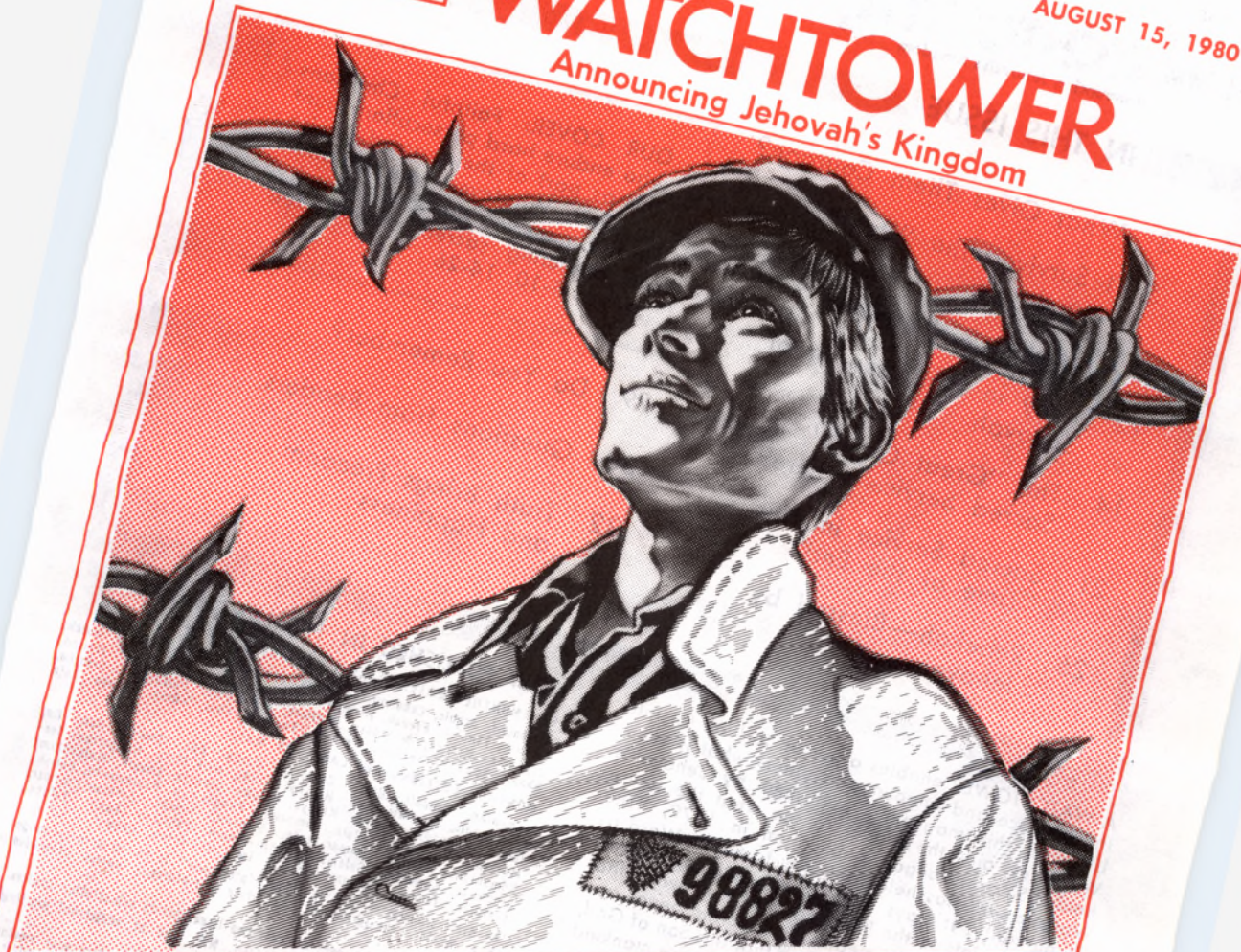


THE

WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

AUGUST 15, 1980



COURAGE

In Walking With God

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OUR COVER: Faithful Christians who endure hard persecution count this as part of their sacred service to God. Whatever your situation in life, may you too show integrity in rendering sacred service. See pages 5-10, 14-26

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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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THE year was 1909. Four women were making an automobile trip across the United States—the first such trans-continental journey with a woman at the wheel. They were crossing Nevada when something happened that admittedly terrified the driver. Sixty-eight years later, she stated:

“Coming directly at us, we suddenly noticed a dozen Indians on horseback . . . all carrying drawn bows and arrows. They were letting out regular war whoops.”

Were the lives of those women in jeopardy? Apparently they thought so. But then there was relief from terror. “Suddenly,” recalled Alice Huyler Ramsey, “across the roadway ahead leaped a jack-rabbit, bent madly on escape . . . The Indians never slowed down nor paid the least attention to us. What a day!”

Those women hardly had time to muster up courage. And their fears were unwarranted. Probably all of us have had unfounded anxieties at times. On other occasions, however, we may have been confronted with situations that have required true and lasting courage. Certainly, this has often been the case with Christians. Repeatedly they have faced trials of faith, some so severe as to arouse fear or dread in most people.

How have true Christians been able to withstand great tests of faith? What gives them their courage?

WALKING WITH GOD

An unquestionable source of courage is ‘walking with God,’ that is, pursuing a course of righteousness that harmonizes with Jehovah God’s revealed truth. This means harmonizing one’s life with the will and purpose of God, no matter what all other persons are doing. In early human history, godly Enoch ‘walked with God.’ So did well-known Noah.—Gen. 5:24; 6:9.

Most Bible readers will recall that Noah was commissioned by God to build a mam-

What Gives Them Courage?

moth ark for the preservation of human and animal life. Over a period of years, this devout man and his family carried on that construction work under the eyes of ridiculing humans. But the faithful patriarch and his family had the courage needed to complete that God-given work.—Gen. 6:13-22.

Yet something else had developed that called for abundant courage. Prior to Noah’s ark-building activities, “the sons of the true God began to notice the daughters of men, that they were good-looking; and they went taking wives for themselves, namely, all whom they chose.” (Gen. 6:2) Obviously, the ‘sons of God’ here mentioned were not human males, for certainly they had ‘noticed the daughters of men’ long before this, had married them and thus had naturally contributed to the continuance of the human race. These “sons of the true God” were disobedient angels who had abandoned their proper heavenly place, had materialized fleshly bodies, and were now living with women. In fact, the Greek *Septuagint Version* found in the Alexandrine Manuscript reads “angels of God” instead of “sons of God” at Genesis 6:4. This harmonizes with the apostle Peter’s words regarding “the angels that sinned” and the statement of Jude about “the angels that did not keep their original position but forsook their own proper dwelling place.”—2 Pet. 2:4; Jude 6.

Increasing Noah's need for courage was the fact that the union of disobedient angels and women produced a race of Nephilim. In Hebrew, this term is believed to mean "fellers," or, "those who cause others to fall down." Otherwise called "mighty ones," these Nephilim were hybrid tyrants, or bullies, who added to the violence rampant in that pre-Flood world.—Gen. 6:4.

Amid such circumstances, Noah distinguished himself not only as the ark builder but as "a preacher of righteousness." (2 Pet. 2:5) Yes, he had the courage to speak up and tell his contemporaries that God had purposed to bring destruction upon the wicked in an earth-wide flood. Noah's preaching of righteousness evidently included a call to repentance and a warning of coming destruction, for Jesus Christ mentioned those days and said that the people "*took no note* until the flood came and swept them all away."—Matt. 24:37-39.

But reflect briefly on the circumstances of Noah and his family in that pre-Flood period. Doubtless they were the objects of ridicule from men, women and children. Add to that the probable taunts of the Nephilim, apparently giants noted for violence. And what about the materialized disobedient angels? Would it not take courage to face them?

THE SOURCE OF COURAGE

Without doubt, 'walking with God' was at the very root of Noah's courage. In fact, the only way that Noah and his family could carry on courageously amid such circumstances was by placing implicit trust in the true God. They had to have the confidence that Jehovah would, as foretold, bring an end to that ungodly world. (Gen. 6:3) Also, that patriarch and his family could have the added assurance that the ark was not being built for no purpose. Eventually it *would* be used.

Moreover, their courage would be enhanced by reason of their having a close personal relationship with Jehovah, especially through prayer. And surely Noah and his family could have confidence that nothing would be permitted to happen to them that would be outside the divine providence.

At God's due time, the Flood took place, and all the ridiculers and opposers were removed. Ungodly humans perished in the floodwaters, as did the Nephilim. The disobedient angels were compelled to dematerialize to save their lives. But, thenceforth, they would be restrained, occupying merely a position of divine disfavor until the future execution of God's adverse judgment upon them. (2 Pet. 2:4) Only courageous Noah and his family were preserved on earth, being recipients of God's favor at that time.

GODLY COURAGE TODAY

Like Noah, Jehovah's Witnesses today are 'preachers of righteousness.' Theirs is both a message of warning and a call to repentance and reconciliation with Jehovah God. Whereas Noah and his family found themselves face to face with disobedient angels, godly persons today have unseen foes. But these true Christians have protective spiritual armor from God and thus can courageously carry on in the God-given work of preaching.—Eph. 6:10-18; Matt. 24:14.

Many people ridicule and oppose God's present-day servants, sometimes even resorting to brutal persecution in an effort to still the lips of praisers of Jehovah. But Jehovah's Witnesses are undeterred. Like Noah, they 'walk with God' and have the confidence that very soon Jehovah will do what he has promised—bring an end to this ungodly world, while preserving those who love righteousness. (2 Pet. 3:5-13) Also, the courage of true Christians is enhanced because of their close personal re-

lationship with Jehovah through prayer. Furthermore, they realize that nothing will happen to them that God does not permit.—Compare Romans 8:28.

There is real comfort in knowing that “Jehovah will not forsake his people.” (Ps. 94:14) Mere humans cannot block God’s purposes or eradicate those who love him.

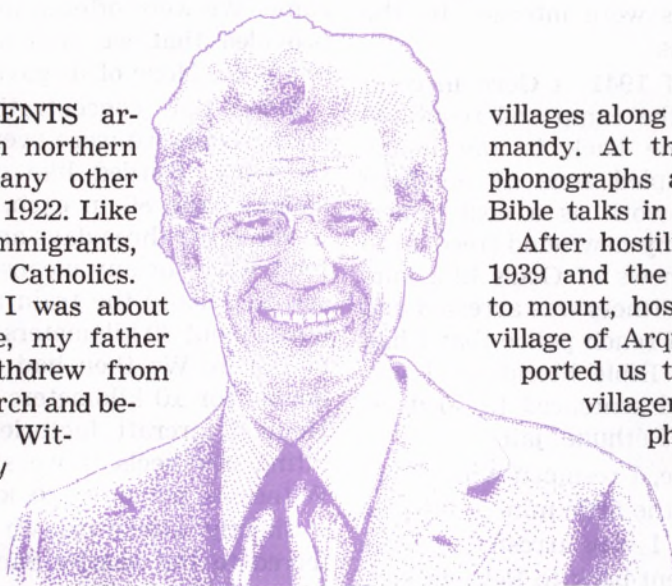
Confidence in Jehovah’s promises, complete trust in him and the maintaining of a close personal relationship with the Most High—these are basic factors that give godly persons their courage. And that courage buoys them up in times of intense hardship and persecution, as is evident from the following account.

I Survived The “Death March”

As told by Louis Piéchota

MY PARENTS arrived in northern France with many other Polish miners in 1922. Like most of these immigrants, they were good Catholics. However, when I was about 11 years of age, my father and mother withdrew from the Catholic Church and became Jehovah’s Witnesses, or *Zloty Wiek* (“Golden Agers”), as the Polish Catholics scornfully called them. That was in 1928. Therefore, since the days of my youth, I have had the joy of sharing with others the “good news” set forth in the Holy Scriptures.

Shortly before the outbreak of World War II, I had my first taste of pioneering, or full-time preaching. My companions and I—all five of us of Polish origin—spread the Kingdom message in small towns and



villages along the coast of Normandy. At that time we used phonographs and recordings of Bible talks in French.

After hostilities broke out in 1939 and the war fever began to mount, hostile people in the village of Arques la Bataille reported us to the police. The

villagers had taken our phonographs to be cameras. Since we had a foreign accent, the police thought that we were

German spies and so arrested and jailed us in the nearby seaport town of Dieppe. After 24 days of detention, we were paraded through the streets handcuffed to one another and were taken to the courthouse. The hostile crowd wanted to throw us into the harbor. But the judge quickly realized that we were innocent and acquitted us.

UNDER BAN

Soon after the work of Jehovah's Witnesses was banned in October 1939, I was again arrested and sentenced to six months in prison, accused of illegally preaching God's kingdom. Initially, the time was spent in solitary confinement in Béthune jail, without anything to read. Several weeks later, when I thought that I would lose my mind, the prison guard brought me a Bible. How I thanked Jehovah! I memorized hundreds of verses and several entire chapters. These passages were a strengthening aid to me in the days ahead. In fact, even now I can quote texts that I committed to memory in Béthune jail.

In February 1940, I was transferred from Béthune to the Le Vernet camp in the south of France where supposedly "dangerous" aliens were interned by the French authorities.

In the spring of 1941, a German commission came to the camp and requested me. They sent me back to my hometown in the occupied zone of northern France, there to work as a coal miner. Naturally, I used my newfound freedom to preach the good news of God's kingdom. But when a new Witness was arrested and unwisely told the French police that I had supplied her with Bible literature, I was again arrested and sentenced to 40 days' imprisonment in Béthune jail.

After my release, I resumed witnessing. While doing so in the little mining town of Calonne-Ricouart, I was arrested for the fourth time and sent back to Béthune jail. There the Germans came to arrest me because I had refused to work extra hours and Sundays in the coal mine to support the Nazi war effort.

A PRISONER IN BELGIUM, HOLLAND AND GERMANY

The Germans transferred me to the Loos Penitentiary, near Lille, and a few weeks

later to Saint-Gilles prison, in Brussels, Belgium.

After that, I was imprisoned in the Huy Citadel, near Liège, Belgium, before finally being sent to the S'Hertogenbosch or Vught concentration camp, in the Netherlands. There I became a cipher—7045—and was given a camp uniform with the purple triangle that identified me as a *Bibelforscher*, or a witness of Jehovah. I was assigned to Block 17-A.

It was indeed difficult for me to get used to marching barefoot in Dutch clogs. My feet were raw with broken blisters. At the slightest stumble, I risked being kicked in the ankles by an SS guard. Soon the skin on my feet thickened and I could march as quickly as the rest.

There were 15 other Witnesses in that camp. We were offered immediate release, provided that we sign a paper abjuring our faith. None of us gave in.

From that concentration camp in the Netherlands we were eventually moved to Germany. Herded like cattle into small freight cars, 80 in each, we were forced to stand for three days and nights without food, water or any means of relieving ourselves. Finally the train reached Oranienburg, about 30 kilometers (19 miles) north of Berlin. We then had to march on the double for 10 kilometers (6 miles) to the Heinkel aircraft factories, with SS dogs biting our heels if we slowed down. We Witnesses managed to keep together.

Shortly afterward we were all transferred to the nearby Sachsenhausen concentration camp. There, my purple triangle was accompanied by a new number: 98827.

LIFE IN SACHSENHAUSEN

As we entered Sachsenhausen, I felt the full irony of the slogan that SS chief Himmler had ordered to be displayed in huge letters inside the camp. It read: "*Arbeit macht frei*" (Work makes free). What hypocrisy! Of course, we had a free-

dom the Nazis never knew, the freedom that Christian truth brings. (John 8:31, 32) In all other respects, life in Sachsenhausen can be summed up as slave labor, slow starvation, humiliation and degradation.

The Nazis were out to break Jehovah's Witnesses or to kill them. They did kill many. But that was a moral defeat for the Nazis, and a victory of faith and integrity for the Witnesses who died.

As for the rest of us, far from being crushed spiritually, we did not allow the degrading conditions to prevent us from respecting high spiritual values. Take the case of Brother Kurt Pape. He was ordered to join a *kommando* (work crew) laboring at an arms factory. He refused, stating that he had been waging Christian warfare without carnal weapons for 16 years and that he was not now going to blemish his integrity. He was, of course, risking his life by refusing. Surprisingly, the camp commander allowed him to do other work. On another occasion, Brother Pape reprimanded me because I had taken some bread from the camp bakery where I was assigned to work. I did this so that the brothers would have a little more to eat, but he told me it was preferable to be hungry rather than to bring reproach upon Jehovah's name by being caught as a thief. This greatly impressed me. On Sunday afternoons, I would serve as inter-

preter for Brother Pape, who had succeeded in arousing interest in the Kingdom message among a group of Russian and Ukrainian prisoners. Yes, Brother Pape was a fine example. Unfortunately, he was killed during an Allied air raid shortly before our liberation.

THE "DEATH MARCH"

By April 1945, the western Allies were pressing in on the Berlin area from the west, and the Russians were advancing from the east. The Nazi leaders studied various means of liquidating the inmates of the concentration camps. But killing off hundreds of thousands of people and disposing of their bodies within a few days without leaving behind any trace of their heinous crimes proved to be too difficult for these fiendish men. So they decided to kill off the sick and march the rest to the nearest seaport, where they would be loaded onto ships that would be taken out to sea and sunk, sending the prisoners to a watery grave.

From Sachsenhausen, we were due to march some 250 kilometers (155 miles) to Lübeck. Departure was scheduled for the night of April 20-21, 1945. The prisoners were first to be assembled by nationality. How thankful to Jehovah we were, therefore, when all Witness prisoners were ordered to assemble in the tailor shop! There were 230 of us, from six different countries. The Witnesses who were sick in the infirmary, occupants of which were to be killed before the evacuation, were saved by brothers at the risk of their lives and were carried to the tailor shop.

Indescribable confusion reigned among the other prisoners. Much stealing went on. As for us, we held an "assembly," and strengthened one another spiritually. Soon, however, our turn came to begin the long march, supposedly to a reassembly camp but actually to a planned watery death. The various nationalities left in groups of

In Coming Issues

- Overseers—Be Fine Examples to "the Flock"
- How Far Would You Go to Save Face?
- "In the Last Days" Since When?

600 prisoners—first the Czechs, then the Poles, and so forth—some 26,000 in all. The group of Jehovah's Witnesses was the last to leave. The SS had given us a cart to haul. I learned later that it contained some of the loot the SS had plundered from among the prisoners. They knew Jehovah's Witnesses would take none of it. That cart turned out to be a blessing, because sick and elderly ones were able to sit on top and rest for a while during the march. When one got his strength back, he would get down and walk and another Witness, too weak to follow, would take his place, and so on throughout the two weeks that the "death march" lasted.

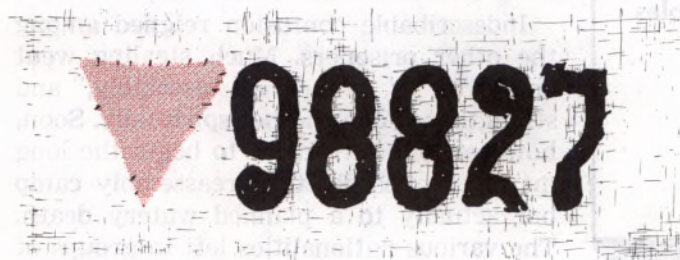
It was in every sense a "death march" because not only was our destination to be a watery grave but death lurked along the way. Any who could not keep up were mercilessly dispatched by an SS bullet. Some 10,700 were to lose their lives that way before the march ended. Yet, through Christian love and solidarity, not one Witness was left on the wayside to be killed by the SS.

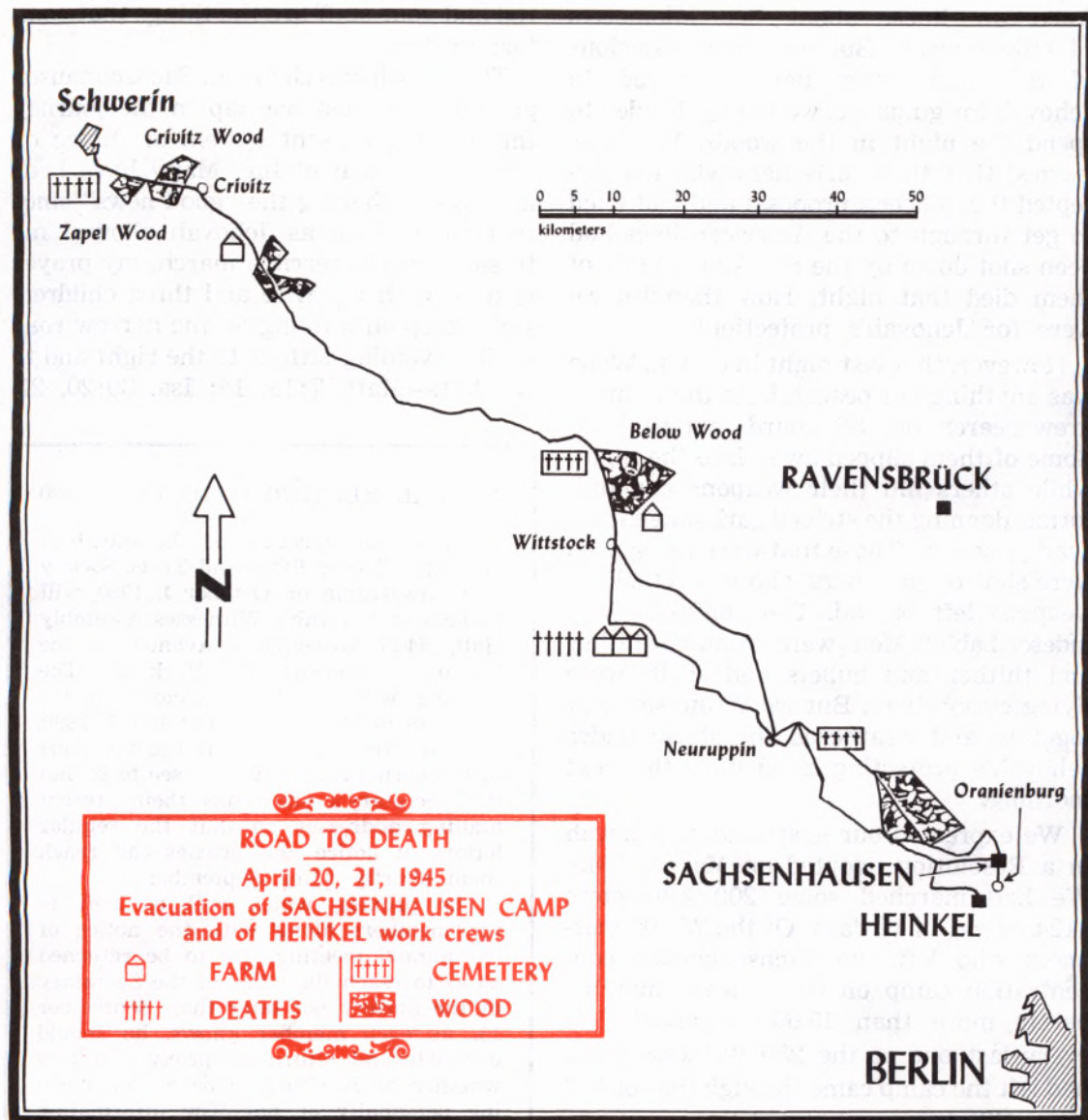
The first 50 kilometers (30 miles) were a nightmare. The Russians were so near that we could hear the guns. Our SS taskmasters were scared of falling into the hands of the Soviets. So that first lap, Sachsenhausen to Neuruppin, turned out to be a forced march that lasted 36 hours.

I had started out carrying a few meager belongings. But upon getting more and

more tired, I threw away one thing after another until nothing was left but a blanket in which to roll up at night. Most nights we slept outdoors, with just twigs and leaves to keep us from the damp ground. One night, however, I was able to sleep in a barn. Imagine my surprise to find a *Vindication* book (a Watch Tower publication) hidden in the straw! The following morning our hosts gave us something to eat. But that was exceptional. After that, for days on end we had nothing to eat or drink, except for a few plants we were able to obtain and use to make herb tea at night, when we stopped to sleep. I remember seeing some non-Witness prisoners rush over to the carcass of a horse that had been killed near the road and devour the flesh in spite of the blows of their SS guards, who hit them with their rifle butts.

All this time, the Russians were advancing on one side and the Americans on the other. By April 25, the situation was so confused that our SS guards no longer knew where the Soviets or the U.S. troops were. So they ordered the whole column of prisoners to camp in a wooded area for four days. While there, we ate nettles, roots and tree bark. This delay proved to be providential, for had they kept us marching, we would have reached Lübeck before the German army collapsed and would have ended up at the bottom of Lübeck Bay.





THE LAST NIGHT

On April 29, the SS decided to move the prisoners on toward Lübeck. They hoped to get us there before the Russian and American forces joined up. The march continued for several days, and by that time we were approaching Schwerin, a city located some 50 kilometers (30 miles) from Lübeck. Once again, the SS ordered

us to hide in the woods. It turned out to be our last night of captivity. But what a night!

The Russians and the Americans were closing in on the remnants of the German forces and shells were whistling over our heads from both sides. An SS officer advised us to walk on unguarded to the

American lines, about six kilometers (4 miles) away. But we were suspicious of this and, after having prayed to Jehovah for guidance, we finally decided to spend the night in the woods. We later learned that those prisoners who had accepted this officer's proposal and had tried to get through to the American lines had been shot down by the SS. About 1,000 of them died that night. How thankful we were for Jehovah's protection!

However, that last night in Crivitz Wood was anything but peaceful. As the fighting grew nearer, our SS guards got panicky. Some of them slipped away into the night, while others hid their weapons and uniforms, donning the striped garb taken from dead prisoners. Those that were recognized were shot by prisoners who had found the weapons left behind. The confusion was indescribable! Men were running hither and thither and bullets and shells were flying everywhere. But we Witnesses kept together and weathered the storm under Jehovah's protecting hand until the next morning.

We expressed our gratitude to Jehovah in a Resolution adopted on May 3, 1945. We had marched some 200 kilometers (124 miles) in 12 days. Of the 26,000 prisoners who left the Sachsenhausen concentration camp on that "death march," barely more than 15,000 survived. Yet every last one of the 230 Witnesses who had left the camp came through that ordeal alive. What a wonderful deliverance!

KEEPING ON THE MARCH

On May 5, 1945, I made contact with the American forces, and on May 21, I arrived back home in Harnes, northern France. I had survived the "death march," and certainly shared David's feelings expressed in Psalm 23:4: "Even though I walk in the valley of deep shadow, I fear nothing bad, for you are with me; your

rod and your staff are the things that comfort me."

The "death march" from Sachsenhausen proved to be just one lap in the journey through the present system of things on toward the goal of life. Many have been my joys in sharing the "good news" since that time. Even as Jehovah allowed me to survive that terrible march, my prayer is that, with my wife and three children, I will keep on walking on the narrow road to life, avoiding pitfalls to the right and to the left.—Matt. 7:13, 14; Isa. 30:20, 21.

ANNUAL MEETING OCTOBER 1, 1980

The annual meeting of the members of Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania on October 1, 1980, will be held at Jehovah's Witnesses Assembly Hall, 44-17 Greenpoint Avenue in the Borough of Queens, New York city. The meeting will be at ten o'clock in the forenoon of Wednesday, October 1, 1980.

It will be appreciated if the members of the corporation will now see to it that the Secretary's office has their present mailing addresses so that the regular letters of notice and proxies can reach them shortly after September 1.

The proxies, which will be sent to the members along with the notice of the annual meeting, are to be returned so as to reach the office of the Secretary of the Society not later than September 15. As each member knows, he should complete and return his proxy promptly whether he is going to be at the meeting personally or not. The information given on each proxy should be definite on this point as it will be relied upon in determining in advance those who will actually be personally present.

It is expected that the entire session including the formal business meeting and any remarks by members or officers will be concluded at 12 noon or shortly thereafter. There will be no afternoon session. No arrangements will be made for tying in the annual meeting by telephone line to any other locations.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● There are an estimated six million compulsive gamblers in the United States today, according to a report in the New York "Sunday News Magazine." This compares to an estimated 1.1 million just four years ago. More and more states are turning to some form of gambling as a source of revenue.

Masters of Deception

"It begins innocently enough," says the report. "It might be a dollar chance on a lottery ticket, a casual day at the racetrack, or a curious look at an Off-Track Betting parlor. It might even be a quarter in a slot machine." The article also notes that compulsive gamblers "began gambling probably in adolescence," and had "a history of gambling in the family."

By the time these gamblers look for help, they "might have 20 or more years' experience at lying and deception," says the magazine. "They can be masters at [deceiving] psychiatrists." As a result, "many psychiatrists won't take pathological gamblers on as clients." Certainly, there is good reason for caution if a Christian is tempted to experiment with a practice that can produce such bad traits.—Matt. 7:17, 18.

● "Christianity Today" magazine recently sponsored a Gallup Poll of religious beliefs. The poll revealed that beliefs of most American Catholics and Protestants are "heretical" when it comes to the Trinity. Those polled were given a choice among statements about Christ, including:

"1. Jesus Christ was a man, but was divine in the sense that God worked through him; he was the Son of God. 2. Jesus Christ is both fully God and fully man."

Most Christians 'Heretics'?

"Well-instructed Christians, Catholic or Protestant, would recognize that the first statement is inadequate and, indeed, heretical," says "Christianity Today." "Yet this is the statement chosen by 63 percent of the Protestants and 55 percent of the Catholics." In fact, says the magazine, "only 26 percent have a correct doctrinal understanding of Jesus as fully God and fully man."

The president of the Lutheran Concordia Theological Seminary, Robert Preus, complained: "My personal reaction is one of shock and grave disappointment, especially in what seems to be a gross ignorance on the part of all professed Christian groups concerning the very fundamentals of Christianity."

But are the people heretics who do not understand the complex "mystery" of the Trinity and choose instead to believe the simple statement of Christ that he is the "Son of God"? Rather, is it not those who have tried to burden the people by teaching pagan philosophy instead of the Word of God who are the true heretics?—John 10:36, "AV."

● Mesopotamia, the home of the ancient Sumerian, Babylonian and Assyrian civilizations, has yielded inscriptions by the hundreds of thousands. A project is under way to publish editions of these royal records and reliefs carved in stone. But how reliable are they? In a report published in the Toronto "Star," journalist Bruce Ward comments: "The ancient Assyrians were masters of 'hype'—the adman's art of puffery and exaggeration—and some of their truthstretchers were shameless."

Experts at Exaggeration

According to the "Star," Kirk Grayson, who is a professor of Near Eastern studies at the University of Toronto, says: "You can't trust the Assyrian inscriptions because of the hyperbole." Citing one example of inscribed untruth, he tells of a 100-line account about a certain alleged military victory by Assyrian King Sennacherib. But the newspaper adds: "Grayson says that other more reliable sources point out that Sennach[e]rib received a sound thrashing in the fight."

Ancient inscriptions may relate to historical incidents and may thus be of interest to many people, including Bible students. For instance, King Sennacherib is mentioned in the Scriptures. (2 Chron. 32:1-23) But when confronted with a question of reliability, will you accept the words of these inscriptions or the Bible record? Before answering, remember that Jesus Christ said in prayer to God: "Your word is truth."—John 17:17.

ONLY IN THE STRENGTH OF JEHOVAH



THE Hebrew prophets were not men of superhuman strength but persons "with feelings like ours." (Jas. 5:17) Yet they often faced tremendous opposition from their own people. Without divine help, they simply could not have succeeded in carrying out their commission. But they did triumph in the strength of Jehovah. This is dramatically illustrated in the case of the prophet Jeremiah.

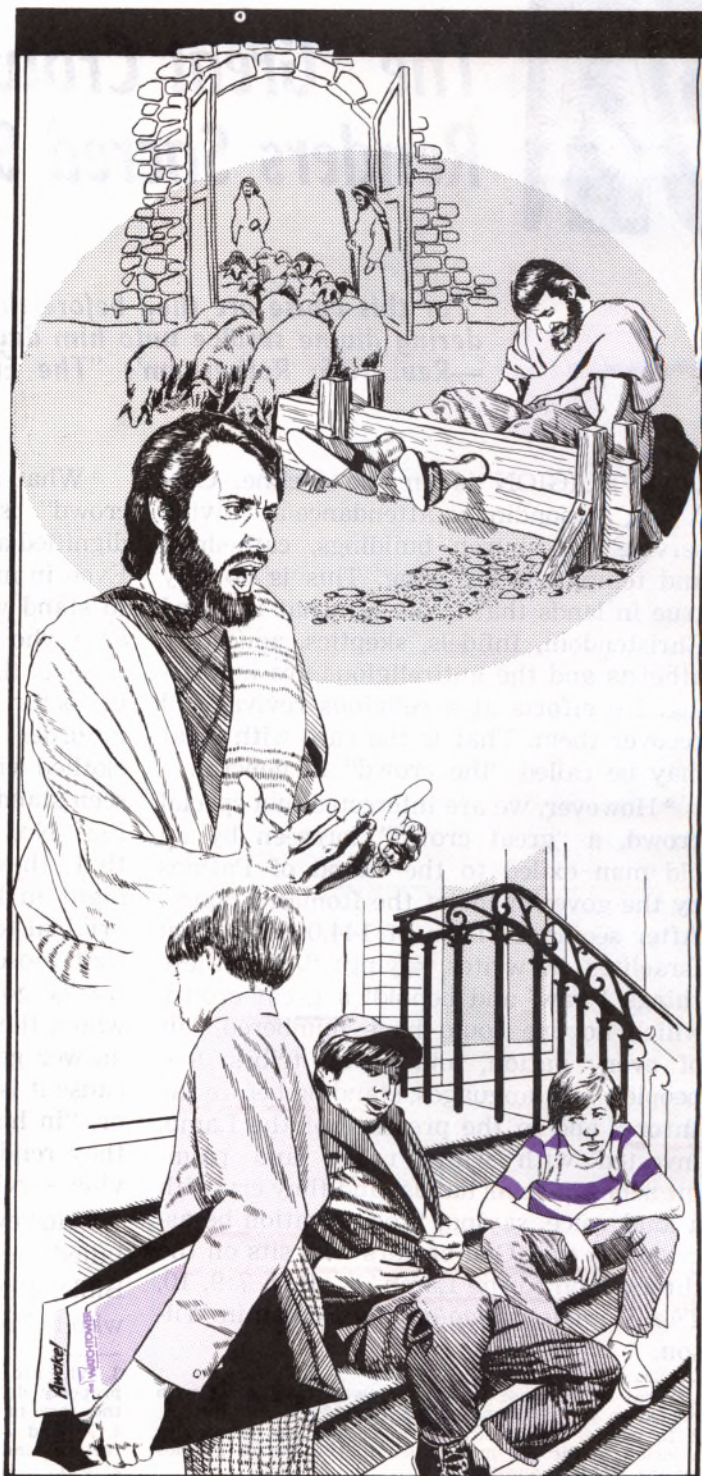
Before the eyes of the elders of his nation and the elders among the priests, Jeremiah smashed an earthenware flask. Explaining the significance of this act, he stated: "This is what Jehovah of armies has said: 'In the same way I shall break this people and this city as someone breaks the vessel of the potter so that it is no more able to be repaired; and in Topheth they will bury until there is no more place to bury.'" (Jer. 19:1-11) Leaving Topheth in the valley of the son of Hinnom, Jeremiah went to the temple courtyard and there proclaimed Jehovah's message of doom in the hearing of all the assembled people.—Jer. 19:14, 15.

The leading commissioner of the temple, Pashhur, acted swiftly against Jeremiah. He publicly humiliated the prophet by striking him and then putting him into stocks in the Gate of Benjamin.

On being released from the stocks the following day, Jeremiah proclaimed Jehovah's judgment against Pashhur.—Jer. 20: 1-6.

How did such experiences affect Jeremiah? He felt very discouraged about being an object of reproach on account of making known God's message. He felt like quitting. But he could not. Under the impelling power of God's spirit, he simply had to speak out. The word of Jehovah 'proved to be like a burning fire shut up in his bones.' Jeremiah realized that, in his own strength, he never would have been able to continue proclaiming what caused so much personal trouble for him. He stated: "You have fooled me, O Jehovah, so that I was fooled. You used your strength against me, so that you prevailed." (Jer. 20:7-9) The prophet was fooled in the sense that he was able to accomplish what he could never have done in his own power. The Most High had proved stronger than Jeremiah's weakness.

How encouraging this can prove to be for us today! We, too, may face opposition and ridicule in preaching God's message contained in the Scriptures. But with divine help, we can succeed in carrying out the commission given by Jesus Christ to his disciples. (Matt. 28:19, 20) Our situation can be like that of the apostle Paul, who said: "When I am weak, then I am powerful."—2 Cor. 12:10.





The "Great Crowd" Renders Sacred Service Where?

**"For this cause are they before the throne of God and are rendering divine service unto him day and night in his sanctuary."
—Rev. 7:15, Rotherham's "The Emphasised Bible."**

RELIGION is on the decline. Correspondingly, attendance at "divine service" in church buildings, cathedrals and temples is declining. This is notably true in lands that make up what is called Christendom. Infidels, skeptics, agnostics, atheists and the antireligious are increasing. No efforts at a religious revival will recover them. That is the case with what may be called "the crowd" in general.

² However, we are interested in a special crowd, a "great crowd" foreseen by an old man exiled to the island of Patmos by the government of the Roman Empire. After seeing a vision of 144,000 spiritual Israelites, he writes, saying: "After these things I saw, and behold! a great crowd, which no one could have numbered, out of every nation, and of all tribes, and peoples, and languages, standing before the throne, and in the presence of the Lamb, invested with white robes, and palm-branches in their hands; and they cry with a loud voice, saying, 'The salvation be ascribed to that God of ours who sits on the throne, and to the Lamb.'"—Rev. 7:9, 10, *The Emphatic Diaglott*, by Benjamin Wilson.

1. What is the case of "the crowd" in general with regard to the religions of the world?

2. In what "crowd" are we interested, as foreseen in a vision to the old man exiled to the Isle of Patmos by the Roman government?

³ What an honored position this "great crowd" is said to occupy, and what a dignified appearance they are said to have! Even in modern times it is proper for one to stand when in the presence of a monarch who is seated on his throne. But here those of that "great crowd" are seen standing before the throne of God himself. Also, in order to suit the occasion, they are clothed with spotless white robes. Are they seen standing in some out-of-doors gathering? No, for Revelation 7:15 (ED) says that "they . . . publicly serve him day and night in his temple [na-os' in the Greek original text]." Well, now, does this mean that those making up this "great crowd" finally go to heaven where the God is to whom they ascribe their "salvation"? The answer generally given is Yes! Why? Because it is said to be "in his temple" (ED), or, "in his sanctuary" (Rotherham), that they render to him public service or "divine service."

⁴ However, does that view fit all the detailed facts set out in the last book of the Bible, Revelation? Also, as regards those who today consider themselves part of that

3. Why are those of that "great crowd" seen standing properly dressed, and why is it widely thought that they are in heaven?

4. Around what original Greek word does the question revolve, and in what connection was it used in John 2:19-21?

"great crowd" that is now being formed, do they expect to go to heaven and become spirit creatures like angels? Do they even want to go to heaven? They will tell you No! and they do not consider themselves to be begotten by God's spirit to such a heavenly hope. The question revolves around that original Greek word that is variously translated as "tent," "temple" and "sanctuary." For example, in the Bible account of where Jesus Christ drove the money changers and merchantmen out of Herod's temple, the original Greek word used is *na-os'*. There we read: "Jesus answered, 'Destroy this sanctuary [*na-os'*], and in three days I will raise it up'. The Jews replied, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this sanctuary [*na-os'*]: are you going to raise it up in three days?' But he was speaking of the sanctuary [*na-os'*] that was his body." (John 2:19-21, *The Jerusalem Bible*) By "sanctuary," what did those Jews mean?

⁵ Certainly not the inner sanctuary that contained the vestibule, the Holy and the Most Holy compartments. They meant the temple structure as a whole, including its

5. (a) What structure could the Jews not have meant when saying it took 46 years to build it? (b) To what must the word *na-os'* in the Greek *Septuagint* rendering of Isaiah 66:6 apply?

courtyards, in one of which the money changers and merchantmen were doing business. Herod's temple as a whole was destroyed by the Romans in 70 C.E. Unlike Solomon's earlier temple that was destroyed in 607 B.C.E., Herod's temple was never rebuilt. Concerning the temple in Jerusalem, Isaiah 66:6 says, with prophetic significance: "That roar from the city, that uproar in the temple [*na-os'* in the Greek *Septuagint* translation], is the sound of the LORD dealing retribution to his foes." (*The New English Bible*) "Hark! an uproar from the city, Hark! it cometh from the temple [*na-os'*], Hark! the LORD rendereth recompense to His enemies." (*The Jewish Publication Society of America*) Very plainly the temple, sanctuary, or *na-os'*, does not mean just the inner sanctuary, but the entire temple area with all its structures.

⁶ On Passover night, Nisan 14, of 33 C.E., certain Jews bore witness before the chief priests and the Sanhedrin, but if these witnesses lived to the year 70 C.E. they had it proved to them that their testimony against Jesus Christ that fateful night was false. They testified: "We heard him say,

6. On Passover night of 33 C.E., what false witness did Jews give respecting Jesus and the *na-os'* of Jerusalem?



The Greek word *na-os'* refers often to the inner sanctuary representing heaven itself

- BUT it was the entire temple (*na-os'*) that had been 46 years in the building
- It was the entire temple (*na-os'*) that was destroyed as a judgment from God
- It was from the courts of the outer temple (*na-os'*) that Jesus drove the money changers
- It was in the outer temple (*na-os'*) that Judas threw back the 30 pieces of silver
- HENCE it is consistent that the "great crowd" serve God in the earthly court of the spiritual temple

'I will throw down this temple [*na-os'*] that was made with hands and in three days I will build another not made with hands.'" (Mark 14:58) Their having Jesus killed did not save their temple from being thrown down completely in 70 C.E.

⁷ Later, on that same day, when the hostile Jews saw this Jesus impaled on the stake outside Jerusalem, they may have felt that he had been foiled in carrying out what they wrongly thought he had said. "So the passersby began to speak abusively of him, wagging their heads and saying: 'O you would-be thrower-down of the temple [*na-os'*] and builder of it in three days, save yourself! If you are a son of God, come down off the torture stake!'" (Matt. 27:39, 40; Mark 15:29, 30) But before the impalement of Jesus the disciple who had betrayed him to his bloodthirsty enemies for 30 pieces of silver tried to absolve himself. This was Judas Iscariot, one of the 12 apostles. He tried to return the bribe money, but the bribers refused to take it back. Unable to clear himself in this way, what did the betrayer do? Matthew 27:5 reports: "Judas threw the money into the sanctuary [*na-os'*] and left them; then he went off and hanged himself." (*Good News Bible*; *The Jerusalem Bible*; *Young's Literal Translation of the Holy Bible*) Why did other modern Bible versions translate *na-os'* as "temple"?

⁸ Evidently because they recognized that the Greek word here did not mean the inner sanctuary with its porch, Holy and Most Holy, into which the high priest brought the blood of the sacrifices on the annual Atonement Day. It meant the temple with all its courts.

⁹ Thus the "great crowd" may be said

7. (a) How did the Jews ridicule the impaled Jesus on Calvary? (b) Where did Judas the betrayer finally throw the bribe money?

8. Why, evidently, did many Bible translators use the word "temple" here instead of "sanctuary"?

9. (a) So, does the "great crowd" need to be in heaven in order to serve God in his *na-os'*? (b) According to Revelation 3:12, may *na-os'* have a limited meaning?

to be in the "temple," or *na-os'*, of God and yet not be in heaven as spirit creatures with the 144,000 spiritual Israelites who make up the "little flock" of God. (Rev. 7:1-9, 15; Luke 12:32) *Na-os'* may also have a limited sense, for Jesus Christ addressed the first-century congregation in Philadelphia, Asia Minor, and said: "As for the one who conquers, I will make him a pillar in the temple [*na-os'*] of my God; he will be secure, and will go out no more; and I will write my God's Name on him, and he will be a citizen in the city of my God—the New Jerusalem, coming down from heaven from my God; and he will have my new Name inscribed upon him."—Rev. 3:12, *The Living Bible*.

¹⁰ Such an inscription upon the members of the "great crowd" is not even mentioned in Revelation 7:9-17, neither are they said to be made 'pillars' in God's temple. Those who are made symbolic 'pillars' are the 144,000 spiritual Israelites of 12 tribes.

¹¹ Unlike the numberless "great crowd," this numbered group of spiritual Israelites have the name of Jesus and the name of his Father written upon them. They also have written upon them the name of the city of God, the New Jerusalem, which comes down out of heaven from God. Just as Mount Zion was associated with ancient Jerusalem, so a spiritual Mount Zion is associated with this New Jerusalem that is heavenly. In agreement with this, the apostle John had a second vision of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites, and in making a record of this he wrote:

¹² "Look! the Lamb [Jesus Christ] standing upon the Mount Zion, and with him a hundred and forty-four thousand having his name and the name of his

10. In what ways does Revelation 7:9-17 show that the "great crowd" falls to be in the congregation in that limited *na-os'*?

11, 12. (a) In what way does the numbered group of spiritual Israelites differ from the "great crowd" as to names? (b) According to Revelation 14:1-5, how does the name of the city that comes down from God befit the 144,000?

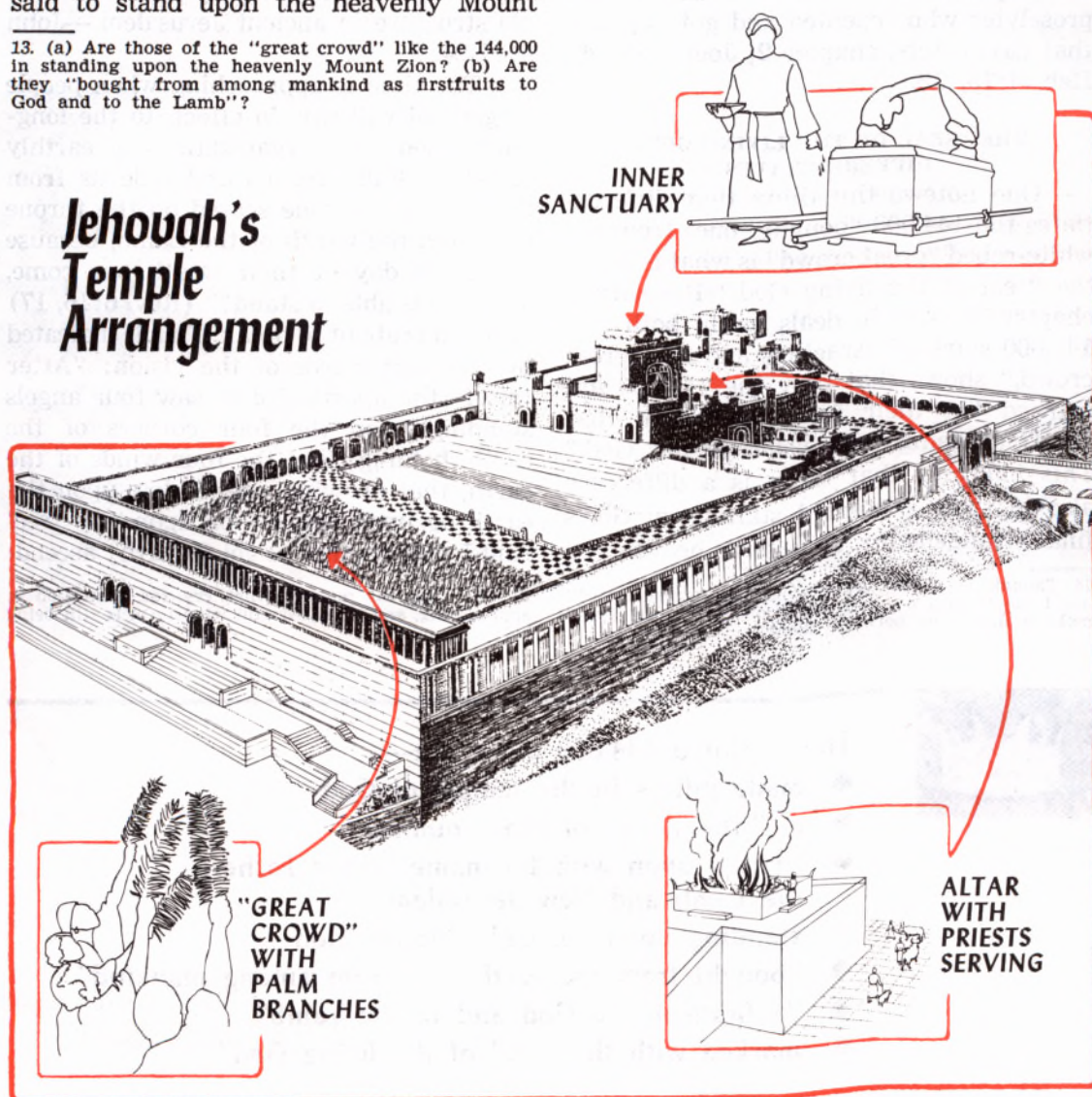
Father written on their foreheads. . . . And they are singing as if a new song before the throne . . . and no one was able to master that song but the hundred and forty-four thousand, who have been bought from the earth. . . . These were bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.”—Rev. 14:1-5.

¹³ Do those descriptive details fit also the international “great crowd” of Revelation 7:9-17? No, for nowhere are they said to stand upon the heavenly Mount

13. (a) Are those of the “great crowd” like the 144,000 in standing upon the heavenly Mount Zion? (b) Are they “bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb”?

Zion. (Heb. 12:22) They are excluded from the *original* singers of the “new song.” They are not said to be “bought from the earth,” “bought from among mankind as firstfruits to God and to the Lamb.” Consequently, those of the “great crowd” expect to remain on earth forever and to share in bringing it to a Paradise state. They do not belong to the company of

Jehovah's Temple Arrangement



144,000 "bought" ones that began to be formed on the day of Pentecost of 33 C.E., the day on which the Jewish high priest presented the "firstfruits" of the wheat harvest at the temple in Jerusalem. On that day the Greater High Priest, Jesus Christ, paid the purchase price to God in heaven by means of his shed blood, and God used him as the channel through whom to pour out the holy spirit that same day upon the 120 waiting disciples and later upon about 3,000 Jews and Jewish proselytes who repented and got baptized that day.—Acts, chapter 2; Joel 2:28, 29; Heb. 4:15, 16.

THE "SEAL OF THE LIVING GOD" DIFFERENTIATES

¹⁴ One noteworthy thing that differentiates the 144,000 "bought" ones from the white-robed "great crowd" is what is called the "seal of the living God." Revelation, chapter 7, which deals with both the 144,000 spiritual Israelites and the "great crowd," shows that only the 144,000 are marked "in their foreheads" with that "seal" as being "the slaves of our God." This indicates that there is a difference also in their appointed stations in God's final arrangements, as regards heaven and

14. Though both the 144,000 and the "great crowd" are brought into a saved condition, how does a seal make a difference between them?

earth. This remains true although all are brought into a saved condition, because those of the "great crowd," as well as the 144,000, accept Jesus Christ as being "the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world." (John 1:29, 36; 1 John 2:1, 2) In this way those of the "great crowd . . . have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:9, 14) This entitles them to worship Jehovah in his spiritual temple, which was typified or foreshadowed by the whole temple structure in ancient Jerusalem.—John 4:21-24.

¹⁵ The time is approaching when people in general will say, in effect, to the long-entrenched lofty organizations of earthly society: "Fall over us and hide us from the face of the One seated on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb, because the great day of their wrath has come, and who is able to stand?" (Rev. 6:16, 17) A storm is about to break. This is indicated by the next words of the vision: "After this I [the apostle John] saw four angels standing upon the four corners of the earth, holding tight the four winds of the earth, that no wind might blow upon the earth or upon the sea or upon any tree. And I saw another angel [a fifth] ascend-

15. The time for making what cry for protection is approaching, and what harmful windstorm is still being held up, and why?



The anointed 144,000 alone are—

- made pillars in the temple of God
- a "little flock" of exact number
- written upon with the name of the Father, the Lamb and New Jerusalem
- standing upon heavenly Mount Zion
- "bought from the earth . . . from among mankind"
- "a firstfruits to God and to the Lamb"
- marked with the "seal of the living God"

ing from the sunrising, having a seal of the living God; and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels to whom it was granted to harm the earth and the sea, saying: 'Do not harm the earth or the sea or the trees, until after we have sealed the slaves of our God in their foreheads.'"

—Rev. 7:1-4.

¹⁶ None of the "great crowd" are reported as being sealed with that "seal of the living God," only the 144,000 "slaves of our God." Why, then, is it that none of the "great crowd" are harmed by that turbulent twister that results from the release of the "four winds" let loose from the four corners of the earth? Also, how is it that those of the unsealed "great crowd" do not feel the "wrath of the Lamb" after the sealing of the 144,000 is finished? Ah! it is because "they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." (Rev. 7:14) They now accept the benefits of his ransom sacrifice and seek cleansing from their sins by being washed in his sin-atonement blood. For their protection they do not look to deep-rooted imposing institutions of puny men, but look to Jehovah God and his Lamblike Son Jesus Christ. So they gratefully cry out: "Salvation we owe to

¹⁶ Why is it that the "great crowd," although not sealed, are not harmed by the windstorm that is let loose in expression of the wrath of the Lamb?

our God, who is seated on the throne, and to the Lamb."—Rev. 7:9, 10.

¹⁷ Down to the settlement of the all-important issue of Universal Domination they are loyal to Jehovah's kingdom by Christ the Lamb. "That is why they are before the throne of God; and they are rendering him sacred service [*latreu'ein*, Greek verb] day and night in his temple [*na'os'*]." (Rev. 7:15) There they are associated with the surviving remnant of the 144,000 sealed "slaves of our God."

"OUT OF THE GREAT TRIBULATION"

¹⁸ Included in the "salvation" that the "great crowd" experience is their coming out of what is prophesied in Revelation 7:14: "These are the ones that come out of the great tribulation, and they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb." Word for word, the original Greek text reads: "Out of the tribulation the great." (*Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) So, now, what is this "great tribulation"? Instead of the word "tribulation," other Bible translations read: "affliction,"* "distress,"† "persecu-

* *The Emphatic Diaglott.* † *The Bible in Living English; The New Testament in Modern Speech.*

¹⁷ With respect to the issue over Universal Domination, to whom is the "great crowd" loyal, and where is it rendering sacred service, and to whom?

¹⁸ Out of what are those of the "great crowd" said to come, and what question arises about it?



The "great crowd" are privileged to—

- flee the doomed organizations of earthly society
- find salvation through the Lamb's ransom
- stand approved before the throne of God
- render God sacred service in his spiritual temple
- survive the final "tribulation" on this condemned world
- become the foundation of a clean "new earth" society
- share eternally in the Paradise earth

tion,"† "oppression,"□ and "ordeal."△ But many other translations read "tribulation."

¹⁹ The Greek word thus variously translated is *thlip'sis*. It denotes a bad experience. The English word "tribulation" comes from the Latin *tribulum*, which means "threshing board (sledge)."

²⁰ On the expression "the great tribulation" as used in Revelation 7:14, Robertson's *Word Pictures in the New Testament* (Volume VI, pages 352, 353) comments: "Apparently some great crisis is contemplated (Matt. 13:19ff.; 24:21; Mark 13:19), though the whole series may be in mind and so may anticipate final judgment." Matthew 24:21 refers first of all to ancient Jerusalem's destruction in 70 C.E. and reads: "For then there will be great tribulation [*thlip'sis*] such as has not occurred since the world's beginning until now, no, nor will occur again." Mark 13:19 reads: "For those days will be days of a tribulation [*thlip'sis*] such as has not occurred from the beginning of the creation which God created until that time, and will not occur again." This tribulation was to be part of the "sign when all these things are destined to come to a conclusion." (Mark 13:4) "All these things" would include the completion of the sealing of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites. —Rev. 7:1-8.

²¹ The Greek *Septuagint Version* of the Hebrew Scriptures uses the word *thlip'sis* when referring to the same event at Daniel 12:1 and says: "And at that time Michael, the great prince who hath been over the children of thy people, will stand up, and there will be a time of tribulation [*thlip'sis*]—a tribulation [*thlip'sis*] such as hath

not been since there was a nation on the earth even to this time." (*The Septuagint Bible*, by Charles Thomson; *The Septuagint Version*, published by Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited) According to Revelation 12:7, Michael corresponds with the glorified Jesus Christ.

²² From all the foregoing it can be seen that the "great tribulation" is not an expression of God's wrath or displeasure against the "great crowd," for the purpose of disciplining them and purifying them from their connections with this wicked system of things. The foretold "great tribulation" is the world trouble, the final "tribulation" upon this doomed world. It is the symbolic windstorm that was held back by the four angels at the four corners of the earth until the final ones of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites are sealed as the "bought" property of Jehovah God, the untransferable "slaves of our God." The coming of the "great crowd" out of that "great tribulation" means that they survive it.

²³ What a delightful privilege it will then be for the saved "great crowd" to continue "rendering [God] sacred service day and night in his temple," in the earthly courtyards of his great temple arrangement! The "new heavens" will have been established over them, and they will be the beginning of the "new earth" in which righteousness is to dwell endlessly. (2 Pet. 3:13) A new Paradise will begin blossoming upon the cleansed earth, and there will not be in it any Devil to try tempting them to turn to unrighteousness of any kind. Happy, indeed, is the prospect that is set before the "great crowd" that will survive the "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon!—Rev. 16:13-16.

† An American Translation; Good News Bible; The Jerusalem Bible. □ Phillips' The New Testament in Modern English. △ The New English Bible.

19, 20. (a) What is the meaning of the Latin word from which "tribulation" is drawn? (b) What does Robertson's commentary say about this word at Revelation 7:14, and how does Jesus' prophecy use the word? 21. What is the vital Greek word used in the *Septuagint Version* rendering of Daniel 12:1, and who is Michael?

22. Is the "tribulation" an expression of God's displeasure with the "great crowd," and what does their coming out of it mean?

23. The surviving "great crowd" will form the beginning of what new thing, and with what prospects ahead?



Sacred Service In This "Time Of The End"

IN THE light of the unsealed prophecies of the Bible we should have no trouble in seeing that we are living in the foretold "time of the end." With regard to this critical period, the prophecy of Daniel 12:4 says: "But thou, O Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book, even to the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased." (*The Jewish Publication Society of America; Leeser*) The Greek *Septuagint Version* reads: "And thou, Daniel, close the words, and seal the book to the time of the end; until many are taught, and knowledge is increased." (*Bagster; Thomson; Latin Vulgate; Lamsa's Holy Bible from Ancient Eastern Manuscripts*) The "great crowd" that is described in the last book of the Bible has benefited from this increase of Bible knowledge and understanding.—Rev. 7:9-17.

² Ever since this "great crowd" began to be gathered in 1935 C.E., it has been "rendering . . . sacred service" to Jehovah God. Just how they do this is very important. Why? Because to his faithful 11 apostles Jesus Christ said on his last night with them: "I have spoken these things to you that you may not be stumbled. Men will expel you from the synagogue. In fact, the hour is coming when everyone that kills you will imagine he has rendered a

sacred service to God." (John 16:1, 2) Instead of "sacred service," *The Jerusalem Bible* says "holy duty"; *The New English Bible* says "religious duty"; Rotherham's *The Emphasised Bible* says "divine service." The original Greek word thus translated is *la-trei'a*. The verb form of that Greek noun is *la-treu'ein*. It differs from the Greek verb *di-a-ko-nein'*, which means "to minister or serve," and which is used even in common, ordinary, mundane things, things not sacred, as in Matthew 8:15.

³ Saul of Tarsus, Asia Minor, was once a misguided Jew who persecuted Christians until he got converted. He spoke of his fellow Jews as being "Israelites, to whom belong the adoption as sons and the glory and the covenants and the giving of the Law and the sacred service [*la-trei'a*] and the promises; to whom the forefathers [Abraham, Isaac and Jacob] belong and from whom Christ sprang according to the flesh." (Rom. 9:4, 5) Because they stuck to that "sacred service" set out in the Law covenant, the unbelieving Jews thought that they could not be wrong in impaling Jesus Christ and persecuting his faithful disciples even to the death.

⁴ For the time that the Law covenant was in effect, that "sacred service" under it had its place, and it was acceptable to

1. How do we know that we are living in the "time of the end," and what does Daniel 12:4 say about it?
2. (a) Why is how the "great crowd" renders "sacred service" important? (b) How is the Greek word translated 'to serve' different from the word rendered 'sacred service'?

3. Why did the Jews who stuck to the Law covenant think they could not go wrong in killing Jesus and persecuting his disciples?

4. How does Paul speak of the service of the priests in the tent compartments, and what did those activities typify?

God. So the apostle Paul puts it on a high level when he says: "For its part, then, the former covenant used to have ordinances of sacred service [*la-trei'a*] and its mundane holy place. For there was constructed a first tent compartment in which were the lampstand and also the table and the display of the loaves; and it is called 'the Holy Place.' But behind the second curtain was the tent compartment called 'the Most Holy.' . . . After these things had been constructed this way, the priests enter the first tent compartment at all times to perform the sacred services [*la-trei'a*]." (Heb. 9:1-6) That ceremonial sacred service was in connection with the sacrifices offered in behalf of the nation of Israel. It did not refer to everyday things of the people. As the apostle Paul points out, all such "sacred service" under the old Law covenant was typical, prefiguring Christian matters.

⁵ In line with that, Paul said in his letter to the Christians at Rome: "Consequently I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to present your bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service [*la-trei'a*] with your power of reason. And quit being fashioned after this system of things." (Rom. 12:1, 2) So their doing something of a sacrificial kind would be out of the ordinary, something not carried on in general by the unchristian people of this worldly system of things.

⁶ After the nation of Israel was delivered out of the house of slavery in ancient Egypt, they were given an organized form of sacred service to God. As the Christian martyr Stephen worded it: "'And that nation for which they will slave I shall judge,' God said, 'and after these things they will come out and will *render sacred*

service [*la-treu'ein*] to me in this place.' " (Acts 7:7) By entering the Law covenant with Jehovah God through Moses as their mediator, the Israelites obliged themselves to render sacred service to Him. Later the majority of the covenant-bound Israelites chose to worship other gods. "So," as Stephen went on to say, "God turned and handed them over to *render sacred service* [*la-treu'ein*] to the army of heaven, just as it is written in the book of the prophets, 'It was not to me that you offered victims and sacrifices for forty years in the wilderness, was it, O house of Israel?' "—Acts 7:42.

⁷ It was many years after Jehovah God had canceled his Law covenant with the natural house of Israel that the apostle Paul said in a judicial hearing before King Agrippa at Caesarea: "Our twelve tribes are hoping to attain to the fulfillment of this promise by intensely *rendering* [God] *sacred service* [*la-treu'ein*] night and day. Concerning this hope I am accused by Jews, O king." (Acts 26:7) Because of such an accusation Paul could say before the Roman governor Felix in the presence of Jewish accusers: "I do admit this to you, that, according to the way that they call a 'sect,' in this manner I am rendering sacred service [*la-treu'ein*] to the God of my forefathers, as I believe all the things set forth in the Law and written in the Prophets."—Acts 24:14; 28:22.

⁸ The so-called heretical "sect" according to which Paul was worshiping Jehovah as God was Christianity. (Acts 11:26; 1 Pet. 4:16) Today those of the "great crowd" publicly acknowledge that they are Christian witnesses of Jehovah, and for that

5. Is what Paul tells Christians to do at Romans 12:1 something of an ordinary kind, and what does he call it?

6. By entering the Law covenant through Moses, the Israelites obligated themselves to do what toward God, and what did the martyr Stephen say about this?

7. (a) In order to attain to the fulfillment of God's promise, what did Paul say that the Jews were rendering to Him? (b) According to what the Jews called a sect, the apostle Paul was doing what to the God of his forefathers?

8. (a) What is that "sect" according to which even the "great crowd" of today is worshiping Jehovah? (b) Why is there great danger of rendering a misguided "sacred service," and what did Paul say is our safeguard?

reason they must be very careful as to how they try to serve Jehovah in a sacred way. Since the "time of the end" set in at the close of the "times of the Gentiles" in 1914, false gods and false lords have multiplied. (Luke 21:24, *Authorized Version*) Even 19 centuries ago the apostle Paul found it necessary to remind the "Christians" in the capital city of the Roman Empire: Jewish apostates "exchanged the truth of God for the lie and venerated and rendered sacred service [*la-treu'ein*] to the creation rather than the One who created." (Rom. 1:25) He showed what was his safeguard against misguided sacred service, when he said: "Even though there are those who are called 'gods,' whether in heaven or on earth, just as there are many 'gods' and many 'lords,' there is actually to us one God the Father, out of whom all things are, and we for him; and there is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things are, and we through him."—1 Cor. 8:5, 6.

HOW RENDERED AND WHEN

⁹ During the 1,545 years that the Law covenant was in operation toward the Jewish nation, from 1513 B.C.E. to 33 C.E., the faithful Jews rendered to Jehovah God what was "sacred service" acceptable to him. But when that Law covenant was abolished at the time that the glorified Jesus Christ mediated the new covenant in heaven in 33 C.E., the Mosaic Law covenant was no longer the means by which to render sacred service approved by Jehovah, the God of the new covenant. (Heb. 8:10-13) To have their religious service approved by Jehovah God, the Jews had to render it through the Mediator greater than Moses, Jesus Christ the Son of God, the 'seed of Abraham.' (Gal. 3:16) This was referred to on that spring day in 2 B.C.E. when the Jewish priest named

9. When did efforts to render "sacred service" to God according to the Mosaic Law covenant become out of order, and why?

Zechariah declared that his eight-day-old son should be named John.

¹⁰ Then the inspired Zechariah told of God's purpose to "perform the mercy in connection with our forefathers and to call to mind his holy covenant, the oath that he swore to Abraham our forefather, to grant us, after we have been rescued from the hands of enemies, the privilege of fearlessly rendering sacred service [*la-treu'ein*] to him with loyalty and righteousness before him all our days." (Luke 1:59-75) John the son of Zechariah became the forerunner of Jesus Christ, the one whom God used in carrying out the covenant that he made with Abraham, confirming it with an unbreakable oath.—Gen. 12:3; 22:15-18; Gal. 3:8, 16; Heb. 6:13-17.

¹¹ As persons who are already blessed through the Abrahamic covenant, those of the "great crowd" find themselves in the earthly courtyards of Jehovah's spiritual "temple" and are seeking to render "sacred service" fearlessly to the God of Abraham. But how? True, the words of the apostle Paul at 1 Corinthians 10:31 apply to the "great crowd" as well as to the remnant of the 144,000 spiritual Israelites, namely: "Therefore, whether you are eating or drinking or doing anything else, do all things for God's glory."

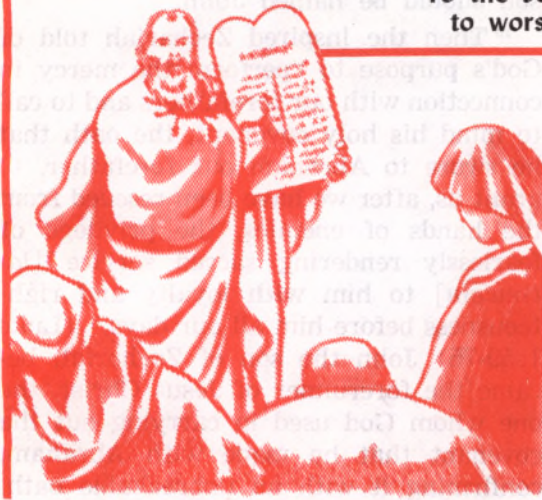
¹² By those words does the apostle Paul mean that all things that we now do as Christians become "sacred service" (*la-trei'a*) because of our having a different viewpoint respecting these things? Why should that be the case? When we eat,

10. (a) On that day of circumcising his son, Zechariah said that it was God's purpose for His people to render what to Him after being freed from their enemies? (b) In behalf of that oath-bound covenant, John became the forerunner of whom?

11. (a) Where is the "great crowd" endeavoring to render "sacred service" to God today? (b) What question does 1 Corinthians 10:31 raise with regard to that "great crowd"?

12. Because of our different viewpoint and because we do these common things under the name of Christian witnesses of Jehovah, does this of itself make these things "sacred service," or not?

To the Jews, sacred service was always related to worship in obedience to the Law covenant



drink and sleep and do things that all other humans are obliged to do to live, whom are we really serving? Ourselves, naturally. Yes, when we now do those things, we have God's glory in mind. Hence, we do not overeat to the point of sickness or gluttony; we do not drink alcoholic beverages to the point of drunkenness; we do not regularly sleep too much to the point of laziness or slothfulness. Yet now when we eat, drink, sleep under the religious name of Christian witnesses of Jehovah, the same as all other humans do under their religious names, does this of itself transform these basic, essential acts of human living into "sacred service"? No; why should it?

¹³ Of course, when Christian witnesses of Jehovah who are anointed with his holy spirit celebrate the Lord's Supper or Evening Meal each year, this does make a difference. Then their eating the unleavened bread and their drinking the red wine on the springtime night of Nisan 14 are things done under the command of Jesus Christ and have the deep significance

13. Why is the case different when the anointed witnesses of Jehovah celebrate the Lord's Evening Meal each year on the right date?

that he attached to them. So they are a vital part of the "sacred service" rendered to God by these members of Christ's spiritual body.—1 Cor. 11:20-26; Matt. 26:26-30; Luke 22:19, 20.

¹⁴ On the other hand, when all Christian witnesses of Jehovah do what the apostle Paul instructs them to do in Romans 13:1-7, they are doing only what is required of all other citizens or alien residents of a country. Properly we do so as good and orderly persons, and this keeps us from getting into trouble with the "superior authorities." We also do so with a higher motivation, that is, to keep a good conscience and an appreciation of what is right and fitting. But our now acting in this way under the name of Christian witnesses of Jehovah does not automatically change our proper conduct into the Scriptural "sacred service." All other law-abiding citizens do the same things, even without the same motivations that we have. So how do we differ in these respects?

¹⁵ However, suppose the authorities of the land forbid us to carry on our worship as Christian witnesses of Jehovah? What now if we take up the words of the apostles of Christ: "We must obey God as ruler rather than men"? (Acts 5:29) Our continuing to do what all other citizens do not do, in order to obey what God orders his dedicated, baptized witnesses to do keeps what we are doing a service sacred to him. This holds true even though the authorities and other citizens of the land may denounce it as illegal, lawless.

14. Why is it advisable to do the things stated at Romans 13:1-7, and in doing so do we differ from all other law-abiding citizens of the land?

15. If we defy man-made prohibitions of Jehovah's worship and so do what other citizens do not do, what kind of service does this become, and why?

¹⁶ For instance, God's Word commands: "Let us hold fast the public declaration of our hope without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. And let us consider one another to incite to love and fine works, not forsaking the gathering of ourselves together, as some have the custom, but encouraging one another, and all the more so as you behold the day drawing near."—Heb. 10:23-25.

¹⁷ Undeniably our obedience to this inspired exhortation, even though we suffer for it at men's hands, is a sacred service to the Supreme Being, Jehovah God. Let the displeased "superior authorities" of the land brand it as they choose to do, legalistically.—2 Tim. 2:8-10.

¹⁸ The confession or "public declaration of our hope" has to do with God's Messianic kingdom that will reign for the blessing of all the families of the earth. Regarding such "public declaration," Jesus said when prophesying concerning "the conclusion of the system of things" these mandatory words: "This good news of the kingdom

will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end [*tel'os*] will come." (Matt. 24:3, 14) "You will . . . be put on the stand before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them. Also, in all the nations the good news has to be preached."—Mark 13:4, 9, 10.

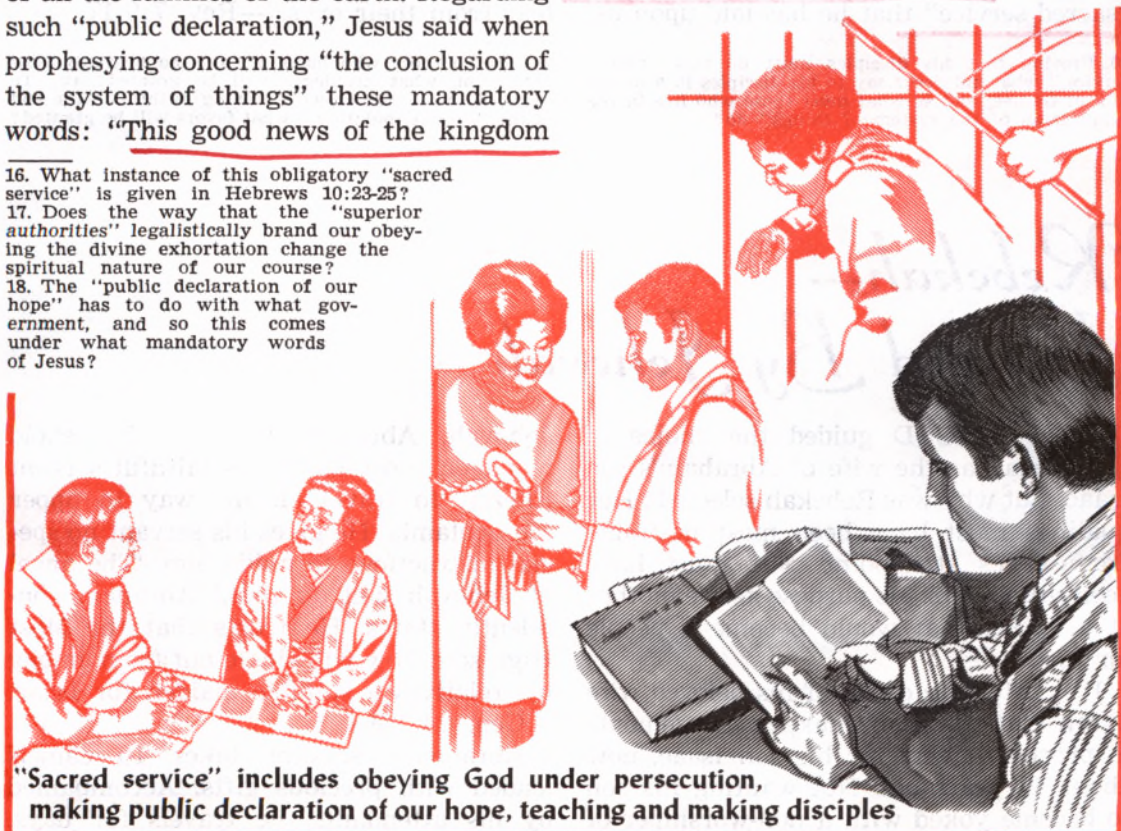
¹⁹ Who are to carry out the fulfillment of those prophecies that they may be proved true? No others than the dedicated, baptized disciples of the Giver of the prophecies, Jesus Christ, the ones to whom the prophecies were given. Their seeing their duty and their taking part in putting those prophecies into effect is a part of the

19. Who are the ones who must carry the fulfillment of those prophetic words into effect, and their doing so is part of what?

16. What instance of this obligatory "sacred service" is given in Hebrews 10:23-25?

17. Does the way that the "superior authorities" legalistically brand our obeying the divine exhortation change the spiritual nature of our course?

18. The "public declaration of our hope" has to do with what government, and so this comes under what mandatory words of Jesus?



"Sacred service" includes obeying God under persecution, making public declaration of our hope, teaching and making disciples

"sacred service" that they may not side-step.

²⁰ Buttrressing up the fact that his disciples were to carry on this "sacred service," the resurrected Jesus appeared to about 500 of his disciples in a mountain in "Galilee of the nations" and commanded them: "Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit, teaching them to observe all the things I have commanded you. And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion [*syntel'ia*] of the system of things." (Matt. 28:19, 20; 4:15; 1 Cor. 15:6) Since the end of the "times of the Gentiles" in 1914 we have been living in the "conclusion of the system of things." So all we dedicated, baptized disciples of the resurrected, fully empowered Jesus Christ are under orders to carry out this "sacred service" that he has laid upon us.

20. Proving that his disciples must do this "sacred service," what did Jesus say to his disciples in a mountain of Galilee, and so what must those who live in the "conclusion of the system of things" do?

To the end of this "conclusion of the system of things" we must do so, never slackening the hand.

²¹ Concerning the 144,000 spiritual Israelites who gain admission into the heavenly city, the New Jerusalem, it is written: "And no more will there be any curse. But the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in the city, and his slaves will render him sacred service [*la-treu'ein*]; and they will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads." (Rev. 22:3, 4) As for the faithful, obedient ones who make up the numberless "great crowd," they will be blessed with "salvation" out of the "great tribulation" with which this "time of the end" will close, and under the millennial kingdom of the Lamb of God they will continue "rendering [God] sacred service" in the earthly courtyards of his spiritual temple. "And God will wipe out every tear from their eyes."—Rev. 7:9-17.

21. (a) To those who make it into the heavenly New Jerusalem, what privileges will be granted? (b) To those of the "great crowd" proving faithful to the end of the "great tribulation," what favors will be granted?

Rebekah— Blessed By Jehovah

JEHOVAH GOD guided the choice of Rebekah as the wife of Abraham's son Isaac. But why was Rebekah selected? Her qualities must have been most desirable from God's standpoint. She must have been suitable for his purpose as the mother of a nation that would become a people for his name.

It is after the death of his beloved wife Sarah that Abraham makes arrangements to procure a wife for his son Isaac, now about 40 years old. Not wanting his son to become yoked with a non-worshiper of

Jehovah, Abraham asks his household manager, most likely his faithful servant Eliezer, to travel all the way to upper Mesopotamia. He gives his servant no special instructions to guide him. "The angel of Jehovah will do that," Abraham confidently states. He trusts that the Most High somehow will single out from among his relatives a suitable maiden for Isaac.—Gen. 24:1-9.

Abraham's servant takes 10 camels loaded with precious gifts. Accompanied by his attendants, he travels for days,

finally reaching the city of Nahor in the upper Mesopotamian valley. Tired and thirsty, he arrives at evening time, just when the young women of the city come to draw water from the well. What an opportunity to act on his master's order! But how will he know which girl to choose? He turns to Jehovah, praying that the choice be indicated by a sign—that the chosen girl, on being asked to give him a drink, would also volunteer to water his camels.—Gen. 24:10-14.

JEHOVAH ANSWERS A PRAYER

Before the servant finishes praying, a very attractive girl comes out with her jar upon her shoulder. Unknown to him, she is Rebekah, the grandniece of Abraham. The servant directs this request to her: "Give me, please, a little sip of water from your jar." Is this young woman to be Jehovah's choice? Graciously, Rebekah answers: "Drink, my lord." She quickly lowers her jar and gives him a drink. "For your camels too I shall draw water until they are done drinking," she says. So Rebekah quickly empties her jar into the drinking trough and runs yet again and again to the well to draw water for the 10 camels. What a job! A camel may drink up to seven gallons a day.—Gen. 24:15-20.

The servant realizes that thus far his prayer for guidance has been answered. His attention has been drawn to a young maiden with the desirable qualities of graciousness, willingness and industriousness. After giving her a costly gold nose ring and two beautiful gold bracelets, he inquires about her family background and the possibility of spending the night in her father's house. Readily, she identifies herself and says: "There is both straw and much fodder with us, also a place to spend the night." Overwhelmed with thankfulness to Jehovah, the servant bows down and blesses the Most High.—Gen. 24:21-27.

There is not the slightest doubt in Re-

bekah's heart about showing this man hospitality. She runs home to prepare for the unexpected guest and tells her family what has happened. Upon hearing about it, her brother Laban runs out to the well to welcome the stranger. A feast is prepared in the home. No one in Rebekah's family has asked about the stranger's identity and errand. They have been absorbed with showing him and his attendants hospitality and feeding his camels.—Gen. 24:28-32.

Abraham's servant, however, has only one thought in mind—faithfully to carry out his commission in harmony with the leading of Jehovah's angel. Before agreeing to partake of the meal, the servant identifies himself and explains his errand. He tells about his asking for a sign from Jehovah and how Rebekah behaved in agreement with the sign.—Gen. 24:33-49.

JEHOVAH DIRECTS MATTERS

How is Rebekah's family going to react? What a moment of suspense for the servant! Filled with wonder and respect, Laban and Bethuel, the father, realize that all of this must be from Jehovah. They respond: "Here is Rebekah before you. Take her and go, and let her become a wife to the son of your master, just as Jehovah has spoken."—Gen. 24:50, 51.

There is great excitement in the house. The servant brings out precious presents for Rebekah, her mother and her brother. All then partake of the prepared meal. According to the custom of the time, these activities in Rebekah's home constitute the making of a marriage contract.—Gen. 24:52-54a.

But, then, Rebekah's mother and brother plead for a delay of at least 10 days before they will let her go. The servant insists on leaving at once. Finally, they let Rebekah decide. They call her in and ask: "Will you go with this man?" At this moment the servant must hold his breath.

Will she leave home at once for a husband whom she has never seen? What will Rebekah's answer be? Is she willing, and will she thus readily comply with Jehovah's choice? "I am willing to go," is Rebekah's reply. No delay, no hesitation, no doubt, no conditions! What a remarkable maiden! (Gen. 24:8, 54b-58) Not merely is she attractive, gracious, willing, industrious and hospitable; Rebekah is also resolute, far-sighted and full of implicit faith. She discerns Jehovah's hand in this matter, and does not hesitate to act in harmony with His will. Knowing that her grand-uncle Abraham has trained Isaac in the fear of the Almighty, Rebekah has no reason for concern about how she would be treated as a wife.

This young woman leaves with the blessings of her family: "O you, our sister, may you become thousands times ten thousand, and let your seed take possession of the gate of those who hate it." Her nurse and other lady attendants accompany her on the camels.—Gen. 24:59-61.

Days later, in the cool evening, Isaac notices the approach of a camel train. At the same time, Rebekah catches sight of him. Gracefully and promptly she swings herself off the camel. When told who the man is, she veils herself, thus showing subjection and respect for her bridegroom. Truly, the girl who has been willing to follow Jehovah's leading, to ride away with a servant into an unknown country to meet an unknown bridegroom without doubt or question, is a woman deserving of affection. The Bible account says: "He fell in love with her, and Isaac found comfort after the loss of his mother."—Gen. 24:62-67.

Rebekah proves to be just the wife that Isaac needs. Her eager, ardent, active, enterprising spirit makes him happy again as she suitably fills the vacant spot left in his life through the death of his mother. Many years after their marriage, Isaac

continues to find delight in his beloved Rebekah. He is afraid of losing her. When famine forces him to take up residence among the Philistines, he thinks of Rebekah's beauty. Isaac fears for his life, reasoning that some man might want to kill him to procure her as a wife. So, in an effort to prevent this, Isaac passes her off as his sister.—Gen. 26:1-11.

REBEKAH AS MOTHER

Like Sarah, Rebekah remains barren for a long time. Isaac keeps on entreating Jehovah for her. Finally, 20 years after their marriage, she bears him the twin boys Esau and Jacob. Before giving birth, Rebekah knows that she is going to have twins. Her pregnancy is extremely distressing. "If this is the way it is, just why am I alive?" she exclaims when she feels the babies struggling within her. Rebekah receives the promise of God that two national groups would be separated from her inward parts, that the one would be stronger than the other and that the older would serve the younger. She does not lose sight of this promise.—Gen. 25:21-23.

After the two boys are born, Rebekah centers her hopes and affections on Jacob, and in time Esau even despises his birth-right. (Gen. 25:28-34) The years pass, and the day comes when Rebekah takes personal steps to act in harmony with Jehovah's prophetic promise. She hears her aged and blind husband Isaac call for his firstborn son, Esau. Before his death, Isaac has in mind choosing and blessing his successor. As a preliminary to giving the blessing, Isaac sends Esau out to kill some game and prepare a tasty dish for him.—Gen. 27:1-4.

Knowing that Esau is not Jehovah's choice, Rebekah seeks to secure the desired blessing for Jacob. While Esau is hunting, Rebekah instructs Jacob as to how he should get the blessing that is rightly his. Jacob protests, fearing that his

blind father would identify him by touch and then pronounce a malediction. But Rebekah is as determined as ever. "Upon me be the malediction meant for you, my son," she says confidently. "Only listen to my voice." And Jacob does listen.—Gen. 27:5-14.

After that Rebekah has Jacob wear Esau's clothes, which smell of the woods, the fields and the earth. She also takes the soft, silky pelts of young kids and fits pieces of them across Jacob's smooth hands and smooth neck, so that to Isaac's hands he will feel like Esau. With the tasty dish prepared by his mother, Jacob presents himself before Isaac. Rebekah's plan succeeds. Jacob receives the blessing of his father, being constituted the rightful heir to Isaac and Abraham.—Gen. 27:15-29.

Later, when Rebekah learns of Esau's plans to kill Jacob, she again takes resolute action on behalf of Jacob. As a consequence of her encouragement, Isaac sends

Jacob away to her homeland in search of a wife. Rebekah appreciates the importance of a good wife for Jacob. It has grieved both Isaac and her greatly that Esau had taken two wives from among the hateful Canaanites.—Gen. 26:34, 35; 27:41-46; 28:1-5.

Rebekah must have missed Jacob very much after his departure. She may have hoped that he would be able to return soon. But Jacob stayed away for 20 years. There is no record in the Bible of Rebekah's seeing her beloved son again. If she did not, think of the joy that Rebekah and Jacob will experience on meeting again when raised from the dead. How thrilling it will be for Rebekah to learn of her great privilege in being a link leading to the promised Messiah, or Christ!

Truly, the beautiful, alert and resolute Rebekah, who gained Jehovah's favorable attention, is a good example for maidens, wives and mothers today. Her faith was indeed commendable.

Do You Remember?

Have you read recent issues of *The Watchtower* carefully, with the object of retaining the information? If you have done so, undoubtedly you will remember the following points:

● Has it been left to the individual to choose whether his hope will be earthly or heavenly?

No. Before a person can entertain any Scriptural hope, he must make an unqualified dedication to Jehovah God and be baptized, agreeing henceforth to do God's will. Jehovah causes his will to be done by the operation of his holy spirit, and within prospective members of the "little flock" that spirit has quickened a heavenly hope. However, the "great crowd" that is now being gathered, with prospects of living forever on earth, also receive God's spirit. (Luke 12:32; Rom. 8:14-17)—3/1 p. 12.

● How should we react if someone imputes wrong motives to us?

It is good to refrain from taking offense. (Eccl. 7:9) As Christians, we should desire to imitate God, who displays self-control in the face of accusations.

He will comfort us, and we will have joy if we continue to "trust in Jehovah and do good." (Ps. 37:3) If God wants to vindicate us, he can do this at the proper time.—4/1 p. 14.

● What is the 'pain that will be no more' among earthly subjects of Kingdom rule?

The prophetic promise that there will not be pain anymore does not mean that the Kingdom's subjects on earth will become insensitive to all pain. (Rev. 21:4) Ability to feel physical pain can be beneficial. But mental, emotional and severe physical pain resulting from sin and imperfection will 'be no more' in the sense that the causes thereof will be eliminated.—4/15 p. 5.

● For Christians, what is a principal way of showing love for God and neighbor?

Preaching the "good news" is a major way to show that we love God with our whole heart, soul, strength and mind. (Luke 10:27) Also, teaching fellow humans the "good news" is one of the greatest expressions of love for them because this aids them to attain a good standing with Jehovah.—4/15 p. 28.

● How does a person gain by being a dedicated, baptized disciple of Jesus Christ?

Such an individual has the satisfaction of knowing that he is doing what is approved by Jehovah God and Jesus Christ. As a Christian, he also gains brothers, sisters, mothers and children in a spiritual sense.—5/1 p. 14.

● What is Babylon the Great, and why heed the call to “get out of her”?

Babylon the Great is the world empire of false religion, and getting out of her is the only way of avoiding destruction with her at the coming “great tribulation.” (Matt. 24:21; Rev. 18:4) “Getting out” is urgent, as it will be impossible to get out of Babylon the Great after her former political lovers turn upon her. (Rev. 17:15-18)—5/15 pp. 17, 18.

● Why can we, as Jehovah’s people, expect him to listen to our prayers?

He is the “Hearer of prayer” and commands us to pray. (Ps. 65:2; Rom. 12:12) Also, we can confidently approach Jehovah in prayer because his name is involved, he knows our limitations and wants to help us, and he will hear our prayers on the basis of our being integrity-keepers.—6/1 pp. 17, 18.

● In the Christian congregation, is it possible for there to be an environment that is not conducive to proper Christian growth?

Yes, there may be an environment or association that is not most helpful spiritually. For example, some who recently symbolized their dedication to God may tend to bring a measure of worldliness into the congregation. So we should exercise care in our associations because, like soil, the environment in which the seeds of our personal traits are buried and nourished can make us a poor variety

of what was intended when we began sowing as Christians.—6/15 pp. 19, 20.

● Will the new covenant come to an end?

Yes, the new covenant mediated by Christ Jesus will end when it fulfills its purpose of producing 144,000 spiritual sons of God. This will be when all such anointed ones are resurrected to immortal heavenly life. However, people living on earth will benefit from the new covenant everlastingly. This is because the 144,000 will then share with Christ in his millennial kingdom over the earth and in administering his ransom sacrifice, as mankind is restored to perfection with eternal life in view.—7/1 p. 31.

● Who are the “other sheep” of John 10:16?

Since it is stated that the “other sheep” do not belong to “this fold,” they are not spiritual Israelites, heirs of the Abrahamic promise with heavenly prospects. Rather, they are an earthly class, and will be made up ultimately of all those who attain to everlasting life on earth, and for whom the “fine shepherd,” Jesus Christ, also surrendered his soul. (John 10:14)—7/15 pp. 26-28.

● As Christians, what should we do if disturbing doubts start troubling us?

We should examine our motives to see if our doubts are genuine or indicate such things as a lack of endurance or of faith in God’s power to forgive. Also, we should keep a positive attitude and remember all that Jehovah God has done for us through Jesus Christ, as well as all we have learned about God’s purposes and promises through the spiritual food provided by means of the “faithful and discreet slave.” (Matt. 24:45-47)—8/1 pp. 14, 15.

QUESTIONS from READERS

● At Colossians 3:23 Christians are counseled to serve their masters “whole-souled as to Jehovah, and not to men.” Does this mean that secular work done as to Jehovah is part of our sacred service?

The Greek word *la-trei’a*, translated “sacred service” in the *New World Translation*, refers to dedicated worship or service to God. (Rom. 12:1) Jesus himself showed that it involves giving one’s primary allegiance to Jehovah.

(Matt. 4:8-10; Luke 4:5-8) It is service directed toward advancing the interests of Jehovah’s kingdom.

In ancient times, God’s dedicated nation of Israel rendered “sacred service” in obedience to the requirements of the Law covenant, in order to become to Jehovah “a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.” (Ex. 19:5, 6) This service provided types and shadows of realities to appear later under the New Covenant arrangement, in connection with God’s kingdom by Christ Jesus. (Heb. 8:5; 9:9, 14) Thus anointed Christians are told: “Seeing that we are to receive a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us continue to have undeserved kindness, through which we may acceptably render God sacred service with godly fear and awe.” (Heb. 12:28) Their companions, the “great crowd,” who look forward to everlast-

ing life on earth, must likewise show godly fear as they perform their assigned "sacred service" in the earthly courtyard of Jehovah's temple.—Rev. 7:9, 15.

Does this "sacred service" mean simply 'living a good life,' being a fine example in raising and providing for one's family, keeping the house clean, applying oneself at school, and so forth? Hardly, for the Israelites did such things over and above the sacred service that Jehovah commanded them to perform. (Ex. 7:16; 12:25, 26 [*la-trei'a*, Greek *Septuagint Version*]) And though the Sabbath law required them to 'render service, and do all their work six days,' certain *sacred* services were carried on even during the seventh day, such as at festivals and in giving instruction in the synagogues.—Ex. 13:5, 6; 20:9; Acts 13:14, 15; 18:4.

Today, there are people who live clean, moral lives, but who have no interest at all in God or his purposes. Surely their lives cannot be described as "sacred service." Obviously, this has to do specifically with service to God, done out of appreciation for sacred things—something out of the ordinary that calls for the sacrifice of time and energy. It is different from secular work or everyday living, though with Christians this also should be done "for God's glory."—1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 1:9.

Outstandingly, in this time preceding the "great tribulation" our "sacred service" requires obedience to Jesus' commands to preach and to teach "this good news of the kingdom," warning the people and making disciples. (Matt. 24:14, 21; 28:19, 20) It also embraces our assembling for worship, our family studies of the Bible and discussions of the text for each day. It extends to special service in the pioneer and missionary fields, and at Bethel homes operated for supplying spiritual food and providing good organization for the worldwide work of Jehovah's Witnesses. It includes the services performed by traveling and congregational overseers and ministerial servants, as they care for the spiritual interests of their brothers. (Deut. 31:12, 13; 6:4-9; Eph. 6:4; Acts 1:8; 20:28; 1 Pet. 5:2, 3; 1 Tim. 3:1, 12, 13) This "sacred service" of all of God's organized people is rendered from dedicated hearts, and with the help of Jehovah's spirit and his holy angels. (Phil. 3:3; Acts 27:23) If we by such service 'keep on seeking first the kingdom and [God's] righteousness,' Jehovah will see to it that the daily necessities of life are "added" to us.—Matt. 6:33; Luke 12:31.

Our "sacred service" must be modeled after the kind of service that Jesus did on earth. (1 Pet. 2:21-23) It is performed out of love for God and love for neighbor, the kind of self-sacrificing love in which Jesus set the example. (Mark 12:30, 31; John 13:34; 15:13) This service places emphasis on our public preaching, for we are told: "Let us always [through Jesus] offer to God a sacrifice of praise, that is, the fruit of lips which make public declaration to his name." At the same time, we must "not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others"—no, not as mere charitable works, but from the heart in behalf of fellow worshipers. Thus when our brothers are in need, suffer calamity or are in distress, we will render loving assistance, so that all may be encouraged to hold fast the public declaration of their hope without wavering. "With such sacrifices God is well pleased."—Heb. 10:23-25; 13:15, 16; Rom. 10:10-15; Jas. 1:27.

Do you have to readjust your viewpoint on "sacred service"? If so, may you do so in the spirit expressed at Second Corinthians 13:11: "Finally, brothers, continue to rejoice, to be *readjusted*, to be comforted, to think in agreement, to live peaceably; and the God of love and of peace will be with you."

"WATCHTOWER" STUDIES FOR THE WEEKS

September 14: The "Great Crowd" Renders Sacred Service Where? Page 14. Songs to Be Used: 58, 48.

September 21: Sacred Service in This "Time of the End." Page 21. Songs to Be Used: 101, 92.

TRUTH BRINGS FREEDOM AND HAPPINESS

Bible truth results in spiritual freedom and great happiness. Certainly, this has been so in the case of a man named Carlos, a resident of Portugal.

Back in 1968, Carlos used both direct and subtle means to discourage his wife, Olga, from studying the Bible with Jehovah's Witnesses. Finally, she discontinued the study, but still believed what she had learned from the Scriptures.

One day after they had moved to a new location, their three-year-old son mentioned that a Witness neighbor had called at their door. Surprisingly, Carlos had Olga invite this neighbor to their home. The Witness and his wife came and spent three hours answering Scriptural questions. They arranged to return for a Bible study the following week and left a copy of the basic Bible study aid "The Truth That Leads to Eternal Life." By the time the Witnesses returned for the study, Carlos had read the entire book. Two months after starting to study, he asked to attend Christian meetings. The Witnesses (then under ban in Portugal) were hesitant about that, for Carlos was an agent of the secret police. But no problems resulted.

In 1972, Carlos filed two requests for discharge from the secret police and finally this was granted. Then came the revolution of April 1974. On April 30, nine soldiers escorted him to prison, where he spent seven days. According to a recent law, all secret police agents of the former regime are subject to trial and imprisonment, with no provision for pardon. Thus, on July 10, 1979, Carlos came to trial before a military court. During the proceedings it was pointed out that he had resigned from the secret police some years earlier and was one of Jehovah's Witnesses. Much to everyone's surprise, Carlos was acquitted.

Carlos, who had taken his stand as a Christian neutral, now is an overseer in the local congregation. (John 15:19) Along with his wife, son and mother-in-law, he serves Jehovah in happiness, thankful for the truth that sets one free.—John 8:32.

