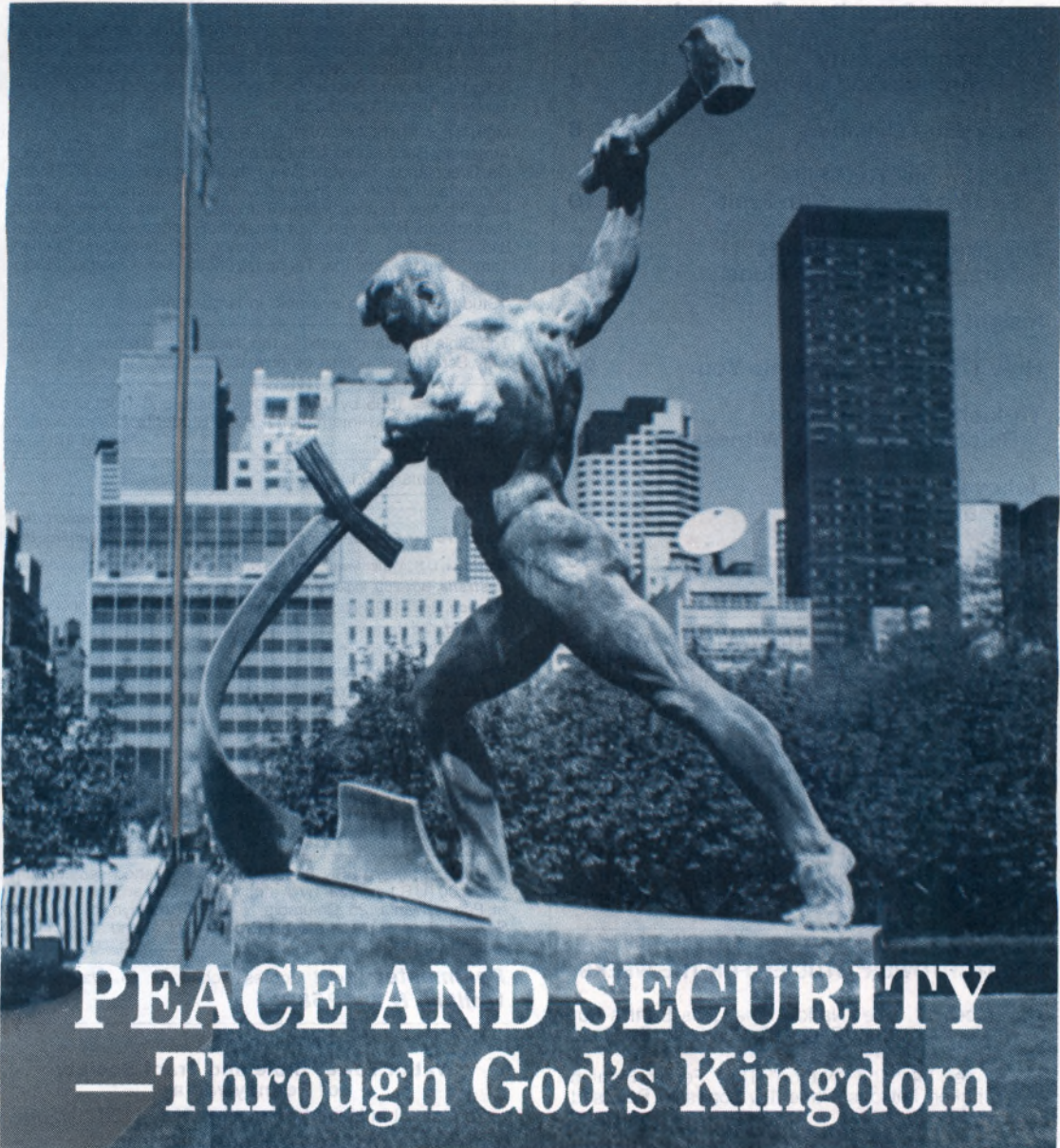


October 15, 1985

The Watchtower

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom



**PEACE AND SECURITY
—Through God's Kingdom**

The Watchtower[®]

Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

October 15, 1985
Vol. 106, No. 20

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THE PURPOSE OF "THE WATCHTOWER" is to exalt Jehovah God as the Sovereign of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as they fulfill Bible prophecy. It comforts all peoples with the good news that God's Kingdom will soon destroy those who oppress their fellowmen and that it will turn the earth into a paradise. It encourages faith in the now-reigning King, Jesus Christ, whose shed blood opens the way for mankind to gain eternal life. "The Watchtower," published by Jehovah's Witnesses continuously since 1879, is nonpolitical. It adheres to the Bible as its authority.

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November 17: The "Nation" That Fills Earth's Surface With Fruit. Page 10. Songs to Be Used: 49, 57.

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Peace and Security

—The Need

"War in the twentieth century has grown steadily more barbarous, more destructive, more debased in all its aspects. . . . The bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki ended a war. They also made it wholly clear that we must never have another war. This is the lesson man and leaders everywhere must learn, and I believe that when they learn it they will find a way to lasting peace. There is no other choice."—Henry L. Stimson, "The Decision to Use the Atomic Bomb," *Harper's Magazine*, February 1947.

IT WAS just a year after the formation of the United Nations that Mr. Stimson, U.S. secretary of war from 1940-45, spoke the above words. Well, after almost 40 years, has man learned "the lesson"? Has the United Nations made it possible for you to enjoy life in "lasting peace"? Why, consider the high price mankind has paid for war and war preparation just since World War II.

THE HUMAN COST: What has been the human cost of wars since World War II, in the face of the United Nations' efforts to bring about peace? "Since the conflagration of World War II, there have been 105 major wars ([reckoned by] deaths of 1,000 or more per year) fought in 66 countries and territories. . . . The wars since 1945 have caused 16 million deaths, many more among civilians than among the armed forces involved. (The count, especially for civilians, is incomplete; no official records are kept for most wars.)" —*World Military and Social Expenditures 1983* by Ruth Sivard.

Peace and security actually are slipping farther away—the *frequency* of wars is on the rise. Explains Sivard: "In the 1950's the average [number of wars] was 9 a

year; in the 60's, 11 a year; and in the 70's . . . , 14 a year."

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL COST: Ever since Hiroshima, man has lived in fear of nuclear war. Why, the few nuclear weapons of 1945 had grown to 50,000 worldwide by 1983. And still more are being produced! Obviously, as both the number of nuclear weapons and the nations possessing them increase, so does the risk of nuclear war. What, though, are the psychological effects of living in fear of nuclear war?

The book *Preparing for Nuclear War —The Psychological Effects* answers: "The effect of living in the shadow of nuclear weapons on the aspirations and behaviour of children and adults urgently needs further investigation . . . Here is a potentially vast, ongoing cost to our societies, compounding with interest as generations grow to maturity. What price the dreams of a child?"

Indeed, youths are particularly vulnerable to the lack of a secure future. A recent survey of Australian schoolchildren from 10 to 12 years of age produced comments such as: "When I grow up I think that there's going to be a war and every-

one in Australia is going to die." "The world will be a wreck—there will be dead creatures everywhere, and the USA will get blown off the face of the earth." More than 70 percent of the children "mentioned nuclear war as a likely possibility." Social researchers fear that the lack of a secure future may be partly responsible for the let-me-live-today attitude of many youths, with the resulting search for kicks.

THE ECONOMIC COST: Before the mid-1930's, world military expenditures were about \$4.5 billion (U.S.) per year. But in 1982 the figure had risen to \$660 billion. And, as you know, it has kept on rising. To help put such costs in perspec-

tive, *World Military and Social Expenditures 1983* explains: "Every minute 30 children die for want of food and inexpensive vaccines and every minute the world's military budget absorbs \$1.3 million of the public treasure." (Italics ours.) And now, in two more years, it has reached \$2 million each minute.

When you consider the high price man has paid for war and war preparedness, one thing is certain: On his own, man has not found the "way to lasting peace." However, ask yourself: Is there a way to worldwide peace and security in our lifetime? From what source can it come? Should you look to the United Nations? If not, how will peace and security be achieved?

Peace and Security —Through God's Kingdom

"THE Purposes of the United Nations are: 1. To maintain international peace and security."—*Charter of the United Nations*.

This is a commendable ideal, to say the least. But as we have noted, the results of the last 40 years make it evident that the United Nations has not succeeded in 'maintaining international peace and security.' Nor will its declaring 1986 the "International Year of Peace" make any difference.*

There is only one way that lasting peace and security will be brought to this earth—*through God's Kingdom in the hands of*

Jesus Christ. This is the real government in heaven for which Jesus taught his followers to pray. (Matthew 6:9, 10) But why will it succeed when the United Nations has failed? Put simply: God's Kingdom will succeed for the very reasons that the United Nations has not succeeded.

More Than Human Wisdom Needed

In our previous issue, we noted that one reason why the United Nations was doomed to failure is that God did not give man the wisdom or right to govern himself. (Jeremiah 10:23) Thus, no man-made organization, however well intentioned, can succeed in bringing peace and security.

In contrast, Jesus Christ, the appointed King of God's Kingdom, has always dem-

*For a fuller discussion of why the United Nations has not succeeded, please see *The Watchtower* of October 1, 1985.

onstrated *superhuman wisdom*. (Matthew 13:54) A prime example is his famous Sermon on the Mount. (Matthew, chapters 5 to 7) In it he explained how to find true happiness, settle quarrels, avoid sexual immorality, and have a secure future. Is it not reasonable that a ruler with such wisdom and understanding of human nature would know how to bring about peace and security?

More than that, Jesus' keen discernment was enhanced by his miraculous ability to see into men's hearts and to know their real motivation and inner reasonings. (Matthew 9:4; Mark 2:8) Consider what that means: One big obstacle to peace and security today is *distrust*. Not knowing the thinking and motivation of one another, men and nations often become distrustful. That distrust stands as a barrier to peace. But for the ruler who can "read men's hearts," that poses no problem at all.—John 2:25, *Knox*.

Removing the Superhuman Foes

Another major reason why the United Nations' efforts to bring peace were doomed was the influence of "the ruler of this world," Satan the Devil. (John 12:31) He and his demonic hordes know that they have only "a short period of time" before they are to be removed. Determined to cause "woe for the earth," they have stood in the way of peace by dividing mankind politically and nationally.—Revelation 12:9-12.

Who could remove such superhuman instigators of war? The Bible answers, Jesus Christ, the one referred to as Michael, who, with his angels, ousted Satan and his demons from the heavens. Thus we read: "I saw an angel [Jesus] coming down out of heaven with the key of the abyss and a great chain in his hand. And he seized the dragon, the original serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and . . . he hurled him

Why the United Nations Has Failed:

- Human wisdom too limited (Jeremiah 10:23)
- Satan's influence dooms its efforts (Revelation 12:12)
- It is a child of this world and inherits its weaknesses (1 John 5:19)
- It is trying to save the "old earth," which is against God's purposes (1 John 2:17)

Why God's Kingdom Will Succeed:

- Its ruler has superhuman wisdom and can read men's hearts (John 2:25)
- It will remove the demonic instigators of war (Revelation 20:1-3)
- It is a "child" of God, and its ruler mirrors God's qualities (Revelation 12:5)
- It will establish a righteous "new earth" under a single heavenly government (Revelation 21:1)

into the abyss and shut it and sealed it over him." (Revelation 20:1-3) So Satan will be taken out of the way. Only then will it be possible to enjoy life in true peace and security.

A "Child" of God

Our previous issue noted a third reason why the United Nations could never bring peace and security: It is a child of this world and, as such, it inherits the weaknesses, evils, and corruption that characterize its member nations.

In refreshing contrast, the Kingdom that will bring peace and security is pictured in Revelation 12:5 as a "child" of God. Its ruler mirrors God's characteristics. Notice some of the endearing qualities manifested by its ruler, Jesus Christ: self-sacrificing love (John 15:12, 13); warmth and feeling (Matthew 9:10-13; Luke 7:36-48); humility (John 13:3-5,

12-17); compassion (Mark 6:30-34); sympathy (Hebrews 2:17, 18; 4:15); firmness for righteousness (Isaiah 11:4, 5). Would you not delight to submit yourself to such a Ruler?

In With the "New Earth"

A final reason why the United Nations could never succeed in bringing peace was indicated by the words of former Secretary-General Dag Hammarskjöld who, back in 1953, said: "Our greatest hope is that we may be permitted to save the old earth." If he had in mind preserving this worldwide system of things, then such efforts to save the "old earth" are doomed to failure. Why?

For one thing, this "old earth" is composed of man-made governments. Individual governments promote nationalism, which divides man; nationalism stresses the interests of *one* nation rather than seeking the overall welfare of all nations. This self-interest undermines any efforts of the United Nations to bring about peace. As an editorial in the British newspaper *The Guardian* noted: "Since none of the member nations is ready to sacrifice its own interests for the collective good, the prospects for reform are slim. The [United Nations General] Assembly's only real function is to serve as a kind of barometer of global opinion. Its agenda is full of issues that have been debated for years with little if any progress towards solution."

But there is a more compelling reason why the United Nations' efforts to save the "old earth" are futile: *It is against God's purposes*. How so? In God's eyes the "old earth" cannot be reformed. The time is nearing when God's stated purpose will be fulfilled. As the apostle John described it: "I saw a new heaven and a *new earth*; for the former heaven and the former earth had passed away." (Revelation 21:1)

In removing man-made governments, God's Kingdom will do away with divisive nationalism. In its place "a new earth," a righteously disposed human society, will thrive under a *single* heavenly government, God's Kingdom. Then, and only then, will mankind be able to enjoy genuine peace and security worldwide.

'Beating Swords Into Plowshares'

That this is a realistic hope is assured by the words of a Bible prophecy inscribed on a wall that is facing the United Nations. There it states: "They shall beat their swords into plowshares. And their spears into pruning hooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation. Neither shall they learn war any more."—Quoted from Isaiah 2:4.

No, the United Nations has not succeeded in preventing the nations from 'lifting up sword' against one another. Nevertheless, there is a people who give living evidence that they have 'beaten their swords into plowshares.' They have demonstrated a unity that rises above racial and national barriers. No amount of pressure can force these Christian neutrals to "lift up sword" against their fellowman. Who are they? Jehovah's Witnesses.

Typical of their response when pressured to take part in the wars of the nations is what happened to one Witness in an African country that is rife with political terrorism.

To get recruits for their guerrilla army, a terrorist group in this country kidnaps men and then gives them a choice: Serve in the terrorist army or be shot. One day they kidnapped one of Jehovah's Witnesses. The leaders, who had been drinking, gave him the choice. Putting before him two beer bottles, they pointed to one and said that it represented the government, the other their terrorist group. 'Which one are you for?' they asked him. The Witness

thought for a moment, and observing other beer bottles nearby, he picked one up and set it right between the two, stating: 'This is where I am.' He added: 'I am neutral, since I am for God's Kingdom.' After this, he was beaten several times. Then he was forced to do slave labor in the guerrilla camp, never knowing whether they would shoot him or not. After eight months, he escaped when government forces attacked the camp.

Jehovah's Witnesses have risked imprisonment, even death, rather than take part in the wars of the nations. Thus, in Nazi Germany thousands of them were put into concentration camps because they would not support the Nazi reign of terror. Hundreds of Witnesses were executed or died in the camps. Yet now, with the vicious Nazi government long since gone, Jehovah's Witnesses abound in Germany and around the globe.

But why are they able to 'beat swords into plowshares'? A clue can be found in the preamble to the UNESCO Charter, which says: "Since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defenses of peace must be constructed."

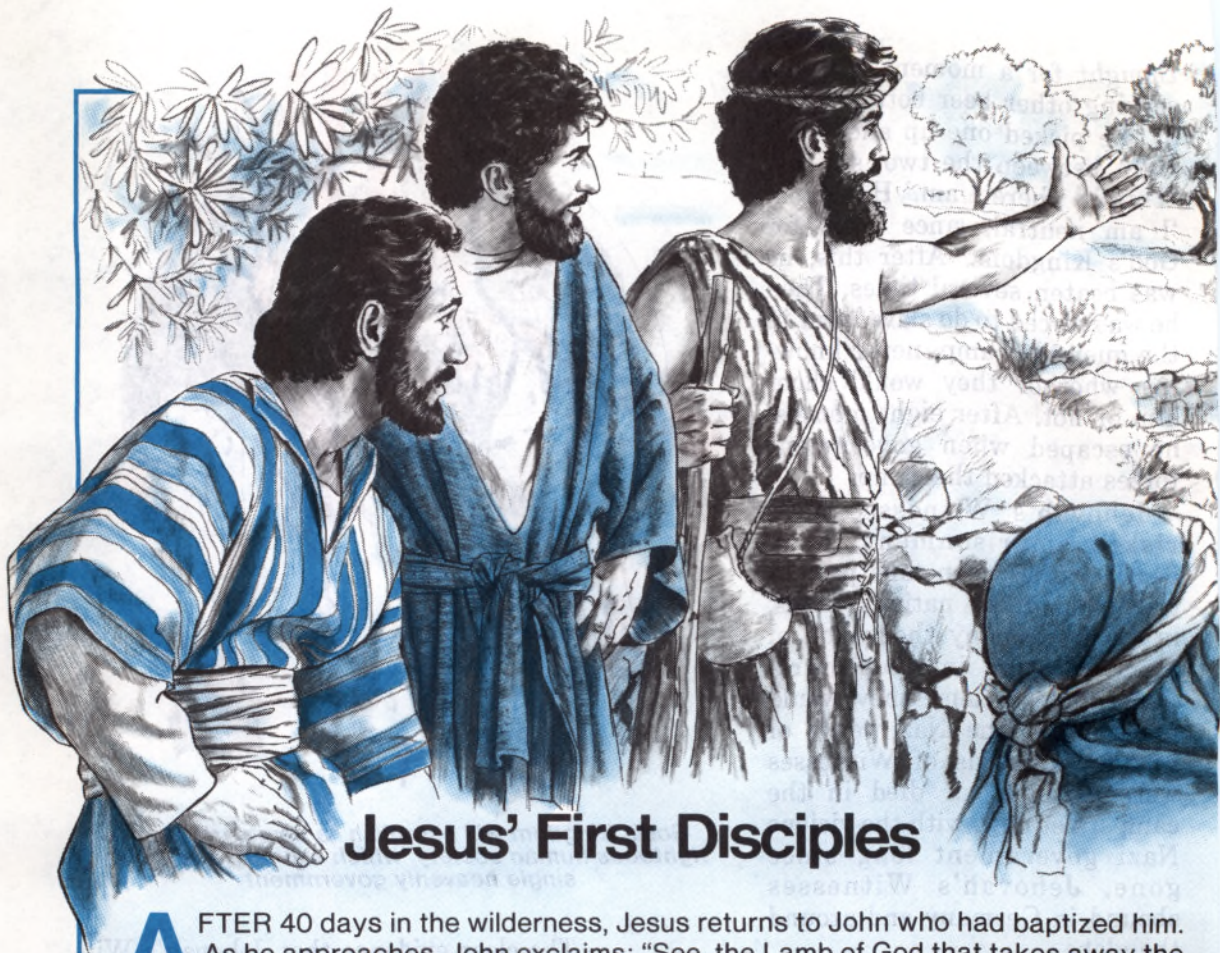
In line with that, regarding those who 'beat swords into plowshares,' Isaiah's prophecy says, "neither will they *learn war anymore*." Rather, by the study and application of the Scriptures, they 'learn God's ways and walk in his paths.' (Isaiah 2:3, 4) With the help of his holy spirit, they 'make their minds over,' becoming peaceable.—Romans 12:2, 18.



God's Kingdom will establish "a new earth," a righteous human society, which will thrive under a single heavenly government

The clear evidence that Jehovah's Witnesses have 'beaten swords into plowshares' proves that living in peace and security is possible. Their present way of life demonstrates on a *small scale* what God's Kingdom through Christ will accomplish *earth wide* in the near future.

Does such a prospect appeal to you? Jehovah's Witnesses will gladly share with you the evidence that God's Kingdom will soon bring lasting peace and security. Why not get in touch with them locally or write to the publishers of this magazine? Learn more about how you can 'beat swords into plowshares' now, with the prospect of soon enjoying life in an entire world without war.



Jesus' First Disciples

AFTER 40 days in the wilderness, Jesus returns to John who had baptized him. As he approaches, John exclaims: "See, the Lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world! This is the one about whom I said, Behind me there comes a man who has advanced in front of me, because he existed before me." Although John is older than his cousin Jesus, John knows that Jesus existed before him as a spirit person in heaven.

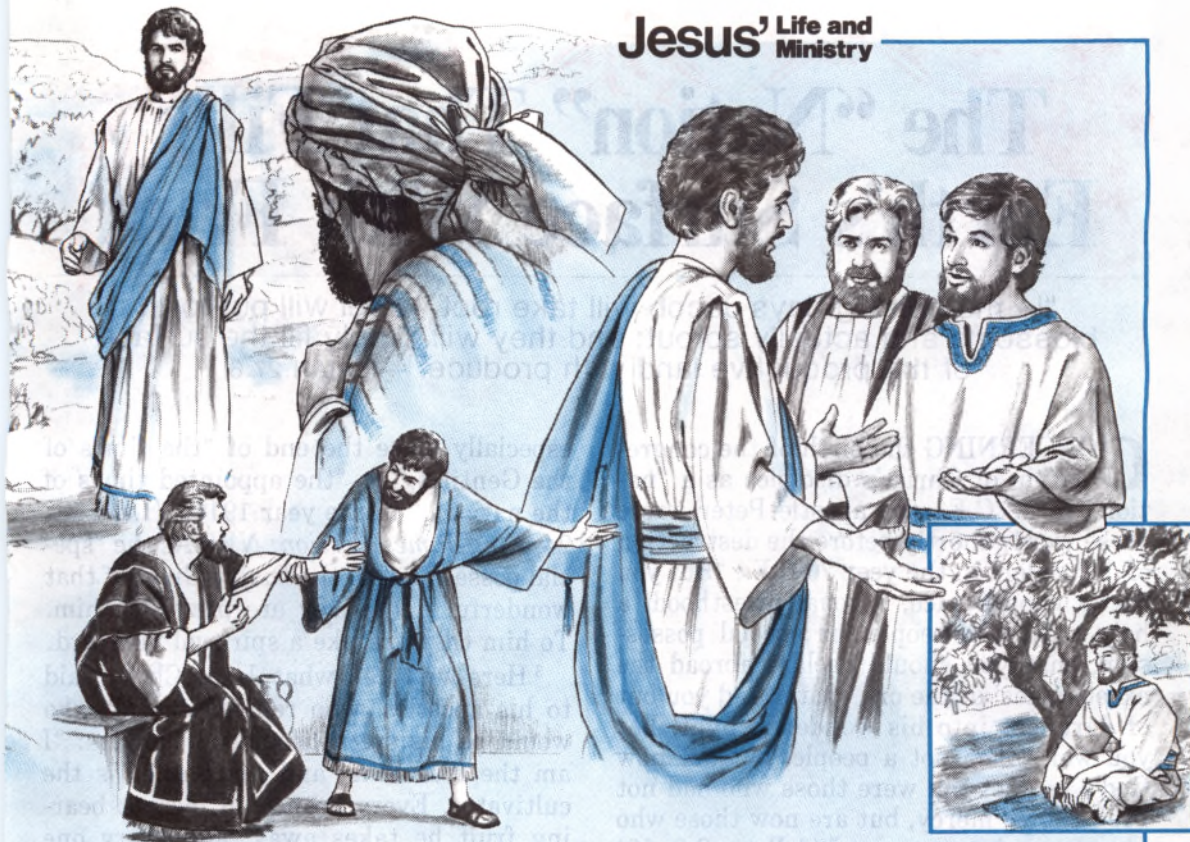
The next day John is standing with two of his disciples. Again, as Jesus approaches, he says: "See, the Lamb of God!" At this, these two disciples of John the Baptizer follow Jesus. One of them is Andrew, and the other is evidently the very person who recorded these things, who was also named John. This John, according to indications, is also a cousin of Jesus, being a son of Mary's sister Salome.

Turning and seeing Andrew and John following him, Jesus asks: "What are you looking for?"

"Teacher," they ask, "where are you staying?"

"Come, and you will see," Jesus answers.

It is about four o'clock in the afternoon, and Andrew and John stay with Jesus the rest of that day. Afterward Andrew is so excited that he hurries to find his brother,



who is called Peter. "We have found the Messiah," he tells him. And he takes Peter to Jesus. Perhaps John at the same time finds his brother James and brings him to Jesus; yet, characteristically, John omits this personal information from his Gospel.

The next day, Jesus finds Philip and invites him: "Be my follower." Philip then finds Nathanael, who is also called Bartholomew, and says: "We have found the one of whom Moses, in the Law, and the Prophets wrote, Jesus, the son of Joseph, from Nazareth." Nathanael is doubtful. "Can anything good come out of Nazareth?" he asks.

"Come and see," Philip invites. When they come to Jesus, he says to Nathanael: "Before Philip called you, while you were under the fig tree, I saw you."

Nathanael is amazed. 'Teacher, you are the Son of God, you are King of Israel,' he answers.

Very soon after this, Jesus with his newly acquired disciples leaves the Jordan Valley and travels to Galilee.

John 1:29-51.

- ♦ Who were the first disciples of Jesus?
- ♦ How was Peter, and perhaps James, introduced to Jesus?
- ♦ What convinced Nathanael that Jesus was the Son of God?



The “Nation” That Fills Earth’s Surface With Fruit

“In the coming days Jacob will take root, Israel will put forth blossoms and actually sprout; and they will simply fill the surface of the productive land with produce.”—ISAIAH 27:6.

CONCERNING the birth of the congregation of Christ’s disciples as a “nation” in 33 C.E., the apostle Peter wrote these words shortly before the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70 C.E.: “But you are ‘a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for special possession, that you should declare abroad the excellencies’ of the one that called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. For you were once not a people, but are now God’s people; you were those who had not been shown mercy, but are now those who have been shown mercy.” (1 Peter 2:9, 10) How gracious on God’s part that was!

² Today, 19 centuries after Peter wrote those words, there is still on earth a remnant of that spirit-begotten “nation.” They are reduced now to less than ten thousand in number, according to the reports of the annual celebration of the Lord’s Evening Meal. They are ‘a people for Jehovah’s special possession,’ and as such they must declare abroad the excellencies of Jehovah God, who called them out of worldly “darkness into his wonderful light.” This “light” has been shining

especially since the end of “the times of the Gentiles,” or “the appointed times of the nations,” in the year 1914.* (Luke 21:24, *King James Version*; NW) As the “special possession” of the Divine Giver of that wonderful light, they are prized by him. To him they are like a spiritual vineyard.

³ Here we recall what Jesus Christ said to his apostles, who represented all who would be his spirit-begotten followers: “I am the true vine, and my Father is the cultivator. Every branch in me not bearing fruit he takes away, and every one bearing fruit he cleans, that it may bear more fruit. You are already clean because of the word that I have spoken to you. Remain in union with me, and I in union with you. Just as the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it remains in the vine, in the same way neither can you, unless you remain in union with me. I am the vine, you are the branches. He that remains in union with me, and I in union with him, this one bears much fruit; because apart from me you can do nothing at all.”—John 15:1-5.

1. How did the apostle Peter refer to the nation of spiritual Israel?

2, 3. As the special possession of Jehovah God, what obligation devolves upon spiritual Israel, and to what are they likened by Jesus Christ in John chapter 15?

* Interestingly, the *Oxford NIV Scofield Study Bible* (1984) comments on Luke 21:24: “The ‘times of the Gentiles’ began with the captivity of Judah under Nebuchadnezzar (2 Chr. 36:1-21). Since that time Jerusalem has been, as Christ said, ‘trampled on by the Gentiles.’”

⁴ That comparison, or parable, made by Jesus Christ reminds us of Jehovah's words in Isaiah 27:2-4, where we read;

"In that day sing to her, you people: 'A vineyard of foaming wine! I, Jehovah, am safeguarding her. Every moment I shall water her. In order that no one may turn his attention against her, I shall safeguard her even night and day. There is no rage that I have.'"

The "vineyard of foaming wine" today on earth may be compared to the remnant of the branches in that symbolic "vine" in which the spirit-begotten Christians of the "holy nation" are productive members. Consequently, there rests upon them the obligation to bear much fruit. (John 15:5) According to Isaiah's prophecy, it was to be in the time of restoration of Jehovah's people to his favor that the song about the "vineyard of foaming wine" was to be sung. (Compare Isaiah 27:13.) This would locate the modern fulfillment of this glowing prophecy as going into effect with the postwar year of 1919, and the facts of history verify its fulfillment down till now. Today Jehovah has no "rage" against his people, neither against the remnant of his "holy nation," his "people for special possession," nor against the loyal Christians who look forward to eternal life on earth. Mercifully he has turned his favor to them, which accounts for their spiritual prosperity and fruitfulness.

⁵ This spiritual "nation," along with its hardworking associates, has been like a productive vineyard that has produced much "foaming wine." It is a spiritual wine that has made the heart of Jehovah

4. (a) Jesus' illustration reminds us of what description in Isaiah chapter 27? (b) When does this prophecy have its modern fulfillment, and upon whom? (c) What attitude does God no longer have toward his people?

5. By what from this figurative vineyard have people been gladdened, and what can they recount about it?

and of man glad. (Judges 9:13) For this valid reason the people who have been gladdened by drinking this spiritual beverage can joyfully sing and can recount all that the Divine Cultivator of the "vineyard" has done for this symbolic "vineyard." Figuratively speaking, he has indeed 'watered' this "vineyard" for its constant refreshment, so that juicy, luscious fruit has been produced, with gladdening effect.

A Contrast—"The Vine of the Earth"

⁶ This has not been the case with what the last book of the Bible calls "the vine of the earth." Shortly, the divine command will be given to the heavenly executorial forces: "Put your sharp sickle in and gather the clusters of the vine of the earth, because its grapes have become ripe." Then, as the prophetic Revelation goes on to show, "the angel thrust his sickle into the earth and gathered the vine of the earth, and he hurled it into the great winepress of the anger of God. And the winepress was trodden outside the city, and blood came out of the winepress as high up as the bridles of the horses, for a distance of a thousand six hundred furlongs." (Revelation 14:18-20) So it will happen to the governmental part of the Devil's visible organization on earth; it is something of which he is the cultivator, and it is in opposition to "the true vine" of which Jehovah God is the Cultivator. There will be no restoration of "the vine of the earth" at all!

⁷ However, this prophecy of Isaiah chapter 27 is really a prophecy of restoration, first of the nation of natural Israel and then of spiritual Israel in our own 20th century. This is evident from what the

6. What, however, will be the experience of "the vine of the earth," according to Revelation chapter 14?

7-9. What double fulfillment does Isaiah 27:7-13 have, and at what times?

prophecy says in verse 7 down to verse 13, with which the chapter closes. Those verses read:

⁸ "As with the stroke of one striking him does one have to strike him? Or as with the slaughter of his killed ones does he have to be killed? With a scare cry you will contend with her when sending her forth. He must expel her with his blast, a hard one in the day of the east wind. Therefore by this means the error of Jacob will be atoned for, and this is all the fruit when he takes away his sin, when he makes all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that have been pulverized, so that the sacred poles and the incense stands will not rise up. For the fortified city will be solitary, the pasture ground will be left to itself and abandoned like a wilderness. There the calf will graze, and there it will lie down; and he will actually consume her boughs. When her sprigs have dried up, women coming in will break them off, lighting them up. For it is not a people of keen understanding. That is why its Maker will show it no mercy, and its own Former will show it no favor.

⁹ "And it must occur in that day that Jehovah will beat off the fruit, from the flowing stream of the River to the torrent valley of Egypt, and so you yourselves will be picked up one after the other, O sons of Israel. And it must occur in that day that there will be a blowing on a great horn, and those who are perishing in the land of Assyria and those who are dispersed in the land of Egypt will certainly come and bow down to Jehovah in the holy mountain in Jerusalem."

¹⁰ In the days of this prophecy of Isaiah, Assyria had become the dominant world power in the earth, displacing the first of the series of seven world powers, although Egypt was still functioning but as a subsidiary power. The ten-tribe kingdom of Israel had broken away from the rule of the royal house of King David of the tribe of Judah. So it was against the city of

10. What world power was prominent in the time of Isaiah's prophecy, and how did it fare in its intended attack upon the capital of the kingdom of Judah?

Jerusalem that the king of Assyria came to demand its complete surrender, if it did not want to be destroyed. However, Jehovah fought for the kingdom of Judah and sent haughty King Sennacherib reeling back homeward in disgraceful defeat. —Isaiah, chapters 36 and 37.

¹¹ Hence, an emperor of a succeeding world power, the Babylonian World Power, was authorized to destroy the holy city of Jerusalem and its temple. According to Biblical indications, this occurred in the year 607 B.C.E., at the hand of Emperor Nebuchadnezzar. He was the one that carried off captives into the land of Babylonia, to spend 70 years of exile there. It was in view of the impending destruction of Jerusalem and the taking of exiles into Babylonian captivity for 70 years that the questions were properly raised:

"As with the stroke of one striking him [the nation of Israel] does one have to strike him?" (Isaiah 27:7)

As never before in its national history since 1513 B.C.E., God's nation was struck with a calamitous blow in 607 B.C.E., a stroke that almost spelled its destruction. Great was the mortality of the besieged city of Jerusalem. Yes, Jehovah saw that the need for this drastic action was vital, and it had to take place. He saw the dire need for contending with those who should have remained his friends, his own befriended ones, with whom he had entered into the Law covenant through the mediator Moses.

¹² Jehovah could thus ask further:

"Or as with the slaughter of his killed ones does

11. By the emperor of what world power was the overthrow of the kingdom of Judah effected, and how does Isaiah 27 refer to this event?

12. So what question could Jehovah inspire the prophet Isaiah to ask with reference to Israel's experience, and thus what was the effect on Israel's relationship with Jehovah?

he [the nation of Israel, or Jacob] have to be killed?" (Isaiah 27:7)

Ah, yes, for now it had become necessary for Jehovah to contend with his once favored people, raising a frightful cry, a "scare cry," from the martial forces of the Babylonian World Power, the third in Bible history. Hence the divine statement:

"With a scare cry you will contend with her when sending her forth. He must expel her with his blast, a hard one in the day of the east wind [to indicate the direction from which the scary war cry would come]." (Isaiah 27:8)

With such a preliminary he would send forth the unfaithful nation that had once been like a typical wife to him as his visible organization on earth. Now he was dismissing her from her God-given homeland and sending her off at the hands of the Babylonian captors to a distant land, as if temporarily divorced.—Compare Isaiah 50:1.

¹³ Now the time had come for the nation of Israel, or Jacob, to make atonement for its "error" by more costly means than animal sacrifices offered up on the altar of the temple in Jerusalem. This is what Jehovah prescribed in behalf of his wife-like organization, saying:

"Therefore by this means the error of Jacob will be atoned for, and this is all the fruit when he takes away his sin, when he makes all the stones of the altar like chalkstones that have been pulverized, so that the sacred poles and the incense stands will not rise up." (Isaiah 27:9)

What an expression of divine fury, or rage, the fulfillment of this prophecy would be, justifiably so! No more would the

13. How, according to Isaiah's prophecy, was the nation of Israel going to make atonement for its violation of God's covenant?



Through the Babylonians, Jehovah dealt a severe blow in 607 B.C.E.

idolatrous sacred poles and the incense stands rise up again within his chastised nation.

¹⁴ Indicating the desolation that was to be brought upon this typical wifelike nation of ancient Israel, Jehovah adds:

"For the fortified city will be solitary, the pasture ground will be left to itself and abandoned like a wilderness."

The once populous land will be deserted, to become a mere grazing place for the time being.

"There the calf will graze, and there it will lie down; and he [Jehovah, by his agency] will actually consume her boughs. When her sprigs have dried up, women coming in will break them off, lighting them up [to burn]." (Isaiah 27:10, 11)

Thus Jehovah's typical wifelike nation would be reduced to mere fuel for the fire, for the feminine sex would without hardship be strong enough to avail themselves of what was left of it. What a sorry state to which to be reduced this would be for the typical wifelike organization of Israel!

14. To what sort of desolation was the land of Israel to be reduced, and how was her development as a figurative tree to be dealt with?

But why would such crushing steps have to be taken by such a husbandlike Deity as Jehovah? Listen:

¹⁵ "For it is not a people of keen understanding. That is why its Maker will show it no mercy, and its own Former will show it no favor." (Isaiah 27:11)

With all the provision that Jehovah had made for the education and enlightenment of his wonderfully formed organization, the Israelites should have proved to be a people with great intelligence. They should have been sharp and discerning enough to see the vanity of idol worship, yes, discerning enough to see through the senselessness of idolatrous worship, practiced by the ignorant nations outside of covenant relationship with the one living and true God, Jehovah. But in view of the invisibility of their heavenly Maker and Former, they lost faith and chose to turn to visible man-made gods, to their own downfall. That was why further favor and divine mercy were withdrawn from such self-willed people.

15. In view of Jehovah's special treatment, what kind of people should the nation of Israel have proved to be, but why did they come to be like the idol-worshipping nations?

How Do You Answer?

- ☐ When and how did natural Israel experience a "stroke," as foretold at Isaiah 27:7?
- ☐ How did Israel "take root"? (Isaiah 27:2, 6)
- ☐ Who in modern times are involved in the fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 27?
- ☐ How have these become like a productive vineyard producing "foaming wine"?

Deliverance From Exile

¹⁶ So now, to restore them to his worship in their homeland, it would be necessary for Jehovah to turn his attention to the land of Babylonia through which the great "River," the Euphrates, flowed. He would give attention down southward even toward the land of Egypt, for in such localities his people had come to be exiled from him for their discipline. In this behalf Jehovah had to fulfill his next statement of purpose:

"And it must occur in that day that Jehovah will beat off the fruit, from the flowing stream of the River [Euphrates] to the torrent valley of Egypt [the wadi at the southwestern border of the Promised Land], and so you yourselves will be picked up one after the other, O sons of Israel."—Isaiah 27:12; compare Numbers 34:2, 5.

¹⁷ In order for Jehovah to repatriate his people to their homeland of Judah, he would have to break off the exiled people like fruit, thus loosing them. This he effected by overturning the world power of Babylonia and ushering in the Medo-Persian Empire, the fourth world power of Bible history. The decree of the Persian emperor Cyrus the Great at the beginning of his reign was issued for the liberation of Jehovah's exiled people and for their return to the site of ancient Jerusalem to rebuild Jehovah's temple. This return came at the close of the 70 years of Jewish exile, in 537 B.C.E.—Isaiah 45:1-7.

¹⁸ The disciplined Israelites in Babylonia, and also in Assyria and Egypt, were Jehovah's property, and he was entitled to break them off like symbolic fruit from involuntary exile and dispersion and thus

16. In behalf of restoring his people, to what would Jehovah have to direct his attention?

17. How did Jehovah break off his people from their exiled state, and by what means?

18. What must have been the reaction of the exiles at the decree for their liberation?

to show them mercy, undeserved kindness. Oh, how those ancient Israelites must have rejoiced over that decree of Cyrus, and how zealous they must have displayed themselves in taking full advantage of the glorious opportunity afforded them! What, then, was there to be said about that auspicious “day”?

¹⁹ “And it must occur in that day that there will be a blowing on a great horn, and those who are perishing in the land of Assyria and those who are dispersed in the land of Egypt will certainly come and bow down to Jehovah in the holy mountain in Jerusalem.” (Isaiah 27:13)

19. (a) To whom were the Israelites who were dispersed in Assyria and in Egypt foretold to bow down? (b) What would this mean respecting the worship of Jehovah at the original temple site, and this with overtones for what modern spiritual nation?

What else did that mean but the repopulating of the Promised Land and the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem, restored for the worship of the Former and Maker of the revived nation of Israel? This had to take place according to the earlier words of the prophet Isaiah set out in verse 6. The land of his repatriated people had to become a land teeming with inhabitants, unitedly engaged in his worship at his temple, even though this restored place of worship might not have the grandeur of the magnificent temple built by King Solomon. In this way it was to foreshadow the modern-day spiritual fulfillment involving “the Israel of God,” in filling all “the productive land” with life-giving fruit, or “produce.”—Galatians 6:16; Isaiah 27:6.

The “Nation” That Feeds Famine-Stricken Millions

THE billions of earth’s population should be hungering for “food” that will nourish them for life unending here on earth, when the earth is converted into a global paradise. But to whom or where will they turn? The Republic of Israel is not attempting to fulfill the Bible prophecy in Isaiah 27:6 about filling the earth with “produce” for the lasting benefit of mankind.

² The nation of Israel in the first century of our Common Era lost its commission

1, 2. (a) What genuine need should be felt by earth’s population? (b) To which people can we look in this regard?

to benefit all mankind. Thus it was merely to a small remnant of the natural Jews that the Messiah addressed his words: “All authority has been given me in heaven and on the earth. Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the holy spirit . . . And, look! I am with you all the days until the conclusion of the system of things.” (Matthew 28:18-20) But what about 19 centuries later? Who in our time have in mind the fulfillment of Isaiah 27:6? And how are you and your loved ones involved?

³ Even though we are decades removed from the specific events, we do well to examine briefly certain developments during the years of World War I. At that time Jehovah God had valid reason for feeling "rage" against the nations of Christendom because of their engaging in that blood-spilling conflict. (Compare Isaiah 27:4.) They did that rather than yield their national sovereignties to the Most High God when his Kingdom was set up in the heavens in 1914 in the hands of his glorified Son, Jesus Christ. They added fuel to his rage by persecuting the remnant of spiritual Israel, deliberately hindering these devoted Christian Bible Students from proclaiming freely his established Kingdom. But many of the remnant of spiritual Israel did, in fact, yield to the worldly pressures, thus coming short of their responsibility as chosen people taken out from this worldly system of things. They did not then see the issue of absolute neutrality toward the conflicts of this world, so they came under some blood-guilt, and for a time they merited a degree of God's "rage" too.

⁴ Had you lived back then, how do you think you would have reacted to those wartime pressures? You should consider such things, for by doing so you may firm up your resolve as to what you would do in the face of any future pressures. Back then it might have seemed to be a time to desist from Kingdom proclamation and to lie low. Many tended in that direction, feeling that they should simply wait for their early glorification to be with the enthroned Jesus Christ. (Luke 22:28-30) However, receiving some of Jehovah's "rage" was a disciplinary experience that

was not lost on true Christians of the period, and so it was not fruitless. It strengthened them for the oncoming work of declaring the day of vengeance of our God against the one whom the prophet Isaiah calls "Leviathan" in Isaiah 27:1, where we read:

⁵ "In that day Jehovah, with his hard and great and strong sword, will turn his attention to Leviathan, the gliding serpent, even to Leviathan, the crooked serpent, and he will certainly kill the sea monster that is in the sea."

Back in ancient times, Jehovah turned his attention to the captors of his people. As we have noted previously, that included the empire of Babylon, as well as Egypt and Assyria. (Isaiah 27:12, 13) Can you see a modern application of the symbolic words at Isaiah 27:1? In the period around World War I, God's people were not captive to any one nation or empire. But Jehovah did need to give attention to a symbolic Leviathan, namely, Satan the Devil. He glides in a wily manner through the sea of humanity and uses things on earth to endanger or obstruct God's servants.—Compare Revelation 17:15.

⁶ When in the year 1919 the remnant of spiritual Israel enthusiastically resumed their Kingdom preaching, it was the time for Jehovah to say:

"There is no rage that I have. Who will give me thornbushes and weeds in the battle? I will step on such. I will set such on fire at the same time."—Isaiah 27:4.

⁷ After the close of World War I, the League of Nations was set up in rejection of the Kingdom of God by Christ. We can liken this to "thornbushes and weeds"

5. In modern times, how has Jehovah turned his attention to "Leviathan" mentioned in Isaiah 27:1?

6, 7. (a) What in modern times became like "thornbushes and weeds"? (b) What can we expect regarding them in the future?

3. Who in our century experienced God's "rage" mentioned in Isaiah 27:4?

4. How did God's "rage" affect his Christian servants, and what lesson might we learn from this?



Some hope that humans will resolve the nuclear threat, but wise ones of all nations are 'taking hold of Jehovah's stronghold'

'Taking Hold of Jehovah's Stronghold'

placed in the pathway of Jehovah God, as an obstruction or deterrent. Now the United Nations organization has replaced that League. By the United Nations the various member nations disclose their determination to hold out against the proclaimed Kingdom of Christ and their purpose to preserve their own world sovereignty. In "the war of the great day of God the Almighty" at Har-Magedon, he will figuratively step on all "thornbushes and weeds," crushing them and finally setting them on fire, as it were, to reduce them to mere ashes. He thus will demonstrate who really is the Universal Sovereign. You can, then, see that even if you were not alive among the anointed Christians back around World War I, you may be affected—for good or for bad—in the final results of events paralleling Isaiah 27:1.—Revelation 16:14-16; 17:1-18:4.

⁸ The members of the United Nations are relying on their own strength and trusting in their man-made stronghold. Yet, their confidence in it has not been strong enough to deter them from inventing the most deadly of weapons, the ultimate of war weapons, the nuclear bomb. Likely, fear of reprisal by use of the nuclear bomb is what deters them, not the United Nations.

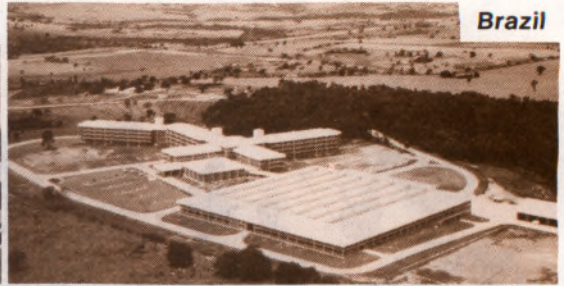
⁹ As we noted, though, what really threatens the continued existence of the nations is "the war of the great day of God the Almighty." What can the nations hope to do against God the Almighty, the One who put the awesome power within the nucleus of each atom of matter? You may well be convinced that the Creator is incomparably more powerful than the nations with all their weapons. Those who appreciate this fact—and Jehovah's Witnesses do—have only one recourse available. That is set forth in the further words of Jehovah:

8. On what do many nations today rely?

9, 10. Why is it wise for us to rely on another "stronghold"?



Spain



Brazil



Canada

The increase in spiritually well-fed Christians is reflected in the expansion of branches of the Watch Tower Society

"Otherwise let him take hold of my stronghold, let him make peace with me; peace let him make with me." (Isaiah 27:5)

No human agency is the stronghold to which to resort for security or prevention of war on earth, and certainly not the stronghold for the families of the earth to flee to for keeping safe.

¹⁰ You likely know that many people today become emotionally involved with debates and movements concerned about nuclear weapons and disarmament. Sadly, that distracts them from the reality that the inevitable war of God the Almighty at Armageddon is what threatens destruction of all the nations. If you appreciate that reality, then the wise course for you involves turning to Jehovah. His "stronghold" is the thing upon which all safety seekers should take hold, namely, his own inexhaustible possession of strength. The entire organization of Satan the Devil will not be able to conquer the individual Christian who has taken hold of that "stronghold."

¹¹ Jehovah and his armies under the Captain, Jesus Christ, are now, as it were, on the march. While they are yet some distance away, the course that common sense, if not real wisdom, dictates is for a person to send, figuratively speaking, a peace mission ahead and to sue for peace in the face of overwhelming odds. The undefeatable Captain of Jehovah's hosts counseled such a course when he was down here on earth. (Luke 14:31-33) And if you examine closely what Jesus there said, you will see that he tied in our attitude toward our "belongings." Whether we live in an advanced and prosperous land or we live in a Third World country where it takes a real struggle to gain financial security, we should scrutinize our outlook. Ask yourself: Am I really putting my reliance on Jehovah's strength as my stronghold or letting "belongings" take the most prominent place? In this connection, please read Luke 12:15-21.

11. How can we apply Jesus' words at Luke 14:31-33 as we take hold of God's "stronghold"?

¹² Around the earth, many thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses have already turned unreservedly to Jehovah, seeking peace with him. Many are arranging their affairs to devote scores of hours each month to the disciple-making activity. Each one who truly exerts himself in serving Jehovah is in a position to experience the promised "peace of God" that surpasses all human thought and understanding. (Philippians 4:7) While there is still time, they keep helping others to enter into this peaceable arrangement of Jehovah of hosts. What place does such lifesaving work have in your life?

Filling "the Productive Land" with "Produce"

¹³ What was to be the world role of spiritual Israel after its being restored to divine favor following World War I? This is indicated for us in these heartening words of Isaiah 27:6:

"In the coming days Jacob will take root, Israel will put forth blossoms and actually sprout; and they will simply fill the surface of the productive land with produce."

Examine the reality of those words today. Doing so will give you added reason to become one of God's people or, if you already are, to become even more firmly resolved to remain among true worshipers no matter what tests or problems arise.

¹⁴ A situation such as prophesied in Isaiah 27:6 has increasingly been found among worshipers of Jehovah since the year 1919, when the first general convention of Jehovah's Witnesses was held at Cedar Point, Ohio. For example, it was not long after this that the Watch Tower Soci-

ety began printing its new magazine, *The Golden Age*, now called *Awake!* It was as though spiritual Judah was then taking root.

¹⁵ Thus in the opening years of liberation and reinstatement in Jehovah's favor, true Christians began to blossom as "the planting of Jehovah." (Isaiah 61:3) In 1918, the final year of World War I, the astounding lecture "Millions Now Living May Never Die" was publicly delivered by J. F. Rutherford. With merely a small remnant of spirit-begotten disciples of the reigning King, Jesus Christ, left on earth to undertake the God-ordained work that then devolved upon them, was that an overestimation of matters?

¹⁶ How would Jehovah use such Christians to fill the surface of "the productive land with produce"? The remnant of spiritual Israel took the initiative, but what about the "produce" with which the productive land was to be filled? The remnant found the "produce," which included the good news of Jehovah's established Kingdom in the hands of Christ, so tasty and nourishing that they wanted to share it with their fellowmen. Jehovah had foretold that the little one would become a thousand and the small one a mighty nation, and this proved to be no miscalculation on God's part. (Isaiah 60:22) Soon the remnant of spiritual Israel was joined by "a great crowd" of "other sheep" of the Fine Shepherd, Jesus Christ.—Revelation 7:9-17; John 10:16.

¹⁷ You may be aware of the situation as to true Christianity today. The Watch Tower Society now has 94 branches all around

12. What evidence is there that many today are taking hold of Jehovah's strength?

13. What does Isaiah 27:6 indicate could be expected in our time?

14. How has Isaiah 27:6 found a fulfillment on God's people?

15. What thrilling prospect was presented to true worshipers starting in 1918?

16. (a) How did the remnant react to the prospects before them? (b) What "produce" did they rejoice in, and with what results?

17, 18. What can you attest to regarding 'filling the surface of the productive land with produce'?

the globe. The organized active congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses now number some 48,000, and these are to be found in 203 lands. To the true God goes all the credit for this, and these noteworthy developments stand in vindication of his infallible Word, whereas "the end," as foretold in Matthew 24:14, is not yet.

¹⁸ Yes, there are nearly three million Christians working along with the Watch Tower Society around the globe. These millions are mainly those of Christ's "other sheep," who have long been carrying the brunt of the worldwide witnessing work, and 'the joy of Jehovah has been their strength, or stronghold.' (Nehemiah 8:10) Hence, each of us today has the opportunity to be well filled spiritually and to participate in 'filling the surface of the productive land with produce.'

¹⁹ We can be sure that Jehovah will never permit the present "produce" of "the productive land," the field of activity of his Witnesses, to be destroyed. The work of his preaching Witnesses will never have been done in vain! The spiritual fruit, or "produce," as cultivated by true Chris-

19. What might you enjoy as to "the productive land," and how do you feel about that?

Can You Recall?

- ☐ Why did true Christians feel Jehovah's "rage" earlier in this century, and what can we learn from this experience?
- ☐ In contrast to the nations, how can we 'take hold of Jehovah as our stronghold'? (Isaiah 27:5)
- ☐ How has "the productive land" been filled with "produce" in our time? (Isaiah 27:6)
- ☐ What future fulfillment of Isaiah 27:1 can we confidently expect?

tians is for the feeding of all who want to avail themselves of it. This will include, in time, the billions of the human dead that are to be resurrected under the Millennial Reign of Jesus Christ. Imagine what that may mean for you in the future! In time, many natural Israelites of the past will be resurrected. Some of them may have been involved in the initial fulfillment of the prophecy in Isaiah chapter 27. Would it not be fascinating for you to be alive then, enabling you to explain how you participated in the larger, present-day 'filling of the productive land with produce'?—Compare Revelation 22:2, 3.

The Course of "Leviathan" Brought to an End

²⁰ Then the figurative Egypt, the present wicked system over which Satan the Devil has dominated as its god, will not exist. Jehovah will have turned his attention to the symbolic Leviathan, the gliding, crooked serpent that is in the midst of the sea of humanity. He and the nations, and even unions of nations, will be gone. He will not be around as a free, active corrupter of mankind for whom Jesus Christ died. (Isaiah 27:1) Yes, Satan the Devil will be abyssed throughout the Thousand Year Reign of Jesus Christ, the Son of David and the rightful Heir of the Kingdom. The 144,000 spiritual Israelites will be joint heirs in heaven with him, the figurative Lion of the tribe of Judah. (Romans 8:16, 17; Revelation 5:5, 9, 10; 7:1-4) Jehovah God the Most High will have been vindicated forever as the Sovereign Lord of the universe. Jehovah's universal organization in heaven and on earth will joyously experience lasting peace and harmony. To endless time, even forevermore, Jehovah will rejoice over his unified universal organization.

20. What lies ahead for "Leviathan," and with what result respecting God's sovereignty?

Insight on the News

New World Translation Passes Examination

In times past, Bible readers of one religion were suspicious of translations made by another religious group. Such distrust is generally unwarranted, claims theologian C. Houtman in the scholarly *Nederlands Theologisch Tijdschrift* (Dutch Theological Magazine). After reviewing these translations, his opinion is that only rarely can passages be found that reflect "the translators' denominational or political and social viewpoint." While for the most part this is true, there are some cases in which Bible translators have let their religious bias show through their renderings. For example, some modern translators have completely eliminated the personal name of God from their works. Others have wrongly translated the word Gehenna as "hell fire." Yet, if someone deliberately changes or omits part of the contents of the Bible, he is on dangerous ground. As one Bible book warns: "If anyone takes anything away from the words of the scroll of this prophecy, God will take his portion away from the trees of life."—Revelation 22:19.

Rather than removing God's name from the Bible, the *New World Translation of the Holy Scriptures* has retained it—7,210 times. Copies of the Bible's original language text provide a basis for doing this. Inter-

estingly, Houtman notes that on the point of translator bias "the *New World Translation* of the Jehovah's Witnesses can survive the scrutiny of criticism."

Man-Made Famine

African drought and famine have grabbed newspaper headlines for over a year. Yet the deadly toll has not been new to that continent. "Ethiopia's drought began in 1981," says researcher Lloyd Timberlake in *The Middle East* magazine. "Chad has suffered from drought for 10 years, Cape Verde for about 15. But the disaster response starts and stops, the timing based more on news reports than real human needs." Timberlake pins the major blame for Africa's food plight not on nature but on humans. He points to "unwise governments and foolish aid and development policies" as the chief culprits that have divided the key decision makers, who are urban officials, from country people, who are the sufferers.

Mankind's infliction of self-hurt is not new. About 3,000 years ago, Bible-writer King Solomon observed that "man has dominated man to his injury." (Ecclesiastes 8:9) Without consideration of godly principles, man's plans, including the providing of sufficient food for the hungry, will ultimately fail because of human selfishness or ignorance. How well the Bible sums up human wisdom compared to God's: "Many are the plans in the heart of a man, but

the counsel of Jehovah is what will stand!"—Proverbs 19:21.

Heart Surgery on Children

Jehovah's Witnesses decline blood transfusions for religious reasons. 'Abstain from blood,' the Bible commands. (Acts 15:20) Does this Scriptural position work a hardship in the health care of their children? No. For example, the article "Cardiac operation for congenital heart disease in children of Jehovah's Witnesses" in the June 1985 issue of *The Journal of Thoracic and Cardiovascular Surgery* concluded: "Cardiac operations and cardiopulmonary bypass can be safely performed in children without blood transfusion."

The article states: "Over a 20 year period ending June, 1983, 110 children of parents of the Jehovah's Witness faith, 6 months to 12 years of age, underwent operation for repair of congenital heart disease with the use of cardiopulmonary bypass at the Texas Heart Institute." Although the article did not provide statistics on the point, the surgeons stated that their impression was "that children of Jehovah's Witnesses usually do as well or better" than those transfused.

Interestingly, after listing things from which Christians are to abstain—including blood—the apostles and older Christians wrote: "If you carefully keep yourselves from these things, you will prosper. Good health to you!"—Acts 15:29.

How True Faith Can Help You

“ARE churches becoming irrelevant?” So asked free-lance writer Paul Fromm after attending the Sixth Assembly of the World Council of Churches held in 1983 at Vancouver, Canada. The reason for his question? The fact that this council had dwelt almost exclusively on politics. Said Fromm: “The mainline Protestant churches . . . have replaced the Gospel of Jesus Christ with the trendy gospel of leftist politics.”

Religion’s plunge into politics appears to be a desperate attempt to rekindle a waning interest in long-established religions. Reports from around the world indicate that faith in organized religion has indeed declined over the last few years.

This, however, does not surprise students of the Bible. Jesus prophesied that “because of the increasing of lawlessness the love of the greater number will cool off.” (Matthew 24:12) As a result of this ‘cooling off,’ relatively few allow religion to have much influence in their lives, even if they do make an occasional trip to church for a wedding or a funeral.—Compare Luke 18:8.

But while faith in most organized religions leads to disappointment, Jesus observed: “Every good tree produces fine fruit, but every rotten tree produces worthless fruit; a good tree cannot bear worthless fruit, neither can a rotten tree produce fine fruit. Every tree not producing fine fruit gets cut down and thrown into the fire. Really, then, by their fruits you will recognize those men.” (Matthew

7:17-20) Note that just as there is a form of worship that produces ‘bad fruit,’ there is a religious way of life that produces “fine fruit.” The latter brings real benefits to the person of faith. What is such faith, and what are some of its benefits?

Basis for Faith

For millions, one’s faith is something into which one is born. But for true Christians, faith is something that is acquired and cultivated. For them, faith is not “firm belief in something for which there is no proof,” as one dictionary defines faith. On the contrary, the early Christian evangelist Paul wrote: “Faith is the assured expectation of things hoped for, the evident demonstration of realities though not beheld.” (Hebrews 11:1) This means that our faith is based on reality.

For example, one approaching God “must believe that he *is*.” (Hebrews 11:6) Many ridicule the idea that there is a God. “Why believe in a God you cannot see?” they say. Yet the same ones have no trouble believing in television waves that are just as invisible. They, of course, can turn on their television sets and see the *results* of these invisible waves! Likewise with true Christians, our faith in God is not mere credulity or blind faith. Paul explains about God: “His invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made, even his eternal power and Godship, so that they are inexcusable.”

(Romans 1:20) Though God is invisible, all around us there is abundant visible evidence of a Master Designer, a superhuman intellect, a Creator with unmatched power.

Our faith, though, must go beyond mere *belief* in God if it is really to benefit us. (James 2:19) We must also have faith in the Holy Bible as the Word of God. (John 17:17) This faith should be based, not on mere emotion or early religious training, but on a knowledge of the many features of the Scriptures that point to divine authorship. The Bible itself encourages its readers to “make sure of all things.”—1 Thessalonians 5:21.

How can you do this with regard to the Holy Scriptures? You might first consider the fact that the Bible is a series of writings by some 40 different servants of God. Though writing over a period of 1,600 years, the writers followed a common theme—God’s Kingdom. Never did they contradict one another. Does not this indicate divine authorship? Also, the Bible shows remarkable accuracy in describing such things as the order of the appearance of living things on earth, a fact that is confirmed by modern science. (Genesis, chapter 1) Even more amazing is the fact that the Bible records *future* events! Some of the writers themselves confessed that they did not understand what they were writing; but what they wrote was truth, for they wrote under divine inspiration!—Daniel 12:8; 2 Peter 1:20, 21.

For many, however, the most persuasive reason to have faith in the Bible is that its counsel works! As you study and apply it, the Bible will exert a powerful motivating



Television and radio waves are invisible. Yet their effects testify to their existence

force for good in your life. This can help you to make changes that may amaze your friends and acquaintances. No wonder Paul said that “the word of God is alive and exerts power”! (Hebrews 4:12) True faith, therefore, has a rock-solid foundation. How, though, can you cultivate that faith?

Growing in Faith

A farmer plants his seed when the season and weather are right. Soon plants begin to sprout. With proper care they will grow to be strong and mature, blossoming and producing fruit. So it is with faith. When a person’s heart is right and the seed of faith is planted, this faith must be cared for if it is to grow. What are some ways in which this can be done?

The Bible explains that faith is one of the nine fruits of the holy spirit. (Galatians 5:22, 23) And how does one receive God’s spirit? Jesus said to listeners in his day: “If you, although being wicked, know



Prayer is one powerful means of building faith

how to give good gifts to your children, how much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!" (Luke 11:13) So *ask* God for his spirit in prayer! Faith will develop as a natural result of having God's spirit.

It is also important to develop a close relationship with Jehovah God. That means making a conscientious study of his Word and endeavoring to follow it. The psalmist developed such a longing for God's Word and declared: "How I do love your law! All day long it is my concern." (Psalm 119:97) When you are truly concerned about following God's Word, you begin to take on the attributes of the Creator. God's spirit begins to bear fruitage in your life. No longer will you be attracted to wrongdoing, but God's spirit and a desire to maintain a happy relationship with God will turn you away from vile "works of the flesh."—Galatians 5:16, 19-21; Psalm 15:1, 2.

As your appreciation for God and the

truth expands, you are further moved to share your faith with others. Because "faith is not a possession of all people," this sharing of God's truth may expose you to attack or ridicule. (2 Thessalonians 3:2; 2 Peter 3:3, 4) Still, so confident can you be about the basis for your faith that you will be able to declare, as did Paul: "I am not ashamed of the good news; it is, in fact, God's power for salvation to everyone having faith, to the Jew first and also to the Greek." (Romans 1:16) What a joy it is when someone responds to this message and the growth cycle begins all over again! God makes such growth possible. —1 Corinthians 3:5-9.

The Benefits of Faith

How, though, does faith *help* a person? Jesus Christ pointed to one long-term benefit at John 3:16: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only-begotten Son, in order that everyone exercising faith in him might not be destroyed but have *everlasting life*." This alone is a marvelous reward for having faith. Faith in God's promise to reward his servants with everlasting life gives you a fresh perspective on life. The trials and problems of life no longer seem quite so important or overwhelming. You are freed from the philosophy "let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we are to die" that dominates this pleasure-mad world. (1 Corinthians 15:32) Even death no longer seems quite so frightening when you have firm faith in a resurrection.—Hebrews 2:15; Luke 12:4, 5.

Faith also helps one cope with economic stress. "What are we to eat?" and, "What are we to drink?" are real concerns for

many today. Jesus, though, exhorted his followers to have faith in God's ability to provide. If you have such faith, you can "stop being anxious" over such things. (Matthew 6:25-34) Such faith spares you the pains that a pursuit of riches is sure to bring.—1 Timothy 6:10.

But what if a person has a serious problem and needs direction? People spend millions of dollars on self-help books and professional counseling. While the advice thus found may sometimes be helpful, a Christian's faith leads him to a far better source of aid. Says James: "So, if any one of you is lacking in wisdom, let him keep on asking God, for he gives generously to all and without reproaching; and it will be given him. But let him *keep on asking in faith*, not doubting at all, for he who doubts is like a wave of the sea driven by the wind and blown about." (James 1:5, 6) A Christian's faith is the guarantee that such divine aid will be provided. He has no hesitancy about approaching God in this way, for 'he has this freeness of speech and an approach with confidence through his faith in [Christ].'—Ephesians 3:12.

Admittedly, the direction God gives us can at times seem difficult—perhaps even impossible—to implement. Abraham, for example, received God's promise that he and his wife were to have a son. Considering the fact that their reproductive powers were 'dead,' attempting to have this child seemed futile. Yet, says Paul: "Although [Abraham] did not grow weak in faith, he considered his own body, now already deadened, as he was about one hundred years old, also the deadness of the womb of Sarah. But because of the promise of God he *did not waver* in a lack of faith, but became powerful by his faith, giving God glory and being fully convinced that what he had promised he was also able to do." (Romans 4:19-21) The reward for such faith? The blessing of having a son who

would continue the line leading to the Messiah!

While God is not at this time performing such direct miracles, Christians today find that if they 'do not waver in a lack of faith,' they, too, can enjoy success when they apply God's direction. Said Jesus: "All things can be to one if one has faith."—Mark 9:23.

Safeguard Your Faith

Faith is therefore the key to enduring these trying times. But we must jealously safeguard it. If we allow our faith to weaken, we can find ourselves without direction in life. We can fall prey to the anxieties and problems that afflict mankind in general. So like Jesus' disciples, let us continually ask for more faith. (Luke 17:5) Let us regularly study God's Word and associate with people of like faith. (Romans 10:17) And let us zealously engage in the work Jesus assigned his followers to do, preaching the "good news of the kingdom."—Matthew 24:14.

The fact that this work is now being carried on in 203 lands should, in itself, build our faith, for this fact indicates that the prophesied "end" is near! Among these zealous preachers, Jehovah's Witnesses, we find people manifesting the fruits of God's spirit. They excel in faith, but also in love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, mildness, and self-control. (Galatians 5:22, 23) They are living testimonies to the value of having faith, for it has enriched their personal lives, family relationships, and above all, their relationship with Jehovah God.

So in answer to Jesus' question, "When the Son of man arrives, will he really find the faith on the earth?" we can confidently say, Indeed he will! (Luke 18:8) May we prove to be among the many who daily demonstrate the value of a living faith!

Turkish Supreme Court Releases Jehovah's Witnesses

THERE was great joy among the 23 Jehovah's Witnesses released on June 14, 1985, after having spent a year in prison in Ankara. In 1984 they had been sentenced to terms ranging from four to six years by the State Security Court in Ankara. That court had found them guilty of violating article 163 of the penal code, which forbids religious activity aimed at 'changing the social, economic, political, or legal order of the state.' The court rejected their status as a religion. —See *The Watchtower*, April 1, 1985.

The verdict had been appealed, and on May 29, 1985, a hearing was granted before the Supreme Court of Turkey. At that hearing, a request was made to annul the verdict on the grounds that Jehovah's Witnesses are indeed a religious group and that there is no evidence for the crime charged.

Defense counsel pointed out that in all previous court cases in the country Jehovah's Witnesses had been acquitted of that same charge, and that all legal experts who had examined the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses over the past 20 years had never found any violation of the law. The attorneys also pointed out that the verdict was based on prejudiced and false information.

Court Decides

On June 19, 1985, the Supreme Court gave its unanimous decision. It annulled the verdict of the State Security Court and ordered the immediate release of the 23 Witnesses. The Court emphasized that under Turkey's constitution all religions have the same right to worship and to spread their beliefs, provided they do not interfere in the affairs of the State.

The Supreme Court pointed out that the accused had been convicted "just because of being . . . Jehovah's Witnesses." And that verdict had been based on the reports of two religiously prejudiced "experts." These had stated that Jehovah's Witnesses were "objectionable from the standpoint of religious

unity and worship." But the Supreme Court showed that this was in no way evidence that the actions of the Witnesses violated article 163.

The Court concluded that Jehovah's Witnesses had not overstepped the boundary of religious freedom guaranteed by the constitution. The Court showed that therefore "a violation and misuse of freedom for evil purposes had not materialized."

This judgment is in harmony with the facts. It is also in harmony with the decision of the Supreme Court of Appeal in 1980. That court clearly stated that the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses is not subversive and does not constitute a danger to the country. It also said: "If one day the things occur which the accused ones believe and God's rule will be established over the world, a punishment of the accused ones because of such a belief will not prevent such events. But if their expectation is just a fancy idea and empty belief, their belief can in no way cause harm to our laical order of the State."

So all the accusations, as well as the information given by the two religiously prejudiced "experts," have been proved false. The non-political and purely religious nature of the work of Jehovah's Witnesses has again been established.

Complete Acquittal Desired

Although the verdict has been annulled, the case has been turned over to the State Security Court for reexamination. It is hoped that this time the court will judge according to the facts and will totally acquit the accused ones of the charges.

Freedom-loving people all over the world will continue to watch for the outcome of this matter. They want to see if Jehovah's Witnesses will enjoy full freedom of worship. If this proves to be the case, then it can rightly be said that Turkey is endeavoring to live up to its claim that it is a democratic country.

Jehovah Has Done Great Things for Us

SOME seven years of de facto military government. War in the South Atlantic. Inflation of about 500 percent a year. Argentina has experienced all these things within the last decade.

Today, financial troubles have not subsided. But a republican government holds sway, and a war is not raging. So this land's 30 million inhabitants look to the future with increased optimism. Especially are some filled with surpassing happiness. Why? Because of the great things Jehovah God has been doing.

With divine blessing, about 55,000 witnesses of Jehovah are now spreading good news of great cheer in this South American country. It is this that has brought joy into the lives of so many inhabitants of Argentina.

The First Seeds Are Sown

The Kingdom-preaching work in this land had its start in 1924, when J. F. Rutherford (then president of the Watch Tower Society) sent Juan Muñiz here to care for Kingdom interests. About a year later, Carlos Ott arrived and began spreading the good news among the German-speaking population. Thus the first seeds of Kingdom truth were sown in Argentina.

By 1945 there were 363 Kingdom proclaimers in Argentina. The next year saw the arrival of missionaries, graduates of the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead. Brother Gwaenydd Hughes

and Sister Ofelia Estrada, both Argentinean, were the first of a long list of Gilead graduates to serve in this country. Among them are Charles and Lorene Eisenhower, as well as Helen Wilson, all of whom arrived in 1948. After some 36 years, they are still active in Jehovah's service here. Helen Nichols, who also arrived in 1948, ended her earthly course in her missionary assignment at Tucumán in 1974.

The First Obstacles Arise

As our numbers increased, many young Witnesses of military age took their stand as Christian neutrals. (Isaiah 2:2-4; John 15:19) This brought opposition. Nevertheless, in 1950 the Watch Tower Society was legally recognized but only for a short time. Later that year, this recognition was withdrawn, and for the next 33 years Jehovah's Witnesses persevered without it.

Even under such difficult circumstanc-



es, however, the Kingdom-preaching work continued to expand. In 1974 the Governing Body of Jehovah's Witnesses decided that our journals *The Watchtower* and *Awake!* should be printed locally. So plans were made for the installation of the first rotary offset press ever to be used by the Society. The press itself came from France, a guillotine section (paper cutter) from Germany, and the stitcher portion from the United States. All of these were gifts made by the respective branches of the Society. Many difficulties had to be overcome before we could publish our first magazines in Argentina, but what joy we had when *The Watchtower* of April 15, 1975, rolled off the press!

Years Under Ban

In 1976 a new military government closed our Kingdom Halls. Our children were expelled from school, and throughout the land Jehovah's Witnesses were arrested for preaching the good news. The climax came on September 7, 1976, when the Society's printing establishment and offices were closed. Only the living quarters of the Bethel family remained open. All of this resulted from an order that 'absolutely prohibited the activity of Jehovah's Witnesses and the spreading and public exercise of their doctrines in the whole territory of the nation.'

Years of difficulty thus began. Yet, this was also a time of spiritual strengthening and enrichment. Never before had we received so much publicity in the secular press. The headlines themselves help to tell the story of what happened over a period of years: "Witnesses prisoners for repudiating the patriotic symbols"; "Expulsion of children from provincial primary schools"; "Readmission of scholar of Jehovah's Witnesses"; "Activities of Jehovah's Witnesses permitted."

In March 1979 the Supreme Court of Justice rendered a favorable decision in the case of *Juan Carlos Barros vs. National Council of Education*. Brother Barros' two sons, Paul and Hugh (seven and eight years old respectively), had been expelled from school for refusing to participate in a flag-raising ceremony. (Compare Exodus 20:4-6; Daniel 3:1, 16-18; 1 John 5:21.) The court decision said in part: "[Their] actions, merely passive in the case, . . . cannot be taken to constitute a rational manifestation of lack of respect for the patriotic symbols, but rather show an obedience to parental authority." Thus it was recognized that the religious position that the Witness children took in no way involved a lack of respect for Argentina's national symbols.

The rights of our youngsters were also upheld in the case of *Aurelio Francisco D'Aversa vs. the National Government*. The Teachers' Council had resolved to expel the D'Aversa child from all schools in the country, but when the case reached the Federal Court of Appeals, a favorable decision was handed down. It set some very interesting precedents. After mentioning that most of the country's citizens participate spontaneously in showing their feelings toward the national symbols, Judge Tonelli said: "On the other hand, it would be offensive to the conscience of the majority that has firmly

In Our Next Issue

- Independence From God
—Why Not?
- Finding Joy in the
Gift of Marriage
- Modern Stewardship
of God's Sacred Word



News headlines chronicle the problems under ban and finally the return of religious freedoms

established patriotic convictions to see someone, against his inward beliefs, obligated to show like feelings without sincerity." Judge Barletta recognized "the lack of facts that imply contempt, disrespect or public showing of such on the part of the pupil D'Aversa." The Supreme Court later confirmed this decision.

The ban placed on our work in 1976 apparently caused the decrease in the number of Jehovah's praisers from 33,503 that year to 31,846 in 1977. But once the brothers became accustomed to the new conditions, the Kingdom-preaching work again gained impetus.

In time, we even began to have small assemblies, first with only the elders and their wives present and later with all members of the congregations in attendance. These assemblies were held in the most unlikely places—in isolated rural areas, in sheds used for sheep shearing, and even in chicken coops. What happy days we had together enjoying spiritual instruction!

Even more important, we never missed

an issue of *The Watchtower* for use in our weekly study. These magazines were printed on small offset presses at various places. All of this required much work and often put our brothers in danger of losing their freedom. At that time newspapers listed thousands of people who had vanished, but not one of Jehovah's Witnesses disappeared. Despite all the obstacles encountered, from 1977 to 1984 God's people saw an increase of 57 percent as more than 18,000 new Kingdom publishers joined their ranks.

Full Freedom Is Granted

Actually, our freedom came in two stages. First, on December 12, 1980, the de facto military regime lifted the ban. At that stage, our work was no longer prohibited, although it still was not legally recognized. Finally, the present government recognized the Association of Jehovah's Witnesses. This step was taken on March 9, 1984, by Dr. María T. de Morini, Undersecretary of Worship.

Behind us then were the long years of



fighting for legal recognition. Our Kingdom Halls could be identified by signs for the first time. Why, the announcement of our legal inscription made us feel like 'those who were dreaming, and our tongue gave way to a joyful cry!' Truly, 'Jehovah had done a great thing for us.'—Compare Psalm 126:1, 2.

Rejoicing in Kingdom Increase

With legal recognition has come grand Kingdom increase. Because of this, plans were made for the construction of our first Assembly Hall. It was to be built near Moreno, some 25 miles (40 km) from

Buenos Aires. This hall will accommodate 2,200 people. On the same property, there is also a farm that provides much of the food needed by the 78-member Bethel family.

The 1985 service year started off with a new peak of Kingdom proclaimers, reaching 51,962 in December. The number of congregations rose to 730. How happy we were when 135,379 gathered in 1985 to commemorate the Memorial of Christ's death! And in January 1985 we finished our series of nine "Kingdom Increase"

District Conventions, with a total attendance of 97,167 people—17,000 more than the preceding year.

This increase made the branch facilities inadequate for our needs. We were able to buy a building complex, to be used for the factory and offices. On a neighboring lot, we plan to construct a ten-story building to house the Bethel family.

We hope that the new facilities will enable us to take good care of the Kingdom interests in Argentina. And we look to the future with optimism, thankful, indeed, for the great things Jehovah is doing for those who love him.

Questions From Readers

■ Are the remnant of the Lord's anointed on earth a part of Jehovah's heavenly, wifely organization, "Jerusalem above"?

Anointed ones on earth can be spoken of as the visible part of God's organization, his universal family of intelligent creatures.

As individuals who are "born again," they become spiritual

sons of Jehovah. (John 3:3, 5; Romans 8:15-17) Jehovah is their Father. Yet they have also a "mother," for the apostle Paul wrote that "the Jerusalem above . . . is our mother." This must be a

reference to a heavenly organization of loyal spirits whom Jehovah views as a figurative "wife." (Galatians 4:26) When anointed Christians receive their heavenly reward, they actually take their place in that heavenly organization.—Revelation 4:4; 14:1-5.

The anointed remnant on earth

are not yet literally a part of "Jerusalem above." But because of their unique position as spiritual sons with the prospect of heavenly life, and because they represent God's heavenly "wife," at times Jehovah includes them in a reflective way in directives, prophecies, promises, and words of comfort addressed to his wifely organization in heaven.

We can illustrate this with words involving ancient Israel. Through Isaiah, Jehovah described a woman in chains, in the dust, in need of waking up and shedding forth light. (Isaiah 51: 9, 14; 52:1, 2; 60:1) Those conditions have not existed among Jehovah's loyal spirit sons making up his heavenly "woman." However, they did exist in the nation of Israel. When the Israelites were released from captivity to Babylon in 537 B.C.E., they awakened, stood up from the dust, and began to reflect Jehovah's light. Rebuilt Jerusalem (standing for the nation) was like a wife who had been abandoned but who now had been reclaimed and was producing children, the Jews in the revived nation. (Isaiah 54:1-8; 60:1-22; 66:7-14) So the words in Isaiah about the situation of the "woman" (whose "husbandly owner" was Jehovah) took in the earthly nation representing her.

Now let us shift attention to the spiritual nation that God would accept once he (and his heavenly "woman") ceased using fleshly Israel. (Galatians 6:16) After being "barren" for many centuries, "Jerusalem above" began to produce spiritual sons. Jesus was the first one produced, in 29 C.E., to be followed by 144,000 others, beginning with the apostles and extending down to our time. (Galatians 4:21-31) For a brief period in the early part of this century, the remnant of spiritual Israelites gave in to pressures and came, as

it were, into captivity. Then, in 1919, they were brought out of Babylonish captivity as a newborn nation in a spiritual land. Thus, we can see that Isaiah's prophetic words regarding ancient Jerusalem find a parallel in spiritual Israel on earth.

Consider, too, Revelation 12:1-17. At the end of the Gentile Times in 1914, God's heavenly "woman" produced the Kingdom government as a "male child." The debased Satan "grew wrathful at the woman." But his attack was not directly against God's wifely organization in heaven, to which

he no longer had access. Rather, Satan waged war "with the remaining ones of her seed" representing her here on earth.

Thus, as it was in the past with earthly Israel, so it is with spiritual Israel. The situation in "Jerusalem above" is reflected among her children on earth. In a practical sense, the commands, correction, comfort, and promises directed to Jehovah's heavenly woman, affect primarily those on the earth who represent her and who have the prospect of being part of God's heavenly organization.

■ Do those of the "great crowd" become part of Jehovah's universal organization?

Now, prior to the "great tribulation," all of Jehovah's Witnesses happily serve God in unity. (Matthew 24:21) There is no division over the fact that a small number are spirit anointed and look forward to going to heaven, while the majority have the hope of eternal life in an earthly paradise. As Jesus indicated, both the "sheep" and the "other sheep" become united in "one flock." (John 10:11, 16) Thus, Jehovah's present organization of servants is made up of those from both groups, with both destinies.

Jehovah foresaw that his woman would enjoy such prosperity. He indicated that people from all nations, those not spiritual Israelites, would be gathered in great numbers. (Isaiah 60:1-22; 61:5-9) The book of Revelation describes "a great crowd, which no man was able to number, out of all nations and tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb." These are ones with

earthly hopes, not those of the spiritual nation of anointed ones who particularly represent Jehovah's universal organization today. Still, the "great crowd" stand before the throne of God and the Lamb in robes made white by washing in the Lamb's blood. What a fine standing they have even now!—Revelation 7:9-17.

These of the "great crowd" are also tested as to their integrity. Their continued faithfulness now and on through the Thousand Year Reign and the final test will result in Jehovah's declaring them righteous as perfect humans, along with resurrected ones who become part of Jesus' "other sheep." Being thus "set free from enslavement to corruption," they will enjoy "the glorious freedom of the children of God." (Romans 8:21) They then will be, as were originally Adam and Eve, the visible part of Jehovah's universal organization. They will be the perfect, intelligent offspring of Jehovah and his wifely organization in heaven.

"The More You Read It, the More You Like It"

"You Can Live Forever in Paradise on Earth is the book of books second only to the Bible," writes a reader from the Philippines. "You cannot help but like it with all your heart and soul. I've already read that book twice from cover to cover, yet I'm ever yearning to read it again. The more you read it, the more you like it. It's highly instructive. . . . The book, if applied, is enough to turn the world upside down."



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