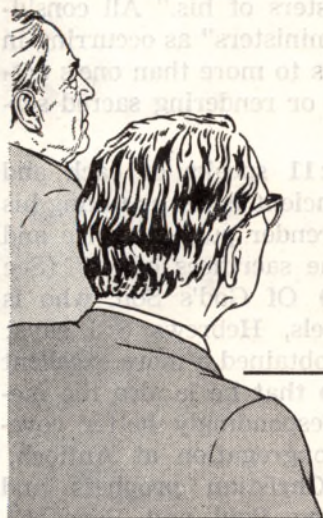
"Two notable books now appeared from Luther's pen defining his attitude: 'To the Christian Nobility of the German Nation,' and the 'Babylonian Captivity.' In the former he proclaims the universal priesthood and declares against any especially instituted priestly order. He also contests the right of the Pope to interpret the Bible, which he declares to be free to everybody."

For instance, Martin Luther wrote in his book 'to the Nobility': "We were all con-

14. How is this fact reiterated in Revelation 5:9, 10?

15. What does the 1977 edition of *The Encyclopedia Americana* say about "Priesthood of all believers" as taught by reformers?

16. In his book addressed to "the Christian Nobility of the German Nation," what did Martin Luther say about the universal priesthood?



The modern-day "ministers of our God" are doing a spiritual rehabilitation work that was foretold by the prophet Isaiah and pioneered by Jesus. The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah has empowered them to proclaim the good news of the Kingdom to the meek ones of all the earth.

secrated to be priests at our baptism. . . . That the Pope or the bishop anoints, tonsures, ordains, consecrates and dresses a person differently from the laity may well make a hypocrite or a fool out of him, but it will never make him a Christian or a spiritual man."

¹⁷ Like the primitive Christians of apostolic times, the members of the anointed remnant today do not assume the title of **priest**. Why should they do so? Are they not all fellow members of the one spiritual priesthood and so not to be distinguished from one another? Yes! The high priesthood of Jesus Christ is the predominant thing to which the inspired Christian

Greek Scriptures point for the consideration of the spirit-anointed congregation. (Heb. 3:1-6) Even Jesus Christ himself, when on earth, did not speak of himself as a priest, even though he was then serving as the antitype of Israel's first high priest, Aaron the brother of Moses.

¹⁸ True, the apostles such as Paul and Barnabas did appoint qualified men to be elders or overseers and ministerial servants in the Christian congregations, but they never appointed or ordained "priests." (Acts 14:23; Phil. 1:1) Jehovah is the One who, by Jesus Christ, appoints or ordains his priests. Despite their not assum-

17. Why did the first-century Christians not assume the title of priest, and what about Jesus Christ himself when on earth?

18. (a) Do men ordain priests, the same as men appoint elders, overseers and ministerial servants? (b) Where, in Jehovah's spiritual temple, are the anointed remnant today, and what are they doing there?

ing titles, the anointed remnant of today are in what was foreshadowed by the "courtyard of the priests" in the temple at Jerusalem. In such a figurative courtyard in the spiritual temple of Jehovah, they offer "spiritual sacrifices" to him through Jesus Christ the High Priest.—1 Pet. 2:5.

¹⁹ Returning now to Isaiah 61:6, we note that it also says to the anointed members of spiritual Israel: "The ministers of our God you will be said to be." Here in the Hebrew text the word translated "ministers" is *m'shareth'* (in the plural number), not *'obed*, meaning "servant," as in Isaiah 65:13. The Hebrew word *m'shareth'* and other forms of the verb *sharath'* are often used in connection with the priests of Israel. Joel 2:17 uses the expression "the priests, the ministers of Jehovah." (Ex. 28:35, 43) In the first translation of the Hebrew Scriptures into a foreign language the Greek-speaking translators recognized the difference between the two Hebrew words *'obed* and *m'shareth'*, and so in their rendering of Isaiah 61:6 in the Greek *Septuagint Version* they used the Greek word *leitourgos'* for *m'shareth'*.

²⁰ The word *leitourgos'* means, basically, "a public worker," that is, a public officer or minister, such as a magistrate. (Rom. 13:6) It may refer to one serving in sacred office, as when the apostle Paul speaks of himself as "a public servant of Christ Jesus to the nations, engaging in the holy work of the good news of God." (Rom. 15:16) Jesus Christ, as God's High Priest, is called a "public servant of the holy place and of the true tent." (Heb. 8:1, 2) In the case of a public figure like King David's princely son Amnon, the man waiting upon him would be viewed as a public

servant. (2 Sam. 13:18) Heavenly angels are viewed as public servants, for, when the apostle Paul quotes Psalm 104:4, he says: "Also, with reference to the angels he [God] says: 'And he makes his angels spirits, and his public servants a flame of fire.'" (Heb. 1:7) Also, in Hebrews 1:14, Paul speaks of the angels as "all spirits for public service."

²¹ Psalm 103:21 is addressed to Jehovah's heavenly "armies," and there they are called "ministers of his." All considered, the word "ministers" as occurring in Isaiah 61:6 refers to more than one's acting as a servant or rendering sacred service.

²² Hebrews 10:11 speaks of each and every priest of ancient Israel as taking his stand daily "to render public service and to offer the same sacrifices often." (See also Luke 1:23.) Of God's Son, who is superior to angels, Hebrews 8:6 says: "Now Jesus has obtained a more excellent public service, so that he is also the mediator of a correspondingly better covenant." In the congregation at Antioch, Syria, certain Christian prophets and teachers, including Paul and Barnabas, were said to be "publicly ministering to Jehovah." (Acts 13:1, 2) Paul, who founded the congregation at Philippi, Macedonia, speaks of their special ministry and says: "I am being poured out like a drink offering upon the sacrifice and public service to which faith has led you." (Phil. 2:17) So all those anointed Christians acted as God's public servants.—Isa. 61:6.

²³ Likewise the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites today render to God "public service" as the "faithful and discreet slave" class. (Matt. 24:45-47) The

19. (a) In Isaiah 61:6, what else are the members of spiritual Israel said to be? (b) Does the Hebrew word there used mean more than acting as a mere "servant"?
20. (a) What is the basic meaning of the Greek word *leitourgos'*? (b) How is it used in the Christian Greek Scriptures with reference to human creatures and to heavenly creatures?

21. In Psalm 103:21, what are God's military forces in heaven called?
22. (a) Jesus Christ rendered to God a public service superior to that of whom? (b) In Philippians 2:17, Paul spoke of the Christian activity there as what?
23. How did the *Watch Tower* in its issue of June 1882 call attention to the public service performed by members of the spiritual body of Christ?

existence of such a class of public servants of God was early called attention to by *Zion's Watch Tower* in its monthly issue of June 1882, page 7, paragraph 5, under the subject title "Human Teachers Necessary." There the publishers said: "... And while we believe that every consecrated member of the body of Christ is a MINISTER in some sense, and all are 'anointed to preach the glad tidings', yet there are various members adapted to different parts of the work, just as there are different members and offices in the human body, which Scripturally is used to illustrate the body of Christ—the Church." So all the anointed remnant of the spiritual body of Christ are properly viewed and spoken of as "ministers of our God."—Isa. 61:6.

NOTICE TAKEN OF THEM INTERNATIONALLY

²⁴ "Ministers of our God" should carry out their responsibilities and conduct themselves in a way that honors their standing before God. People in general may misunderstand them and may look upon them as unrighteous and in the wrong. They may be robbed of their good reputation or be denied proper recognition and a deserved consideration. (2 Cor. 6:8-10) But the Supreme Judge of all will correct matters just when it suits his purpose to do so. He believes in justice. In Isaiah 61:8, 9 he says to those mistreated:

²⁵ "For I, Jehovah, am loving justice, hating robbery along with unrighteousness. And I will give their wages in truth, and an indefinitely lasting covenant I shall conclude toward them. And their offspring will actually be known even among the nations, and their descendants in among the peoples. All those seeing

them will recognize them, that they are the offspring whom Jehovah has blessed."

²⁶ To become "known" the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel had to get out among nations and peoples. During World War I, yes, also during World War II, they had been subjected to international "robbery." Because of being falsely accused and misrepresented by religious foes and their patrons, they underwent great persecution. They were deprived of "wages" that they really deserved for their efforts and activities in Jehovah's public service. But by making them his witnesses and preachers of the Kingdom good news, Jehovah showed whom he himself approved. (Matt. 24:14; Isa. 43:10, 12) By his holy spirit he energized them to bear testimony to all the world. In such a way the nations and peoples got to know the "offspring whom Jehovah has blessed."—Isa. 61:9.

²⁷ Peoples and nations as such did not give Jehovah's anointed remnant the due recognition. But individuals did so. Lovers of justice, righteousness and truth manifested themselves. Notably from the spring of 1935 these went lining themselves up with the anointed remnant because they were "the ministers of our God." Since then these who are not spiritual Israelites, "the offspring whom Jehovah has blessed," have become a "great crowd." At the Washington, D.C., convention of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1935 it was disclosed that this unnumbered "crowd" of those who were not spiritual Israelites matched the prophetic picture of Revelation 7:9-17. Because of not being spiritual Israelites, they were "strangers" and "foreigners" to the anointed remnant. (Isa. 61:5) They saw that the remnant lived in a spiritual paradise, marked by "big trees of righteous-

26. How did the remnant of spiritual Israel become known among nations and peoples, and how did these come to recognize the "offspring whom Jehovah has blessed"?

27. Who among the peoples and nations did give due recognition to the remnant's standing, and where and with whom did they want to live and serve God?

24, 25. How may the "ministers of our God" be robbed and treated unrighteously, but who promises to correct matters at the due time?

ness" and having citylike congregations. They too wanted to be in a spiritual paradise of that kind, there to serve God.—See *You May Survive Armageddon into God's New World*, pp. 296-299, pars. 14-16; p. 368, No. 30.

²⁸ Fully counting the cost of their decision and course of action, they forsook the polluted, decaying world organization. They lined up with Jehovah's visible organization. Of course, they could not serve him as spiritual Israelites, but they really desired to help the anointed remnant in heralding the good news of Jehovah's kingdom by Christ. So they got baptized as dedicated followers of Jesus Christ. They took up active service with the spiritual Israelites. Consequently, with delight the anointed remnant see fulfilled to them the words of Isaiah 61:5: "And strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks of you people, and the foreigners will be your farmers and your vinedressers."

²⁹ Humbly the "great crowd" consider it an honor and a privilege to serve in the spiritual paradise with those whom Isaiah 61:6 designates as "the priests of Jehovah" and "the ministers of our God." They appreciate that the anointed Christians thus designated by Jehovah God must specialize on spiritual matters in his spiritual temple. So they are glad to relieve the anointed remnant by helping and cooperating in order that these may specialize on the more important spiritual matters. All of this aids in beautifying the spiritual paradise and making it fruitful to God's glory.

³⁰ Thus the figurative "strangers" and "foreigners" of today assist those of the remnant that they may carry out the du-

ties devolving upon them because of being anointed with Jehovah's spirit. In Isaiah 61:5 the work of the assistants is pictured as tending to flocks, farming or plowing, and caring for vineyards. But in the Revelation vision of the foreigners out of all nations, tribes, peoples and tongues, it is said of them: "They have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service day and night in his temple."—Rev. 7:14, 15.

³¹ Those of the "great crowd" are thus pictured as performers of sacred service to the enthroned Sovereign Lord of the universe. Regardless of how the world views them, they are His servants!

³² That "great crowd" of "strangers" and "foreigners" will survive the coming "great tribulation." How beautifully Isaiah 61:5 describes what they will do afterward, during the thousand-year reign of Christ! During that time the "priests of Jehovah" who are "the ministers of our God" will be exalted with the High Priest Jesus Christ in the heavens. Up there they will more than ever occupy themselves with priestly service for all mankind. (Rev. 20:6) But the "great crowd" will be left here on the cleansed earth that is to be transformed into a literal paradise globally. Who then will be the pioneers in rehabilitating and beautifying God's earthly footstool? Why, the "great crowd" of tribulation survivors who have stuck to the spiritual paradise with the anointed remnant.

³³ Will there then be clothing to make? The wool from the flocks that the "great crowd" will tend will be ample for this

28. By what course of the "great crowd" do the anointed remnant see fulfilled to them the words of Isaiah 61:5?

29. Humble in mind, the "great crowd" are glad to do what in behalf of "the ministers of our God," and with what effect?

30. Isaiah 61:5 pictures these "strangers" and "foreigners" as performing what services, but how does Revelation 7:14, 15 speak of their service?

31. Regardless of how the world views them, what are those of the "great crowd" to the enthroned God?

32. How will Isaiah 61:5, 6 be fulfilled more literally with respect to the remnant and the "great crowd" during the millennium?

33. How will the "great crowd" attend to human needs and appetites then, and for whom will they be pioneers in Jehovah's service and worship?

purpose. Is bread desired, and other products from the field? The "farmers" will see to satisfying hearty appetites. The vinedressers will be able to furnish the best of wines to gladden the hearts of men. The progress that the "great crowd" will have made in restoring paradise on earth will delight the eyes of all those resurrected from the dead and will demonstrate

the advance care taken for all such redeemed by the High Priest. Despite all of this, the "great crowd" will not neglect rendering sacred service to Jehovah God through Jesus Christ regularly in the earthly courtyard of God's spiritual temple. In this they will take the lead and set an excellent example for all those resurrected from the dead.—Luke 23:43.

CAUSE FOR BEING Joyful

And Exulting In God



THERE is inexpressible joy in one's being liberated from captivity and imprisonment in Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. There is reason for one to exult in being restored to the favor and goodwill of the God of true religion. As the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites today contemplate their deliverance and restoration by Him, they overflow with joyfulness. The inspired prophet Isaiah puts the words into their mouths when he says: "Without fail I shall exult in Jehovah. My soul will be joyful in my God. For he has clothed me with the garments of salvation; with the sleeveless coat of righteousness he has en-

wrapped me, like the bridegroom who, in a priestly way, puts on a headdress, and like the bride who decks herself with her ornamental things."—Isa. 61:10.

² From the postwar year of 1919 onward Jehovah has wrought "salvation" for the anointed remnant of spiritual Israelites by liberating them from Babylon the Great and her worldly paramours. In spite of all the religious persecution experienced since then, the anointed remnant still finds itself clothed with "the garments of salvation." The remnant is determined to keep on wearing these identifying garments down till Babylon the Great and her im-

1. Why do the remnant of spiritual Israelites today overflow with joy in fulfillment of Isaiah 61:10?

2. Do the anointed remnant still wear the "garments of salvation," and why will they never be exiled from the spiritual paradise?

moral paramours are destroyed in the coming "great tribulation." For doing this they will never be driven out and exiled from the spiritual paradise into which Jehovah has brought them since 1919.

³ A "sleeveless coat of righteousness" is something added to "the garments of salvation" with which Jehovah has arrayed his restored remnant. In the eyes of the world, especially due to misrepresentation by Christendom's clergy, the remnant of spiritual Israelites appeared to be unrighteous in a religious way. They were branded as heretics, false prophets, false Christs, deceivers, children of the Devil. Their being made the target of worldwide persecution seemed to confirm such charges against them, particularly so in Christendom. But how did Jehovah view them?

⁴ The great Judge of all did not condemn them and clothe them with prison garb, banishing them from his organization. Because of their seeking him and his Word, he received the repentant remnant back into his favor. He accorded to them the honorable privilege of being his witnesses, his ambassadors, to preach "this good news of the kingdom . . . in all the inhabited earth" for an international testimony before this wicked system of things ends. He caused his name, Jehovah, to be called upon them. (Matt. 24:14; Isa. 43:10) Then he used them mightily to make his name and purposes known to the four corners of the earth. This has meant vindication for the remnant!

⁵ This has proved to be a justification of the remnant, a declaring of them righteous before all the world. Figuratively, this has been an enwrapping of them "with the sleeveless coat of righteousness." In this way they experienced a change of

garments, from what is soiled to what is ornamental. (Isa. 52:1, 2) Their joy at this was early published in the leading, six-page article in the *Watch Tower* issue of February 1, 1925, entitled "The Robe of Righteousness," as based on Isaiah 61:10, *Authorized Version*. Their joy has been like that of a bridegroom and his bride on their wedding day!

⁶ As regards rejoicing, well, what Isaiah's prophecy said earlier has proved to be true: "Rejoicing to time indefinite is what will come to be theirs." (Isa. 61:7) Today, 43 years since 1935 C.E., the saved and vindicated remnant continues to rejoice indeed, but, more than that, the "great crowd" of their assistants join in the rejoicing. Taking the Bible's viewpoint, they have come to view the anointed remnant as "the priests of Jehovah" and "the ministers of our God." They discern that anointed class to be clothed "with the garments of salvation" and enwrapped "with the sleeveless coat of righteousness." They express their own joy at this by serving Jehovah God alongside this approved remnant of priestly, public servants. Even though the "great crowd" are classed as "strangers" and "foreigners" and are likened to shepherds, farmers and vinedressers, the amount of relief and assistance that they have brought to the anointed remnant has been tremendous. The spiritual paradise has benefited from their presence.—Matt. 25:31-46.

⁷ All this 20th-century miracle was bound to come in fulfillment of Bible prophecy, just as truly as spring must regularly come to the land of Palestine. Never could the prophecy of Isaiah 61:11 fail: "For as the earth itself brings forth its sprout, and as the garden itself makes the things that are sown in it sprout, in

3. Why did need arise for the anointed remnant to be enwrapped in a "sleeveless coat of righteousness"?

4. How did Jehovah show that he viewed the repentant, God-seeking remnant as righteous, vindicating them?

5. So, figuratively speaking, what change of garments did the remnant experience, with a joy like that on what occasion?

6. How lasting has been this rejoicing of the vindicated remnant, and who have rejoiced with them, in what practical demonstration?

7. Why was all this 20th-century miracle bound to come, just as spring regularly comes to Palestine?

like manner Jehovah himself will cause the sprouting of righteousness and of praise in front of all the nations."

⁸How true to his own word Jehovah God has acted! He could never leave things unrectified. He is the God "loving justice, hating robbery along with unrighteousness." (Isa. 61:8) At pay time he had to give to his hardworking servants "their wages in truthfulness." He concluded the promised "new covenant" toward his anointed servants, and from this the "great crowd" has also benefited. (Jer. 31:31-34)

8. Why could Jehovah never leave things unrectified, and to what extent has he given his servants their "wages"?

QUESTIONS from READERS

● What is the point being made in Mark 7:19 where we read: "Thus he [Jesus] declared all foods clean"?

Basically, the point is that a person does not become spiritually defiled by what he eats, such as by eating food with hands that were not washed according to some religious ritual.

As the context of Mark 7:19 shows, Pharisees and scribes had taken issue with Jesus because his disciples ate with "defiled hands, that is, unwashed ones," while the religious leaders 'did not eat unless they washed their hands up to the elbows.' (Mark 7:1-3) Jesus duly exposed them for holding to man-made traditions while ignoring weighty principles of God, such as caring for their parents. He continued: "There is nothing from outside a man that passes into him that can defile him; but the things that issue forth out of a man are the things that defile a man."—Mark 7:5-15.

Christ's followers then asked him what he meant. Mark's account goes on: "[Jesus] said to them: . . . 'Are you not aware that nothing from outside that passes into a man can defile him, since it passes, not into his heart, but into

He has already vindicated his Christian witnesses as his approved servants and will yet vindicate them further "in front of all the nations." This will make his own righteousness spring forth for all the universe to see. It will also redound to his everlasting praise from the lips of all lovers of truth, righteousness and pure worship.

⁹Away, then, with "the downhearted spirit"! Let us ever identify ourselves with "the mantle of praise" and exult in Jehovah God through his anointed High Priest, Jesus Christ.—Isa. 61:1-3.

9. With what mantle should we ever identify ourselves?

his intestines, and it passes out into the sewer?" Thus he declared all foods clean."—Mark 7:18, 19.

The grammatical construction of the last part of verse 19 is unusual in the original Greek, but many translators have understood it to be a comment added by the writer Mark. But why would Mark add: "Thus he declared all foods clean"?

Mark's comment would reasonably be in accord with the historical situation existing when Jesus said what he did. At that time the Mosaic law was still in effect, so certain foods, such as pork, were "unclean" to God's servants. That continued to be the case until Jesus' death brought to an end the Law with its dietary restrictions about clean and unclean food.—Compare Leviticus chapter 11; Colossians 2:13, 14; Acts 10:9-16.

Hence, Mark logically was talking about food that was "clean" from the standpoint of the then applicable Mosaic law. The tradition-bound religious leaders felt that in eating even such food they would be made unclean unless first they followed elaborate cleansing rituals. And they tried to impose on all believers these rituals that were not part of God's law but were man-made traditions. So, when Jesus pointed out the error of the religious leaders' thinking, Mark could rightly add an observation as to the import of what Jesus said. Yes, food that the Mosaic law permitted would not defile the eater just because he had not ritualistically washed his hands.

The Teacher Who Was Different

IT IS difficult to look back on a specific time period in history and capture its "spirit"—the feelings and attitudes of the people then living. To help us to understand how different Jesus was from the other teachers of his day, we can look at the views of the rabbis. Many held an extremely lofty view of Israel, teaching that 'Israel had been in God's thoughts before the creation of the Universe.' They also put great stress on knowledge of custom and had great pride in their descent from Abraham. Bible scholar Edersheim notes: "The abhorrence, not unmingled with contempt, of all Gentile ways, thoughts and associations; the worship of the letter of the Law; the self-righteousness, and pride of descent, and still more of knowledge" all contributed to "absolute antagonism to the claims of a Messiah, so unlike themselves and their own ideal."

This helps us to appreciate how even the un-

educated could discern the differences between the teachings of Jesus and those of the rabbis. As Matthew notes: "The crowds were astounded at [Jesus'] way of teaching; for he was teaching . . . not as their scribes."—Matt. 7:28, 29.

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

August 6: "Ministers of Our God" Pioneer Vital Restoration Work. Page 16. Songs to Be Used: 68, 63.

August 13: "Ministers of Our God" and Their Assistants Today, ¶1-23. Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 64, 81.

August 20: "Ministers of Our God" and Their Assistants Today, ¶24-33, and Cause for Being Joyful and Exulting in God. Page 27. Songs to Be Used: 109, 48.

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