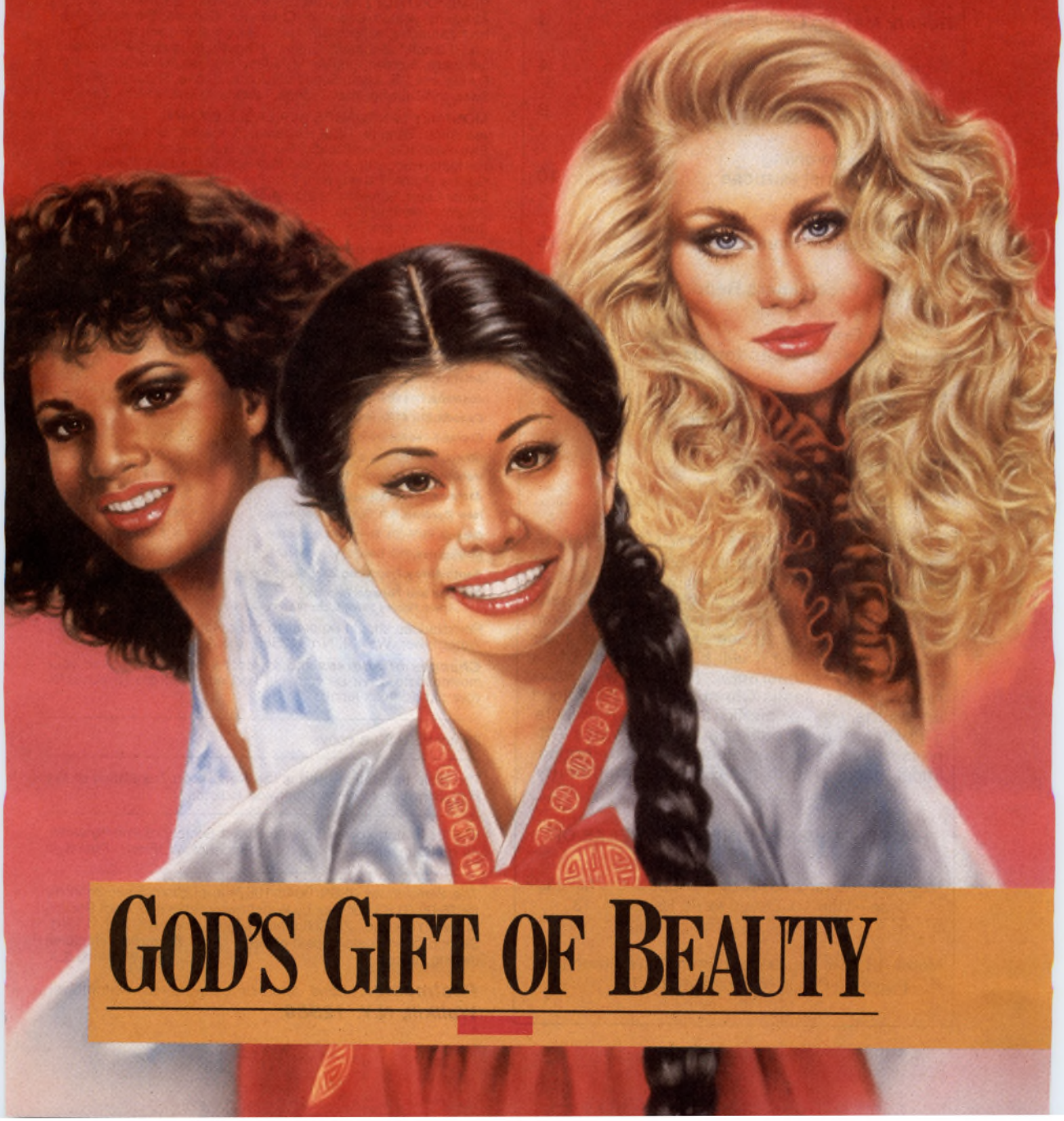
The Watchtower
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom
February 1, 1989



GOD'S GIFT OF BEAUTY

The Watchtower®
Announcing Jehovah's Kingdom

February 1, 1989
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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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BEAUTY MAY BE ONLY SKIN DEEP

EVE, the first and only woman created by God, was likely the most beautiful woman who ever lived. But she and her husband, Adam, rebelled against Jehovah. So Eve lost her close relationship with God and shared in bringing a terrible tragedy on the human race. Afterward, *she* was doubtless still beautiful, but her beauty was only skin deep.

Beauty is ultimately a gift of God, and some have inherited more of it than others. Some wish they were more beautiful —or handsome—than they are, and many spend a lot of time and money making the most of whatever good looks they possess. But as Eve's example shows, beauty alone is worthless in the long run unless it is accompanied by other qualities. What other qualities? An experience back in the days of King Solomon helps us to answer that.

Something More Than Beauty

The Bible book Song of Solomon tells of a beautiful young country girl, a Shulammite, who was in love with a local shepherd boy. Her beauty attracted the attention of the king, and he had her brought to Jerusalem in hopes of making her his wife. What an opportunity for a young woman! There, she could exploit her good looks and gain a position of wealth, power, and influence in the kingdom. But the young girl resolutely spurned the flattering advances of the king. She turned her back on the glitter and wealth of Jerusalem and remained faithful to her shepherd boy. In her case, beauty was a lot more than skin deep. She was not shallow, opportunistic, or greedy. Rather, she had an inner beauty that her ancestress Eve lacked.—Song of Solomon 1:15; 4:1; 8:4, 6, 10.

The Snares of Physical Beauty

Physical beauty, while desirable, can lead to problems that inner beauty never provokes. Almost 4,000 years ago, for example, the patriarch Jacob had a daughter named Dinah who was doubtless very pretty. When she unwisely spent time fellowshipping with "the daughters of the land," a young man named Shechem was so attracted to her that he violated her. —Genesis 34:1, 2.

Additionally, external good looks, if not matched by an inner beauty, can inflate their possessor's self-evaluation. King David had a son named Absalom, of whom we read: "Compared with Absalom there proved to be no man so beautiful in all Israel as to be praised so much." (2 Samuel 14:25) But Absalom's physical beauty masked an inner ugliness: He was vain, ambitious, and ruthless. The young man artfully used his personal charm to build a following in Israel and then conspired against his royal father. Eventually he was killed but not before this very

handsome man had plunged the kingdom into civil war.

Masculine Beauty

As the case of Absalom shows, the Bible speaks of men as well as of women as being beautiful. An example of a man who was not ensnared by his masculine beauty was Joseph, the younger half brother of Dinah. (Genesis 30:20-24) When he was a young man, Joseph's brothers out of jealousy sold him as a slave to be carried off to Egypt. There, he was bought by a military officer named Potiphar, and because of being honest and diligent, he came to be overseer of Potiphar's household. Meantime, "Joseph grew to be beautiful in form and beautiful in appearance."—Genesis 39:6.

Potiphar's wife developed a passion for Joseph and shamelessly tried to seduce him. But the young man showed that he had inner beauty as well as physical attractiveness. He refused to sin against his master, Potiphar, and ran from the woman. As a result, he was clapped into jail. Why? The disappointed wife of Potiphar lyingly accused him of having tried to violate her! Even this bitter experience did not sour Joseph's disposition, however, and his excellent example under extreme difficulty has encouraged righthearted people ever since.

As these examples show, inner beauty —a beauty of personality especially when it is based on faith in God—is far more important than physical good looks. Young people contemplating marriage need to be aware of this. Employers seeking workers should remember it. And all of us ought to bear in mind that whether we have been blessed with physical beauty or not, we can develop this far more important inner beauty. But what does this consist of? And how can we develop it? We will discuss this in the following article.

TRUE BEAUTY
YOU CAN DEVELOP IT

THE Bible has counsel for both men and women in the matter of good looks. For men, it notes: "The beauty of young men is their power." (Proverbs 20: 29) Yes, the energy and vitality of young men can be very appealing. But what happens when that youthful vigor wanes? The Bible proverb says: "Gray-headedness is a crown of beauty when it is found in the way of righteousness." (Proverbs 16:31) Righteousness is a facet of inner beauty. If a young man cultivates it, it will still be there when he loses that attractive vigor of youth.

Regarding women the Bible says: "Charm may be false, and prettiness may be vain; but the woman that fears Jehovah is the one that procures praise for herself." (Proverbs 31:30) A pretty, charming young woman is a delightful companion. But what if there are hypocrisy and selfish vanity lurking behind the physical charm? Then the beauty is only skin deep, and it hides an inner ugliness. When the prettiness fades, what will be left? How much better if the good looks are matched by an unfading inner beauty, rooted in a 'fear of Jehovah'!

A Change of Personality

Is it possible to develop this inner beauty? Yes. In fact, for Christians, it is a must. God values true beauty. "He has made everything beautiful in its time." (Ecclesiastes 3:11, *Revised Standard Version*) He will not accept the worship of those whose conduct betrays unlovely inner qualities.

The apostle Paul's words to the Colossians imply the need to cultivate an inner beauty. First, he admonishes: "Put them all away from you, wrath, anger, badness, abusive speech, and obscene talk out of your mouth. Do not be lying to one another. Strip off the old personality with its practices." Yes, anyone who practices such ugly things is repulsive to God—and to right-thinking humans. Then, Paul continues: "Clothe yourselves with the new personality, which through accurate knowledge is being made new according to the image of the One who created it." (Colossians 3:8-10) We must 'put on' a way of thinking and feeling that conforms to God's will. What characterizes this "new personality"?

Christian Qualities

The Bible lists many beautiful qualities that go to make it up. But the basis for this inner beauty is described in Jesus' words: "'You must love Jehovah your God with your whole heart and with your whole soul and with your whole mind.' This is the greatest and first commandment. The second, like it, is this, 'You must love your neighbor as yourself.'" (Matthew 22:37-39) Love of God leads us to want to be the kind of person that pleases him. Such love moves us to speak about him to others, helping them, in turn, to get to know their Creator.—Isaiah 52:7.

Some other qualities that go to make up the new personality are described by the apostle Paul: "Love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control. Against such things there is no law."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

In addition, the Bible says specifically to husbands: "A husband is head of his wife as the Christ also is head of the congregation . . . Husbands, continue loving your wives, just as the Christ also loved the congregation and delivered up himself for it." (Ephesians 5:23, 25) And to wives, the Bible says: "Let wives be in subjection to their husbands as to the Lord . . . The wife should have deep respect for her husband." (Ephesians 5:22, 33) How attractive family life is when the husband fulfills his responsibilities in a loving, unselfish, and patient manner! And how much easier it is for the man to fulfill his proper role when the wife reveals her inner beauty by lovingly supporting him and not being competitive or overly critical. Family life under such conditions can be truly delightful.

The examples cited in the previous article showed some of these qualities in action. The Shulammite girl demonstrated constancy and a deep love for her shepherd boy when she refused to abandon him for the glitter of Solomon's court. Joseph showed an innate goodness when he refused to sin against his master, Potiphar. He also demonstrated self-control when he fled rather than be seduced by Potiphar's wife. And he exemplified mildness, peace, and long-suffering when he refused to let the many adverse events in his life embitter him.

Beauty in an Ugly World

Are such beautiful qualities practical today? Many think not. Rather, they react to the self-seeking, grasping world in which they live by developing a hard surface. They feel that to survive they have to be ruthless, ambitious, putting number one first and grasping for all they can get.

In contrast, the Bible encourages: 'Do nothing out of contentiousness or out of egotism, but with lowliness of mind consider that the others are superior to you, keeping an eye, not in personal interest upon just your own matters, but also in personal interest upon those of the others.' (Philippians 2:3, 4) It is because mankind in general does not follow this fine counsel that human society is deteriorating so badly.

Additionally, in the present world, a person's success is measured by money or position. A rich man is considered to be a successful man. However, as far as *real* values are concerned, it is completely unimportant whether someone is rich or poor. Indeed, wealth has its dangers. The Bible warns: "Those who are determined to be rich fall into temptation and a snare and many senseless and hurtful desires." It adds: "The love of money is a root of all sorts of injurious things."—1 Timothy 6:9, 10.

Of course, people who are selfish, grasping, materialistic, and ruthless often enjoy temporary "success" today. But it is not real success, since the cost of such an ugly way of living—personal unpopularity, wrecked marriages, ill health, and general frustration—is very high. Man was made in the image of God, but when he rebels so violently against the qualities God originally implanted in him, he can never achieve personal happiness.—Genesis 1:27.

Developing the Inner Beauty

How can we, then, resist the bad influence of this world and develop noble, godly qualities? When Paul listed the qualities of 'love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, and self-control,' he called them "the fruitage of the spirit." (Galatians 5:22, 23) So God's spirit is necessary if we are to develop these beautiful inner qualities.

How? Well, studying the Bible, which was inspired by means of God's spirit, will help us to identify these qualities and strengthen our desire to cultivate them. (2 Timothy 3:16) Jehovah's Witnesses are always happy to help in such a project, since they view it as part of their ministry to help people to study the Bible. Honest self-examination will enable us to see where we fall short, and we can pray for the help of God's spirit in these areas. Associating with fellow worshipers of God

Physically attractive people should avoid being selfish and manipulative. Rather, they should cultivate the inner beauty that pleases God

will give the support of our peers that we need, and here, too, God's spirit helps because, as Jesus said, "where there are two or three gathered together in my name, there I am in their midst."—Matthew 18:20.

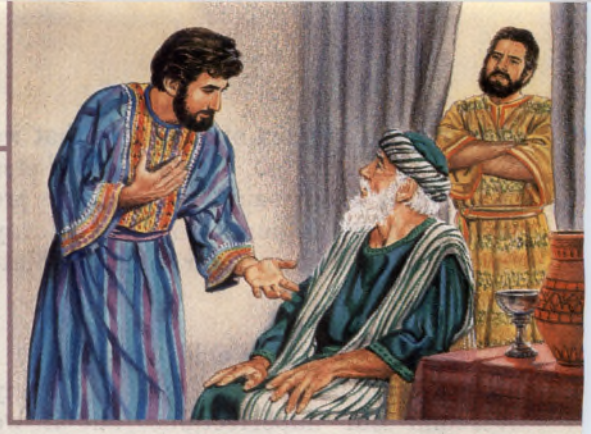
A Beautiful World Ahead

Naturally, none of us will completely overcome our imperfections, but if we strive to develop this inner beauty, God will bless our efforts. And he will reward us in a wonderful way. The Bible records for us God's purpose soon to usher in a new system of things that will be completely different from the present one. In it, "the righteous themselves will possess the earth, and they will reside forever upon it." (Psalm 37:29) Jesus himself said: "Happy are the mild-tempered ones, since they will inherit the earth."—Matthew 5:5.

At that time, the unsightly competitiveness and selfishness of this system of things will be replaced by a beautiful tranquillity and serenity. "They will not do any harm or cause any ruin in all my holy mountain; because the earth will certainly be filled with the knowledge of Jehovah as the waters are covering the very sea." (Isaiah 11:9) Indeed, God "will wipe out every tear from their eyes, and death will be no more, neither will mourning nor outcry nor pain be anymore. The former things have passed away."—Revelation 21:4.

Do such conditions sound appealing? They are possible only because the earth's inhabitants then will possess an inner beauty based on love of God and of neighbor. And God has promised that those who serve him now, cultivating "the new personality" and striving hard to follow his standards, will see the realization of that promise. Good looks, physical beauty, could never bring such blessings. What good reason, then, to develop that richer, longer-lasting inner beauty that is so pleasing to right-thinking humans and to God himself!

The Story of a Lost Son



THE Pharisees have criticized Jesus for keeping company with known sinners, and in answer he has just finished relating illustrations about regaining a lost sheep and a lost drachma coin. He continues now with another illustration, this one about a loving father and his treatment of his two sons, each of whom has serious faults.

First, there is the younger son, the principal character of the illustration. He collects his inheritance, which is unhesitatingly given to him by his father. He then leaves home and becomes involved in a very immoral way of life. But listen as Jesus tells the story, and see if you can determine who the characters are meant to represent.

"A certain man," Jesus begins, "had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the part of the property that falls to my share.' Then [the father] divided his means of living to them." What does this younger one do with what he receives?

"Later," Jesus explains, "after not many days, the younger son gathered all things together and traveled abroad into a distant country, and there squandered his property by living a debauched life." The fact is, he spends his money living with prostitutes. Afterward hard times come, as Jesus goes on to relate:

"When he had spent everything, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he started to be in need. He even went and attached himself to one of the citizens of that country, and he sent him into his fields to herd swine. And he used to desire to be filled with the carob pods which the swine were eating, and no one would give him anything."

How degrading to be forced to take up swineherding, since these animals were unclean according to the Law! But what pained the son the most was the gnawing hunger that even caused him to desire the food that was fed to the pigs. Because of his terrible calamity, Jesus said, "he came to his senses."

Continuing his story, Jesus explains: "He said [to himself], 'How many hired men of my father are abounding with bread, while I am perishing here from famine! I will rise and journey to my father and say to him: "Father, I have sinned against heaven and against you. I am no longer worthy of being called your son. Make me as one of your hired men."' So he rose and went to his father."

Here is something to consider: If his father had turned on him and angrily shouted at him when he left home, the son would not likely have been so single-minded as to what he should do. He may have decided to return and try to find work elsewhere in his home country so he would not have to face up to his father. However, no such thought entered his mind. Home was where he wanted to be!

Clearly, the father in Jesus' illustration represents our loving, merciful heavenly Father, Jehovah God. And you perhaps also recognize that the lost, or prodigal, son represents known sinners. The Pharisees, to whom Jesus is speaking, have previously criticized Jesus for eating with these very ones.

But whom does the elder son represent? And what application does Jesus' illustration have in our 20th century? Our following issue of this magazine will answer these questions when it considers the rest of Jesus' story about the lost son who was found. **Luke 15: 11-20, 30; Leviticus 11:7, 8.**

- To whom does Jesus tell this illustration, or story, and why?
- Who is the principal character in the story, and what happens to him?
- Whom do the father and the younger son represent?
- What information can we anticipate in the next issue of this magazine?

COVENANTS
involving God's eternal purpose

"Jehovah . . . has remembered his covenant even to time indefinite, the word that he commanded, to a thousand generations."—PSALM 105:7, 8.

MOST likely a covenant has affected you—your past, your present, and your future. 'What covenant?' you may wonder. In this case, it is marriage, for most of us are the offspring of a marriage and many of us are married ourselves. Even those not yet married may think about the blessings of a happy marriage in the future.

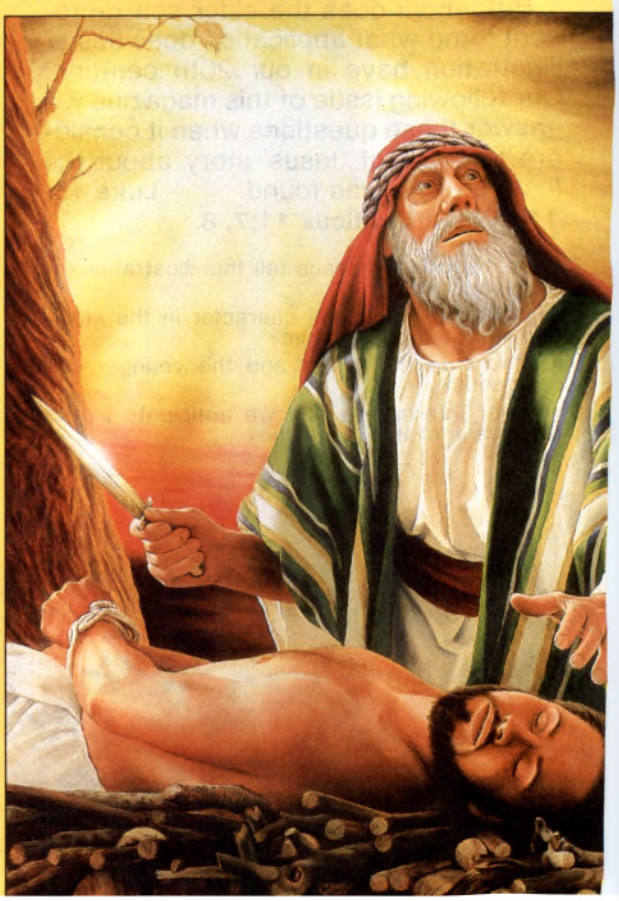
[2] Centuries ago the Hebrew prophet Malachi wrote about "the wife of your youth," "your partner and the wife of your covenant." (Malachi 2:14-16) He could call marriage a covenant, for that is a contract or formal agreement, an arrangement between parties to do something jointly. The marriage compact is a bilateral covenant in which two parties agree to become husband and wife, accepting obligations toward each other and looking forward to lasting benefits.

[3] Marriage might seem to be the covenant with the greatest personal impact on us, and yet the Bible discusses covenants of much wider import. In contrasting Biblical covenants with those of non-Biblical religions, one encyclopedia says that only in the Bible "does this ordering of the relation between God and his people become a comprehensive system with ultimately universal implications." Yes, these covenants involve the eternal purpose of our loving Creator. As you will see, your receiving untold blessings is tied in with these covenants. 'But how is that so?' you have reason to ask.

[4] You are well aware of the tragic results when Adam and Eve rejected God's authority. We inherited imperfection from them, which fact is behind the sicknesses that we have suffered, and which leads to

1, 2. Why can we say that most of us have been affected by a covenant?
3. Why may other covenants affect us more than marriage?
4. What initial covenant points to God's eternal purpose?

To work out his purpose in behalf of mankind, God made a covenant with faithful Abraham



death. (Genesis 3:1-6, 14-19) We can be grateful, however, that their sin could not thwart God's purpose to fill the earth with true worshipers enjoying lasting health and happiness. In this connection, Jehovah made the covenant recorded at Genesis 3:15: "And I shall put enmity between you and the woman and between your seed and her seed. He will bruise you in the head and you will bruise him in the heel." However, the brevity and symbolic language of this statement left many questions unanswered. How would Jehovah fulfill this covenant promise?

5 God further chose to arrange for a particular series of divine covenants, which, with the Edenic covenant, make seven in all. Each of us hoping to enjoy eternal blessings should understand these covenants. This includes knowing when and how they were made, who were involved, what their objectives or terms were, and how the covenants relate to one another in God's purpose to bless obedient mankind with everlasting life. This is an appropriate time to review these covenants, for on March 22, 1989, congregations of Christians will convene to commemorate the Lord's Evening Meal, which directly involves these covenants.

6 Of course, to some people the idea of covenants might sound dry, legalistic, with little human interest. Consider, though, what the *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* says: "The terms for 'covenant' in the ancient Near East as well as in the Greek and Roman world . . . are distributed according to two semantic fields: *oath and commitment* on the one hand, *love and friendship* on the other." We can see both aspects—oath and friendship—as the keystone of Jehovah's covenants.

5, 6. (a) What means did God decide to use in working out his purpose? (b) Why should we be interested in God's means of doing this?

Abrahamic Covenant—Basis for Eternal Blessings

7 The patriarch Abraham, "the father of all those having faith," was "Jehovah's friend." (Romans 4:11; James 2:21-23) God swore to him with an oath, setting out a covenant that is basic to our receiving eternal blessings.—Hebrews 6:13-18.

8 While Abraham was in Ur, Jehovah told him to move to another land, which turned out to be Canaan. At that time Jehovah promised Abraham: "I shall make a great nation out of you and I shall bless you and I will make your name great; . . . and all the families of the ground will certainly bless themselves by means of you."* (Genesis 12:1-3) Thereafter, God gradually added details to what we rightly speak of as the Abrahamic covenant: Abraham's seed, or heir, would inherit the Promised Land; his seed would lead to unnumbered offspring; Abraham and Sarah would be the source of kings.—Genesis 13:14-17; 15:4-6; 17:1-8, 16; Psalm 105:8-10.

9 God called it "my covenant between me and you [Abraham]." (Genesis 17:2) But we certainly should feel that our lives are involved, for God later amplified the covenant, stating: "I shall surely bless you and I shall surely multiply your seed like the stars of the heavens and like the grains of sand that are on the seashore; and your seed will take possession of the gate of his enemies. And by means of your seed all nations of the earth will certainly bless themselves." (Genesis 22:17, 18) We are part of those nations; a potential blessing is in store for us.

* This is a *unilateral* covenant, since only one party (God) is committed to carrying out its terms.

7, 8. What sort of covenant did Jehovah make with Abraham? (1 Chronicles 16:15, 16)
9. How do we know that we can be involved in the Abrahamic covenant?

[10] Let us pause to consider what we can learn from the Abrahamic covenant. Like the Edenic covenant before it, this points to a coming "seed," thus suggesting that the seed would have a human lineage. (Genesis 3:15) That would be of the line of Shem, down to Abraham, and through his son Isaac. This line would involve kingship, and it would somehow allow for a blessing for not just one family but humans of all lands. How was that covenant fulfilled?

[11] Abraham's descendants through Jacob, or Israel, multiplied to become a great nation. As an unnumbered literal seed of Abraham, they were dedicated to the pure worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. (Genesis 28:13; Exodus 3:6, 15; 6:3; Acts 3:13) Often the Israelites turned from pure worship, yet "Jehovah showed them favor and had mercy upon them . . . for the sake of his covenant with Abraham, Isaac and Jacob; and he did not want to bring them to ruin." (2 Kings 13:23; Exodus 2:24; Leviticus 26:42-45) Even after God accepted the Christian congregation as his people, he continued for a time to show special favor to the Israelites as a people who were the literal seed of Abraham.—Daniel 9:27.

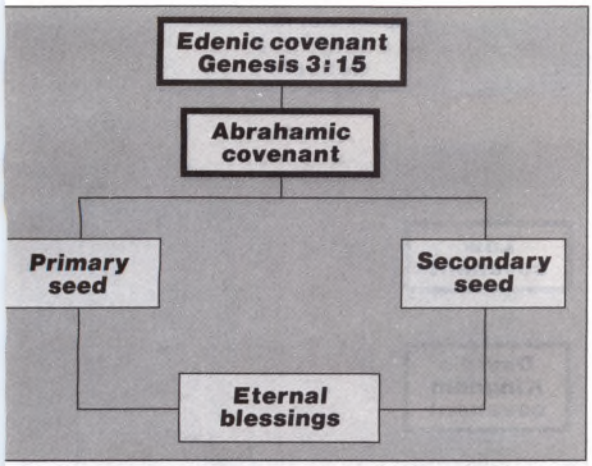
Spiritual Seed of Abraham

[12] The Abrahamic covenant had another fulfillment, a spiritual one. This greater fulfillment would not have been obvious before Jesus' time, but we can be happy that it is clear in our time. We have the explanation of its fulfillment in God's Word. Paul writes: "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. It says, not: 'And to seeds,' as in the case of many such, but as in the case of one: 'And to your seed,' who is Christ."—Galatians 3:16.

[13] Yes, the seed would come through just one line, or family, which was true of Jesus, born a natural Jew, a literal descendant of Abraham. (Matthew 1:1-16; Luke 3:23-34) Additionally, he was part of the family of the Greater Abraham in heaven. Recall that with deep faith the patriarch Abraham had been willing to sacrifice his son Isaac if God wanted that. (Genesis 22:1-18; Hebrews 11:17-19) Similarly, Jehovah sent his only-begotten Son to earth to become a ransom sacrifice for believing mankind. (Romans 5:8; 8:32) It is thus understandable why Paul identified Jesus Christ as the principal part of the seed of Abraham according to this covenant.

[14] Paul went on to indicate that God would 'multiply Abraham's seed' in the spiritual fulfillment. He wrote: "If you belong to Christ, you are really Abraham's seed, heirs with reference to a promise." (Genesis 22:17; Galatians 3:29) Such ones are the 144,000 spirit-anointed Christians who form a secondary part of the seed of Abraham. They are not in opposition to the primary part of the seed but "belong to Christ." (1 Corinthians 1:2; 15:23) We know that many of them cannot trace their ancestry to Abraham, for they are from non-Jewish nations. More crucial in the spiritual fulfillment, though, they are not naturally part of the family of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah; rather, they come from the imperfect family of sinner Adam. So we will need to see from later covenants how they can qualify to become part of "Abraham's seed."

10. What insights do we get from the covenant with Abraham?
11. How did a literal fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant come about?
12, 13. How did Jesus prove to be the primary part of the seed in the spiritual fulfillment of the Abrahamic covenant?
14. What is the secondary part of the seed of Abraham, and to what further discussion does this lead?



Law Covenant Temporarily Added

15 After God made the Abrahamic covenant as a fundamental step toward accomplishing his purpose, how would the line of the Seed be protected from contamination or extermination until the time for him to appear? When the Seed did arrive, how could true worshipers identify him? Paul answers such questions by pointing out God's wisdom in temporarily adding the Law covenant. The apostle writes:

16 "Why, then, the Law? It was added to make transgressions manifest, until the seed should arrive to whom the promise had been made; and it was transmitted through angels by the hand of a mediator. . . . The Law has become our tutor leading to Christ, that we might be declared righteous due to faith."—Galatians 3:19, 24.

17 At Mount Sinai, Jehovah made a unique national covenant between himself and Israel—the Law covenant, with Moses as its mediator.* (Galatians 4:24, 25) The people agreed to be in this covenant, and it was validated with the blood of bulls and goats. (Exodus 24:3-8; Hebrews 9:19, 20) It gave Israel theocratic laws and an outline for a righteous government. The covenant forbade intermarrying with pagans or sharing in immoral and false religious practices. It thus guarded the Israelites and was a force in preserving the line of the seed uncontaminated. (Exodus 20:4-6; 34:12-16) But since no imperfect Israelite could keep the Law completely, it made sins manifest. (Galatians 3:19) It also pointed to the need for a perfect, permanent priest and for a sacrifice that would not have to be repeated yearly. The Law was like a tutor that led a child to the needed instructor, who would be the Messiah, or Christ. (Hebrews 7:26-28; 9:9, 16-22; 10:1-4, 11) When it had accomplished its purpose, the Law covenant would end.—Galatians 3:24, 25; Romans 7:6; see "Questions From Readers," page 31.

18 When making this temporary covenant, God also mentioned this thrilling objective: "If you will strictly obey my voice and will indeed keep my covenant, then you will certainly become my special property . . . And you yourselves will become to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:5, 6) What a prospect! A nation of king-priests. How could that be, though? As the Law later specified, the ruling tribe (Judah) and the priestly tribe (Levi) were allotted different responsibilities. (Genesis 49:10; Exodus 28:43; Numbers 3:5-13) No man could be both a civil ruler and a priest. Still, God's words at Exodus 19:5, 6 gave reason to believe that in some undisclosed manner, those in the Law covenant would have opportunity to provide the members of "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

* "The covenantal idea was a special feature of the religion of Israel, the only one to demand exclusive loyalty and to preclude the possibility of dual or multiple loyalties such as were permitted in other religions."—*Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament,* Volume II, page 278.

15-17. (a) Why was the Law covenant added to the Abrahamic covenant? (b) How did the Law accomplish these objectives?

18. What further prospect was involved with the Law covenant, but why was this difficult to understand?

Davidic Kingdom Covenant

19 In time Jehovah added another covenant that further clarified how he would accomplish his purpose, to our eternal blessing. We have seen that the Abrahamic covenant pointed forward to kingship among the literal seed of Abraham. (Genesis 17:6) The Law covenant also anticipated kings among God's people, for Moses told Israel: "When you eventually come into the [Promised Land] and you have said, 'Let me set a king over myself like all the nations who are round about me'; you should without fail set over yourself a king whom Jehovah your God will choose. . . . You will not be allowed to put over yourself a foreigner." (Deuteronomy 17:14, 15) How would God arrange for such kingship, and how would it bear on the Abrahamic covenant?

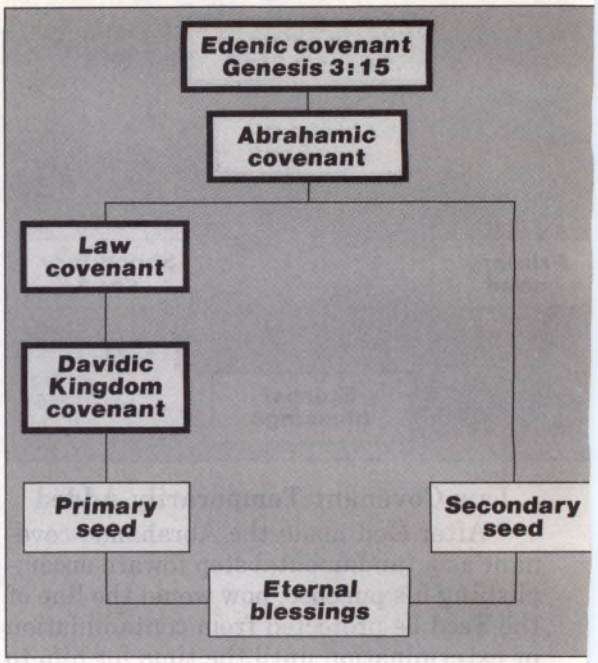
20 Though Israel's first king was Saul of the tribe of Benjamin, he was followed by the courageous and loyal David of Judah. (1 Samuel 8:5; 9:1, 2; 10:1; 16:1, 13) Well into David's reign, Jehovah chose to make a covenant with David. First He said: "I shall certainly raise up your seed after you, which will come out of your inward parts; and I shall indeed firmly establish his kingdom. He is the one that will build a house for my name, and I shall certainly establish the throne of his kingdom firmly to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:12, 13) As there indicated, David's son Solomon became the next king, and he was used to construct a house, or temple, for God in Jerusalem. Yet, there was more.

19. How was kingship pointed to in the covenants?

20. How did David and his line come into the picture?

What Is Your Answer?

- ☐ How did the Abrahamic covenant lay the basis for our receiving eternal blessings?
- ☐ What was the literal, fleshly seed of Abraham? The symbolic seed?
- ☐ Why was the Law covenant added to the Abrahamic covenant?
- ☐ How did the Davidic Kingdom covenant advance God's purpose?



21 Jehovah went on to make this covenant with David: "Your house and your kingdom will certainly be steadfast to time indefinite before you; your very throne will become one firmly established to time indefinite." (2 Samuel 7:16) Plainly, God was thus establishing a kingly dynasty for Israel in David's family. It was not to be just a constant succession of Davidic kings. Eventually, someone in David's line would come to rule "to time indefinite, and his throne [would be] as the sun in front of [God]."—Psalm 89:20, 29, 34-36; Isaiah 55:3, 4.

21. The Davidic Kingdom covenant made provision for what?

[22] It is evident, then, that the Davidic covenant further narrowed down the line of the Seed. Even the first-century Jews realized that the Messiah would have to be a descendant of David. (John 7:41, 42) Jesus Christ, the primary part of the seed of the Abrahamic covenant, qualified to become the permanent Heir of this Davidic Kingdom, as an angel testified. (Luke 1: 31-33) Jesus thus gained the right to rule over the Promised Land, the earthly realm over which David had reigned. This should increase our confidence in Jesus; he rules, not by illegal usurpation, but through an established legal arrangement, a divine covenant.

22. How did the covenant with David relate to the line of the Seed, and with what outcome?

[23] We have considered but four of the divine covenants bearing on how God arranged to accomplish his purpose to bring eternal blessings to mankind. Likely, you can see that the picture is not complete. Questions remain: Since humans continued imperfect, what priest or sacrifice could ever permanently change that? How would humans qualify to become part of Abraham's seed? Is there reason to believe that the right to rule would expand to include more than a mere earthly territory? How could Abraham's seed, both primary and secondary parts, bring a blessing to "all nations of the earth," including each of us? Let us see.

23. What questions and matters remain to be settled?

Will you benefit from God's COVENANTS?

"'By means of you all the nations will be blessed.' Consequently those who adhere to faith are being blessed together with faithful Abraham."—GALATIANS *3:8, 9.*

"BENEVOLENT [or, enlightened] despots" is what some 18th-century European rulers are called. They 'meant well to govern their people with fatherly kindness, but their plans went wrong and their reforms fell flat.'* (*The Encyclopedia Americana*) This was a leading cause of the revolutions that soon engulfed Europe.

*"Even the most adventurous reforms left an impoverished peasantry, an overprivileged, undertaxed nobility, a middle class inadequately integrated into government and society . . . It must be said that while enlightened despotism began to face questions that could no longer be ignored, it could provide no real solutions within the political and economic realities of the era."—*Western Civilization—Its Genesis and Destiny: The Modern Heritage.*

1. What does history show as to the effect of many rulerships?

[2] How different Jehovah is from unpredictable human rulers. We can easily see mankind's aching need for change that will finally produce real remedies for injustice and suffering. But we need not worry that God's actions to bring this about depend on some whim. In the world's most widely distributed book, he has documented his promise to bring lasting blessings to believing mankind. This will be regardless of people's former nationality, race,

2, 3. How is Jehovah different from human monarchs?

education, or social standing. (Galatians 3:28) But can you rely on this?

[3] The apostle Paul quoted part of the assurance God had given to Abraham: "Assuredly in blessing I will bless you." Paul added that since "it is impossible for God to lie," we "may have strong encouragement to lay hold on the hope set before us." (Hebrews 6:13-18) Our confidence in those blessings can be further strengthened by noting the orderly way in which God laid the basis for accomplishing this.

[4] We have already seen that God made a covenant with Abraham involving a seed who would be instrumental in blessing "all nations of the earth." (Genesis 22:17, 18) The Israelites became a fleshly seed, but in the more important spiritual sense, Jesus Christ proved to be the principal part of the seed of Abraham. Jesus was also the Son, or Seed, of the Greater Abraham, Jehovah. Christians who "belong to Christ" make up the secondary part of the seed of Abraham. (Galatians 3:16, 29) After forming the Abrahamic covenant, God temporarily added the Law covenant with the nation of Israel. It proved that the Israelites were sinners who needed a permanent priest and a perfect sacrifice. It guarded the line of the Seed and helped to identify him. The Law covenant also showed that, somehow, God would bring forth a nation of king-priests. While the Law was still in effect, God made a covenant with David to have a kingly dynasty in Israel. The Davidic Kingdom covenant also pointed to someone having permanent rulership over the earth.

[5] Yet, there were aspects or objectives of these covenants that seemed incomplete or in need of clarification. For example, if the coming Seed was to be a king in David's line, how could he be a permanent priest who would do more than previous priests? (Hebrews 5:1; 7:13, 14) Could this King govern more than a limited earthly realm? How would the secondary part of the seed qualify to be in the family of the Greater Abraham? And even if they could, what domain would they have, since most members did not descend from David? Let us see how God took legal steps in the form of additional covenants that would settle these questions, opening the way for our eternal blessing.

4. How did God use various covenants to accomplish his purpose?
5. What questions or problems still needed to be resolved?

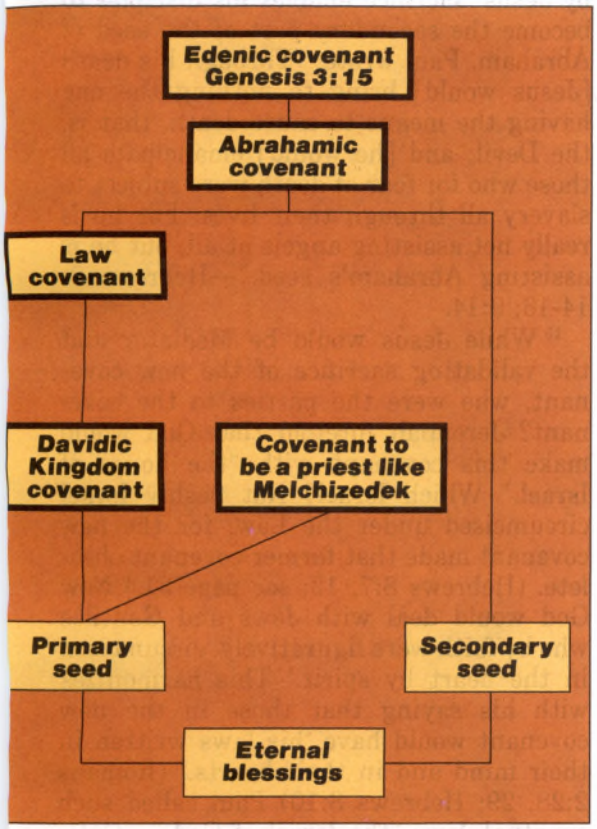
Covenant for a Heavenly Priest

[6] As we saw, within the scope of the Law covenant, God covenanted with David for a descendant (a seed) who would reign permanently over an earthly domain. But Jehovah also revealed to David that a lasting priest would come. David wrote: "Jehovah has sworn (and he will feel no regret): 'You are a priest to time indefinite according to the manner of Melchizedek!'" (Psalm 110:4) What was behind this sworn word of God that amounted to a personal covenant between Jehovah and the coming Priest?

[7] Melchizedek had been king of ancient Salem, which evidently was on the site where later the city Jerusalem (a name incorporating "Salem") was built. The account of Abraham's dealings with him highlights that he was a king who worshiped "the Most High God." (Genesis 14: 17-20) Yet, God's statement at Psalm 110:4 shows that Melchizedek was also a priest, making him a unique person. He was both a king and a priest, and he served where the Davidic kings and the Levitical priests later carried out their divinely arranged functions.

6, 7. (a) According to Psalm 110:4, what additional covenant did God establish? (b) What background helps us to understand this added covenant?

[8] Paul supplies us with added details about this covenant for a priest like Melchizedek. For example, he says that it was Jesus Christ who was "called by God a high priest according to the manner of Melchizedek." (Hebrews 5:4-10; 6:20; 7:17, 21, 22)



Though Melchizedek obviously had human parents, there is no record of his genealogy. So rather than Jesus' inheriting the office of priest according to a recorded lineage from Melchizedek, his appointment came directly from God. Jesus' priesthood will not be passed to a successor, for "he remains a priest perpetually." This is so, for the benefits of his priestly service will be eternal. We can truly be blessed in having a priest who "is able also to save completely those who are approaching God through him" and to instruct and guide faithful ones eternally.—Hebrews 7:1-3, 15-17, 23-25.

8. With whom was this covenant for a priest like Melchizedek made, and with what result?

[9] Another significant fact is that Jesus' role as King-Priest goes beyond the earthly sphere. In the same context where he mentioned this covenant for a priest like Melchizedek, David wrote: "The utterance of Jehovah to my Lord is: 'Sit at my right hand until I place your enemies as a stool for your feet.'" We can thus see that Jesus —David's Lord—was to have a place in heaven with Jehovah, which occurred at his ascension. From heaven, Christ can wield authority with his Father to subdue enemies and to execute judgments. —Psalm 110:1, 2; Acts 2:33-36; Hebrews 1:3; 8:1; 12:2.

[10] Consequently, by knowing about this fifth covenant, we have an expanded view of the orderly, thorough way in which Jehovah will accomplish his purpose. It establishes that the primary part of the seed will also be a priest in heaven and that his authority as King-Priest will have universal range.—1 Peter 3:22.

New Covenant and the Secondary Part of the Seed

[11] When we earlier considered the Abrahamic covenant, we noted that Jesus became the primary part of the seed by natural right. He directly descended from the patriarch Abraham, and as a perfect human, he was an accepted Son of the Greater Abraham. What, though, about humans who have the privilege of becoming the secondary part of Abraham's seed, "heirs with reference to a promise"? (Galatians

9, 10. How does knowledge of this fifth covenant expand our understanding of how God's purpose will be fulfilled?

11. What complications existed as to the secondary part of the seed?

3:29) Being imperfect, part of the family of sinner Adam, they would be unqualified to be in the family of Jehovah, the Greater Abraham. How could the impediment of imperfection be overcome? That would be impossible for humans, but it is not impossible for God.—Matthew 19:25, 26.

[12] While the Law was still in effect, God foretold through his prophet: "I will conclude with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah a new covenant; not one like the covenant that I concluded with their forefathers . . . 'which covenant of mine they themselves broke' . . . I will put my law within them, and in their heart I shall write it. And I will become their God, and they themselves will become my people. And they will no more teach . . . 'Know Jehovah!' for they will all of them know me . . . For I shall forgive their error, and their sin I shall remember no more."—Jeremiah 31:31-34.

[13] Observe that a feature of this new covenant was the forgiveness of sins, evidently in a way that was 'not like' the arrangement with animal sacrifices under the Law. Jesus shed light on this the day he died. After joining his disciples in celebrating the Passover as required by the Law, Christ instituted the Lord's Evening Meal. This annual celebration would involve a shared cup of wine, about which Jesus said: "This cup means the new covenant by virtue of my blood, which is to be poured out in your behalf."—Luke 22: 14-20.

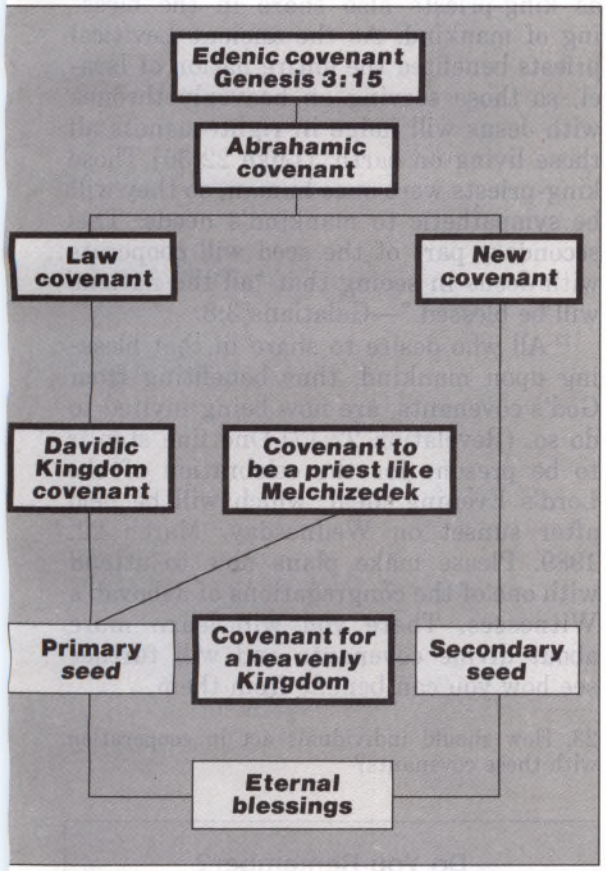
[14] Hence, the new covenant would be made operative by Jesus' blood. On the basis of such a perfect sacrifice, God could 'forgive error and sin' once and for all. Think what that would mean! Being able to forgive completely the sins of devoted humans in Adam's family, God could view them as sinless, beget them as spiritual sons of the Greater Abraham, and then anoint them with holy spirit. (Romans 8: 14-17) Thus, the new covenant validated by Jesus' sacrifice enables his disciples to become the secondary part of the seed of Abraham. Paul wrote: "Through his death [Jesus would] bring to nothing the one having the means to cause death, that is, the Devil; and [he would] emancipate all those who for fear of death were subject to slavery all through their lives. For he is really not assisting angels at all, but he is assisting Abraham's seed."—Hebrews 2: 14-16; 9:14.

[15] While Jesus would be Mediator and the validating sacrifice of the new covenant, who were the parties to the covenant? Jeremiah foretold that God would make this covenant with "the house of Israel." Which Israel? Not fleshly Israel circumcised under the Law, for the new covenant made that former covenant obsolete. (Hebrews 8:7, 13; see page 31.) Now God would deal with Jews and Gentiles who by faith were figuratively 'circumcised in the heart by spirit.' This harmonizes with his saying that those in the new covenant would have 'his laws written in their mind and in their hearts.' (Romans 2:28, 29; Hebrews 8:10) Paul called such spiritual Jews "the Israel of God."—Galatians 6:16; James 1:1.

[16] Since God was now dealing with spiritual Israel, a door of opportunity opened. When God established the Law, he had spoken of the sons of Israel becoming to him "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Exodus 19:6) Actually, fleshly Israel never could and never did become a nation in which all of them were king-

12, 13. (a) How did God foretell another covenant? (b) What special feature of this covenant merits our attention?
14. Why is the new covenant important in the producing of the secondary part of the seed?
15. Who are the parties to the new covenant?
16. How does the new covenant aid in accomplishing what Exodus 19:6 pointed to?

priests. But Jews and Gentiles that were accepted as the secondary part of the seed of Abraham could become king-priests.* The apostle Peter confirmed this, telling such ones: "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." He also wrote that an 'unfading inheritance was reserved in the heavens for them.'—1 Peter 1:4; 2:9, 10.



* Jesus is not a party to the new covenant. He is its Mediator and is without sins needing forgiveness. Furthermore, it is not necessary for him to become a king-priest by it, for he is a king according to the Davidic covenant and also a priest like Melchizedek.

[17] Consequently, the new covenant works with the preexisting Abrahamic covenant to produce the secondary part of the seed. This new covenant between Jehovah and spirit-begotten Christians allows for the formation of a heavenly nation of king-priests in the royal family of the Greater Abraham. We can see, then, why Paul said that this is "a correspondingly better covenant, which has been legally established upon better promises." (Hebrews 8:6) Those promises include the blessing of having God's law written in the hearts of devoted ones whose sins are not called to mind, and with all 'knowing Jehovah, from the least to the greatest.'—Hebrews 8:11.

Jesus' Covenant for a Kingdom

[18] Reflecting on the six covenants that we have discussed, it might seem that Jehovah has legally arranged all that is needed to accomplish his purpose. Yet, the Bible brings up another covenant that ties in with what we have considered, a covenant that rounds out additional aspects of this vital matter. Spirit-begotten Christians rightly expect that 'the Lord will deliver them from every wicked work and will save them for his heavenly kingdom.' (2 Timothy 4:18) In heaven, they will be a nation of king-priests, but what will be their domain? When they are raised to heaven, Christ is already there as a perfect high priest. He will also have stood up with kingly power for universal rule. (Psalm 2:6-9; Revelation 11:15) What is there for the other king-priests to do?

[19] On Nisan 14, 33 C.E., the evening Jesus instituted the Lord's Evening Meal and mentioned "the new covenant by

17. Why is the new covenant "better" than the Law covenant?
18. In what sense did the covenants that we have considered so far not completely accomplish God's purpose?
19. When and how was a seventh important covenant made?

virtue of [his] blood," he spoke of another covenant, the seventh for discussion. He told his faithful apostles: "You are the ones that have stuck with me in my trials; and I make a covenant with you, just as my Father has made a covenant with me, for a kingdom, that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom, and sit on thrones to judge the twelve tribes of Israel." (Luke 22:20, 28-30) Just as the Father had made the covenant with Jesus to be a priest like Melchizedek, so Christ made a personal covenant with his loyal followers.

[20] The 11 apostles had certainly stuck with Jesus in his trials, and the covenant showed that they would sit on thrones. Further, Revelation 3:21 proves that all spirit-begotten Christians who prove faithful will sit on heavenly thrones. Thus, this covenant is with all 144,000 who have been bought with Jesus' blood to be taken to heaven as priests and "to rule as kings over the earth." (Revelation 1:4-6; 5:9, 10; 20:6) The covenant that Jesus makes with them joins them to him to share his dominion. In a sense, it is as though a bride from a noble family was joined by marriage to a ruling monarch. She thus comes into position to share his kingdom rule.—John 3:29; 2 Corinthians 11:2; Revelation 19:7, 8.

[21] What benefits will this open up for obedient mankind? Neither Jesus nor the 144,000 will be like the benevolent despots who "could provide no real solutions." Rather, we are assured that Jesus is a high priest "who has been tested in all respects like ourselves, but without sin." We can therefore understand why he 'can sympathize' with human weaknesses and why the "other sheep," as has been true of anointed Christians, can also, through Christ, approach God's throne "with freeness of speech." Thus, they also "may obtain mercy and find undeserved kindness for help at the right time."—Hebrews 4: 14-16; John 10:16.

[22] Those covenanted to share with Jesus as king-priests also share in the blessing of mankind. As the ancient Levitical priests benefited the entire nation of Israel, so those serving on heavenly thrones with Jesus will judge in righteousness all those living on earth. (Luke 22:30) Those king-priests were once human, so they will be sympathetic to mankind's needs. This secondary part of the seed will cooperate with Jesus in seeing that "all the nations will be blessed."—Galatians 3:8.

[23] All who desire to share in that blessing upon mankind, thus benefiting from God's covenants, are now being invited to do so. (Revelation 22:17) One fine step is to be present for the celebration of the Lord's Evening Meal, which will be held after sunset on Wednesday, March 22, 1989. Please make plans now to attend with one of the congregations of Jehovah's Witnesses. There you will learn more about divine covenants and will further see how you can benefit from them.

20. With whom was the covenant for a Kingdom made, and why? (Daniel 7:18; 2 Timothy 2: 11-13)

21, 22. What blessing can be expected because of what these covenants accomplish?

23. How should individuals act in cooperation with these covenants?

Do You Remember?

- ☐ Why was the covenant mentioned at Psalm 110:4 made, and what did it accomplish?
- ☐ Who are in the new covenant, and how did it help to produce a nation of king-priests?
- ☐ Why did Jesus make a personal covenant with his followers?
- ☐ What are the seven covenants that we have considered?

Kingdom Proclaimers Report

'The Harvest Is Ripe' in Burma

□ THE beautiful land of Burma has over 1,500 proclaimers of the good news. Their recent conventions were held in the Burmese, Lushai, and Haka Chin languages, with a total attendance of 2,273. The following experiences reveal the interest that sheeplike people have in the Kingdom message and emphasize what John saw in vision: "The harvest of the earth is thoroughly ripe."—Revelation 14:15.

It Happened in Dinam

□ While in the house-to-house ministry in Matupi, a special pioneer met a student who was particularly interested in knowing about hell. When it was explained to him that the Bible hell is the common grave of mankind, he was very much surprised. He couldn't keep it to himself but wanted to tell his relatives back in his village of Dinam. During school holidays, he went back to his village and spread the truth about hell. His brother-in-law was very much interested in knowing more, so he accompanied the student back to Matupi to talk to the pioneer himself. He stayed for weeks in Matupi and studied with the pioneer. Later, during his second visit to Matupi, he insisted that the pioneers visit his village, for, he said, there were many interested people there. All three pioneers gladly accepted the invitation. It took them 12 hard hours to reach Dinam.

There was a funeral in Dinam the day the pioneers arrived, and people from nearby villages were there also to hear more about this Bible hell. They all rushed to see the visitors. A Bible discussion ensued that lasted from 7:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m. An understanding person in the crowd stopped the discussion at 11:00 p.m., allowing the pioneers to rest up a bit for the next day. Next morning, they started the Bible discussion at about seven and continued until ten in the evening, with only short breaks for meals. When the pioneers left the village, the sheeplike people requested that they return and spend more time with them. What a privilege to help such teachable persons with the precious good news of the Kingdom. Truly, the harvest is 'ripe' in Burma!

Getting the Truth From a Discarded Book

□ A man in Burma was visiting his friend who sells old books and newspapers as wastepaper and saw an old book without a cover in among the wastepaper. He picked it up and began to read it. Soon he was engrossed in it. It happened to be the Watch Tower Society's book *Listening to the Great Teacher*. He wrote the Society's branch office to obtain more books. The branch office immediately sent a pioneer to call on him. A study was started with him, and after just a few studies, he recognized the ring of truth and started cleaning up his life of bad habits and later got rid of his Hindu religious idols. Before long, he and his oldest daughter dedicated themselves to Jehovah and were baptized. Now he is a regular pioneer.

Truly, "the harvest is great, but the workers are few" in the fruitful field of Burma.—Matthew 9:37, 38.

IF WE DO GOD'S WILL, HE WILL NEVER ABANDON US

As told by Grete Schmidt

I WAS born in Budapest, Hungary, in 1915. The first world war was in progress, and my father was on the front lines with the Austrian-Hungarian army. When he died a year later, Mother returned with me to Yugoslavia, where her relatives lived.

Since Mother did not remarry, she had to find work, so she entrusted her sister with my upbringing. My aunt owned a farm about three miles from the city of Maribor in northern Yugoslavia. There I spent many happy years, always looking forward to Sunday when Mother would come up from Maribor to visit. At the same time, I developed a great longing for a father.

A Relationship With a Father

My relatives were Catholic, and since heaven and hell play an important role in the Catholic religion, a conflict arose in my mind. I did not feel good enough for heaven, but I felt I wasn't bad enough to be condemned to hell. I talked about this problem with everyone, from my grandmother to the village priest.

Mother was the one I bothered most. So after some months, she handed me a booklet in Slovenian, *Where Are the Dead?*, that she had obtained in town. Mother had not read it herself, but she thought it might answer my questions.

Never in my whole life had I read any publication as often as that booklet! Not only did it answer my questions about life and death but it also showed me how to develop an intimate relationship with my heavenly Father. I ordered five booklets with the intent of distributing them in front of the church.

In our village the womenfolk attended church services on Sunday, but the men remained outside discussing their favorite subjects, livestock and agriculture. Thus, while the priest preached to the women in the church, I preached to the men outside. I was only 15, and they evidently enjoyed my youthful enthusiasm, for they paid for the booklets, and I used the contributions to get a fresh supply.

The priest soon learned of my activities and came to speak to my aunt. The following Sunday, he warned from the pulpit: "Certainly, no one in our village will be so naive as to believe the stories of a teenager." As a result, everyone in the village turned against me. Even my aunt was ashamed and informed my mother that she could no longer keep me.

I really felt abandoned, but in prayer to Jehovah, I found comfort and regained strength. I moved in with my mother in Maribor, and we had a very happy time together. Although she did not share my spiritual interests, she allowed me to attend the meetings of the small congregation there. On August 15, 1931, I symbolized my dedication to God by water baptism.

To my great sorrow, Mother suddenly became ill and died a few weeks later. Her last words to me remain engraved in my memory: "Gretel, my dear, stick to your faith. I am sure it is the truth." After her death, I again felt painfully abandoned,

yet my relationship with our heavenly Father sustained me.

A couple with no children of their own took me in, and I served as an apprentice in the tailor shop that the wife managed. Materially I was well off, but my heart's desire was to serve God full-time. In our small congregation in Maribor, all were convinced that the remaining time for this system of things was short. (1 Corinthians 7:29) Secretly I asked Jehovah in my prayers to postpone his intervention until I had completed my apprenticeship. I finished on June 15, 1933, and the very next day, I left home in order to start pioneering! In view of my youthfulness—I was only 17—even some of the brothers tried to hold me back, but I was determined.

Early Pioneer Days

My first assignment was Zagreb, a city of about 200,000 inhabitants not far from Maribor. The congregation had only six publishers. I learned a great deal by working with Brother Tuček, the very first pioneer in Yugoslavia. Later, I pioneered by myself for almost a year. Gradually, however, more pioneers arrived from Germany, since the preaching work had recently been banned there by the Nazi government.

I helped several of the pioneer couples by serving as their translator. Working with these mature Christians was a very precious experience for me. I increased in knowledge and understanding, and my appreciation grew constantly for the privilege of preaching the good news of the Kingdom.

In the course of time, we became an impressive group of 20 pioneers serving in the Balkan States. Our common endeavor to make known the Word of God forged us together, each one ready to help the other in case of need. All of us were motivated by a willingness found only among God's people. This special "bond of union," love, continues among those of the group who are still alive today.—Colossians 3:14.

A pioneer's life is rich in experiences and offers as much variety as there are clouds in the sky. We felt enriched through the precious experience of getting to know lands and peoples previously unknown to us, including their customs and their way of life. Besides, we experienced how Jehovah cares for his faithful servants, just as Paul assures us at Ephesians 3:20: 'According to his power which is operating in us, he is doing more than superabundantly beyond all the things we ask or conceive.'

Jehovah's loving care was demonstrated when

Alfred and Frieda Tuček pioneering in Yugoslavia with full equipment, in 1937

Brother Honegger visited us from Switzerland and noted that we had to walk up to 25 miles to reach the outlying villages around Zagreb. He observed that we took off our shoes and hung them over our shoulders as soon as we had left the city in order to save the soles. So he bought us 12 bicycles, even though, as he later said, it took all the money he had! Jehovah surely moves the hearts of upright ones. The bikes, like a gift from heaven, served as our faithful companions during 25 years of pioneer service.

Once, Willi and Elisabeth Wilke and I arrived at a sizable Croatian village, where we each worked alone—from the outskirts toward the village center. We were offering the booklet *Righteous Ruler,* which depicted Jesus Christ on the title page. Just the year before, in 1934, the Yugoslavian king, Alexander, had been murdered, and his son Peter was to succeed him on the throne. However, the villagers preferred autonomy rather than a monarch from Serbia (southern Yugoslavia).

After a couple of hours' preaching, loud excitement could be heard from the village square. There, Brother Wilke and I found Sister Wilke encircled by a group of about 20 men and women, some armed with sickles, others busy burning our booklets. Sister Wilke could not speak the language well enough to dispel the mistrust of the villagers.

"Ladies and gentlemen," I cried out, "what are you doing?"

"We don't want King Peter!" they answered almost in one voice.

"Nor do we," I replied.

Surprised, the people pointed to the picture on the booklet and asked, "Then why are you making propaganda for him?" They had mistaken Jesus Christ for King Peter!

The misunderstanding was cleared up, and a thorough witness concerning the King Jesus Christ was given. Some who had burned their booklets now wanted new ones. We left the village in a happy mood, feeling that Jehovah's protective hand had been over us.

Later we extended our preaching into Bosnia, the central part of Yugoslavia. There, almost half the population was Muslim, and again we were confronted with new customs and also a lot of superstition. In the villages, the people had never seen a woman on a bicycle, so our arrival was somewhat of a sensation, stirring up curiosity. The religious leaders spread the rumor that a woman on a bicycle brought bad luck to a village. After that we left our bicycles outside the villages and entered on foot.

Since our literature now came under ban, the police often apprehended us. Usually, we were ordered to leave the province. Two policemen would accompany us to the border, a distance of from 30 to 60 miles. They were surprised that we were such good cyclists, able to keep up with them despite the fact that we carried all our clothing and literature and a small kerosene stove. Our escorts were always happy to find an inn along the way, and often they invited us for something to drink or even a meal. We enjoyed these occasions, as our small allowance did not permit such extras. Of course, we seized the opportunity to tell them about our hope, and often they would accept some of the "forbidden" publications. More often than not, we parted on good terms.

Then came the year 1936. We were preaching in Serbia when the news reached us that an international convention was to be held in Lucerne, Switzerland, in September. A special bus was to leave from Maribor, but that was 430 miles from where we were—a long bicycle ride! Nonetheless, we started to

save our money and, later in the year, made the trip.

We would ask permission from farmers to stay overnight in their hayloft instead of paying for a room at a guesthouse. In the morning, we asked if we could buy some milk from them, but usually they gave it to us free and sometimes added a substantial breakfast. We were shown much human kindness, and this remains a happy part of our pioneer memories.

Before leaving from Maribor for Lucerne, more pioneers arrived from Germany. Among them was Alfred Schmidt, who had served eight years in Bethel at Magdeburg, Germany. A year later I became his wife.

Alfred and Grete Schmidt pioneering in Mostar, the Islamic section of Yugoslavia, in 1938

Almost all the pioneers in Yugoslavia were able to attend the convention in Lucerne. It was my first one, and I was overwhelmed by the love and care shown by the Swiss brothers, besides being impressed by the pleasantness of the city of Lucerne. Little did I know that 20 years later, I would be pioneering there!

Working Under Restrictions

Returning from beautiful Switzerland to Yugoslavia, we soon began to experience real persecution. We were arrested and interned in the main prison in Belgrade. The brother who was responsible for the work in Yugoslavia requested permission to visit us, but this was denied. However, he spoke with a prison warden in such a loud voice that we could hear him, and the sound of his voice itself was a great encouragement to us.

After a few days, we were taken handcuffed to the Hungarian border; our literature and our money had been confiscated. Thus, we arrived in Budapest practically penniless, but with plenty of lice clinging to us as a souvenir from prison. Soon we met with other pioneers and shared with them in the preaching work there.

Every Monday we pioneers in Budapest met at the Turkish bath, and while caring for our bodies, the sisters and the brothers separately enjoyed an "interchange of encouragement . . . each one through the other's faith." (Romans 1:12) Meeting regularly served also as a check in case someone became sick or was imprisoned.

We had barely become accustomed to the new surroundings when, after six months, our Hungarian residence visa expired. In the meantime, Alfred and I had been married. Now we received instructions to get a visa for Bulgaria. The pioneer couple there had been expelled, and ten thousand booklets that they had ordered were ready at a small printery in Sofia. The couple's literature had been publicly burned, so we knew what kind of treatment to expect.

We finally obtained a three-month Bulgarian visa. We were passing through Yugoslavia at night, and a responsible brother met us at a predetermined station with the money to purchase the booklets. Finally, we arrived safely in Sofia and found a suitable room.

Sofia was a modern city of about 300,000 inhabitants, but there were no Witnesses there. The day after our arrival, we went to the printery. The owner had heard of the ban on our literature and the deportation of the couple who had ordered the booklets, so when he learned that we had come to purchase them, he almost hugged us. We packed the booklets into empty bags and drove past several policemen, who, I am happy to say, could not hear our accelerated heartbeat!

Our next problem was where to store the booklets and how to place such a large quantity in only three months. I was actually afraid of that pile of booklets! Never had I seen so many. But again Jehovah was our Helper. We had tremendous success, placing up to 140 a day, and in a few weeks, Brother and Sister Wilke arrived to help us.

One day, however, things nearly went wrong. I was preaching in a business area where on every door there was a brass plate with the name of a Dr. So-and-So. After about two hours, I met an elderly gentleman who scrutinized me distrustfully. He asked if I knew where I was.

"I do not know exactly what kind of building this is, but I noticed that all good lawyers seem to have combined their offices here," I answered.

"You are in the Ministry of the Interior," he replied.

Although my heart almost stood still, I calmly responded: "Oh, that is why all these gentlemen have been so friendly to me!" This remark softened his attitude, and he handed back my passport after checking it thoroughly. I left with a sigh of relief, thankful to Jehovah for his protection.

Finally, all the booklets were placed, and the day arrived for us to leave the "land of roses," Bulgaria. It was difficult to leave such friendly people, but the memory of them remained deeply anchored in our hearts.

Since we had German passports, we were able to return to Yugoslavia, but we were granted only a short stay. Afterward, in order to escape arrest, we had to sleep in a different place every night. We lived this way for about six months. Then, during the latter half of 1938, we received a letter from the Society's office in Bern, Switzerland, instructing us to try to come to Switzerland. The Nazi army had already occupied Austria, and political pressure was growing. In fact, the Yugoslavian government had already handed some of the German pioneers over to the Nazis.

So my husband and I traveled separately to Switzerland, Alfred by way of Italy and I through Austria. We were happily reunited and assigned to work at the Society's farm, Chanélaz, and then later at Bethel in Bern. This was an entirely new experience for me. I now had to learn to keep house the Swiss way, and I came to appreciate Jehovah's organization as never before.

Jehovah's Sustaining Power

After serving at Bethel during World War II and afterward, in 1952 Alfred and I again entered the pioneer work, the activity that had shaped our lives. We never had children of our own, but over the course of the years, we have received numerous expressions of love from our spiritual children. For example, in February 1975 we received the following note:

"I remember the day when a wise, gray-haired man visited a stubborn Evangelical Church counselor and offered him a Bible study. Reservedly and critically, my family and I accepted and then examined every point just as the Beroeans, until we had to admit that you brought us the truth. . . . What a kind Father Jehovah God really is! To him be praise and honor and thanks for all his kindness and mercy. But we want to thank you too, dear Alfred and Gretel, from the bottom of our hearts, for the painstaking patience you showed us. May Jehovah richly bless you for that. We sincerely hope that he will also give us the strength to persevere."

In November 1975 my husband Alfred died suddenly from a heart attack. For 38 years we had served Jehovah together, enduring the ups and downs of pioneering. This made our relationship a very close one. However, with his death that feeling of emptiness and of being abandoned crept over me again. But by taking refuge in Jehovah, I was again comforted.

My relationship with our heavenly Father has sustained me through more than 53 years in his full-time service. And my sentiments continue to be those of Jesus Christ: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me."—John 16:32.

The Word of God Evidences of Authenticity

True or false?—The Bible has been handed down through the ages without alteration.

True or false?—The thousands of variations in Bible manuscripts weaken its claim that it is the Word of God.

BEFORE you answer those questions, consider some information that was presented recently at "The Word of God" Exhibition held in the Chester Beatty Library in Dublin, Ireland.

The tattered, fragmented papyrus pages are wasting away with age. Yet, the Chester Beatty papyri are the most precious manuscripts in the library. They were dug out of a Coptic (Egyptian) graveyard about 1930. "[It was] a discovery," said Sir Frederic Kenyon, "only to be rivalled by that of the Codex Sinaiticus."

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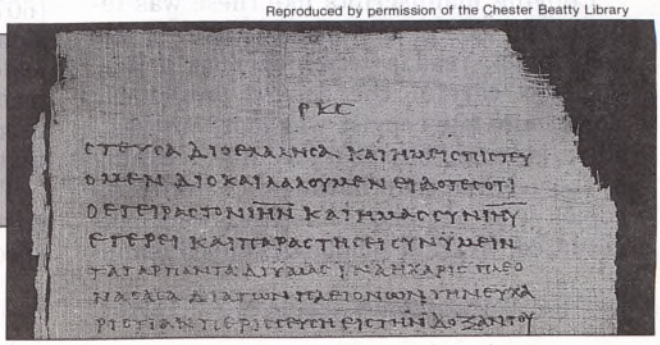
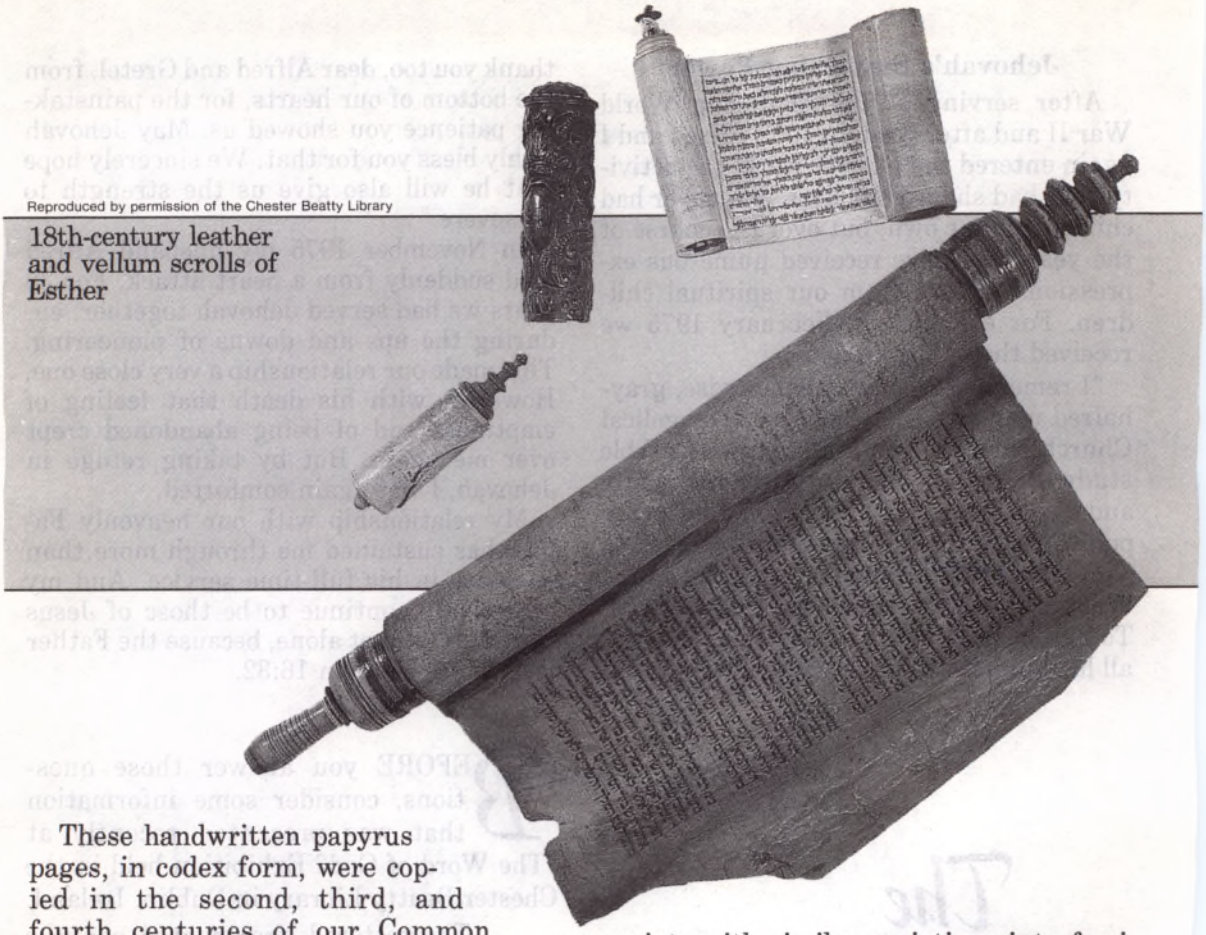


Third-century papyrus
—2 Corinthians 4:13–5:4



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18th-century leather and vellum scrolls of Esther

These handwritten papyrus pages, in codex form, were copied in the second, third, and fourth centuries of our Common Era. "Some," said Wilfrid Lockwood, the librarian, "may well have been copied *within a hundred years of the composition of the original.*" (Italics ours.) One codex has the four Gospels and the book of Acts. Another has most of the letters of the apostle Paul, including his letter to the Hebrews.

Copying manuscripts like these was tedious and tiring, and open to error. It was easy to misread a letter or miss a line, however careful the copyist might be. Sometimes the copyist was more interested in getting the substance and meaning of the original than in the exact words. As copies were recopied, mistakes were perpetuated. Textual scholars grouped manuscripts with similar variations into families. These Chester Beatty papyri, the oldest substantial manuscripts of the Greek Bible in existence, gave the scholars an unexpectedly new slant on things, since they fitted into none of the established families.

Before Jesus' time, and especially following the destruction of Jerusalem (607 B.C.E.) and the subsequent dispersion of the Jews, many handwritten copies of the sacred Hebrew Scriptures were made. About 100 C.E., Jewish authorities used such copies to establish a Hebrew text accepted by orthodox Jews.

They also set out precise rules to try to ensure exact copying of the text. They specified what materials could be used and

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Sixth- or seventh-century vellum codex—John 1:1-9, Coptic version

even the size and spacing of letters, words, lines, and columns. "No word or letter, not even a *yod* [the smallest letter in the Hebrew alphabet], must be written from memory," they said. Thus copyists produced scrolls like the Torah (teaching), comprising the first five books of the Bible, and the book of Esther. Such manuscripts of the Hebrew text, said the exhibition catalog, "exhibit an impressive degree of uniformity."

How serious were the mistakes that crept into both Hebrew and Christian Greek manuscripts? "It should be stressed," said Mr. Lockwood, "that the divergences between manuscripts of the Bible are superficial by comparison with those found in the manuscripts of the pagan literature . . . *In no case is any point of Christian doctrine affected by scribal corruption.*"—Italics ours.

The books of the Bible from before and after Jesus' time were translated into other languages. One of the oldest of the versions is the Samaritan Pentateuch. The Samaritans were people who occupied the territory of the ten-tribe kingdom of Israel after the king of Assyria took the Israelites into exile (740 B.C.E.). They adopted some features of Jewish worship and accepted only the first five books of the Bible, the Pentateuch. The Samaritan text of these books, written in a form of ancient Hebrew script, has 6,000 variations from the Hebrew text. "Most," said the exhibition catalog, "are of little importance to the text though of interest as possibly preserving features of ancient pronunciation or grammar."

In the third century B.C.E., Jewish scholars in Alexandria, Egypt, produced the Greek *Septuagint* version of the Hebrew Scriptures, which came to be used by Greek-speaking Jews all over the world. In time the Jews stopped using it, but it became the Bible of the early Christian congregation. When Christian Bible writers quoted from the sacred Hebrew Scriptures, they used the *Septuagint*. The

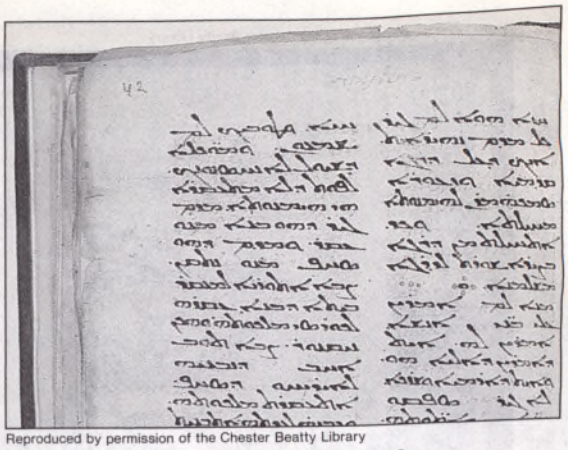
Chester Beatty papyri of the Hebrew Scriptures include 13 pages of the book of Daniel in the *Septuagint.*

Later versions of the Bible were produced in languages such as Latin, Coptic, Syriac, and Armenian. One example in the exhibition was a vellum codex of a Coptic version of a portion of the Bible from the sixth or seventh century C.E. How do versions like these help Bible scholars and textual critics? Such versions are usually very literal translations of the Greek manuscripts that the translators used. "If the Greek text on which the translator worked was a good one," explained Mr. Lockwood, "it is evident that the version will provide important help in the work of recovering the original words of the Greek."

A very precious, unique exhibit in the library is a commentary by a fourth-century Syrian writer, Ephraem, on the *Diatessaron* by Tatian. About 170 C.E., Tatian compiled a harmonized account of the life and ministry of Jesus, using extracts from the four Gospels (*Diatessaron* means "through [the] four"). Because no copies survived, some critics in the last century disputed whether such a harmony of the Gospels ever existed. These critics contended that the four Gospels themselves were not written till the middle of the second century.

In the last hundred years, however, the discovery of translations of the *Diatessaron* in Armenian and Arabic forced the higher critics to retreat. Then, in 1956, Sir Chester Beatty obtained this unique fifth/sixth century commentary that contains long extracts from Tatian's original work. "It certainly scotched the notion that the four Gospels were not in circulation in that era," said Mr. Lockwood.

"The Word of God" Exhibition was a reminder of the abundance of material available to Bible scholars and textual critics. Let one of these scholars, Sir Frederic Kenyon, explain the significance of all these Biblical manuscripts that have been discovered and at the same time answer the questions raised at the beginning:



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Fifth- or sixth-century vellum codex —commentary by Ephraem that includes extracts from Tatian's *Diatessaron,* in Syriac

"It may be disturbing to some to part with the conception of a Bible handed down through the ages without alteration . . . It is reassuring in the end to find that the general result of all these discoveries and all this study is to strengthen the proof of the authenticity of the Scriptures, and our conviction that we have in our hands, in substantial integrity, the veritable Word of God." (*The Story of the Bible,* page 113)—Psalm 119:105; 1 Peter 1:25.

In Our Next Issue

- **Justice for All —Will It Ever Come?**
- **Is Your Personal Opinion Paramount?**
- **Great Things Happening in a Small Land!**

Questions From Readers

■ Did the Law covenant end when Jesus died on the stake, and when was it replaced by the new covenant?

Pictorial Archive (Near Eastern History) Est.

Many have asked these questions, having in mind three events: Jesus' dying on the torture stake in the afternoon of Nisan 14, 33 C.E., his presenting the value of his lifeblood in heaven, and his pouring out of holy spirit on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. Scripturally, the Law covenant ended and was replaced with the new covenant at Pentecost. Let us see why this is so.

Jehovah foretold that, in time, he would replace the Law covenant with "a new covenant" that would allow for sin to be forgiven completely, which was not possible under the Law. (Jeremiah 31:31-34) When would that replacing occur?

The older covenant, the Law covenant, needed first to be taken out of the way as having accomplished its purpose. (Galatians 3:19, 24, 25) The apostle Paul wrote: "[God] kindly forgave us all our trespasses and blotted out the handwritten document against us, which consisted of decrees and which was in opposition to us; and He has taken it out of the way by nailing it to the torture stake." (Colossians 2:13, 14) Does that mean that at the moment that Jesus died, the Law covenant was replaced by the new covenant?

No, for the new covenant was to be inaugurated with the blood of the appropriate sacrifice and with a new nation, spiritual Israel. (Hebrews 8:5, 6; 9:15-22) Jesus was resurrected on Nisan 16, and 40 days later he ascended to heaven. (Acts 1:3-9) Ten days after his ascension, or on the day of Pentecost, Jesus poured out on his disciples "the promised holy spirit" that he had received from his Father, and spiritual Israel came into existence. (Acts 2:33) By means of the Mediator, Jesus Christ, God makes the new covenant with spiritual Israel.

In view of these interconnected things, at what time was the Law covenant replaced by the new covenant?

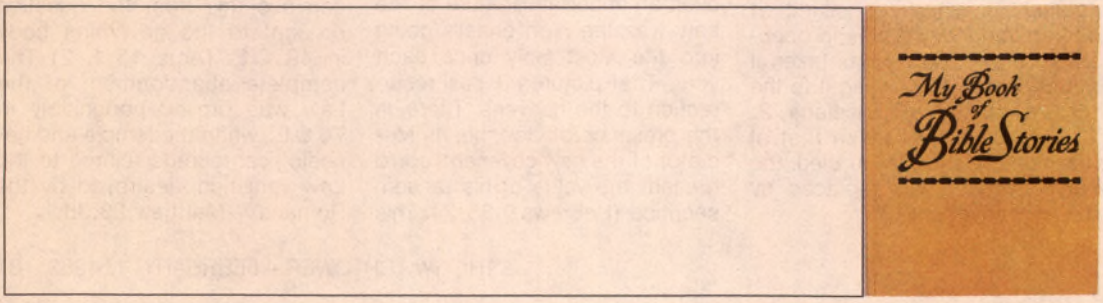
One could not say that the Law ended with Jesus' death. During the 40 days after Jesus was resurrected to spirit life but remained at the earth, his disciples were still keeping the Law. Moreover, an important feature of the Law was the high priest's going into the Most Holy once each year. That pictured Jesus' resurrection to the heavens. There, in the presence of God, he, as Mediator of the new covenant, could present the value of his ransom sacrifice. (Hebrews 9:23, 24) This opened the way for a new covenant to be inaugurated in fulfillment of Jeremiah 31:31-34.

The new covenant went into effect when Jehovah *acted* upon his acceptance of the ransom sacrifice. He poured out his holy spirit upon the faithful disciples of Jesus to bring into existence a new nation, spiritual Israel, composed of those in the covenant for the Kingdom. (Luke 22:29; Acts 2:1-4) This showed that God had canceled the Law covenant, figuratively nailing it to the stake on which Jesus had died. So the Law covenant ended when the operation, or inauguration, of the new covenant took place at the birth of the new nation, spiritual Israel, at Pentecost 33 C.E.—Hebrews 7:12; 8:1, 2.

Beyond that primary answer to the question, we can note that God did not completely turn his back on natural Israel at the end of the Law covenant and the evident commencement of the new covenant at Pentecost 33 C.E. For instance, in accord with the Abrahamic covenant, Jehovah showed special favor toward Jews, proselytes, and Samaritans during the 70th "week" that ended in 36 C.E. (Genesis 12:1-3; 15:18; 22:18; Daniel 9:27; Acts 10:9-28, 44-48) It took time for even some anointed Jewish Christians to adjust to the fact that after 33 C.E. it was not necessary to keep the Law; we can see this from the question brought to the governing body in 49 C.E. (Acts 15:1, 2) The complete abandonment of the Law was proved undeniably in 70 C.E., when the temple and genealogical records related to the Law vanished, destroyed by the Romans.—Matthew 23:38.

Where the Devil Came From

"My duties are mainly to keep the kids in their seat belts and to keep them quiet," explains a young woman who works part-time as a school-bus monitor in South Dakota. She relates:

"One of the boys gives me an especially hard time. Mind you, he's only six years old, yet his mouth at times can make a sailor blush. I have had to put him bodily in his seat and to sit with my hand over his mouth to keep him quiet. He has kicked, scratched, pinched, cursed, and screamed. On a bad day, he requires being sat on to keep him in his seat.

"Friday was a bad day, and about the time I was numb from the shoulders down, he asked: 'Why did God make the Devil?' There was a copy of *My Book of Bible Stories* on the bus. I told him that this book would help him to see where the Devil came from. Would you believe that we have gone through 41 stories together? I had just about given up on this kid, but his attitude has changed to the point that he doesn't want to leave the bus when we get to school. He wants to go through more stories!"