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THE WATCHTOWER

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

**DO ALL
RELIGIONS
LEAD TO GOD?**



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OUR COVER: Costly religious build-ings, colorful ceremonies, works of charity—are these the way of true worship? What does God re-quire of us? Read carefully the pages that follow

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A WATCHTOWER provides a vantage point from which the watchman can observe and warn of approaching danger. This magazine, published by Jehovah's Witnesses since 1879, serves a similar purpose. It keeps watch on world events in these critical times and calls attention to God's warning of his vengeance soon to be executed on those ruining the earth. It comforts all peoples with the hope that God's kingdom by Jesus Christ is about to bring in a global paradise of peace. It encourages all to exercise faith in the ransoming power of Jesus' shed blood, and points to the joyous prospect of everlasting life on earth under the sovereignty of the true God, Jehovah. "The Watchtower Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom" is nonpolitical, and adheres to the Bible as authority.

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DO ALL RELIGIONS LEAD TO GOD?

DID you know that there is a religion called "Kennedy Worshipers"? Its adherents believe that the deceased president of the United States John F. Kennedy can 'cure them of congenital and even terminal diseases.'

Or what about the Ministry of Universal Wisdom church? It is based on belief in flying saucers, and its founder claims to have been given a 2 a.m. ride in one.

And who has not heard of, and been shocked by, the mass suicide in Guyana of over 900 members of "Reverend" Jim Jones' People's Temple?

Such examples may raise serious questions about a commonly held view, one that you may have heard expressed. The view is often stated this way, 'All religions are just different roads leading to God.'

WHY THIS VIEW IS POPULAR

One reason why many today believe this way is that there is a growing 'liberal spirit.' People are very sensitive about giving any impression of being narrow-minded or fanatical.

Another reason why some say that 'there is good in all religions' is that most churches do speak about love and teach that it is bad to hurt others, to murder, to lie or to steal. Churches have established hospitals and schools to help the needy. And religious groups have translated and distributed the Bible, thus allowing many persons to learn about the true God and his Son, Jesus.

If, though, there is a true God who has provided guidance in his written Word, and whose Son accurately taught about religion, we ask: "How do God and Jesus view the different religions? Do they agree that 'all religions lead to God'?"

WITH THE "MANY" OR THE "FEW"?

Around the globe Jesus Christ is honored as having been a wise and godly teacher, certainly not narrow-minded. Yet, in his famous Sermon on the Mount, Jesus plainly said:

"Not everyone saying to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter into the kingdom of the heavens, but the one doing the will of my Father who is in the heavens will. Many will say to me in that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not . . . perform many powerful works in your name?' And yet then I will confess to them: I never knew you! Get away from me."—Matt. 7:21-23.

Note that Jesus did not take today's popular and ecumenical view that most persons who practice some religion in their own way are pleasing God. Rather, Jesus said that "many" even of those who claim to recognize Jesus as Lord or Christ are not acceptable.

In the same sermon, Jesus straightforwardly advised:

"Go in through the narrow gate; because broad and spacious is the road leading off into destruction, and many are the ones going in through it; whereas narrow is the gate and cramped the road leading

Are you on
the broad way . . .



. . . or the narrow way?



off into life, and few are the ones finding it."—Matt. 7:13, 14.

Why do you think that Jesus took such a position? The Scriptures make it clear that Jesus knew that to please God a person needs to 'do the will of the Father,' which is outlined in the Bible. Bearing this out, Jesus condemned practicing and teaching things in conflict with God's Word. It was right for him to do that for he knew that religion can be used to ensnare and mislead people. (Matt. 23:13; 2 Cor. 4:4) A comparison with the Scriptures shows that much of what is today taught in the churches misrepresents the loving and generous ways of the true God.

It follows, then, that it would not be sufficient for someone, including ourselves, simply to go along with the religion of our parents or to follow the major religion around us. For even if we did this in sincerity, it might put us among the "many" who Jesus said are on the 'broad road leading to destruction.'

Certainly you would prefer to be among the "few" whom God judges as being on the "road" that is truly leading to him. It is also the road that Jesus said is leading to "life," everlasting life.—John 3:16; 17:3.

ACCURATE KNOWLEDGE THAT LEADS TO GOD

You can undoubtedly see that we do not have to be theologians or have an extensive

knowledge of religion to avoid churches marked by belief in miracles from a deceased politician, or by flying-saucer travels, or those leading to maniacal suicides. Yet we do need knowledge—*accurate* knowledge.

We have graphic proof of this in the case of the first-century Jewish lawyer named Saul (or Paul) who became a Christian apostle. He had been very zealous in his former faith, even trying to stamp out worship that he felt was improper. Yet through God's mercy Paul came to realize that very religious persons, himself included, might have "a zeal for God; but not according to accurate knowledge." When Paul increased in knowledge of God's will and dealings, he became a convert to the more correct way of worship.—Acts 8:1-3; 9:1, 2; Rom. 10:2; 1 Tim. 1:12-16.

This ought to have a bearing on our thinking today, for it is God's will that all persons "come to an accurate knowledge of truth" and worship him accordingly. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4) God inspired Paul to foretell that in our time many persons would 'have a form of godly devotion but prove false to its power.' We are commanded: "From these turn away."—2 Tim. 3:1-5.

We, then, very much need to determine whether *we* are pursuing a religion or way of worship that is truly leading to God. But how can we be sure?

WORSHIP GOD IN HIS WAY

HAVE you observed evidence of this religious paradox:

"The 1980s will see 'more people won to the Christian faith than in all previous history, and more Christians defecting from organised Christianity than in any previous era.'"—Sydney *"Morning Herald,"* July 21, 1979.

This Australian report, based on a survey of 50 major religions and 9,000 "Christian" groups, showed that people are abandoning their churches in record numbers. You may know of many who used to be quite religious and attended church, but who have now stopped.

Yet many individuals, sensing an inner need to worship God, are drawn to some religion or other, often to a religion that touches their emotions, perhaps urging them to "get saved."

You also have a God-instilled need to worship your Creator. But how should you do it? What is *his* way to be worshiped?

HOW CAN YOU KNOW?

Naturally, it is God, not any man or church, who should determine what is truth and true worship. Jesus told a woman who was part of a first-century religious community: "God is a Spirit, and those worshiping him must worship with spirit and truth." (John 4:24) That also applies to us today.

Yes, for us to please God we need an inclination toward pure worship, showing that with wholeheartedness and sincerity. We also must be seeking truth and striving to conform to it. That means acting in accord with truth revealed in God's Word, rather than following mere church traditions or even religious doctrines that conflict with Bible truth.

In analyzing whether a religion—even your own church, or the faith popular around you—conforms to truth, many different areas could be examined. But even an investigation limited to just three areas could help you to worship God in *his* way. Observe:

A COMMON BELIEF—BUT IS IT TRUTH?

One teaching common to most religions around the globe is that man has within him an invisible soul that survives the death of the body and lives on immortally as a spirit. Do you recognize that teaching? It often is linked with the idea that the soul of a good person goes to heaven at death. And it is behind the widespread concern about the "spirits" of dead relatives or ghosts. The *Encyclopædia Britannica* points out: "The belief in human immortality in some form is almost universal." Probably you know that.

But it is quite appropriate that the encyclopedia says "*almost* universal." Why? Because the ancient Hebrews and early Christians did not believe that humans have immortal souls.

You may be surprised to hear that, for many persons think that this church doctrine is drawn from the Bible. However, note this:

According to the Scriptures the first lie, told by Satan the Devil, was that human sin would not bring death. (Gen. 3:1-4) When our original human parents did die anyway, and death claimed everyone afterward, what would be more deceptive than to say, 'They are not really dead—just their body is; their soul lives immortally'? Yes, the doctrine of the immortality of the human soul tends to further Satan's lie

and has led millions to fear the dead.

Simply put, however, the Scriptures teach that your soul is *you*. We find an indication of that in what the Bible reports about Adam. The Creator formed a body from dust and then provided life and the breath needed to sustain life. The result? Adam "came to be a living soul." (Gen. 2:7) He was not *given* a soul. Adam *was* a soul.—Compare 1 Corinthians 15:45.

Consistent with this, the Bible teaches that a soul (a person) can die. See Ezekiel 18:4. Does that mean that when some person is dead he has no thoughts or feelings? Exactly. In fact, Ecclesiastes 9:5 informs us: "The living are conscious that they will die; but as for the dead, they are conscious of nothing at all."

Does that mean that there is no more hope for our relatives and friends who have died? No, for the Bible gives examples in which God brought dead persons back to life, resurrected them. For instance, you may already know that God resurrected Jesus Christ as a spirit on the third day after his death. (Acts 10:39, 40; 1 Pet. 3:18) On the basis of this and related Bible promises, we can look forward to the time when God will resurrect those in his memory.—Acts 17:31; 24:15.

When you reflect on matters, then, you can see that the immortal-soul doctrine taught by most religions conflicts directly with what the Bible says. So ask yourself: "What does this mean for me? Do I need to make some adjustment so as to worship God in *his* way, with truth?"

CONDUCT IS ALSO INVOLVED

Jesus Christ gave us added aid in identifying God's way to worship him. He told his followers: "By this all will know that you are my disciples, if you have love among yourselves." (John 13:35) Do most churches today really urge all their followers to show the very kind of love that Jesus did?

For example, the early Christians were put to the test as to true love when they were asked to join or support the Roman army. They wanted to obey governmental laws, but could not do so when it meant breaking God's laws, such as his law against killing. (Matt. 22:21; Acts 5:29) Moreover, God had said of his people: "They will have to beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning shears. Nation will not lift up sword against nation, neither will they learn war anymore."—Isa. 2:4.

In harmony with that, early Christians would not fight in behalf of the Roman Empire or any other nation.

"A careful review of all the information available goes to show that, until the time of Marcus Aurelius [emperor from 161 to 180 C.E.], no Christian became a soldier; and no soldier, after becoming a Christian, remained in military service."—"The Rise of Christianity."

Think, though, of the position taken by the churches of our time and by their ministers and priests. After giving some excuse, they have approved of and blessed warfare—warfare in which Catholics kill Catholics and Protestants kill Protestants. That is not God's way!

"VALUES AND VIOLENCE IN AUSCHWITZ"

In her book of that title, Polish sociologist Anna Pawelczynska observed that in Nazi Germany "Jehovah's Witnesses waged passive resistance for their belief, which opposed all war and violence." With what result? She explains:

"This little group of prisoners was a solid ideological force and they won their battle against Nazism. The German group of this sect had been a tiny island of unflagging resistance existing in the bosom of a terrorized nation, and in that same undismayed spirit they functioned in the camp at Auschwitz. They managed to win the respect of their fellow-prisoners . . . of prisoner-functionaries, and even of the SS officers. Everyone knew that no Jehovah's Witness would perform a command contrary to his religious belief."

GOD'S MORAL STANDARDS

As a third area to examine in determining God's way of worship, we should see whether a religious group upholds his moral standards rather than simply overlooking wrongdoing.

Jesus worked to help sin-laden persons, including drunkards and the sexually immoral. His disciples were to do the same. (Matt. 9:10-13; 21:31; Luke 7:36-48; 1 Cor. 6:9, 11) And the Bible shows that even after individuals repented and became Christians some of them might slip and commit serious sin. (Gal. 6:1) For example, a man in the Christian congregation in ancient Corinth became a fornicator.—1 Cor. 5:1.

If a Christian did fall into a practice of sin, other Christians were to try to restore him to God's favor and to spiritual strength. (Jas. 5:13-16) But what if one unrepentantly practiced sin? God's Word says of that man in Corinth or any like him:

"Quit mixing in company with anyone called a brother that is a fornicator or a greedy person or an idolater or a reviler or a drunkard or an extortioner, not even eating with such a man. . . . 'Remove the wicked man from among yourselves.'"
—1 Cor. 5:11-13.

So if a gross sinner refuses to accept help and repent, he must be expelled or disfellowshipped from the true Christian congregation. Perhaps that will shock him to his senses. Yet, whether that happens or not, this God-directed expulsion from the congregation will protect the sincere Christians.—1 Cor. 5:2-8.

But does such disciplining occur in most of the churches you know of? Or is it not true that most churchgoers who openly practice sin continue to be accepted as part of the group?

The front page of a Nigerian newspaper recently reported:

"Nearly one-third of married Roman

Catholic men in the archdiocese of Lusaka have live-in concubines . . . The report, based on a survey by Archbishop Emmanuel Milingo, says that there are concubines in 3,225 out of 10,903 Catholic households."—Sept. 14, 1980.

By refusing to follow God's command to disfellowship unrepentant sinners, the churches cause others to think that they can sin too and get away with it. Or they may just turn away from religion.—Eccl. 8:11.

A young lad wrote the following to a newspaper:

"I hate going to church because I see people there who I know are drunkards, gossips, liars and cheats, and they are right there every Sunday saying their prayers and singing the hymns. I don't have any respect for hypocrites and our church is full of them."—Palm Beach "Post-Times," May 27, 1979.

Clearly God cannot approve of individuals or churches that produce such fruitage and do not worship him "with spirit and truth."—John 4:24; Matt. 7:15-20.

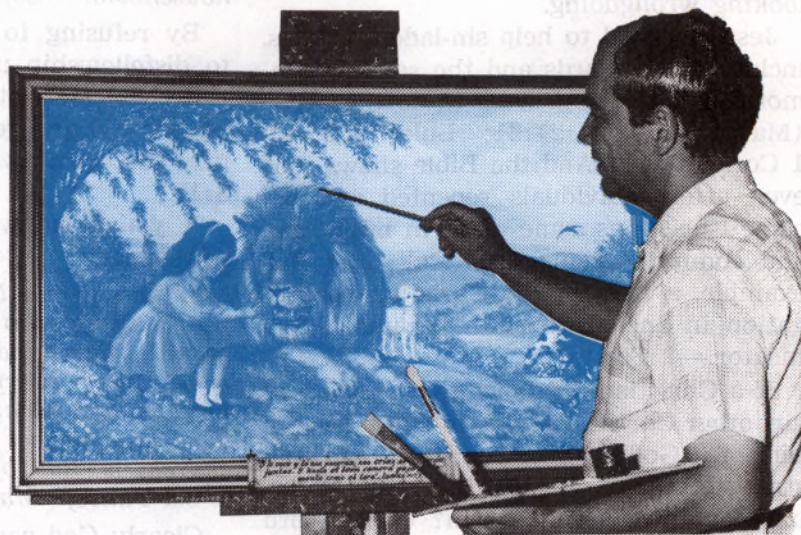
WHAT WILL YOU DO?

We have examined only three areas. But these make it clear that if we want to worship God in his way, we may have to make some basic changes in our beliefs and ways, even as did the apostle Paul and many others who have become true Christians. Separating ourselves from religions that are not promoting God's way of being worshiped is vital. In fact, God commands us to 'get out if we do not want to share in their sins and receive part of the plagues coming from God.'—Rev. 18:4, 5; 2 Cor. 6:14-18.

Jehovah's Witnesses are seriously interested in conforming their lives to God's Word, thus worshiping the Creator "with spirit and truth." They will be very much pleased to assist you, too, in your desire to worship God in his way.

PARADISE: PAINT IT OR PREACH IT—WHICH?

As told by
Randy Morales



I GREW up on the southern coast of the island of Puerto Rico, near the city of Guayama. Our house in the country was set among sugarcane plantations. It was indeed a beautiful location, a veritable paradise. These surroundings, I believe, influenced my desire to become a painter, to capture such beauty on canvas.

So it was that, one afternoon late in August 1948, I set sail from San Juan with great expectations. I was on my way to New York city with dreams of becoming an artist. I was only 18.

SCHOOLING OFFERS SURPRISES

In September I started classes at Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, New York. One of our textbooks, *Art Through the Ages*, was very revealing, as were the weekly lectures on the history of art. We learned that in ancient Egypt huge sums were spent to decorate the temples and pyramids, while the people were kept in ignorance, superstition and fear. It was similar

in other nations such as Babylon, Greece and Rome. But the big surprise for me came when we studied so-called Christian Art, especially during the Renaissance period.

I was startled to learn how the Catholic Church obtained the funds to build all those fabulously ornate cathedrals in Europe, especially in Italy and what is now Vatican City. The methods used by various popes to acquire wealth were openly discussed in class. I have since then remembered the following quotation from *The New Funk & Wagnalls Encyclopedia* of 1949 regarding Pope Alexander VI:

"He acquired wealth and lived a life of pleasure even after his elevation to the papacy, which he secured by bribery in 1492. . . . He achieved the aggrandizement of the fortunes of his children principally by the thinly disguised robbery of nobles and ecclesiastics, a number of whom he caused to be assassinated or poisoned to that end."

Yes, the way that the popes exerted their power to secure money, workers and artists to build temples and palaces for church officials was certainly eye-opening to me. In this connection, a special issue of *Life* magazine, published while I was going to school, really made an impression on me. It discussed the works of the great Italian sculptor and painter Michelangelo Buonarroti from the city of Florence.

That December 26, 1949, issue of *Life* said that Pope Julius II "literally had to force [Michelangelo] to paint the Sistine frescoes. . . . Michelangelo refused twice to come to Rome and execute the murals. He consented the third time only on the insistence of the Florentine government, which feared that the enraged pope would attack the city of Florence with the papal army."

I had not been particularly religious. My mother, who was nominally Catholic, taught me and my brother to pray before going to bed. I kept up the habit, praying to *la virgencita*—the virgin—but from what I was learning in school, my faith in the Catholic Church vanished. Yet I still believed in God, and I felt there must be a proper way to worship him.

SEARCH FOR SOMETHING BETTER

One of my schoolmates invited me to join a club of Protestant students. They would invite members of the clergy, including Catholic priests, Protestant ministers and even rabbis, to give talks. I attended, but was disappointed because the Bible was never used. The clergymen seemed to present simply their own philosophical ideas and opinions.

Early in 1950 I went to visit a lady who had been our neighbor in Guayama but was now living in the Bronx, New York. My mother had asked me to see her since they were very good friends. While there

I was given copies of *The Watchtower*, a magazine I had never seen before.

A couple of months later, in March, a middle-aged couple called at my door, explaining that they were talking to their neighbors about the Bible. I invited them in, and for the first time in my life I heard what the kingdom of God is all about. It is a government that will bring peace to earth, yes, see that it is transformed everywhere into a gorgeous paradise. That was the first time I had opportunity to handle the Bible and see that it really did tell about such wonderful things. (Ps. 37:9-11, 29; Rev. 21:3, 4) The couple left with me the Bible study aid "*Let God Be True*," and from then on we had regular Bible discussions.

In June I went home to Puerto Rico for my summer vacation. When I returned to school toward the end of summer, I resumed my Bible discussions and started attending the congregational meetings at 124 Columbia Heights, where the world headquarters of Jehovah's Witnesses was located. Soon afterward I began sharing with others the wonderful message about a paradise earth. This I did by going from house to house, thus copying the example of first-century Christians. (Acts 20:20) Then, on May 13, 1951, in symbol of my dedication to Jehovah God, I was baptized.

Finally I had found the truth that makes persons free. As Jesus Christ said: "You will know the truth, and *the truth will set you free*." (John 8:32) Yes, free from fear of hellfire, limbo, purgatory and other false doctrines taught in the name of God. Free from subjection to religious leaders who so often are lovers of riches, money and earthly power. Free from the belief that world peace is dependent on political leaders to straighten out world problems. And free from the fear of the destruction of the earth by terrible atomic weapons in the hands of ungodly men.

CAREER AS AN ARTIST OR A PREACHER?

By 1952 I had been studying to be an artist for nearly four years. What would I do? Returning to Puerto Rico, my desire to share what I had learned from the Bible was even stronger than my desire to be an artist. Thus, in August 1952, I began serving in the full-time preaching activity as a pioneer. By the end of the year we had established a little congregation of eight or nine new witnesses for Jehovah in Guayama. Soon the congregation grew to 18.

Then, in July 1954, another Witness and I were invited to become special pioneers. Our assignment was Yauco, a town on the southern coast of Puerto Rico. There were no Witnesses there, but soon we found interested persons, even though the local religious leaders warned the people not to listen to us. Although my partner left after seven months, I remained for two years, helping to support myself by doing some artwork. Today there are three strong congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses in Yauco.

SPECIAL PRIVILEGES OF SERVICE

In 1957 I was invited to the Gilead missionary school in New York State. The graduation exercises of the 31st class of Gilead were held July 27, 1958, in Yankee Stadium during the "Divine Will" International Assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. An amazing total of 180,291 spectators were present! I was assigned to the missionary work in Honduras, finally arriving there in December 1958.

Soon I was assigned to visit congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses as a circuit overseer. Getting around the country was really an experience! Often I traveled by *varonesa* (local bus), at other times by train or by *cayuco* (local oar boat), on occasion by airplane, and even by mule or horse to get to more remote areas.

I will never forget the first time in my life I rode a horse; well, really it was a mule. Somebody put a spur on my right boot, and I guess I kicked the mule too hard and it took off galloping, with me trying not to fall off. Finally I was able to stop it, saving my skin and bones!

In January 1961 I married Johneth Fischer, who had been a missionary in Honduras since 1952. By the end of that year our first daughter, Jeanneatte Rose, was born. After that we stayed in Honduras for almost two years, but due to increasing family responsibilities we moved back to Guayama and started working with the congregation of about 20 Kingdom publishers.

It was our joy to see the Guayama Congregation grow. Among those we were able to help was my mother. She accepted the Bible truths we were teaching, and it brought us real joy when she was baptized. She died in 1970, and I pray that Jehovah will remember her in the resurrection. It certainly is a hope that encourages us to keep on serving our loving Father.

On June 6, 1976, I was invited to become a member of the Branch Committee of Jehovah's Witnesses, which oversees the activities of Jehovah's Witnesses in Puerto Rico. A further privilege of service came in 1978 when I was invited to attend the Gilead Branch School in New York. Also, my wife and I have been blessed with five children, and it is a real joy to see them serving their Creator willingly and putting their trust in him.

It has been many, many years now since painting was my chief pursuit in life. Mind you, it is still important to me. I derive real pleasure from it, and it has helped me to provide a living for our family. I hope that, if it is Jehovah's will, in his paradise earth I will be able to pursue more fully my desire to reproduce on canvas the marvels of his grand creations.

INSIGHT ON THE NEWS

● When the most violent earthquake to strike Europe in recent times rocked southern Italy last November, over 3,000 died. Scores in the village of Balvano died when their church collapsed near the end of a Sunday evening Mass. What kind of spiritual

No Comfort for Quake Victims

comfort did the parish priest offer his flock? "I don't know why us," he reportedly cried. "How can I explain to these people that God decided to take their loved ones during a Mass?"

However, what happened can be explained, and in a most comforting way. From the Catholic "Jerusalem Bible" we can learn what our "gentle Father and the God of all consolation, who comforts us in all our sorrows," has to say to those bereaved through such disasters. No, God did not "take their loved ones." Rather, all humans "are subject to time and mischance. . . like birds taken in the snare, so is man overtaken by misfortune suddenly falling on him." Knowing this, sorrowing relatives and friends may be further encouraged by Jesus' uplifting promise: "Do not be surprised at this, for the hour is coming when the dead will leave their graves at the sound of his voice" to enjoy a potentially happy future.—2 Cor. 1:3, 4; Eccl. 9:11, 12; John 5:28, 29.

● At least 10 planetariums in the Federal Republic of Germany, Greece and the United States revised their recent winter shows to reflect what they believe to be a more accurate year for Christ's birth. For centuries, scholars had accepted the year 5 B.C.E. or earlier for Jesus'

Update on Christ's Birth Date

birth, based on an eclipse cited by Jewish historian Josephus as occurring prior to the death of Herod the Great. Now John Mosley of Los Angeles' Griffith Observatory says that recent research offers "convincing demonstration that the lunar eclipse mentioned by Josephus . . . could not have been the eclipse of 4 B.C."

The eclipse Josephus actually had in mind must have been one of two that occurred in

1 B.C.E. Therefore, as a report by United Press International states: "Herod actually died in 1 B.C. rather than in 4 B.C. as commonly believed. The issue is pivotal because New Testament records make it clear that Herod was alive when Jesus was born." So instead of earlier dates, says the news service, the "research indicates that Jesus was born in the summer or early autumn of 3 B.C. or 2 B.C."

Once again, the evidence brings authorities into agreement with the Bible's historical record. Luke's Gospel account says that Jesus "was about thirty years old" when he was baptized by John, who began his work six months earlier "in the fifteenth year of the reign of Tiberius Caesar." According to secular history, this was the year 29 C.E. Hence, placing Jesus' birth at possibly "early autumn of . . . 2 B.C." agrees with an age of "about thirty" at his baptism.—Luke 1:34-36, 60; 3:1, 2, 23.

● "The view that a woman who resists [a rapist] is more likely to be injured or killed is an old wives' tale," declared Detroit Police executive deputy chief James Bannon. "There has never been any evidence to back it up." On the other hand, Dr. Mary Lystad, director of the National Center for the Prevention and Control of Rape, says new studies prove that "women who used an array of physical and psychological resistance such as screaming, hitting, biting, kicking and attempting to flee were more successful in avoiding rape."

To Avoid Rape— Fight!

But women who merely cried or tried to talk their way out were more apt to be raped. In fact, the passive ones also were more likely to be seriously injured than were those who actively resisted the rapist's advances. "The thing not to do is act utterly passive," warned Lystad. "A woman who behaves as if she is weak and defenseless appears to increase her risk of rape."

Similar advice has long been available to Bible readers. In ancient Israel, the Law required a woman confronted by a rapist to scream, thus putting up active resistance.—Deut. 22:23-27.

DO ALL GOOD PERSONS GO TO HEAVEN?

PERHAPS most persons believe that they do. But is that what the Bible teaches?

Shortly after Jesus Christ was raised from the dead, the apostle Peter told a crowd of Jews: "The family head David . . . both deceased and was buried and his tomb is among us to this day. *Actually David did not ascend to the heavens.*"—Acts 2:29, 34.



**King David—
in heaven or where?**



**Was it Job's hope
to go to heaven?**

Did the good man Job go to heaven when he died? While suffering, Job prayed to God: "O that in Sheol

[the grave] you would conceal me, that you would keep me secret until your anger turns back, that you would set a time limit for me and remember me!"—Job 14:13.

When he died, Job expected to be unconscious in the grave. But he had hope, as he explained: "If an able-bodied man dies can he live again?

All the days of my compulsory service [appointed time in the grave] I shall wait, until my relief comes. You will call, and I myself shall answer you."—Job 14:14, 15.

John the Baptizer was indeed a good man. Yet Jesus said: "A person that is a lesser one in the kingdom of the heavens is greater than he is." (Matt. 11:11) This is so because John the Baptizer will not go to heaven. He will be resurrected to life on earth. David, Job, John the Baptizer and all other faithful men and women who died before Christ did will receive a resurrection to life on earth. They will be earthly subjects of God's kingdom.

Jesus Christ will rule as king in heaven. His apostles and other spirit-begotten Christians



Did John the Baptizer go to heaven?



...OR WILL MOST LIVE ON A PARADISE EARTH?

will go to heaven to rule with him, as the Bible says: "They are to rule as kings over the earth." (Rev. 5:10) The Bible shows that only a limited number of persons, a "little flock," will go to heaven to be those kings. The Bible gives their total number as 144,000. The rest of faithful human-kind will live on earth under these rulers.—Luke 12:32; Rev. 14:1, 3.

What will it be like on earth when God's kingdom rules? The earth will become a *paradise earth* wide, even as God originally purposed it to be when he put Adam and Eve in the paradise of Eden. Then the Bible promise will be fulfilled: "The righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it."—Ps. 37:29.



Who Are God's Ministers?

SEVERAL years ago a number of objections were raised against having the term "minister" apply to all dedicated and baptized Christians. These objections were based on differences in language, the way other religious bodies and men in official positions might view their claim to be ministers, and so forth. However, it does not appear that such objections are sufficiently strong to negate the position that Jehovah's people have held for the greater part of the last 100 years.

"DI-A'KO-NOS"—A MINISTER

In the English translation of the Christian Greek Scriptures the verb "minister" and the noun "minister" occur many times. The Greek noun thus translated is *di-a'ko-nos*, which literally means 'through the dust,' as though applying to one who gets dusty running errands. It appears to be used in three distinct senses, which we will now examine.

First of all, the term *di-a'ko-nos* is used to refer to one who serves in a material, secular sense, and may simply refer to serving in a household. Thus, in one of Jesus' parables, we read: "The king said to his servants [*di-a'ko-noi*], 'Bind him hand and foot.'" (Matt. 22:13) The same word is rendered "minister" at Romans 13:4, where the reference is to secular governments.

In certain contexts, this Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* is used in a special restricted official sense, as at Philippians 1:1, where it is applied to certain persons in the Christian congregation who hold an appointive office, for it is there linked with others holding the office of overseer, or "bishop." Thus we read: "Paul and Timothy, slaves of Christ Jesus, to all the holy ones in

union with Christ Jesus who are in Philippi, along with overseers and ministerial servants [or, "deacons," *di-a'ko-noi*]." The term is also used in this special sense at 1 Timothy 3:8, 12, where the apostle Paul lists the qualifications of such ministerial servants, or "deacons."

Finally, there are other instances in which these inspired Christian Greek Scripture writers appear to have used this term in a broader way, which also carries more weight than merely referring to a servant that performs mundane duties. This is when it is used to apply to any dedicated person who serves God in sacred or spiritual matters, and so here some languages translate it by a more fitting word, namely, "minister," which conveys the sense of an elevated or godly service. Thus the apostle Paul at Colossians 1:23 refers to himself as one who was "made a minister [*di-a'ko-nos*]," or one who 'had become or became a minister.' (See *Authorized Version*; *Revised Standard Version*; Phillips' *New Testament in Modern English*; *The New English Bible*.) Paul also speaks of others as ministers, as in the case of Timothy.—1 Tim. 4:6, AV; RSV; *New International Version*.

"DI-A-KO-NI'A"—MINISTRY

Closely related to the Greek word *di-a'ko-nos* is the noun *di-a-ko-ni'a*, referring to a "service" or a "ministry." This Greek word is also used in both a secular and a religious, or sacred, sense. It is used in a secular sense at Acts 6:1, where we read: "Now in those days, when the disciples were increasing, a murmuring arose on the part of the Greek-speaking Jews against the Hebrew-speaking Jews, because their widows were being overlooked

in the daily distribution [footnote, "ministration"]."

When *di-a-koni'a* is used in a religious sense some translators in certain languages use a special word for it, rendering it not as a "distribution" or a "service," but as a "ministry," meaning an elevated, godly service. Thus in such languages the apostle Paul is made to say regarding his apostleship to the Gentiles, "I glorify my *ministry*." (Rom. 11:13, *RSV*; *NE*; *NIV*) * He further wrote that he was grateful that God 'considered him faithful by assigning him to a ministry,' a godly, elevated "service." (1 Tim. 1:12, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*) Thus Paul wrote Timothy: "You, though, keep your senses in all things, suffer evil, do the work of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry." Timothy's evangelizing, or preaching of the "good news," was not a mundane service. It was a godly, elevated service—a ministry—and it constituted him a minister. By the same token today, all who share in this evangelizing ministry are indeed ministers.—2 Tim. 4:5, *AV*; *NIV*; *RSV*.

It is the way Christian Greek Scripture writers under inspiration use the Greek words *di-a-konos*, *di-a-koni'a* and similar ones that sets the pattern for Jehovah's Witnesses. Actually, not only are Jehovah's Witnesses a religious organization in the commonly accepted meaning of the term "congregation," or "church," but they also constitute an association for the training and equipping of men, women and youths to be ministers, "servants," in an elevated or godly sense, preachers of the good news of God's kingdom. For this purpose they have an ongoing body of study courses for the education of men, women and young people in the vital knowledge of the Bible so that they may be increasingly effective as God's ministers. These study courses are covered at five weekly meetings in

which there is exposition of Bible doctrine, interpretation of Bible prophecies, instruction in Christian conduct and training in the preaching and teaching of Bible truths.

ORDINATION AS MINISTERS

As with all religious organizations, Jehovah's Witnesses have the privilege and right to determine when their students have reached the point where they qualify to be ministers of God's Word, "servants" in an elevated, godly sense. After an appropriate personal training period they are examined by the duly appointed elders in their congregation. If students can give evidence of having an adequate knowledge of God's Word, a heart appreciation of its message, and have unreservedly dedicated themselves to Jehovah to do his will and to follow in the footsteps of Jesus Christ, and if they have brought their lives in line with God's requirements and principles,



Scripturally, ordination as a minister of God takes place at one's baptism

* See succeeding article.

they are admitted to baptism and are thereby ordained as ministers. There is sound Scriptural precedent for this procedure, for it was only after Jesus had presented himself for baptism that he began his career as God's anointed minister, preaching the good news of God's kingdom. —Mark 1:9-15.

But is there sound reason for considering baptism, complete submersion in water, as an adequate ordination ceremony? Perhaps not according to prevailing customs in Christendom, but there certainly is from a Scriptural point of view, even as can be seen from what M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopaedia of Biblical, Theological, and Ecclesiastical Literature* (1877), Vol. VII, page 411, has to say on the subject. According to it, an ordination is "the appointment or designation of a person to a ministerial office, whether with or without attendant ceremonies.

... A scriptural investigation of this subject can hardly fail to impress any ingenuous mind with the great significance of the fact that neither the Lord Jesus Christ nor any of his disciples gave specific commands or declarations in reference to ordination." A diploma or an ordination certificate is no more needed by ministers today than one was needed by the apostle Paul.—2 Cor. 3:1-3.

MINISTRY OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES

How do Jehovah's Witnesses carry on their ministry? Some of them serve as appointed elders, and as such they preach and teach in their congregations from the



platform and at congregational Bible classes held in the homes of the Witnesses. However, the most extensive and most distinctive method used by the Witnesses in their ministry is that used by the apostles and other early disciples of Jesus in obedience to his command: "Into whatever city or village you enter, search out who in it is deserving . . . When you are entering into the house, greet the household; and if the house is deserving, let the peace you wish it come upon it."

—Matt. 10:11-13.

Similarly, the apostle Paul distinguished himself

by preaching both to congregations and to individuals in their homes. As he told the elders of Ephesus: "You well know how . . . I did not hold back from telling you any of the things that were profitable nor from teaching you publicly and from



Following the Bible precedent, Jehovah's Witnesses pursue their ministry "publicly and from house to house"

house to house. But I thoroughly bore witness both to Jews and to Greeks about repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus." (Acts 20:18-21) This provides a fine precedent for God's ministers today.

Regarding modern-day house-to-house ministry with the use of religious tracts the Supreme Court of the United States in the case of *Murdock v. Commonwealth of Pennsylvania* (1943) ruled: "The hand distribution of religious tracts is an age-old form of missionary evangelism—as old as the history of printing presses. . . . This form of religious activity occupies the same high estate under the First Amendment as do worship in the churches and preaching from the pulpits."

* See *The Watchtower*, August 15, 1957, pp. 485-487.

Also, in the United States Court of Appeals for the Seventh Circuit, in the case of *Ransom v. United States* (1955), that court stated that it could not “validly distinguish . . . between ministers of Jehovah’s Witnesses who preach from door to door and on street corners as their vocations, and ministers of more conventional faiths who preach in pulpits, teach in church schools or carry on various other religious activities for their churches.”

Would the fact that these ministers did not devote all their time to their ministry reflect unfavorably on their claim to be ministers, meaning they did not qualify to be such? Not at all, for even the apostle Paul engaged in secular activities to sup-

port himself and those with him. (Acts 18:3, 4; 20:33, 34) This position was supported by this ruling of the United States Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit in the case of *Wiggins v. United States* (1958): “Ministers of Jehovah’s Witnesses . . . have no choice except to engage in secular pursuits in order to obtain funds to make the ministry their vocation. . . . The test . . . is . . . whether, as a vocation, regularly, not occasionally, he teaches and preaches the principles of his religion.”

So who are God’s ministers? They are the dedicated and baptized Christians who make service to God and neighbor their chief aim in life! (Mark 12:28-31) Please see also the three succeeding articles.

Women—May They Be “Ministers”?

TODAY more and more women are occupying Protestant pulpits. At a certain church some women share the pulpit with their husbands. Many nuns have agitated for the Catholic Church to allow women also to be ordained as clergymen or priests, but thus far the pope has refused to accede to their wishes.

Regardless of what human wisdom might dictate on the subject, or what our own inclinations or preferences might be, the ‘wisdom that comes from above,’ as expressed in God’s Word, will be the determining factor as far as all sincere followers of Jesus Christ are concerned.—Jas. 3:15-17.

God’s Word shows that Jesus Christ set a precedent by appointing only men to be among the 12 apostles and the 70 evangelists. (Matt. 10:1-4; Luke 10:1) In keeping with this precedent, we find that the apostle Paul limited the appointment of

congregational elders (and ministerial servants) to men. (1 Tim. 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) Moreover, he reminded Timothy: “I do not permit a woman to teach, or to exercise authority over a man, but to be in silence.” —1 Tim. 2:12.

However, from other scriptures it is apparent that this restriction applies only within the congregation. That women can be preachers, proclaimers, ministers of the “good news” outside the congregational meetings can be seen from the prophecy at Joel 2:28, 29, which the apostle Peter showed had a fulfillment on the day of Pentecost by saying: “‘In the last days,’ God says, ‘I shall pour out some of my spirit upon every sort of flesh, and your sons and your daughters will prophesy . . . and even upon my men slaves and upon my women slaves I will pour out some of my spirit in those days, and they will prophesy.’” Yes, at Pentecost the holy



At Pentecost, holy spirit commissioned men and women to be ministers of our God, Jehovah

spirit fell upon both men and women.—Acts 1:14, 15; 2:1-4, 17, 18.

Also pertinent here is Isaiah 61:6, which reads, in part: “As for you, the priests of Jehovah you will be called; the ministers of our God you will be said to be.” This prophecy had its initial fulfillment when the Jewish exiles, as a composite or national group, returned from ancient Babylon. However, as can be seen from the physical facts and in keeping with Romans 15:4 these words are having a modern fulfillment upon spiritual Israelites. (Gal. 6:16)* They were in spiritual captivity to “Babylon the Great” during World War I, and were set free shortly thereafter, with the symbolic fall of that world empire of false religion.

Since this restoration prophecy does find a fulfillment in modern times, who are included in the expression “ministers” or “servants” in an elevated or sacred sense? Is it limited to elders and ministerial servants, or “deacons,” in the congregation?

* See *The Watchtower*, July 1, 1978, pp. 16-29.

Apparently not. Back there this prophecy applied to all the Jews who returned from Babylon as a composite or national group. Likewise today, this prophecy can be applied to all spiritual Israel who have come out of modern Babylon, both men and women, both old and young—yes, regardless of age or sex, provided, of course, that they do “minister.”

Does this mean that the term “ministers” is limited now to the anointed spiritual remnant? No, for this expression can be applied also to the “great crowd” of “other sheep” who are assisting the remnant today. This can be seen from the way many other scriptures apply to these “other sheep.”—John 10:16; Rev. 7:9.

For example, Isaiah 43:10-12 applied first to the natural Israelites whom Jehovah God delivered from Egypt and made his witnesses. Today, this scripture applies to the spiritual Israelites whom Jehovah has delivered from Satan’s organization, making them Jehovah’s Witnesses. Proof that this term cannot be limited to the anointed remnant of spiritual Israel can be seen from the fact that today there are more than two million worshipers of Jehovah who have an earthly hope and who truly are witnessing to their God, Jehovah.

FEMALE MINISTERS

Yes, all dedicated and baptized Christians, regardless of sex or age, can be proclaimers, preachers, ministers, “servants” in an elevated or sacred sense—provided they give proof thereof by their conduct and their witnessing. Thus the apostle Paul wrote at Romans 16:1: “I recommend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a minister of the congregation that is in Cenchreae, that you may welcome her in the Lord in a way worthy of the holy ones, and that you may assist her in any matter where she may need you, for she herself also proved to be a defender of many, yes, of me myself.” Obviously, Paul’s reference

is to something more than merely physical service. It is to something having to do with the spoken word, the Christian ministry. However, she had not been appointed as a female ministerial servant, as Jehovah God through Paul made no provision for women in such an office.

Again, when writing the Christian congregation in Philippi, Paul makes reference to Euodia and Syntyche as "women who have striven side by side with me in the good news [evidently preaching and teaching the good news of God's kingdom] along with Clement as well as the rest of my fellow workers, whose names are in the book of life."—Phil. 4:2, 3.

Also, not to be overlooked is Priscilla, wife of Aquila. She is mentioned repeatedly, most often even ahead of her husband. (Acts 18:2, 18, 26; Rom. 16:3; 1 Cor. 16:19; 2 Tim. 4:19) When eloquent Apollos arrived in Ephesus and it was apparent that he needed further instruction, 'Priscilla and Aquila took him to their home and *they* both expounded the word of God more correctly to him.'—Acts 18:26, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

Several courts in the United States have recognized female Jehovah's Witnesses, in carrying on the door-to-door evangelistic work, as ministers. For example, the Supreme Court of Vermont, in *Vermont v. Greaves* (1941), stated that Elva Greaves "is an ordained minister of a sect or class known and designated as 'Jehovah's Witnesses'."

YOUTHFUL MINISTERS

The same principle may be applied to youthful Christians. Although in no sense of the word could they serve as appointed servants in the congregation, their age would be no impediment to their being preachers and proclaimers of the "good news," ministers of God. Jesus at the age of 12 showed himself to be capable of 'ministering' God's Word. (Luke 2:46-50)



Youths may serve as 'ministers of God,' preaching the "good news" and bringing spiritual comfort to others

Samuel became "a minister of Jehovah" as a mere "boy." (1 Sam. 2:11, NW; see also *American Standard Version; The Jerusalem Bible; Rotherham*.) And so in modern times some in their early teens or even younger, after having dedicated themselves to Jehovah and having been baptized, are proving by their activity in preaching the good news of God's kingdom at every opportunity, as well as by their conduct, that they are indeed ministers of God.—2 Tim. 2:22; Eccl. 12:1.

A "SACRED SERVICE"

Jesus laid down the rule that a man's claims must be measured by his works. He stated: "The works themselves that I am doing, bear witness about me that the Father dispatched me." (John 5:36) By the same token, those ministers (or, "servants" in an elevated sense) that God sends forth, male or female, young or old, are to be recognized by their service for the Kingdom interests, their "sacred service" to their God, Jehovah.—Matt. 4:10; Rom. 12:1, 2.

So among Jehovah's Witnesses today, anyone who upon adequate instruction in

God's Word has been baptized in symbol of dedicating his or her life to God, and who thereafter seriously undertakes service to Jehovah God in witnessing to his name and kingdom, is truly a minister in God's view. (John 12:26) However, whether they would always want to introduce themselves when calling from house to house

as a "minister" would depend upon the circumstances, including the local attitude toward the term "minister." In any case, today's 'great crowd out of all nations' are described at Revelation 7:9-17 as 'rendering God sacred service day and night in his temple.' All are God's ministers—his servants in a sacred, elevated sense.

GLORIFYING THE MINISTRY

"I glorify my ministry."—Rom. 11:13.

THE time approaches when those who are ministers of any false religion will be ashamed. They will try to hide what their occupation is. That is what Bible prophecy indicates. Speaking of them as "prophets" or visionaries, Zechariah 13:4-6 says:

² "And it must occur in that day that the prophets will become ashamed, each one of his vision when he prophesies; and they will not wear an official garment of hair for the purpose of deceiving. And he will certainly say, 'I am no prophet. I am a man cultivating the soil, because an earthling man himself acquired me from my youth on.' And one must say to him, 'What are these wounds on your person between your hands?' And he will have to say, 'Those with which I was struck in the house of my intense lovers.'"

³ The onetime lovers of the religious clergymen will finally turn upon them and strike them and wound them even to death or to where they give up their religious profession and its style of dress. In the

last book of the Bible, Revelation, the turning of the worldly officials against those of a religious profession is pictured with strong imagery. Chapter 17 presents the whole world empire of false religion, which stems from ancient Babylon, as being an international harlot called Babylon the Great.

⁴ Pictorially, she sits upon a scarlet-colored wild beast, with seven heads and ten horns upon those heads. The beast makes a descent into an abyss, disappears, and comes to view again, just like in the case of the League of Nations and its successor, the United Nations. Babylon the Great climbed back upon this reappearing international political "beast" in 1945 C.E. Since then Babylon the Great has ridden the royal-colored "beast" for more than 35 years. The time must now be near when, to the shock of religionists, the symbolic beast will turn upon the loose "woman" that has dominated politics during the lifetime of seven successive world powers. Then what? Revelation 17:15-18 portrays it for us, saying:

1, 2. According to Zechariah 13:4-6, instead of glorifying their ministry, what will the ministers of false religion try to do at a certain future time?

3. To what extent will such wounds be inflicted upon the clergymen of Christendom?

4, 5. (a) In Revelation, chapter 17, how is the world empire of false religion symbolized? (b) Finally, what will the symbolic 10 horns, and the royal-colored wild beast itself, do to its rider with God's permission?

⁵ "The waters that you saw, where the harlot is sitting, mean peoples and crowds and nations and tongues. And the ten horns that you saw, and the wild beast, these will hate the harlot and will make her devastated and naked, and will eat up her fleshy parts and will completely burn her with fire. For God put it into their hearts to carry out his thought, even to carry out their one thought by giving their kingdom to the wild beast [the eighth world power], until the words of God will have been accomplished. And the woman whom you saw means the great city [modern Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion] that has a kingdom over the kings of the earth."—Note Revelation 18:21-24.

⁶ Will the oncoming destruction of Babylon the Great, which includes Christendom, mean the wiping out of *all* religion from the face of the earth? As long as there is the one living and true God, No! His worshipers, who are no part of Christendom or of the rest of Babylon the Great, will survive the worldwide onslaught against all religion. They will have the protection of the God, Jehovah, and of his reigning "Lord of lords and King of kings," Jesus Christ. Afterward, they will witness the destruction of the godless, irreligious rulers that will then dominate the earth entirely. The "form of worship that is clean and undefiled from the standpoint of our God and Father" will never perish from the earth, which is his "footstool." —Rev. 17:12-14; Jas. 1:27; Isa. 66:1.

NOT MINISTERS OF POLITICAL GOVERNMENTS

⁷ In the showdown "war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, the officiating "ministers" of the

6. To what extent will the destruction of Babylon the Great affect religion, and what is the reason for this?
7. In the war at Har-Magedon, what will happen to the officiating "ministers" of the political governments arrayed against Jehovah?

political states there arrayed against God the Almighty will be destroyed with their earthly governments. (Rev. 16:13-16; 19:11-21) Those who are nonpolitical "ministers" of the victorious Almighty God, Jehovah, will be preserved by him through that war of all wars with which the present system of earthly governments will end. What a grand reward that will be for their having kept on faithfully in their Christian ministry to him! Their being called "ministers" may be objected to in many lands, Communist and non-Communist. In such lands the term "minister" may be reserved strictly for the high-ranking officers of the State. However, in the English-speaking land of the United States of America the members of the president's cabinet are entitled secretaries, such as secretary of state, secretary of the interior, and so on, and attorney general. Yet they will not survive.

⁸ In the Holy Bible, in its Christian Greek Scriptures, the term "minister" is a translation of the Greek word *di'a'konos*, which word is understood to mean, literally, "through dust," as in the case of someone sent or summoned. However, in modern Greece the president is called the *pro'e-dros*, meaning "the one sitting before or in front." The members of his cabinet are not called by the Greek word *di'a'konos* ("minister") but are given the title *hypourgos*, meaning, literally, an "underworker." This word occurs in the Greek Septuagint Version of the Hebrew Scriptures, according to the Sinaitic and Vatican No. 1209 manuscripts. There Joshua 1:1 reads: "Now it came to pass after the death of Moses the servant of the LORD, that the LORD spoke unto Joshua the son of Nun, Moses' minister [*hypourgos*]." (*The Jewish Publication Society of America and Bagster's*) The translation by

8. In modern Greece, what are the members of the president's cabinet called, and for whom is the word "deacon" reserved there?

"The spirit of the Sovereign Lord Jehovah is upon me, . . . to proclaim the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah and the day of vengeance on the part of our God."—Isa. 61:1, 2.

Charles Thomson calls Joshua "the lieutenant of Moses." Similarly, in the Republic of Greece, the president (*pro'e-dros*) has his lieutenants, attendants, assistants or *underworkers* (*hypour-gos'*), and he leaves the service of *di'a'ko-nos*, or "deacons," to the religious organizations of the land.

⁹ Granted that today some lands use and apply the term "minister" in only a political sense. However, this does not mean that, from the standpoint of the Bible in its original languages, a person who dedicates himself wholly to God and devotes himself to doing the will of Jehovah God is not to be called a "minister," or *di'a'ko-nos*, of Jehovah God, in imitation of Jesus Christ. Nearly a century ago, in its monthly issue of June 1882 (page 7), the magazine *Zion's Watch Tower and Herald of Christ's Presence* said concerning religious ministers:

The disciples were sent to preach and teach and baptize. And while we believe that every consecrated member of the body of Christ is a minister in some sense, and all are "anointed to preach the glad tidings," yet there are various members adapted to different parts of the work, just as there are different members and offices in the human body, which Scripturally is used to illustrate the body of Christ—the church.

¹⁰ In its later issue of January 1, 1892 (page 9), the *Watch Tower* magazine said, under the heading "Views from the Tower," the following:

Few know these colporteurs as the Lord's real representatives, or recognize

9. Despite the political usage of the term, are there Scripturally "ministers" of God, and what did the *Watch Tower* magazine say about this in 1882?

10. What did the magazine issue of January 1, 1892, say about full-time publishers known as colporteurs in the light of what the nominal church of Christendom claims to be God's ministers?

that dignity which the Lord sees in their humility and self-sacrifice. Missionaries? No, say the world and the nominal church, ours are the missionaries, who go to foreign lands. Yes, says the Lord, these are my missionaries, charged with a grand mission— . . .

Ministers? No, say the world and the nominal church, only ours who wear "clerical" garments and preach from our pulpits are God's ministers. Yes, says the Lord, my servants (ministers) they are because they serve me, dispensing present truth to my household. I have sent forth the message which they bear. He that despiseth them despiseth me, and he that receiveth the sealing in the forehead which I send by them will know the doctrine, that it is of me. "My sheep know my voice."

(See also the issue of February 1, 1899, paragraphs 6 and 7, under the heading "Is Present Truth Unreasonable?")

¹¹ However, has the *Watchtower* magazine been self-assuming or presumptuous in saying that every consecrated or dedicated, baptized disciple of Jesus Christ is a "minister"? Not at all! The English words "minister" and "ministry," as well as the corresponding words in Italian, Spanish, Portuguese and French, are drawn from the ancient Latin words *minister* and *ministerium*, words found in the Latin Vulgate Version of the Bible. *Minister* is defined as follows: "An attendant, waiter, servant, also a priest's attendant, or assistant; likewise an inferior officer, under-officer." *Ministerium* is defined as "the office or functions of a minister, attendance, service, ministry, in a good or bad sense; an office, occupation, work, task, employment, administration, etc."—*A New Latin Dictionary*, by Lewis and Short, page 1146.

11. From what language are the words "minister" and "ministry" drawn, and what are they defined as meaning?

"Strangers will actually stand and shepherd the flocks, . . . and as for you the priests of Jehovah . . . the ministers of our God you will be said to be."—Isa. 61:5, 6.

¹² So the words "minister" and "ministry" should have a broad meaning. Here we must remember that, from the beginning, the *Watch Tower* magazine and associated publications have used as their fundamental Bible translation the *Authorized Version*, or *King James Version*, of 1611 C.E. To this day this recognized version is used throughout Great Britain and the Commonwealth of Nations as well as in the United States of America. So in quotations from that commonly used Bible translation, the key words "minister" and "ministry" are used in the sense given to them in the Christian Greek Scriptures (The New Testament), and not in the modern political sense. We are not discussing politics.

LATEST PREFERRED TRANSLATIONS OF THE WORDS

¹³ There are many modern English translations of the Christian Greek Scriptures (The New Testament). How do the majority of these modern English translations prefer to render the controversial Greek word *di-a-ko-ni'a* for their readers? By the word "ministry," with all the dignity that the Holy Bible imparts to it. Rightly, the dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah are within the Bible meaning of things to apply to their assigned Christian activity the fitting word "ministry." What, now, are these "ministers" going to do with their "ministry"? Are they going to live up to it and its obligations, or renounce it because of objections or opposing pres-

ures? From revealed Bible prophecy we know what the alienated political authorities will do to the ministers, bishops, deacons, priests and patriarchs of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. We should not blind our eyes to what is coming.

¹⁴ As indicated in the sign language of Revelation, the secular political powers will stop having unions of Church and State. They will break off having intimate relations with the international religious prostitute. They will unseat her from their back, strip her of her claims to royalty with its scarlet and purple, rob her of her gold, pearls and precious stones with which she has gaudily exhibited herself. From her hand they will snatch away the "golden cup" that is filled with all the unclean and disgusting things, the goblet from which she has made all the peoples drink to their becoming befuddled as if they were intoxicated. Her ornate religious buildings they will convert into places for common, secular uses, or will even burn them down after they have despoiled them of their ill-gotten wealth. Woe for the day of reckoning upon Babylon the Great during "the great tribulation"!—Rev. 17:1-18; 7:14.

¹⁵ What will that future course of the political powers of the world mean for the Christian witnesses of Jehovah? This: their ministry in behalf of the interests of God's kingdom will be rejected. No longer will they be preaching "the year of goodwill on the part of Jehovah." Even after the despoiling of Babylon the Great, they must unflinchingly carry on the proclaiming of the "day of vengeance on the part

12. How widely is the Bible version first quoted from by this magazine and other Watch Tower publications used even today, and is politics being discussed in the matter of the ministry?

13. How do most Bible translators like to render the controversial word *di-a-ko-ni'a* into English, and what are God's dedicated people going to do about the obligations resulting therefrom?

14. What does the sign language of Revelation, chapter 17, indicate will be done to Babylon the Great during "the great tribulation"?

15. What will the Christian witnesses of Jehovah then be obliged to do?

of our God.”—Isa. 61:1, 2; 59:17, 18.

¹⁶ Till then, what are Jehovah's Witnesses going to do with their “ministry”? Keeping close in mind what is coming according to Bible prophecy, they will wisely determine to do what that fine example, the apostle Paul, did. In Romans 11:13, as an international legate from Jehovah God, the apostle Paul described what he did about it, according to various modern translations of his words: “For I speak to you, the nations, since I am an apostle of the nations; I glorify my ministry.” (*The International Hebrew/Greek English Bible; British Revised Version; The New World Translation; The New American Bible; Rotherham*) “I honor my ministry.” (*Murdock; The Emphatic Diaglott; Roman Catholic Douay Version; The New English Bible*) “I make much of my ministry.” (*The New International Version*) “I make as much as I can of my ministry.” (*Phillips' Modern English*) “I make the most of my ministry.” (*An American Translation*) “I take pride in my ministry.” (*Weymouth*) “I magnify my ministry.” (*Revised Standard Version*) “I make much of my office.” (*The Bible in Living English*) “I lay great stress on my office.” (*Moffatt*) “I magnify mine office.” (*Authorized Version*) Luther's German Bible translation reads: “I will prize my office [*Amt*, German].” William Tyndale rendered it: “I will magnify myn office.”

¹⁷ From the above translations we note that Paul's *di-akoni'a* is not lowered to the level of a mere “service.” Paul uses in connection with his “ministry” the Greek word *doxa'zo*, the root word of which is the Greek term *do'xa*, meaning “glory.” Certainly there was nothing about Paul's *di-akoni'a* of which to be ashamed.

16. How will Jehovah's Witnesses imitate the apostle Paul in what he says in Romans 11:13 according to many translations?

17. Although it was a work in behalf of pagan Gentiles, did Paul as a Jew say he lowered it to the level of a mere average service?

As *Today's English Version* renders Romans 11:13: “I am speaking now to you Gentiles: As long as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I will take pride in my work.” *The Jerusalem Bible* reads: “Let me tell you pagans this: I have been sent to the pagans as their apostle, and I am proud of being sent.”*

¹⁸ Of course, one's Christian “ministry” is nothing over which to get a swelled head. Rather, we should feel most humble, because God has so favored his dedicated, baptized worshipers by taking them into such a ministry under the now reigning King, Jesus Christ. Christendom's clergymen who have graduated from her theological seminaries are called Reverend, Most Reverend, Most Right Reverend, Your Reverence, and by other high-sounding titles, and may therefore belittle the dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah. On the other hand, four of Jesus' apostles were fishermen, one was a tax collector, and the seven others are not cited as having attended any of the Rabbinical schools of the first century. Yet

* As far back as 383 C.E., the year when Eusebius Jerome began his Latin Vulgate Version of the Holy Scriptures from the original languages, he popularized ministerial terms among Latin-speaking and -reading Christians by using the Latin noun *minister* from Matthew 20:26 onward; the Latin noun *ministerium* (“ministry”) from Luke 10:40 forward; and the Latin verb *ministrare* (“to minister”) from Matthew 4:11 forward.

Latin used to be the international diplomatic language of the Western world. In 1378, the year of the “Great Schism of the West” involving the papacy, John Wycliffe published his translation of the New Testament (the Christian Greek Scriptures). “Wycliffe translated directly from the Latin Vulgate, not deeming himself competent to use the Hebrew and Greek originals as a basis. His version is quite literal and plain, but stiff and Latinized; yet less so than many of Wycliffe's other writings.” (M'Clintock and Strong's *Cyclopædia*, Volume X, page 1043, column 1, under “Wycliffe”) So back in the 14th century Wycliffe was using the word “minister.” No doubt William Tyndale “largely used it in his translation from the original tongues.” At Romans 13:4 Wycliffe's translation reads: “He is the mynystre of God.” At Romans 11:13: “I schal onoure my mynysterie.”—Oxford—At the Clarendon Press.

18. In the light of what the 12 apostles of Jesus Christ were naturally, why should Jehovah's Witnesses not be belittled by the clergy with high-sounding titles who graduated from seminaries?

they are given a glorious citation in the last book of the Bible, where it is stated that their names are inscribed on the 12 foundation stones of the New Jerusalem.—Rev. 21:14.

¹⁹ As for being ministers of government, well, those dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah are ministers of the greatest government in all existence. No, they are nothing like Cabinet officers of some man-made government such as an empire, kingdom or democracy, but they are ministers of the Sovereign of the Universe, the Creator of heaven and earth. In fulfillment of Matthew 24:14, they are the appointed heralds of the Messianic kingdom of the presently reigning King, Jesus Christ. Their ministry will not end with the catastrophic end of the old system of things,

19. Are the dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah ministers of any government, and how enduring will their ministry be?

during the “great tribulation” just ahead.

²⁰ The apostle Paul could hardly have had in mind the common, ordinary services performed by worldly men in general, when he wrote to his fellow Christian named Archippus: “Keep watching the ministry which you accepted in the Lord, that you fulfill it.” (Col. 4:17) During his final imprisonment Paul wrote to Timothy, his fellow missionary: “Do the work [*er'gon*, Greek] of an evangelizer, fully accomplish your ministry.” (2 Tim. 4:5) These inspired instructions to faithful ministers of the primitive Christian congregation are excellent admonitions for all dedicated, baptized witnesses of Jehovah today to apply to themselves in this “time of the end” of the doomed old system of things, to God’s eternal glory.—Dan. 12:4.

20. In his admonitions at Colossians 4:17 and 2 Timothy 4:5 was Paul referring to the common, ordinary service performed by men in general?

WORKER-MINISTERS

IN HIS translation of 1526 C.E., from the original Greek into the vernacular English of his day, William Tyndale wrote concerning the “higher powers” or “superior authorities” of this world: “For he is the minister of god, for thy welth. Butt and yff thou do evyll, then feare. for he beareth not a swearde for nought. for he is the minister off god, to take vengeance on them that do evyll. Wherefore ye must nedes obey, nott for feare off vengeance only : but also be cause of conscience. Even for this cause paye ye tribute. For they are goddes ministers, servynge for the same purpose.”—Rom. 13:1-6, *Dabney*.

1. In Tyndale’s translation of Romans 13:1-6, what are officers of political governments called with reference to the God of Christians?

² There is no reason to believe that the entitling of certain officers of State in various political governments as “prime minister” or “minister” of this or that is based upon the above words of the apostle Paul. Even then, there is a vast difference between the secular ministry of such politicians called ‘God’s ministers’ and the religious “ministry” of the apostle Paul and that of his fellow Christians who are no part of this world. Their areas of operation are different from one another. The use of the term “minister” in a governmental sense by worldly politicians does

2. (a) Is the fact that officers of worldly governments are called “ministers” based on Tyndale’s translation of 1526? (b) Does their use of that term deny to Paul and fellow Christians who are no part of this world the right to call themselves ministers?

not debar Paul and his fellow Christians from being called "ministers" in a religious sense according to the languages that are involved.

³ When, in Ephesians 6:21, the apostle Paul calls Tychicus "a beloved brother and faithful minister in the Lord," he was not classifying Tychicus with the clergymen of Christendom. (Also, Colossians 1:7; 4:7.) Paul also called Timothy "our brother and God's minister in the good news about the Christ." (1 Thess. 3:2) Certainly Jehovah's dedicated, baptized witnesses of today who preach "this good news of the kingdom" from house to house are "God's minister[s] in the good news about the Christ."—Matt. 24:14; Mark 13:10.

⁴ What, though, about the congregation of baptized Christians as a whole? To the congregation in Thyatira, Asia Minor, the glorified Son of God, Jesus Christ, said: "I know your deeds, and your love and faith and ministry." (Rev. 2:18, 19) To the congregation in Corinth, Achaia, Greece, Paul wrote: "There are varieties of ministries, and yet there is the same Lord." (1 Cor. 12:5) In harmony with that fact, from the Pentecost of 33 C.E. forward the glorified Jesus Christ bestowed upon his congregation on earth gifts in the form of men, such as apostles, prophets, evangelizers, shepherds, teachers. For what purpose? "With a view to the readjustment of the holy ones, for ministerial work [*literally*, work of ministry], for the building up of the body of the Christ." (Eph. 4:7-12) Finally, to all the members of the Hebrew Christian congregation in Jerusalem, the apostle Paul wrote: "God is not unrighteous so as to forget your work and the love you showed for his name, in that you have ministered to the

holy ones and continue ministering." (Heb. 6:10) In this way all were performing a ministry approved by Jehovah God.

AS REGARDS SECULAR WORK

⁵ One's being Scripturally a minister as a part of the dedicated, baptized congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses does not mean living a life in luxury and at ease. The living arrangements for the professional ministers of the religious systems of Christendom may lead many to think so. But according to the inspired Bible this should not be so. Yet, those who are "ministers" according to the Bible meaning of the word may be workers at secular employment for part of the time. Why, even Jesus Christ was a carpenter at Nazareth until 30 years of age! Then he devoted his full time to the ministry for which he had been anointed with God's spirit. Whether he spoke the Latin language and used its term "minister," we do not know. But when the Hebrew-Greek Scriptures were translated into the Latin of the Roman Empire, then the word *minister* appeared in that translation.

⁶ Since the word *minister* is derived from the Latin adjective *minus*, meaning "less," to be a minister means, basically, for one to "be or act like something less" (*quod minus est*, Latin). The corresponding Greek word *di-a'konos* has a like lowly derivation. It is understood to be drawn from *di-a'* (meaning "through") and *konis* (meaning "dust"). To a Greek the word would present the idea of someone going through the dust in order to make himself available or to render some service. However, despite the lowly roots of the Greek word the apostle Paul used it when saying: "I glorify my ministry." (Rom. 11:13) He

3. Are Jehovah's Witnesses of today, who go preaching from house to house like Tychicus and Timothy, each "God's minister in the good news about the Christ"?

4. What do the Scriptures indicate as to whether the Christian congregation as a whole, as well as individual members of it, has a ministry?

5. (a) Contrary to the style of professional ministers of Christendom, may ministers according to the Scriptural rule be part-time secular workers? (b) When did the term "minister" appear in Bible translations?

6. (a) According to the roots of the corresponding word in the Latin or the Greek, "minister" has what kind of sense? (b) How, then, could it be "glorified" by Paul?

proved this by sticking to it to the finish.

⁷ It was not for self-glory that Paul zealously carried on his ministry. It was without cost or without charge to the ones to whom he preached the "good news." But by this he was not cheapening his ministry. Receivers of the "good news" still had to 'count the cost' for doing something beneficial to themselves without paying for the "good news." Paul felt most highly honored at being entrusted with such glorious "good news," a ministry without equal when compared with all the high-paying occupations of this world. Today Jehovah's Witnesses imitate the example of the apostle Paul. How? By not engaging in the ministry of God's Kingdom message for personal gain in a material or worldly way. They view it as wrong to handle the Kingdom message like something of a commercial kind, as merely a means of making a comfortable living. Any secular work that they may be obliged to do takes a secondary place with them as a sideline. The Kingdom ministry is something worth making sacrifices for!

⁸ When the apostle Paul finally arrived in Rome and made contact with the congregation, he continued to do what he had said in his letter written years earlier to them: he 'glorified his ministry.' How did he do this in spite of being a prisoner with a chain? Doctor Luke, his faithful companion, tells us: "When, finally, we entered into Rome, Paul was permitted to stay by himself with the soldier guarding him. However, three days later he called together those who were the principal men of the Jews. When they had assembled, [Paul talked to them]. . . . So he remained for an entire two years in his own hired house, and he would kindly receive all

those who came in to him, preaching the kingdom of God to them and teaching the things concerning the Lord Jesus Christ with the greatest freeness of speech, without hindrance."—Acts 28:16-31; Eph. 6:20.

⁹ What was the result of this activity of Paul held unjustly as a prisoner? He tells us: "Now I desire you to know, brothers, that my affairs have turned out for the advancement of the good news rather than otherwise, so that my bonds have become public knowledge in association with Christ among all the Prætorian Guard and all the rest; and most of the brothers in the Lord, feeling confidence by reason of my prison bonds, are showing all the more courage to speak the word of God fearlessly." "All the holy ones, but especially those of the household of Caesar, send you their greetings."—Phil. 1:12-14; 4:22.

NOW THE TIME TO DIGNIFY THE MINISTRY

¹⁰ Jehovah's Witnesses have responded to the divine call to come out of Babylon the Great, the world empire of false religion. During World War I of 1914-1918, Babylon the Great collaborated with the warring political powers in putting restrictions upon the dedicated, baptized people of Jehovah God. This went as far as the imprisoning of leading members of the headquarters staff of their organization. But in the postwar year of 1919 there came relief and release. Then they saw the need for reorganizing themselves for the foretold work of preaching "this good news of the kingdom" worldwide.—Matt. 24:14.

¹¹ A reorganization of the remnant followed for preaching "this good news of the kingdom" earth wide as never before.

9. To what extent did Paul's imprisonment and the reason for it become public knowledge in Rome, and how did the Christians in that city feel about it?

10. When did the remnant of Jehovah's faithful dedicated baptized people respond to the call to get out of the world empire of false religion?

11. (a) When met in convention in 1919, members of the remnant exposed Babylon the Great in what way? (b) What awaited time period did they hail, and in line with that what magazine began to be published?

7. (a) Is the ministry of the Kingdom message cheapened by ministers' not charging for it? (b) How is any necessary secular work viewed by Kingdom ministers?

8. In what way did Paul, after finally reaching Rome, continue to 'glorify his ministry' there?

With that in view they held a general convention in September of the year 1919, at Cedar Point, Ohio, U.S.A. There they publicly exposed Babylon the Great as the backer of the then proposed League of Nations, which the clergy of the Protestant Church called "the political expression of the kingdom of God on earth." The conventioners hailed the "golden age" that is to be ushered in by God's heavenly kingdom under Christ. As announced at the convention, in October of 1919 a new magazine began to be published as a complement to the *Watch Tower* magazine and it was entitled "The Golden Age." Later, due to the increasing need of comfort on the part of the whole human family, the name of the magazine was changed to "Consolation." After World War II the name was changed to "Awake!"

¹² All of this gave a new ministerial appearance to those preachers of God's established kingdom. In 1931 they shook off all the reproachful names with which Babylon the Great continued to dub them, for then they adopted the name based on Bible prophecy, that is, Jehovah's Witnesses. (Isa. 43:10-12) This gave them a new identification before Babylon the Great and her political patronizers. This stripping off of religious clothing that had been stained and soiled by contact with Babylon the Great was pleasing to their God, Jehovah. They took on a new image in his sight. Figuratively, it was as if the anointed remnant were putting on the "robes of state" that befitted their priestly ministry. (Zech. 3:4, 5) This dignified, honored, glorified their ministry toward God.

¹³ Was there visible evidence of the res-

12. (a) Further improving their ministerial appearance, the remnant took on themselves what new identification? (b) What was all of this doing to their Kingdom ministry?

13. (a) What further proof was given from 1935 onward that the remnant had been restored to God's favor? (b) Those of the "great multitude" joined the remnant in doing what about the ministry?

toration of the anointed remnant to divine favor after World War I? Yes, for what proved to be "a great crowd" of sincere seekers of the one living and true God began associating with the comparatively small remnant of the "royal priesthood." (1 Pet. 2:9) This has definitely been the case since the spring of the year 1935. Then a general convention was held in Washington, D.C. There, on May 31, the president of the Watch Tower Society gave the feature talk on the subject of "The Great Multitude." This was based on Revelation 7:9-15, *Authorized Version*. Next day 840 symbolized their dedication to Jehovah God by water baptism. The majority of these baptismal candidates entertained the hope of the "great multitude" for an earthly paradise under Christ's kingdom. This they well knew meant their joining the anointed remnant in their house-to-house activity as ministers of Jehovah God. They, too, began to 'glorify their ministry.'

¹⁴ Till now hundreds of thousands of sheeplike persons have flocked to the side of the anointed remnant and have joined them in the Kingdom ministry. Not all of these have been able to devote their full time to that ministry in the capacity of full-time publishers, traveling representatives of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society of Pennsylvania, or as staff members of branch offices of the Society. Earthly obligations require most of them to do secular work for most of their time or a good part of it. Yet their dedication to God, as symbolized by water baptism, calls for them to be ministers of him in serving the interests of his kingdom.

¹⁵ They find themselves in a situation like that of the apostle Paul. For a year

14. Though not in most cases able to devote their full time to the Kingdom preaching, those of the "great multitude" are under what obligation because of their dedication and symbolic baptism?

15. How do these find themselves in a situation like that of the apostle Paul at Corinth?

and a half he worked in Corinth as a tent-maker with Aquila, a Jewish believer. (Acts 18:1-11) Some today might classify Paul as being then "a regular minister."

¹⁶ We also recall what Paul said while on his way to Jerusalem when he stopped at the seaport of Miletus in Asia Minor. From there he sent and called for the elders or overseers of the congregation in Ephesus. Among other things, he said to them: "Therefore keep awake, and bear in mind that for three years, night and day, I did not quit admonishing each one with tears. . . . I have coveted no man's silver or gold or apparel. You yourselves know that these hands have attended to the needs of me and of those with me. I have exhibited to you in all things that by thus laboring you must assist those who are weak, and must bear in mind the words of the Lord Jesus, when he himself said, 'There is more happiness in giving than there is in receiving.'"—Acts 20:31-35.

¹⁷ By working temporarily in secular employment, at a paying job, Paul was not downgrading his Kingdom ministry. He arranged to make his preaching and teaching without cost to his hearers and pupils. In that way he was really keeping his educational work clear of the charge of being a money-making racket. (1 Cor. 9:13-18) In this case he was really doing what he said: "I glorify my ministry." (Rom. 11:13) His being a worker-minister for self-support proved that he had a pure unselfish motive in his Kingdom ministry. Most of his dedicated Christian associates were worker-ministers, some of them even being slaves to non-Christian masters. (Acts 18:1-4; Rom. 16:3-5) Necessary

secular work does not degrade the Kingdom ministry, for we must bear in mind that the Levites under the Mosaic Law covenant of Israel served at the temple in Jerusalem just one week each half year, besides at the annual festivals in Jerusalem. The rest of the time they lived in their Levite cities throughout the land and worked there for the upkeep of their families. Thus they too were worker-ministers.

¹⁸ Because many of Jehovah's dedicated, baptized witnesses find it necessary or obligatory to do secular work most of their time, it does not mean or argue that they are not real ministers of God, entitled to all the considerations given by governments to religious ministers of Babylon the Great. Although being worker-ministers, they put the interests of God's kingdom ahead of everything else. Because of preaching God's kingdom even from house to house, they are indeed Kingdom ministers, not ranking lower than the political ministers in the governments of this world. By the praiseworthy quality of the work that they render to their secular employers these worker-ministers indirectly 'glorify their ministry.' This brings credit to God to whom we render sacred service.

¹⁹ It goes without saying that, if circumstances change to allow worker-ministers to engage in the Kingdom ministry full time, they will appreciatively take up the ministry of God's Word to the full extent of their ability. At all events, whether we are able to devote our full time or only part of it directly in the interests of God's now established kingdom by Christ, let us incessantly 'glorify our ministry.'

16. When Paul stopped at Miletus on his way to Jerusalem, what did he say about secular work on his part?

17. (a) Was Paul downgrading his ministry by working at times at secular employment, or what was the idea of it? (b) What is there to say about whether other dedicated Christians of the day were worker-ministers, as illustrated by what temple attendants?

18. (a) Are such worker-ministers among Jehovah's Witnesses entitled to the consideration granted to ministers of Babylon the Great? (b) How do worker-ministers 'glorify their ministry' while engaged in secular employment?

19. (a) If circumstances change to make it possible for him, what will the worker-minister do to the extent of his ability? (b) Regardless of the amount of time spent directly in behalf of the Kingdom, what will each dedicated baptized witness of Jehovah do?

QUESTIONS from READERS

● According to Hebrews 12:22, 23 (*Authorized Version*) the apostle Paul speaks of "the spirits of just men made perfect." Could these "men" be those faithful ones about whom Paul wrote at Hebrews chapter 11?

The suggestion that these words may apply to men of faith and faithfulness in pre-Christian times down to John the Baptizer is not new. Already the *Watchtower* issue of August 15, 1913, pages 248 and 249, cautiously made this suggestion, and that view continued to be held for many years. In this verse the word "men" does not occur in the original Greek text. That is why the *New World Translation* reads, "and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect."—See *Jerusalem Bible*, *Emphatic Diaglott*, *Rotherham*, *Westminster Version*, *Kingdom Interlinear Translation*.

Hebrews 11:8-10 referred to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and showed that Abraham left the city of Ur of Chaldea and that he and Isaac and Jacob lived as nomads until Jacob transferred down to the land of Egypt in the days of his son Joseph. So during that period of time they did not live in a settled, established place like a city. Nothing in the Hebrew Scriptures says that God promised these three men a "city having real foundations, the builder and maker of which city is God." That is Paul's comment on the matter. Doubtless that expression refers to the established government of God by the 'seed of Abraham,' under which government those three patriarchs will live on earth and gain human perfection by the end of the thousand years.—Gal. 3:16.

When God brought the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob out of the land of Egypt and into the land that he had promised to Abraham, they settled in the cities of the Canaanites, Jericho being the only one that was destroyed by God's power. Thereafter all the faithful prophets and faithful women of ancient times had a fixed residence in cities. Consequently, it could not be said of them as it was said of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, that they were seeking a future city on earth. Jerusalem was destroyed in the year 70 C.E., 39

years after the beheading of John the Baptizer. So even Jewish Christians lived in that visible, earthly city until after the withdrawal of General Gallus from Jerusalem, when Christians obeyed Jesus' prophetic command to get out of her.—Matt. 24:15-22.

Hebrews 13:12-14 refers to Jesus' being impaled outside the walls of earthly Jerusalem, or "outside the gate." In the face of that circumstance Paul goes on to say, "Let us, then, go forth to him outside the camp [like the scapegoat or "the goat . . . for Azazel" that was sent into the wilderness on the day of atonement, (Lev. 16:10)], bearing the reproach he bore, for we do not have here a city that continues, but we are earnestly seeking the one to come." This "city" refers to the heavenly kingdom, the New Jerusalem, which Paul mentions in Hebrews 12:22.

The faithful men of old, particularly from Abraham down to John the Baptizer, were not seeking to go to heaven and enter into that heavenly Jerusalem. They had no concept of such a thing. (Matt. 11:11) They could not entertain such a hope because they had not been begotten by God's holy spirit. John 7:39 proves this, saying: "However, he said this concerning the spirit which those who put faith in him were about to receive; for as yet there was no spirit, because Jesus had not yet been glorified." Spirit begetting of Christian men and women did not begin until Pentecost of 33 C.E. Those begotten of holy spirit from then on looked forward to life in the heavenly city prefigured by earthly Jerusalem.

That is why Paul in writing to Hebrew Christians could correctly say to them in Hebrews 12:22, "But you have approached a Mount Zion [not Mount Sinai in Arabia] and a city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem, and myriads of angels." In Paul's time "the congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens" was not quite 30 years old, so it was near its beginning, and numbered far less than 144,000. The completing of the number 144,000 "firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens" is accomplished by the end of the so-called Christian Era, which ends with the "great tribulation" of Revelation 7:14 and Matthew 24:21, 22. Thus Paul and the Hebrew Christians to whom he wrote were only approaching that "congregation" as respects its full membership of 144,000.

Next, Hebrews 12:23, 24 says "and God the Judge of all, and the spiritual lives [footnote, spirits] of righteous ones who have been made

perfect, and Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks in a better way than Abel's blood." So God is the judge of all, including the 144,000 enrolled ones. The prospective members of the glorified "congregation" must therefore pass through a judgment period before they are approved by Jehovah the Supreme Judge. This is why, right after mentioning him, the verse goes on to say, "and the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect." It is the members of the spirit-begotten Christian "congregation" who have been justified by faith. (Rom. 5:1; 8:14) For this reason they are referred to as "righteous ones who have been made perfect."

Accordingly they are exhorted to "present [their] bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason." (Rom. 12:1) Thus they "go forth to him outside the camp, bearing the reproach he bore." (Heb. 13:13) These spirit-begotten Christians really have "spiritual lives" now on earth and they are exhorted to walk according to the spirit by which they were begotten.

The apostle Paul refers to the "spiritual lives" of these justified Christians in the same chapter at Hebrews 12:9: "Shall we not much more subject ourselves to the Father of our spiritual life and live?" Literally, the Greek text reads, "the Father of the spirits." He is the father of the spirit-begotten congregation to which Paul was writing and so the *New World Translation* here paraphrases the expression with a personal touch, saying "the Father of *our* spiritual life." This expression is 14 verses in advance of Hebrews 12:23 and so is in the immediate context.

In Hebrews 12:1 the apostle Paul turns attention away from considering the faithful men and women of pre-Christian times to the spirit-begotten Christian congregation and the course of divine service that lay ahead of these spirit-begotten Christians. So in Hebrews 12:23, he is not reverting to what he had been discussing in chapter 11. In view of these facts the expression "the spiritual lives of righteous ones who have been made perfect" presents the "congregation of the firstborn who have been enrolled in the heavens" from a different viewpoint and therefore is no needless repetition of what has been said in verse 22. There is accordingly no need for trying to apply it to another class of God-fearing persons like the

faithful men and women of former times from Abel to John the Baptizer.

Further limiting all of Hebrews 12:22, 23 to apply to the spirit-begotten Christian congregation, Paul goes on to say, "and Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and the blood of sprinkling, which speaks in a better way than Abel's blood." (Heb. 12:24) The spirit-begotten congregation is in that new covenant and consequently Jesus is their mediator. They are the ones upon whom the "blood" of Jesus Christ has been sprinkled in a spiritual way so that it produces better effects with them than the blood of martyred Abel would do. (Heb. 11:4) That is to say, they are really justified or declared righteous now by their faith in that blood.—Rom. 5:9.

In line with all of this, Paul goes on to address himself to the spirit-begotten congregation in Hebrews 12:25-28, exhorting them to prove worthy of their heavenly kingdom, which is the "city of the living God, heavenly Jerusalem," to which they have approached. The remnant of the spirit-begotten congregation of 144,000 members is now much closer to the things enumerated by Paul in verses 22 and 23 than those Hebrew Christians of the first century were. And a great crowd of "other sheep" are rejoicing with them that this is the case. Really today this "great crowd" is walking by faith just the same as the faithful men and women of pre-Christian times did.

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