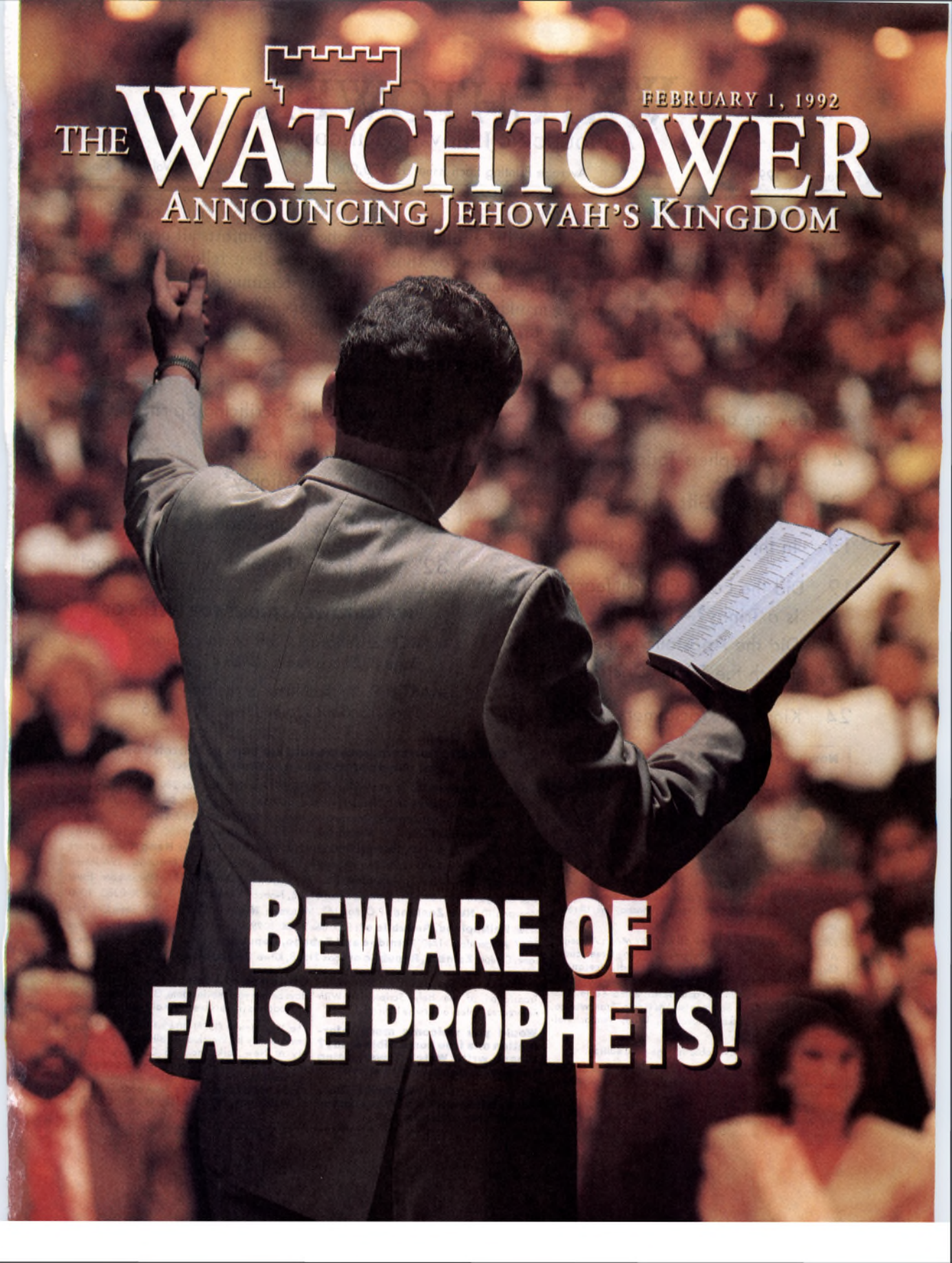
FEBRUARY 1, 1992

THE WATCHTOWER

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM



BEWARE OF FALSE PROPHETS!

THE WATCHTOWER®

ANNOUNCING JEHOVAH'S KINGDOM

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THE PURPOSE OF *THE WATCHTOWER* is to exalt Jehovah God as Sovereign Lord of the universe. It keeps watch on world events as these 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 God's 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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Beware of False Prophets!

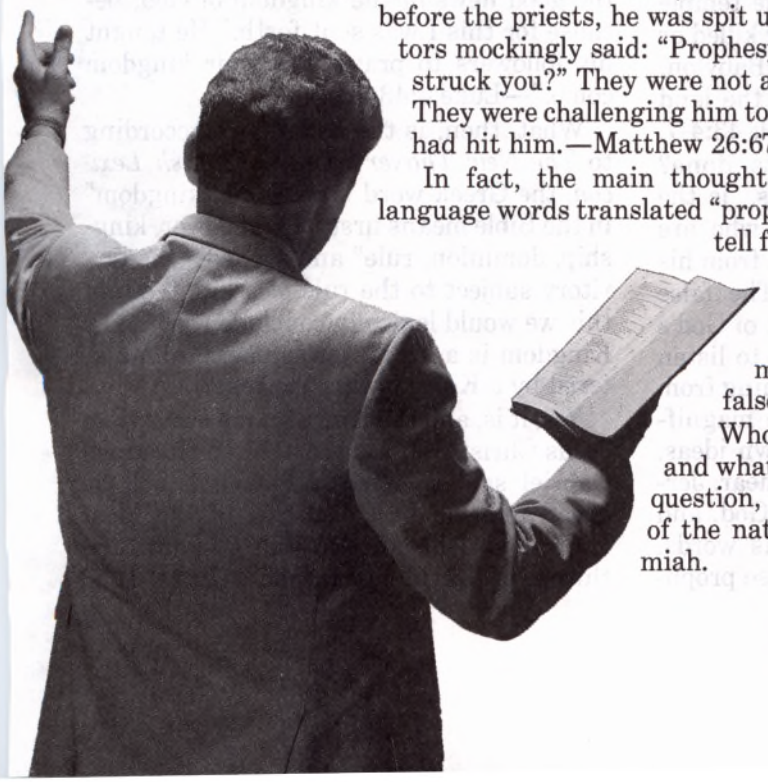
A BRAZILIAN couple had retired for the night when they heard thieves breaking into their home. The terrified couple managed to escape through the bedroom window and call the police. But afterward the wife was so shaken by the experience that she could not sleep in the house and had to go to her mother's.

Anyone who has had his house burglarized or who has been robbed in some other way will sympathize with her. Such an experience can be unnerving, and, unhappily, more and more people are suffering in this way. There is, however, a form of theft that has far more serious consequences.

What is this more serious form of theft, and who are the thieves? Jesus Christ gave us some information about it when, in speaking about our day, he said: "Many false prophets will arise and mislead many." (Matthew 24:11) False prophets are thieves. In what way? What are they stealing? Their thieving is tied in with their prophesying. So in order to understand the matter fully, we need first to know what prophesying is according to the Bible.

What It Means to Prophesy

When you think of prophesying, perhaps the first thing that comes to your mind is the foretelling of the future. This was indeed an aspect of the work of God's prophets of old, but it was not their primary work. For example, when in a vision the prophet Ezekiel was told to "prophesy to the wind," he simply had to issue a command from God. (Ezekiel 37:9, 10) When Jesus was on trial before the priests, he was spit upon and slapped, and his persecutors mockingly said: "Prophesy to us, you Christ. Who is it that struck you?" They were not asking Jesus to foretell the future. They were challenging him to identify by God's power those who had hit him.—Matthew 26:67, 68.



In fact, the main thought conveyed by the original Bible language words translated "prophesy" or "prophecy" is basically to tell forth God's mind on a matter or, as the book of Acts puts it, to tell "the magnificent things of God." (Acts 2:11) It is in this sense that many people are being robbed by false prophets.

Who, though, are the false prophets, and what are they stealing? To answer this question, let us look back in the history of the nation of Israel to the time of Jeremiah.

False Prophets Today

JEREMIAH served as God's prophet in Jerusalem at a time when the city was rife with idolatry, immorality, corruption, and the shedding of innocent blood. (Jeremiah 7:8-11) He was not the only prophet active at that time, but most of the others were self-serving and corrupt. In what way? Jehovah declares: "From the prophet even to the priest, each one is acting falsely. And they try to heal the breakdown of my people lightly, saying, 'There is peace! There is peace!' when there is no peace."—Jeremiah 6:13, 14.

The false prophets tried to make it appear that despite all the corruption in the land, things were fine, and the populace was at peace with God; but that was not so. God's judgment awaited them, as Jeremiah fearlessly proclaimed. The true prophet Jeremiah, not the false prophets, was vindicated when Jerusalem was razed by Babylonian soldiers in 607 B.C.E., the temple destroyed, and the populace either killed or dragged away captive to distant Babylon. The pitiful few that were left in the land fled into Egypt.—Jeremiah 39:6-9; 43:4-7.

What had the false prophets done? "'Here I am against the prophets,' is the utterance of Jehovah, 'the ones who are stealing away my words, each one from his companion.'" (Jeremiah 23:30) The false prophets stole the force and effect of God's words by encouraging the people to listen to lies rather than to the true warning from God. They were telling, not "the magnificent things of God," but their own ideas, things that the people wanted to hear. Jeremiah's message was truly from God, and if the Israelites had acted on his words, they would have survived. The false prophets 'stole God's words' and led the people to disaster. It was just as Jesus said about unfaithful religious leaders of his day: "Blind guides is what they are. If, then, a blind man guides a blind man, both will fall into a pit."—Acts 2:11; Matthew 15:14.

As in Jeremiah's day, there exist today false prophets claiming to represent the God of the Bible; but they too steal God's words by preaching things that distract people from what God, through the Bible, really says. In what way? Let us answer that question by using, as a touchstone, the fundamental Bible teaching of the Kingdom.

The Truth About the Kingdom

God's Kingdom was the major theme of Christ's teaching, and it is mentioned more than a hundred times in the Gospels. Early in his ministry, Jesus said: "I must declare the good news of the kingdom of God, because for this I was sent forth." He taught his followers to pray: "Let your kingdom come."—Luke 4:43; 11:2.

What, then, is the Kingdom? According to *The New Thayer's Greek English Lexicon,* the Greek word translated "kingdom" in the Bible means first, "royal power, kingship, dominion, rule" and second, "the territory subject to the rule of a king." From this we would logically conclude that God's Kingdom is a literal government administered by a King. Is this the case?

Yes, it is, and the King is none other than Jesus Christ. Before Jesus' birth the angel Gabriel said to Mary: "This one will be great and will be called Son of the Most High; and Jehovah God will give him the throne of David his father." (Luke 1:32)

Jesus' receiving a throne proves that he is a King, a governmental Ruler. Also proving that the Kingdom is a literal government is the prophecy of Isaiah: "Unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given: and the government shall be upon his shoulder . . . Of the increase of his government and peace there shall be no end."—Isaiah 9:6, 7, *King James Version.*

Where does Jesus rule? In Jerusalem? No. The prophet Daniel saw a vision of Jesus receiving the Kingdom, and his vision locates Jesus in heaven. (Daniel 7:13, 14) This agrees with the way Jesus spoke of the Kingdom. He often called it "the kingdom of the heavens." (Matthew 10:7; 11:11, 12) It also agrees with Jesus' words to Pilate when Jesus was on trial before him: "My kingdom is no part of this world. If my kingdom were part of this world, my attendants would have fought that I should not be delivered up to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from this source." (John 18:36) Has your minister or priest taught you that Jesus' Kingdom is a real government, ruling from heaven? Or has he taught you that the Kingdom is merely something that exists in the heart? If so, he has been stealing God's words from you.

Courtesy of the Trustees of the British Museum

Luther taught that human government could be viewed as God's Kingdom

What is the relationship between the Kingdom government and all the different forms of human government? According to *The Encyclopedia of Religion,* edited by Mircea Eliade, the Reformer Martin Luther, when discussing the Kingdom, proposed: "The worldly government . . . also may be called God's kingdom." Some teach that humans, by their own efforts, can bring human governments closer to God's Kingdom. In 1983 the World Council of Churches affirmed: "As we witness to our genuine desire for peace with specific actions, the Spirit of God can use our feeble efforts for bringing the kingdoms of this world closer to the kingdom of God."

Notice, though, that in the Lord's Prayer (the "Our Father"), Jesus taught his followers to pray for God's Kingdom to come and only then told them to pray: "Let your [God's] will take place, as in heaven, also upon earth." (Matthew 6:10) In other words, men do not make the Kingdom come by doing God's will. It is the coming of the Kingdom that causes God's will to be done on earth. How?

Listen to what the prophecy of Daniel chapter 2, verse 44, says: "In the days of those kings [human rulers in the time of the end] the God of heaven will set up a kingdom that will never be brought to ruin. . . . It will crush and put an end to all these kingdoms." No wonder Jesus said that his Kingdom was no part of this world! Rather, the Kingdom is going to destroy the kingdoms, the governments, of this earth and take their place in ruling mankind. As the God-given government of mankind, it will then see to it that God's will is done on earth.

The reason for such drastic action on the part of the Kingdom becomes clearer when

we consider who is in control of this world. The apostle John wrote: "The whole world is lying in the power of the wicked one." (1 John 5:19) "The wicked one" is Satan the Devil, whom Paul called "the god of this system of things." (2 Corinthians 4:4) There is no way that institutions in a world whose god is Satan the Devil can be identified with the Kingdom of God.

This is one reason why Jesus did not get involved in politics. When Jewish nationalists tried to make him a king, he avoided them. (John 6:15) As we have seen, he told Pilate frankly: "My kingdom is no part of this world." And in harmony with this, he said of his followers: "They are no part of the world, just as I am no part of the world." (John 17:16) Therefore, religious leaders who teach that the coming of God's Kingdom is hastened by reformation within this system of things and who encourage their flocks to work to that end are false prophets. They steal the force and effect of what the Bible really says.

Why Is It Important?

Is all of this just an intellectual argument? By no means. Wrong teachings about God's Kingdom have misled many and have even affected the course of history. For example, the publication *Théo,* a Roman Catholic encyclopedia, says: "God's people are on the move toward a Kingdom of God initiated on earth by the Christ . . . The church is the seed of this Kingdom." The identification of the Catholic Church with God's Kingdom gave the church enormous secular power during the superstitious Middle Ages. Even today, church authorities try to influence the course of world affairs, working in favor of some political systems and against others.

One commentator presented another view that is widespread today when he said: "The way of revolution is the kingdom because the revolution is the people coming together in a new humanity, ignited by a divine symbol given through the man of truth—Jesus . . . Gandhi . . . the Berrigans." Teaching that God's Kingdom can be furthered by political activism and ignoring the real facts about the Kingdom have led religious leaders to run for political office. It has led others to get involved in civil unrest and even take part in guerrilla warfare. None of this is in harmony with the truth that the Kingdom is no part of this world. And religious leaders who get so deeply involved in politics are far from being no part of the world, as Jesus said his true disciples would be. Those who teach that God's Kingdom is achieved through political action are false prophets. They are stealing God's words from the people.

If religious leaders in Christendom really taught what the Bible says, their flocks would know that God's Kingdom will indeed solve problems such as poverty, disease, racial inequity, and oppression. But it will be in God's due time and in God's way. It will not be through the reform of political systems, which will pass away when the Kingdom comes. If these clergymen were true prophets, they would have taught their flocks that while waiting for God's Kingdom to act, they can find real, God-given, practical help to handle the problems that the inequities of this world cause.

Finally, they would have taught their flocks that the worsening conditions on earth that cause so much distress were prophesied in the Bible and are a sign that the coming of the Kingdom is close. Yes, the Kingdom of God will soon intervene and replace the present political structures. What a blessing that will be!—Matthew 24: 21, 22, 36-39; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 19: 11-21.

Like a loving Shepherd, Jehovah through his Kingdom will bring conditions that no human could

Mankind Under God's Kingdom

What will the coming of God's Kingdom mean for mankind? Well, can you imagine yourself getting up every morning full of vitality? No one you know is sick or dying. Even your dead loved ones have been returned to you through a resurrection. (Isaiah 35:5, 6; John 5:28, 29) There are no more economic worries caused by selfish commercialism or unequal economic systems. You have your own comfortable home and plenty of land to raise all you need to feed the family. (Isaiah 65:21-23) You can walk about anywhere at any time of day or night with no fear of assault. There are no wars anymore—nothing to threaten your security. Everybody has your best interests at heart. The wicked are gone. Love and righteousness reign. Can you imagine such a time? This is the kind of world the Kingdom will bring.—Psalm 37:10, 11; 85:10-13; Micah 4:3, 4.

Is this just a pipe dream? No. Read the scriptures cited in the preceding paragraph, and you will find that everything said there reflects definite promises of God. If you have not until now been given this true picture of what God's Kingdom can and will do for mankind, then someone has stolen God's words from you.

Happily, things need not remain that way. Jesus said that in our day "this good news of the kingdom will be preached in all the inhabited earth for a witness to all the nations; and then the end will come." (Matthew 24:14) The magazine you are reading is part of that preaching work. We encourage you to avoid being deceived by false prophets. Look deeper into God's Word to find the truth about God's Kingdom. Then, subject yourself to that Kingdom, which is a provision of the Great Shepherd, Jehovah God. In truth, it is man's only hope, and it will not fail.

JEHOVAH'S GIFT OF HOLY SPIRIT

"How much more so will the Father in heaven give holy spirit to those asking him!"—LUKE 11:13.

IN THE fall of the year 32 C.E. while Jesus was preaching the good news in Judea, he spoke to his disciples about Jehovah's generosity. He used some powerful illustrations and then made a wonderful promise, saying: "If you, although being wicked, know 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.

[2] What a comfort those words are! As we endure the turmoil of this world's last days, face the enmity of Satan and his demons, and fight our own fallen inclinations, it is truly heartwarming to know that God will strengthen us by his spirit. Indeed, faithful endurance is impossible without that support. Have you experienced the power of this spirit, which is God's own active force? Do you understand how much it can help you? Do you use it to the full?

1, 2. (a) What promise did Jesus make about holy spirit, and why is this truly comforting? (b) What is the holy spirit?

The Power of Holy Spirit

[3] Consider first the power of holy spirit. Think back to the year 1954. That was when a hydrogen bomb was detonated over Bikini Atoll in the South Pacific. An instant after the bomb exploded, that beautiful island was engulfed in an immense fireball and battered by an explosion equal in force to the detonation of 15 million tons of TNT. Where did all that destructive power come from? It was the result of changing into energy just a small fraction of the uranium and hydrogen that made up the core of the bomb. What, though, if

3, 4. Illustrate the power of holy spirit.

scientists could do the opposite of what they had accomplished at Bikini? Suppose they could capture all that fiery energy and convert it into a few pounds of uranium and hydrogen. What an achievement that would be! Yet, Jehovah did something similar to that but on a vastly greater scale when "in the beginning [he] created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

[4] Jehovah has vast reserves of dynamic energy. (Isaiah 40:26) In the creation, he must have harnessed some of this energy when he formed all the matter that makes up the universe. What did he use in this creative activity? Holy spirit. We read: "By the word of Jehovah the heavens themselves were made, and by the spirit of his mouth all their army." (Psalm 33:6) And the Genesis account of creation reads: "God's active force [holy spirit] was moving to and fro over the surface of the waters." (Genesis 1:2) What a mighty force the holy spirit is!

Miraculous Works

[5] Holy spirit still operates in very lofty ways. It guides and directs Jehovah's heavenly organization. (Ezekiel 1:20, 21) Like the energy released by the hydrogen bomb, it can be used destructively to execute judgment on Jehovah's enemies, but it has also operated in other ways that excite us to wonder.—Isaiah 11:15; 30:27, 28; 40:7, 8; 2 Thessalonians 2:8.

[6] For example, about 1513 B.C.E., Jehovah sent Moses to appear before Pharaoh of Egypt to demand freedom for the children of Israel. For the previous 40 years, Moses had been a shepherd in Midian, so why should Pharaoh listen to a shepherd? Because Moses came in the name of the only true God, Jehovah. To prove this, Jehovah empowered him to perform miracles. So impressive were these that even the Egyptian priests were forced to admit: "It is the finger of God!"* (Exodus 8:19) Jehovah brought ten plagues on Egypt, the final one of which forced Pharaoh to let God's people leave Egypt. When Pharaoh stubbornly pursued them with his army, the Israelites escaped when a way was miraculously opened up through the Red Sea. The Egyptian army followed them and drowned in the sea.—Isaiah 63:11-14; Haggai 2:4, 5.

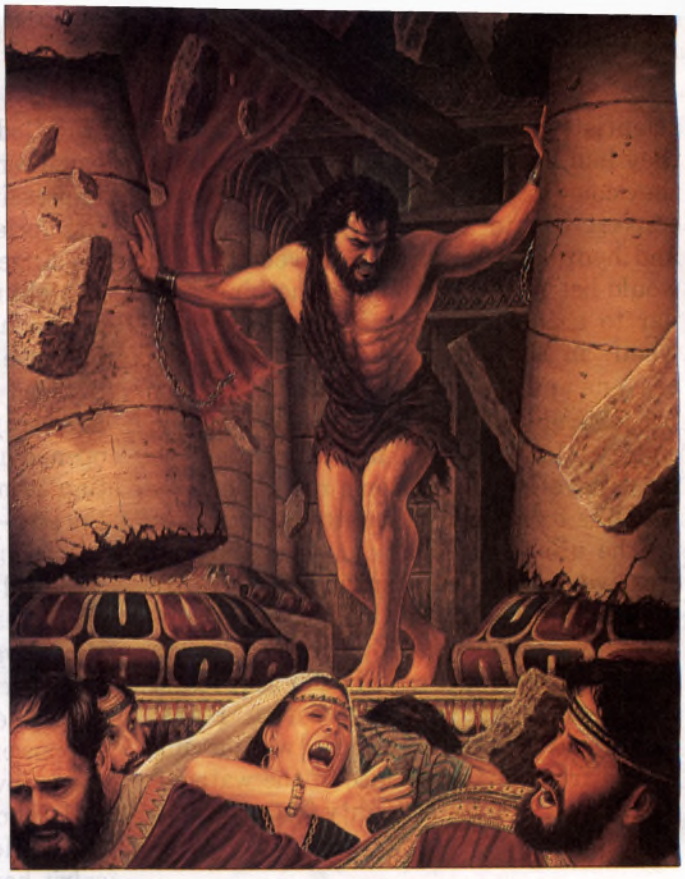
[7] Yes, Jehovah through his spirit worked powerful miracles in behalf of the Israelites in Moses' time, and at other times too. What was the intent of those miracles? They furthered Jehovah's purposes, caused his name to be known, and demonstrated his power. And sometimes, as with Moses, they proved conclusively that an individual had Jehovah's backing. (Exodus 4:1-9; 9:14-16) However, miracles wrought by holy spirit have been rare throughout history.# Likely, most individuals living in Bible times never witnessed one, and today they no longer occur. Nevertheless, as we today wrestle with problems that may seem insurmountable, is it not a comfort to know that if we ask Jehovah in faith, he will give us the same spirit that supported Moses before Pharaoh and opened a way for the Israelites through the Red Sea?—Matthew 17:20.

5. In what lofty ways does holy spirit operate?
6. How did holy spirit support Moses and the children of Israel in their dealings with Egypt?

* The expression "finger of God" usually refers to holy spirit.—Compare Luke 11:20 and Matthew 12:28.

The majority of the miracles recorded in the Bible took place during the time of Moses and Joshua, Elijah and Elisha, and Jesus and his apostles.

7. (a) What were some reasons why the holy spirit worked miracles? (b) Although miracles wrought by holy spirit no longer occur, why is the record of them in the Bible comforting?



The spirit that gave Samson superhuman strength can give us power for all things

Inspired Writings

[8] After their deliverance from Egypt, Moses led the Israelites to Mount Sinai, where Jehovah concluded a covenant with them and gave them his Law. A central part of that Law given through Moses was the Ten Commandments, and the original copies of these were engraved on stone tablets. How? By holy spirit. The Bible says: "Now as soon as [Jehovah] had finished speaking with him on Mount Sinai he proceeded to give Moses two tablets of the Testimony, tablets of stone *written on by God's finger.*"—Exodus 31:18; 34:1.

[9] In addition to the Ten Commandments, Jehovah through his spirit gave Israel hundreds of laws and regulations to guide the lives of faithful men and women. And more was to come. Centuries after Moses' day, Levites testified in a public prayer to Jehovah: "You were indulgent with [the Israelites] for many years and kept bearing witness against them by your spirit by means of your prophets." (Nehemiah 9:5, 30) Many inspired prophecies uttered by those prophets were recorded. Further, holy spirit moved faithful men to write down sacred histories and heartfelt songs of praise.

[10] Paul was speaking of all these writings when he said: "All Scripture is inspired of God." (2 Timothy 3:16; 2 Samuel 23:2; 2 Peter 1:20, 21) Indeed, when quoting these scriptures, Jesus' first-century disciples often used expressions such as "holy spirit spoke . . . by David's mouth," "holy spirit aptly spoke through Isaiah," or just "the holy spirit says." (Acts 1:16; 4:25; 28:25, 26; Hebrews 3:7) What a blessing that the same holy spirit that influenced the writing of the Holy Scriptures has preserved them so that they can guide and comfort us today!—1 Peter 1:25.

8. What was the role of the holy spirit in the giving of the Ten Commandments?

9, 10. How was the holy spirit active in the writing of the Hebrew Scriptures, and how is this evident from expressions used by Jesus' disciples?

Reliance on Holy Spirit

[11] While the Israelites were encamped at the foot of Mount Sinai, Jehovah command-

11. What activity of the spirit was seen with regard to the building of the tabernacle?

ed them to build a tabernacle as a center for true worship. How could they accomplish this? "Moses said to the sons of Israel: 'See, Jehovah has called by name Bezalel the son of Uri the son of Hur of the tribe of Judah. And he proceeded to fill him with the spirit of God in wisdom, in understanding and in knowledge and in every sort of craftsmanship.'" (Exodus 35:30, 31) Holy spirit reinforced whatever natural skill Bezalel possessed, and he could successfully oversee the erection of that remarkable structure.

[12] At a later time, Jehovah's spirit became operative upon Samson, giving him superhuman strength to enable him to deliver Israel from the Philistines. (Judges 14: 5-7, 9; 15:14-16; 16:28-30) Still later, Solomon was granted special wisdom as king of God's chosen people. (2 Chronicles 1:12, 13) Under him, Israel prospered as never before, and its happy condition became a pattern for the blessings that God's people will enjoy under the Millennial Reign of Christ Jesus, the Greater Solomon. —1 Kings 4:20, 25, 29-34; Isaiah 2:3, 4; 11: 1, 2; Matthew 12:42.

[13] What a blessing it is that Jehovah makes that same spirit available to us! When we feel inadequate to fulfill an assignment or engage in the preaching work, we can ask Jehovah to give us the same spirit that he gave to Bezalel. When we suffer sickness or endure persecution, the same spirit that gave Samson extraordinary strength will fortify us—though not, of course, miraculously. And when we face difficult problems or have to make important decisions, we can ask Jehovah, who gave Solomon extraordinary wisdom, to help us act wisely. Then, like Paul, we will say: "For all things I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me." (Philippians 4:13) And James' promise will apply to us: "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." —James 1:5.

[14] Jehovah's spirit was also upon Moses in his work of judging the nation. When others were appointed to help Moses, Jehovah said: "I shall have to take away some of the spirit that is upon you and place it upon them, and they will have to help you in carrying the load of the people that you may not carry it, just you alone." (Numbers 11:17) Thus, those men did not have to act in their own strength. Holy spirit supported them. We read that on later occasions Jehovah's spirit was upon other individuals. (Judges 3:10, 11; 11:29) When Samuel anointed David as future king of Israel, the record says: "Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed him in the midst of his brothers. And the spirit of Jehovah began to be operative upon David from that day forward." (1 Samuel 16:13) Those today with weighty responsibilities—family, congregation, or organizational—can be comforted to know that God's spirit still supports his servants as they take care of their obligations.

[15] Some thousand years after Moses' day, faithful ones from among the children of Israel returned to Jerusalem from Babylon with the commission to rebuild the temple. (Ezra 1:1-4; Jeremiah 25:12; 29:14) Difficult obstacles arose, however, and they were discouraged for many years. Finally,

12. How did the spirit strengthen individuals in unusual ways after Moses' time?
13. How does the record of the spirit's strengthening Bezalel, Samson, and Solomon encourage us today?

14. Who, in ancient times and today, have been supported by holy spirit?
15. In what way has holy spirit strengthened Jehovah's organization (a) in the days of Haggai and Zechariah? and (b) today?

Jehovah raised up the prophets Haggai and Zechariah to encourage the Jews not to rely on their own strength. But how would the task be accomplished? "'Not by a military force, nor by power, but by my spirit,' Jehovah of armies has said." (Zechariah 4:6) And with the support of God's spirit, the temple was built. God's people today have similarly accomplished much. The preaching of the good news has expanded around the earth. Millions of individuals are being educated in truth and righteousness. Conventions are organized. Kingdom Halls and branch offices are built. Much of this has been done in the face of bitter opposition. But Jehovah's Witnesses have not become discouraged, knowing that every single thing they have accomplished has been, not by a military force, nor by human power, but by God's spirit.

God's Spirit in the First Century

[16] As we have seen, pre-Christian servants of God were well aware of the power of God's spirit. They relied on it to help them fulfill weighty obligations and to accomplish God's will. They also knew that the Law and the other sacred writings were inspired, written under the influence of the spirit of Jehovah, and thus they were 'God's Word.' (Psalm 119:105) What, though, of the Christian era?

[17] The first century of our Common Era also saw wonderful activities of God's spirit. There was spirit-inspired prophesying. (1 Corinthians 14:1, 3) In fulfillment of Jesus' promise that holy spirit would remind his disciples of all the things he had said and would teach them further aspects of the truth, a number of books were written under the influence of holy spirit. (John 14:26; 15:26, 27; 16:12, 13) And there were miracles, as will be discussed more fully in our next article. Indeed, the first century was ushered in by a remarkable miracle. About the year 2 B.C.E., a special baby was to be born, and as a sign, his young mother was to be a virgin. How could that be? By means of holy spirit. The record says: "The birth of Jesus Christ was in this way. During the time his mother Mary was promised in marriage to Joseph, she was found to be pregnant by holy spirit before they were united."—Matthew 1:18; Luke 1:35, 36.

[18] When Jesus grew up, he cast out demons, healed the sick, even raised the dead in the power of holy spirit. Some of his followers also performed miracles and powerful works. These special abilities were gifts of the spirit. What was their purpose? Just as earlier miracles had done, they furthered God's purposes and revealed his power. Moreover, they demonstrated the genuineness of Jesus' claim that he was sent from God; and later, they proved that the first-century Christian congregation was God's chosen nation.—Matthew 11: 2-6; John 16:8; Acts 2:22; 1 Corinthians 12: 4-11; Hebrews 2:4; 1 Peter 2:9.

16. What experience did Jehovah's pre-Christian servants have with the activity of God's spirit?

17, 18. What were some miraculous manifestations of the spirit in the Christian era, and what purpose did these serve?

Can You Answer the Following Questions?

- ☐ How did Jehovah create all the matter in the universe?
- ☐ What were some ways in which holy spirit operated in pre-Christian times?
- ☐ How does it comfort us today to know what the holy spirit accomplished in ancient times?
- ☐ How can we avail ourselves of the provision of holy spirit?

[19] The apostle Paul, however, said that such miraculous manifestations of the spirit belonged to the childhood of the congregation and would pass away, so we today do not see such miracles wrought by holy spirit. (1 Corinthians 13:8-11) Still, the miracles performed by Jesus and his apostles have more than historic interest. They strengthen our faith in God's promise that sickness and death will have no place under Jesus' rulership in the new world.—Isaiah 25:6-8; 33:24; 65:20-24.

Benefit From God's Holy Spirit

[20] What a powerful force this spirit is! But how can Christians today avail themselves of it? First, Jesus said we should ask for it, so why not do just that? Pray to Jehovah to give you this wonderful gift not only in times of stress but on every occasion. In addition, read the Bible so that holy spirit can speak to you. (Compare Hebrews 3:7.) Meditate on what you read and apply it so that holy spirit can be an influence in your life. (Psalm 1:1-3) Further, associate—individually, in congregations, and at assemblies—with others who rely on God's spirit. How richly holy spirit fortifies those who bless their God "in the congregated throngs"!—Psalm 68:26.

[21] Is not Jehovah a generous God? He says we have only to ask for holy spirit and he will give it to us. How foolish to rely on our own wisdom and strength when such a powerful help is at our disposal! There are, however, other matters having to do with God's spirit that affect us as Christians, and these will be discussed in the next article.

19. How is our faith strengthened by the Bible's account of the miracles of Jesus and his apostles?

20, 21. How can we avail ourselves of the provision of holy spirit?

'IN THE NAME OF THE HOLY SPIRIT'

"Go therefore and make disciples of people of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of . . . the holy spirit."—MATTHEW 28:19.

IN THE year 29 of our Common Era, John the Baptizer was active in Israel preparing the way for the Messiah, and in the course of his ministry, he announced something new about holy spirit. Of course, the Jews already knew what the Hebrew Scriptures said about the spirit. They may have been surprised, though, when John said: "I, for my part, baptize you with water because of your repentance; but the one coming after me . . . will baptize you people with holy spirit." (Matthew 3:11) 'Baptism with holy spirit' was a new expression.

[2] The one coming was Jesus. During his earthly life, Jesus did not actually baptize

1. What new expression did John the Baptizer use in connection with holy spirit?

2. What new expression involving holy spirit did Jesus introduce?

anyone with holy spirit, although he did speak of the spirit many times. Moreover, after his resurrection, he referred to the holy spirit in still another new way. He told his disciples: "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." (Matthew 28:19) The expression "in the name of" means "in recognition of." Water baptism in recognition of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit was to be different from baptism in holy spirit. It was also a new expression involving holy spirit.

Baptized in Holy Spirit

[3] As for baptism in holy spirit, Jesus promised his disciples just before his ascension: "You will be baptized in holy spirit not many days after this." (Acts 1:5, 8) Shortly thereafter that promise was fulfilled. Holy spirit descended upon some 120 disciples gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem as Jesus, from heaven, performed his first baptisms in holy spirit. (Acts 2:1-4, 33) With what result? The disciples became a part of the spiritual body of Christ. As the apostle Paul explains, "by one spirit [they] were all baptized into one body." (1 Corinthians 12:13) At the same time, they were anointed to be future kings and priests in God's heavenly Kingdom. (Ephesians 1: 13, 14; 2 Timothy 2:12; Revelation 20:6) The holy spirit also served as an initial seal and token of that glorious future inheritance, but that was not all.—2 Corinthians 1: 21, 22.

[4] A few years earlier, Jesus had said to Nicodemus: "Unless anyone is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God. . . . Unless anyone is born from water and spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God." (John 3:3, 5) Now 120 humans had been born again. By means of holy spirit, they had been adopted as spiritual sons of God, brothers of Christ. (John 1:11-13; Romans 8:14, 15) All these activities of holy spirit are in their way more wonderful than miracles. Moreover, unlike one-time miracles, holy spirit did not cease after the death of the apostles but has continued to be active in this way right down to our day. It is the privilege of Jehovah's Witnesses to have among them the last of the spirit-baptized members of Christ's body, and these serve as a "faithful and discreet slave" to provide spiritual food in its proper time. —Matthew 24:45-47.

3, 4. (a) When did the first baptisms in holy spirit take place? (b) Apart from baptizing them, how did the holy spirit act toward Jesus' disciples at Pentecost 33 C.E.?

Baptized "in the Name of . . . the Holy Spirit"

[5] But what of the promised water baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit? Those first disciples who were baptized in spirit did not undergo such a water baptism. They had already received John's water baptism, and since that was acceptable to Jehovah at that particular time, they did not have to be rebaptized. But at Pentecost 33 C.E., a large crowd of souls did receive the new water baptism. How did this happen?

[6] The baptism of the 120 in holy spirit had been accompanied by a loud noise that attracted crowds. These were astonished to hear the disciples speaking in tongues, that is, in foreign languages understood by those present. The apostle Peter explained that this miracle was evidence that God's spirit had been poured out by Jesus, who had been raised from the dead and was now sitting at God's right hand in heaven. Peter encouraged his listeners: "Let all the house of Israel know for a certainty that God made him both Lord and Christ, this Jesus whom

5, 6. How did the first baptisms in holy spirit lead to water baptisms?

The baptism Peter preached was also in the name of the Father and the holy spirit

you impaled." He then concluded by saying: "Repent, and let each one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the free gift of the holy spirit." About 3,000 souls responded.—Acts 2:36, 38, 41.

[7] Can it be said that these were baptized in the name of (in recognition of) the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit? Yes. Though Peter did not tell them to get baptized in the name of the Father, they already recognized Jehovah as Sovereign Lord, since they were natural Jews, members of a nation dedicated to Him. Peter did say: 'Be baptized in the name of the Son.' So their baptism signified their recognition of Jesus as Lord and Christ. They were now his disciples and accepted that forgiveness of sins was henceforth through him. Finally, the baptism was in recognition of the holy spirit, and it was undergone in response to the promise that they would receive the spirit as a free gift.

[8] Those baptized in water on the day of Pentecost 33 C.E. were also baptized in spirit, being anointed as future kings and priests in the heavenly Kingdom. According to the book of Revelation, there are only 144,000 of these. So those baptized in holy spirit and finally 'sealed' as Kingdom heirs number only 144,000. (Revelation 7:4; 14:1) However, *all* new disciples—whatever their hope—are baptized in water in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit. (Matthew 28:19, 20) What, then, does baptism *in the name of* the holy spirit imply for all Christians, whether of the "little flock" or of the "other sheep"? (Luke 12:32; John 10:16) Before answering that, let us note some of the activities of the spirit in the Christian era.

The Fruitage of the Spirit

[9] An important activity of holy spirit is in helping us to develop Christian personalities. True, because of imperfection we cannot avoid sinning. (Romans 7:21-23) But

7. In what way were the 3,000 baptized at Pentecost 33 C.E. baptized in the name of the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit?

8. (a) In addition to water baptism, what other baptism have anointed Christians received? (b) Who besides the 144,000 receive water baptism in the name of the holy spirit?

9. What activity of the holy spirit is important to all Christians?

when we sincerely repent, Jehovah forgives us on the basis of Christ's sacrifice. (Matthew 12:31, 32; Romans 7:24, 25; 1 John 2: 1, 2) Moreover, Jehovah expects us to struggle against our tendency to sin, and the holy spirit helps us to do this. "Keep walking by spirit," said Paul, "and you will carry out no fleshly desire at all." (Galatians 5:16) Paul went on to show that the spirit can produce the finest of qualities in us. He wrote: "The fruitage of the spirit is love, joy, peace, long-suffering, kindness, goodness, faith, mildness, self-control."—Galatians 5:22, 23.

[10] How does the spirit make possible such fruitage in a Christian? It does not happen automatically just because we are dedicated and baptized Christians. We have to work at it. But if we associate with other Christians who display these qualities, if we pray to God for his spirit to help us develop specific qualities, if we avoid bad associations and study the Bible for counsel and good examples, then the fruitage of the spirit will grow in us.—Proverbs 13:20; 1 Corinthians 15:33; Galatians 5:24-26; Hebrews 10:24, 25.

Appointed by Holy Spirit

[11] Paul, when addressing the elders of Ephesus, introduced another activity of holy spirit when he said: "Pay attention to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the holy spirit has appointed you overseers, to shepherd the congregation of God, which he purchased with the blood of his own Son." (Acts 20:28) Yes, congregation overseers, or elders, are appointed by holy spirit. In what way? In that appointed elders must meet the qualifications outlined in the inspired Bible. (1 Timothy 3:1-13; Titus 1:5-9) They can develop those qualifications only with the help of holy spirit. Further, the body of elders that recommends a new elder prays for the guidance of holy spirit to discern whether he meets the qualifications or not. And the actual appointment is made under the supervision of the spirit-anointed faithful and discreet slave.

10. How is the fruitage of the spirit developed in a Christian?
11. In what way are elders appointed by holy spirit?

Be Guided by the Spirit

[12] Christians recognize that the Holy Scriptures were written under the influence of holy spirit. Hence, they delve into them for spirit-inspired wisdom, as did Jehovah's pre-Christian witnesses. (Proverbs 2:1-9) They read them, meditate on them, and let them guide their lives. (Psalm 1:1-3; 2 Timothy 3:16) They are thus helped by the spirit to 'search into the deep things of God.' (1 Corinthians 2:10, 13; 3:19) Guiding God's servants in this way is an important activity of God's spirit for our time.

[13] Further, in the book of Revelation, the resurrected Jesus sent messages to seven congregations in Asia Minor. (Revelation, chapters 2 and 3) In them he revealed that he had inspected the congregations and discerned their spiritual condition. Some, he found, were setting a fine example of faith. In others, the elders had allowed sectarianism, immorality, and lukewarmness to corrupt the flock. The congregation at Sardis, apart from a few faithful souls, was spiritually dead. (Revelation 3:1, 4) How did Jesus handle these problems? With the holy spirit. When giving counsel to the seven congregations, Jesus' message concluded in each case with the expression: "Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says to the congregations."—Revelation 2:7, 11, 17, 29; 3:6, 13, 22.

12. How can the spirit influence us through the Bible?
13, 14. What did Jesus use to deal with problems in the congregation, and how does he do the same today?

The spirit is deeply involved in the preaching of the good news

[14] Today, too, Jesus inspects the congregations. And when he discerns problems, he still handles them by means of holy spirit. The spirit can help us recognize and overcome problems directly through our reading of the Bible. Help can also come through Bible literature published by the spirit-anointed faithful and discreet slave. Or it can come from spirit-appointed elders in the congregation. Whatever the case, whether the counsel is to individuals or to the congregation as a whole, do we heed Jesus' words: "Let the one who has an ear hear what the spirit says"?

The Spirit and the Preaching Work

[15] On one occasion when Jesus preached in a synagogue in Nazareth, he showed yet another activity of the spirit. The record tells us: "He opened the scroll and found the place where it was written: 'Jehovah's spirit is upon me, because he anointed me to declare good news to the poor, he sent me forth to preach a release to the captives and a recovery of sight to the blind, to send the crushed ones away with a release.' Then he started to say to them: 'Today this scripture that you just heard is fulfilled.'" (Luke 4:17, 18, 21; Isaiah 61:1, 2) Yes, Jesus was anointed by holy spirit to preach good news.

[16] Shortly before his death, Jesus foretold a grand preaching campaign to be accomplished by his followers. He said: "In all the nations the good news has to be preached." (Mark 13:10) These words had an initial fulfillment in the first century, and the part played by holy spirit was noteworthy. It was holy spirit that directed Philip to preach to the Ethiopian eunuch. Holy spirit directed Peter to Cornelius, and holy spirit directed that Paul and Barnabas be sent out as apostles from Antioch. Later, when Paul wanted to preach in Asia and Bythinia, holy spirit in some way prevented him. God wanted the witness work to move into Europe.—Acts 8:29; 10:19; 13:2; 16:6, 7.

[17] Today, holy spirit is again deeply involved in the preaching work. In a further fulfillment of Isaiah 61:1, 2, Jehovah's spirit has anointed Jesus' brothers to preach. In the final fulfillment of Mark 13:10, these anointed ones, aided by the great crowd, have preached the good news literally in "all nations." (Revelation 7:9) And the spirit supports all of them in this. As in the

15. How did the spirit act toward Jesus with regard to the preaching work?

16. In the first century, how was holy spirit deeply involved in the preaching of the good news?

17. Today, how is holy spirit involved in the preaching work?

first century, it opens up territories and guides the general progress of the work. It strengthens individuals, helping them overcome timidity and develop their teaching skills. Moreover, Jesus told his disciples: "You will be haled before governors and kings for my sake, for a witness to them and the nations. However, when they deliver you up, do not become anxious about how or what you are to speak . . . , for the ones speaking are not just you, but it is the spirit of your Father that speaks by you."—Matthew 10:18-20.

[18] In the book of Revelation, the Bible again stresses the involvement of holy spirit in the preaching work. There the apostle John reports: "The spirit and the bride keep on saying: 'Come!' And let anyone hearing say: 'Come!' And let anyone thirsting come; let anyone that wishes take life's water free." (Revelation 22:17) The bride, represented by the remaining ones of the 144,000 still on earth, invite all to take of life's water free. But notice, the holy spirit also says "Come!" In what way?

18, 19. In what way does the spirit join the bride in inviting meekhearted ones to "take life's water free"?

What Do You Remember About the Holy Spirit?

- ☐ In what ways was holy spirit active at Pentecost 33 C.E.?
- ☐ How can we produce the fruits of the spirit?
- ☐ In what way are elders appointed by holy spirit?
- ☐ How does Jesus handle problems in the congregation by means of holy spirit?
- ☐ How is the spirit deeply involved in the preaching work?

[19] In that the message being preached by the bride class—today assisted by the great crowd of other sheep—comes from the Bible, written under the direct influence of holy spirit. And that same spirit has opened the hearts and minds of the bride class to understand the inspired Word and explain it to others. Those who are baptized as new disciples of Jesus Christ delight to take of life's water free. And they are thrilled to cooperate with the spirit and the bride in saying "Come!" to yet others. Today, more than four million share with the spirit in this work.

Living Up to Our Baptism

[20] Baptism in the name of the holy spirit is a public declaration that we recognize the holy spirit and acknowledge the role it plays in Jehovah's purposes. It implies that we will cooperate with the spirit, doing nothing to hinder its operation among Jehovah's people. Thus, we recognize and cooperate with the faithful and discreet slave. We cooperate with the elder arrangement in the congregation. (Hebrews 13:7, 17; 1 Peter 5:1-4) We live by spiritual, not fleshly, wisdom and allow the spirit to mold our personality, making it more Christlike. (Romans 13:14) And we join wholeheartedly with the spirit and the bride in saying "Come!" to the millions who may yet respond.

[21] What a serious thing it is to be baptized 'in the name of the holy spirit'! Yet, what blessings can result! May the number of those thus baptized continue to increase. And may all of us continue to live up to the meaning of that baptism, as we slave for Jehovah and continue to be "aglow with the spirit."—Romans 12:11.

20, 21. How can we live up to our baptism in the name of the holy spirit, and how should we view this baptism?

DID THE EARLY CHURCH TEACH THAT GOD IS A TRINITY?

Part 2

Did the Apostolic Fathers teach the Trinity doctrine?

In *The Watchtower* of November 1, 1991, Part 1 of this series discussed whether Jesus and his disciples taught the Trinity doctrine—the idea that the Father, the Son, and the holy spirit were three equal persons but one God. The clear evidence from the Bible, from historians, and even from theologians is that they did not. What of church leaders who followed soon afterward—did they teach a Trinity?

"APOSTOLIC FATHERS" is the designation used for churchmen who wrote about Christianity in the late first and early second centuries of our Common Era. Some of them were Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, Hermas, and Papias.

They were said to be contemporaries of some of the apostles. Thus, they should have been familiar with apostolic teachings. Regarding what those men wrote, *The New Encyclopædia Britannica* says:

"Taken as a whole the writings of the Apostolic Fathers are more valuable historically than any other Christian literature outside the New Testament."[1]

If the apostles taught the Trinity doctrine, then those Apostolic Fathers should have taught it too. It should have been prominent in their teaching, since nothing was more important than telling people who God is. So did they teach the Trinity doctrine?

An Early Statement of Faith

One of the earliest non-Biblical statements of Christian faith is found in a book of 16 short chapters known as *The Didache,* or *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles.* Some historians date it before or about the year 100 C.E. Its author is unknown.[2]

The Didache deals with things people would need to know to become Christians. In its 7th chapter, it prescribes baptism "in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," the same words Jesus used at Matthew 28:19.[3] But it says nothing about the three being equal in eternity, power, position, and wisdom. In its 10th chapter, *The Didache* includes the following confession of faith in the form of a prayer:

"We thank you, Holy Father, for your holy Name which you have made to dwell in our

hearts; and for the knowledge and faith and immortality which you have made known to us through Jesus your Servant. Glory to you forever! You, Almighty Master, created everything for your Name's sake . . . And to us you have graciously given spiritual food and drink, and life eternal through Jesus your Servant."[4]

There is no Trinity in this. In *The Influence of Greek Ideas on Christianity,* Edwin Hatch quotes the foregoing passage and then says:

"In the original sphere of Christianity there does not appear to have been any great advance upon these simple conceptions. The doctrine upon which stress was laid was, that God is, that He is one, that He is almighty and everlasting, that He made the world, that His mercy is over all His works. There was no taste for metaphysical discussion."[5]

Clement of Rome

Clement of Rome, thought to have been a "bishop" in that city, is another early source of writings on Christianity. It is believed that he died about 100 C.E. In the material said to have been written by him, he makes no mention of a Trinity, either directly or indirectly. In the *First Epistle of Clement to the Corinthians,* he states:

"Grace unto you, and peace, from Almighty God through Jesus Christ, be multiplied."

"The apostles have preached the Gospel to us from the Lord Jesus Christ; Jesus Christ has done so from God. Christ therefore was sent forth by God, and the apostles by Christ."

"May God, who seeth all things, and who is the Ruler of all spirits and the Lord of all flesh—who chose our Lord Jesus Christ and us through Him to be a peculiar people—grant to every soul that calleth upon His glorious and holy Name, faith, fear, peace, patience, long-suffering."[6]

Clement does not say that Jesus or the holy spirit is equal to God. He presents Almighty God (not just "Father") as distinct from the Son. God is spoken of as superior, since Christ is "sent forth" by God, and God "chose" Christ. Showing that God and Christ are two separate and unequal identities, Clement said:

"We will beg with earnest prayer and supplication that the Creator of the universe will keep intact the precise number of his elect in the whole world, through his beloved Child Jesus Christ. . . . We realize you [God] alone are 'highest among the highest' . . . You alone are the guardian of spirits and the God of all flesh."

"Let all the nations realize that you are the only God, that Jesus Christ is your Child."[7]

Clement calls God (not just "Father") "the highest," and refers to Jesus as God's "Child." He also notes regarding Jesus: "Since he reflects God's splendor, he is as superior to the angels as his title is more distinguished than theirs."[8] Jesus reflects God's splendor, but he does not equal it, just as the moon reflects sunlight but does not equal the source of that light, the sun.

If the Son of God were equal to God, who is the heavenly Father, it would have been unnecessary for Clement to say that Jesus was superior to the angels, since that would have been obvious. And his wording shows his recognition that while the Son is superior to angels, he is inferior to Almighty God.

Clement's position is quite plain: The Son is inferior to the Father and is secondary to him. Clement never viewed Jesus as sharing in a godhead with the Father. He shows that the Son is dependent upon the Father, that is, God, and says definitely that the Father is 'God alone,' sharing His position with no one. And nowhere does Clement give the holy spirit equality with God. Thus, there is no Trinity at all in Clement's writings.

Ignatius

Ignatius, a bishop of Antioch, lived from about the middle of the first century C.E. to early in the second century. Assuming that all the writings attributed to him were authentic, in none of them is there an equality of Father, Son, and holy spirit.

Even if Ignatius had said that the Son was equal to the Father in eternity, power, position, and wisdom, it would still not be a Trinity, for nowhere did he say that the holy spirit was equal to God in those ways. But Ignatius did not say that the Son was equal to God the Father in such ways or in any other. Instead, he showed that the Son is in subjection to the One who is superior, Almighty God.

Ignatius calls Almighty God "the only true God, the unbegotten and unapproachable, the Lord of all, the Father and Begetter of the only-begotten Son," showing the distinction between God and His Son.[9] He speaks of "God the Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ."[10] And he declares: "There is one God, the Almighty, who has manifested Himself by Jesus Christ His Son."[11]

Ignatius shows that the Son was not eternal as a person but was created, for he has the Son saying: "The Lord [Almighty God] created Me, the beginning of His ways."[12] Similarly, Ignatius said: "There is one God of the universe, the Father of Christ, 'of whom are all things;' and one Lord Jesus Christ, our Lord, 'by whom are all things.'"[13] He also writes:

"The Holy Spirit does not speak His own things, but those of Christ, . . . even as the Lord also announced to us the things that He received from the Father. For, says He [the Son], 'the word which ye hear is not Mine, but the Father's, who sent Me.'"[14]

"There is one God who manifested himself through Jesus Christ his Son, who is his Word which proceeded from silence and in every respect pleased him [God] who sent him. . . . Jesus Christ was subject to the Father."[15]

True, Ignatius calls the Son "God the Word." But using the word "God" for the Son does not necessarily mean equality with Almighty God. The Bible also calls the Son "God" at Isaiah 9:6. John 1:18 calls the Son "the only-begotten god." Being vested with power and authority from Jehovah God, the Father, the Son could properly be termed a "mighty one," which is what "god" basically means.—Matthew 28:18; 1 Corinthians 8:6; Hebrews 1:2.

However, are the 15 letters attributed to Ignatius accepted as authentic? In *The Ante-Nicene Fathers,* Volume I, editors Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson state:

"It is now the universal opinion of critics, that the first eight of these professedly Ignatian letters are spurious. They bear in themselves indubitable proofs of being the production of a later age . . . and they are now by common consent set aside as forgeries."

"Of the seven Epistles which are acknowledged by Eusebius . . . , we possess two Greek recensions, a shorter and a longer. . . . Although the shorter form . . . had been generally accepted in preference to the longer, there was still a pretty prevalent opinion among scholars, that even it could not be regarded as absolutely free from interpolations, or as of undoubted authenticity."[16]

If we accept the shorter version of his writings as genuine, it does eliminate some phrases (in the longer version) that show Christ as subordinate to God, but what is left in the shorter version still does not show a Trinity. And regardless of which of his writings are genuine, they show at best that Ignatius believed in a duality of God and his Son. This was certainly not a duality of equals, for the Son is always presented as lesser than God and subordinate to him. Thus, regardless of how one views the Ignatian writings, a Trinity doctrine is not to be found in them.

Polycarp

Polycarp of Smyrna was born in the last third of the first century and died in the middle of the second. It is said that he had contact with the apostle John, and he is said to have written the *Epistle of Polycarp to the Philippians.*

Was there anything in Polycarp's writing that would indicate a Trinity? No, there is no mention of it. Indeed, what he says is consistent with what Jesus and his disciples and apostles taught. For instance, in his *Epistle,* Polycarp stated:

"May the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ Himself, who is the Son of God, . . . build you up in faith and truth."[17]

Note that, like Clement, Polycarp does not speak of a Trinitarian "Father" and "Son" relationship of equals in a godhead. Instead, he speaks of "the God and Father" of Jesus, not just 'the Father of Jesus.' So he separates God from Jesus, just as the Bible writers repeatedly do. Paul says at 2 Corinthians 1:3: "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ." He does not just say, 'Blessed be the Father of Jesus' but, "Blessed be *the God* and Father" of Jesus.

Also, Polycarp says: "Peace from God Almighty, and from the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour."[18] Here again, Jesus is distinct from Almighty God, not one person of an equal triune Godhead.

Hermas and Papias

Another Apostolic Father is Hermas, who wrote in the first part of the second century. In his work the *Shepherd,* or *Pastor,* does he say anything that would lead one to believe that he understood God to be a Trinity? Note some examples of what he said:

"Nor when man wishes the spirit to speak does the Holy Spirit speak, but it speaks only when God wishes it to speak. . . . God planted the vineyard, that is to say, He created the people, and gave them to His Son; and the Son appointed His angels over them to keep them."[19]

"The Son of God is older than all his creation."[20]

Here Hermas says that when God (not just the Father) wishes the spirit to speak, it speaks, showing God's superiority to the spirit. And he says that God gave the vineyard to his Son, showing God's superiority to the Son. He also states that the Son of God is older than his, the Son's, creatures, that is, those the Son of God created as God's Master Worker, "because by means of him all other things were created in the heavens and upon the earth." (Colossians 1: 15, 16) The fact is that the Son is not eternal. He was created as a spirit creature of high rank, before other spirit creatures, such as the angels, who were created by means of him.

J. N. D. Kelly, in his *Early Christian Doctrines,* writes about the view of Hermas regarding the Son of God:

"In a number of passages we read of an angel who is superior to the six angels forming God's inner council, and who is regularly described as 'most venerable', 'holy', and 'glorious'. This angel is given the name of Michael, and the conclusion is difficult to escape that Hermas saw in him the Son of God and equated him with the archangel Michael."

"There is evidence also . . . of attempts to interpret Christ as a sort of supreme angel . . . Of a doctrine of the Trinity in the strict sense there is of course no sign."[21]

Papias is also said to have known the apostle John. Likely he wrote early in the second century, but only fragments of his writings exist today. In them he says nothing about a Trinity doctrine.

Consistent Teaching

In the matter of God's supremacy and his relationship with Jesus, the teaching of the

Apostolic Fathers is fairly consistent with the teaching of Jesus, the disciples, and the apostles, as recorded in the Bible. All of them speak of God, not as a Trinity, but as a separate, eternal, almighty, all-knowing Being. And they speak of the Son of God as a separate, lesser, subordinate spirit creature whom God created to serve Him in accomplishing His will. And the holy spirit is nowhere included as an equal of God.

Thus, in those late-first-century and early-second-century writings of the Apostolic Fathers, there is no support for Christendom's Trinity. They spoke of God, Jesus, and the holy spirit just as the Bible does. Look, for example, at Acts 7:55, 56:

"Stephen, filled with the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at God's right hand. 'I can see heaven thrown open,' he said, 'and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God.'"—Catholic *Jerusalem Bible.*

Stephen saw a vision of God in heaven with Jesus standing next to Him. The Son was standing next to the One termed, not just "Father," but "God," one completely separate in identity from Jesus. And there was no third person involved in what Stephen saw. The holy spirit was not seen in heaven with Jesus and his Father.

That is similar to Revelation 1:1, which states: "This is the revelation given by God to Jesus Christ." (*The Jerusalem Bible*) Again, the resurrected Christ in heaven is shown to be entirely separate from God, and the holy spirit is not mentioned. If Jesus were the second person of a Trinity, knowing all things, how could he be "given" a revelation?

Scriptures such as these show clearly that there is no Trinity. And no scripture in the entire Bible speaks of God as being a Trinity. The writings of the Apostolic Fathers reflected this. They most certainly did not teach Christendom's Trinity.

The next important group of writings on Christianity came later in the second century. These were the works of churchmen who are called apologists. Did they teach a Trinity? In a future issue, Part 3 of this series will comment on their teachings.

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KINGDOM PROCLAIMERS REPORT

'Harvesting' in Venezuela

On one occasion Jesus likened the preaching work to the annual harvest. (Matthew 9:36-38) The Master of the harvest is Jehovah God, and the harvest is truly great all around the globe. This includes seldom worked territory in Venezuela.

The Venezuela branch office of the Watch Tower Society reports what happened when a group of Witnesses worked the territory of Sabana Grande, Guárico State. The Witnesses relate: "The house we were to stay in was a good place to have meetings, so right away we started to invite people to meetings there. The people did not know of Jehovah's Witnesses. Although there were four evangelical groups in town, people were eager to learn from the Bible.

"We worked for three hours in the morning and for three hours in the afternoon, calling from house to house and inviting people to a meeting the following night. We did not have chairs, so we invited them to bring their own chairs. When the time approached for the meeting to begin, people started coming, each one carrying a chair. When the meeting was over, we told them that we would like to write down the names of those who desired to have a free home Bible study. All 29 in attendance wanted their names on the list.

"As we were closing the door behind the last visitor, we noticed three men standing by the corner of the house. At about nine o'clock, we were ready to sit down to eat when they knocked on the door. They asked questions such as: 'What is this preaching you are doing in this town? For what reason did you have a meeting here tonight?'

"We asked if we had violated any law. They answered no and said that they were the pastors of three of the town's evangelical churches. They were upset because their churches were empty that evening. We invited them in and explained our work. We also placed some literature with them and asked them to return the following Thursday.

"The next Thursday the pastors came back and with them 22 other individuals who wanted to hear what we had to say. The pastors thought that, being women, we would not measure up to them in a discussion. Nevertheless, the meeting was successful from our point of view. At the end we explained that we were making a list of those who wanted to learn more from the Bible. A number of the pastors' companions wanted their names added to the list, and some even said they wanted to go out with us in the preaching work!

"We explained that they would need more Bible knowledge and training before they could join us in the preaching work. Every day people were coming to the house, asking us to explain the Bible to them. Sometimes, when we had talked until late at night, we had to ask them to go home. When we finally had to leave the territory, they were very sad and told us that when we returned, they would go with us in the preaching work. They promised that by then they would have made the required progress."

When the Witnesses left that territory, there were 40 persons who wanted to study the Bible. The names of these interested people were turned over to the nearest congregation, which is about 30 miles away. Subsequently, some Witnesses from another city have moved into this town, and a group of zealous preachers of the good news has been formed.

HAVE A SELF-SACRIFICING SPIRIT!

ROLF* was a valued employee. When he decided to obtain part-time work so that he could expand his share in the Christian ministry, his employer readily cooperated. For years Rolf was therefore able to enjoy the pioneer service. One day, though, the work situation changed. Rolf had proved himself so capable at his work that he was offered the position of marketing manager with the firm. The job came with a tempting salary and good prospects for further advancement. However, part-time work would no longer be possible.

Rolf had a wife and two children to support, and the extra money would have been useful. Nevertheless, he declined the offer and applied for another job, one that would allow him to meet both his spiritual and his financial obligations. Rolf's employer was amazed at this decision. Realizing that even an offer of a higher salary would be in vain, his boss concluded: "I see that I can't compete with your conviction."

Yes, Rolf had conviction. But he also had another quality—the spirit of self-sacrifice. Such a spirit is rare in our self-indulgent world. But it can lead to a way of life that is beneficial and satisfying. What is the spirit of self-sacrifice? What does it entail? And what must we do to maintain it?

A Bible Requirement

To sacrifice means to give up or surrender something valuable. Sacrifice has been a part of pure worship since the first faithful witness, Abel, offered "some firstlings of his flock" in sacrifice to God. (Genesis 4:4) Men of faith, such as Noah and Jacob, followed suit. (Genesis 8:20; 31:54) Animal sacrifices were also an important feature of

* Name has been changed.

Finding time for personal study and field service may entail sacrifice, but it is rewarding

the Mosaic Law. (Leviticus 1:2-4) Under that Law, though, worshipers were exhorted to offer their very best. They were not allowed to offer any defective animal as a sacrifice. (Leviticus 22:19, 20; Deuteronomy 15:21) When apostate Israelites violated this law, God reproved them, saying: "When you present a lame animal [for sacrificing, you say]: 'It is nothing bad.' Bring it near, please, to your governor. Will he find pleasure in you, or will he receive you kindly? . . . Can I take pleasure in it at your hand?" —Malachi 1:8, 13.

The principle of sacrifice was carried over into Christian worship. However, since Christ has paid the full ransom price, animal sacrifices are no longer acceptable to God. So, what can Christians acceptably sacrifice? Paul writes at Romans 12:1: "Consequently I entreat you by the compassions of God, brothers, to *present your bodies* a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God, a sacred service with your power of reason." What an astonishing change! Instead of sacrificing dead bodies, Christians were to make a living sacrifice of themselves—their energies, assets, and abilities. And as in Israel, Jehovah will not accept "lame," or halfhearted, sacrifices. He demands that his worshipers give him their very best, that they serve him with their whole heart, soul, mind, and strength. —Mark 12:30.

A self-sacrificing spirit thus involves far more than simply committing oneself to a schedule of meetings and activity in the Christian ministry. It means a determination to do God's will whatever the cost. It means being ready to suffer hardships and inconveniences. "If anyone wants to come after me," said Jesus, "let him disown himself and pick up his torture stake and continually follow me." (Matthew 16:24) A Christian does not make personal ambition or materialistic goals his main concern. His life centers on seeking *first* God's Kingdom and His righteousness. (Matthew 6:33) If necessary, he is prepared to "pick up his torture stake," suffer persecution, shame, or even death!

The Blessings That Come From Self-Sacrifice

Faced with such sobering possibilities, one may naturally wonder if self-sacrifice is worth it. For those who love Jehovah God and wish to see his name honored, it certainly is. (Matthew 22:37) Consider the perfect example set by Jesus Christ. Prior to coming to the earth, he enjoyed a lofty

position in heaven as a spirit creature. However, as he told his disciples, he sought 'not his own will, but the will of God, who sent him.' (John 5:30) So he willingly "emptied himself and took a slave's form and came to be in the likeness of men. More than that, when he found himself in fashion as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient as far as death, yes, death on a torture stake."—Philippians 2:7, 8.

Such sacrifices did not prove fruitless. Because Jesus was willing to "surrender his soul in behalf of his friends," he could pay the ransom price, enabling imperfect men to gain either immortality in the heavens, or everlasting life on earth. (John 3:16; 15:13; 1 John 2:2) By perfectly keeping his integrity, he caused Jehovah's name to be praised greatly. (Proverbs 27:11) Little wonder that Jehovah blessed him for his self-sacrificing course! "God exalted him to a superior position and kindly gave him the name that is above every other name." —Philippians 2:9.

Of course, Jesus was God's only-begotten Son. Does God also reward others who make sacrifices for him? Yes, and this is shown by many examples in both ancient and modern times. Consider the Bible account of Ruth the Moabitess. She evidently learned of Jehovah through her Israelite husband. After he died, she had to make a decision. Would she remain in the pagan land of her birth, or would she travel to the Promised Land with her elderly mother-in-law, Naomi? Ruth chose the latter, even though it meant sacrificing association with her parents and perhaps even the prospect of remarriage. Nevertheless, Ruth had come to know Jehovah, and the desire to worship him among his chosen people moved her to stick with Naomi.

Was Ruth rewarded for such self-sacrifice? Indeed she was! In time, a landowner named Boaz took her as wife, and Ruth became the mother of a son named Obed, which made her an ancestress of Jesus Christ.—Matthew 1:5, 16.

Blessings have likewise been enjoyed by self-sacrificing servants of God in modern times. For example, in 1923, William R. Brown, better known as "Bible" Brown, left his home in the West Indies to spearhead the preaching work in West Africa. Accompanying him were his wife and daughter. He eventually moved to Nigeria, where the preaching work was just beginning to bear fruit. Along with a black American named Vincent Samuels and another West Indian Witness named Claude Brown, "Bible" Brown played an important role in the early stages of the work in West Africa.

Today over 187,000 publishers serve in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Ghana, and Nigeria, territories pioneered by "Bible" Brown and his associates. Before his death in 1967, "Bible" Brown said: "What a joy it is to see men and women becoming obedient to the good news of God's Kingdom!" Yes, he was richly blessed for his self-sacrificing course.

Ways to Be Self-Sacrificing

What are some ways that we can show the same spirit today? One is to have a regular weekly share in the house-to-house ministry. (Acts 20:20) Doing so, especially after a tiring week on a secular job, may not be easy. It may require discipline and good scheduling. But the joys outweigh any inconveniences suffered. Why, you could have the privilege of helping someone become "a letter of Christ . . . inscribed not with ink but with spirit of a living God, not on stone tablets, but on fleshly tablets, on hearts."—2 Corinthians 3:3.

By carefully "buying out the opportune time," perhaps from secular work or entertainment, some have increased their share in the preaching work. (Ephesians 5:16) Many arrange their schedules so as to enjoy the auxiliary pioneer service at least once a

W. R. Brown and John Cutforth were richly blessed for their self-sacrificing course

year. Others are able to auxiliary pioneer continuously or serve as regular pioneers. Another sacrifice to consider is that of moving to areas in need of more Kingdom publishers. This often entails drastic changes in life-style, putting up with inconveniences, adjusting to new cultures and customs. But the blessings of having a fuller share in helping others gain life makes such sacrifices worthwhile.

Canadian-born John Cutforth found this out personally. After his graduation from the Watchtower Bible School of Gilead, he was assigned as a missionary to Australia. "What a long distance from home that was!" recalled Brother Cutforth. "Would I ever get back to Canada to see my parents and friends again before Armageddon? The only way to find out was to go." Brother Cutforth went, and he did not regret the sacrifices he made. In later years he spearheaded the witness work in Papua New Guinea, where he still serves zealously, having completed 50 years in full-time service. He once said: "Always seeking to follow Jehovah's leading, accepting whatever assignment he sees fit to give, brings joy, happiness, contentment, and unnumbered friends."

Of course, circumstances such as health, finances, and family obligations may limit what you can do; not all can serve as pioneers and missionaries. Nevertheless, be determined to have as full a share in meetings and in field service as possible, not allowing minor inconveniences, such as inclement weather, to deter you. (Hebrews 10:24, 25) You may also be able to sacrifice more time for personal study of God's Word. Some families do so by limiting the time spent in viewing TV programs, perhaps even having a "no TV" night each week or no TV at all. By finding time for personal study, the "sacrifice of praise" with which you "make public declaration to his name" at meetings and in field service is more likely to be a sacrifice of high quality.—Hebrews 13:15.

Remember, the preaching work is now in its final stages. Soon God will bring his judgment upon this greedy and self-indulgent world. (Zephaniah 2:3) To maintain God's favor, we cannot be self-sparing. We must 'present our bodies a sacrifice living, holy, acceptable to God.' (Romans 12:1) Such a spirit will bring great happiness and contentment. It will help us attain greater joy in our ministry. And it will make the heart of Jehovah God rejoice! —Proverbs 27:11.

So maintain a self-sacrificing spirit! Do not hesitate to put yourself out for others and in support of Kingdom interests. Paul exhorts: "Do not forget the doing of good and the sharing of things with others, for with such sacrifices God is well pleased." —Hebrews 13:16.

"HIS LOVING-KINDNESS HAS PROVED MIGHTY"

AS TOLD BY JOSÉ VERGARA OROZCO

Do you think that your life could be filled with new impetus at 70 years of age? Mine was. And that was over 35 years ago. By Jehovah's loving-kindness, since 1962, I have served as a regular pioneer, and since 1972, I have been an overseer in the El Carrizal Congregation of Jehovah's Witnesses in the state of Jalisco, Mexico. Let me tell you a little of my background.

I WAS born in the state of Michoacán, in Mexico, on August 18, 1886. My father was a Mason, so our family did not go to the Catholic Church, nor did we participate in any Catholic religious celebrations or have any religious images in our home.

When I was 16 years old, my father left to work in the United States, but he arranged for a man to teach me a trade. Two years later, however, the man took me to Mexico City for training at a military academy. Afterward I embarked upon a career in the Mexican army.

In the Army and Afterward

I fought in the Mexican Revolution that began in 1910. All of us young men at the academy supported Francisco I. Madero, who was a revolutionary opposed to the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. We backed Madero until his death in 1913, and after that, we supported Venustiano Carranza, who served as president of the Republic from 1915 to 1920. We were called *Carranzistas.*

On four different occasions, I tried, without success, to be released from the army. Finally I deserted and became a fugitive. As a result, my father, who had returned to Mexico, was imprisoned. One day, pretending to be his nephew, I visited him in prison. We communicated by writing on little pieces of paper so that the guards could not hear us. To prevent anyone from discovering who I was, I ate the paper.

After my father was released from prison, he visited me and requested that I surrender to the authorities. I did, and to my surprise the general in charge did not arrest me. Rather, he suggested that I move to the United States. I followed his suggestion and lived there from 1916 to 1926.

In 1923, I married a Mexican woman who was also living in the United States.

I learned a trade in construction, and we adopted a little girl. When she was 17 months old, we returned to Mexico and took up residence in Jalpa, Tabasco. Then the 'Cristero rebellion' started, and it lasted from 1926 to 1929.

The Cristeros wanted me to join them. My family and I, however, preferred to flee to Aguascalientes State. After living in various places in the Mexican republic, in 1956 we settled down in Matamoros, Tamaulipas, where I began supervising construction jobs.

My Life Changes

This is when my life began to change. My daughter, who by now was married and lived across the border in Brownsville, Texas, U.S.A., would visit us frequently. One day she said: "Dad, a lot of families are meeting in the union hall right now. Let's go and see what it's all about." It was an assembly of Jehovah's Witnesses. My daughter, son-in-law, grandson, wife, and I attended all four days of the assembly.

From that year on, we attended the Christian meetings of Jehovah's Witnesses. I progressed spiritually in Mexico, while my daughter did so in the United States. Soon I was telling my workmates the Bible truths I was learning. I received ten magazines of each issue of *The Watchtower* and *Awake!*, which I distributed among my workmates. Five of those in the office and three of the engineers as well as some of the other workers became Witnesses.

Oh, was it cold that December 19, 1959, when I was baptized in the river! Everyone who got baptized that day got sick because of the extremely cold water. My daughter was baptized before I was, and my wife, although she never got baptized, came to the point of knowing Bible truth, and she was very cooperative.

The Full-Time Ministry

I felt indebted to God for all of his loving-kindness, so in February 1962, when I was 75 years old, I began the full-time ministry as a pioneer. A few years later, in 1968, my wife died. I wanted then to serve in another country, but because of my age, the brothers did not think that was advisable. However, in 1970, I was assigned as a pioneer in Colotlán in the state of Jalisco, where there was a small congregation.

In September 1972, the circuit overseer suggested that I move to the small town of El Carrizal, which is near Colotlán. In November of that year, a congregation was established there, and I was appointed an elder. Even though it is a very isolated town, up to 31 attend the congregation meetings.

Despite my age, I am still active in the ministry, trying hard to help people to reason on their beliefs. For instance, in the Rosary sincere Catholics repeat the Hail Mary: 'Hail, Mary, full of grace; the Lord is with you.' The prayer adds: 'Holy Mary, Mother of God.' I ask them: 'How can that be? If God is the one that saves Mary, how can He at the same time be her son?'

I am 105 years old now and have served as an elder and as a regular pioneer in El Carrizal, Jalisco, for nearly 20 years. I feel that it has been Jehovah's will that I have lived these many years, since in this way I can make up for the time I lost when I was not serving Him.

One thing I have learned is that we should always have confidence that our Supreme Judge is watching us from his righteous throne and provides us with our needs. As Psalm 117:2 states: "Toward us his loving-kindness has proved mighty."

QUESTIONS FROM READERS

Did Pharaoh actually marry Sarah, Abraham's wife, as it appears from the rendering of Genesis 12:19 in some Bible versions?

No, Pharaoh was prevented from taking Sarah (Sarai) as his wife. Hence, Sarah's honor and dignity were not compromised.

We are helped to see this by examining the situation in its context. A famine compelled Abraham (Abram) to seek refuge in Egypt for a while. He feared that his life would be in jeopardy there because of his beautiful wife, Sarah. Abraham had not yet fathered a son by Sarah, so if he met death in Egypt, the line of the Seed would be broken, the Seed through whom all families of the earth would be blessed. (Genesis 12:1-3) So Abraham directed Sarah to identify herself as his sister, for she was in fact his half sister.—Genesis 12:10-13; 20:12.

His fear was not without foundation. Scholar August Knobel explained: "Abram requested Sarai to present herself as his sister in Egypt so that he would not be murdered. If she were viewed as a married woman, an Egyptian could only get her by killing her husband and owner; if she were viewed as a sister, there was the possibility of winning her from the brother by amicable means."

The Egyptian princes, however, did not enter negotiations with Abraham about Pharaoh's marrying Sarah. They simply brought beautiful Sarah into Pharaoh's house, and the ruler of Egypt gave her supposed brother, Abraham, gifts. But following this, Jehovah touched Pharaoh's household with plagues. When the true situation was revealed to Pharaoh in some unstated way, he said to Abraham: "Why did you say, 'She is my sister,' *so that I was about to take her as my wife?* And now here is your wife. Take her and go!"—Genesis 12:14-19.

The New English Bible and other Bible translations render the above italicized portion of the verse "so that I took her as a wife" or similar wording. While not necessarily a wrong rendering, such wording could give the impression that Pharaoh had actually married Sarah, that the marriage was an accomplished fact. It may be noted that at Genesis 12:19 the Hebrew verb rendered "to take" is in the imperfect state, which indicates an action not yet completed. The *New World Translation* renders this Hebrew verb in harmony with the context and in a way that clearly reflects the state of the verb—*"so that I was about to take her as my wife."** Though Pharaoh was "about to take" Sarah as his wife, he had not yet gone through whatever procedure or ceremony was involved.

Abraham has often been criticized for his approach to the matter, but he acted in the interests of the promised Seed and thus of all mankind.—Genesis 3:15; 22:17, 18; Galatians 3:16.

On a comparable occasion that was potentially dangerous, Isaac had his wife, Rebekah, avoid disclosing her married state. At that point their son Jacob, through whom the line of the Seed would come, had already been born and evidently was a young man. (Genesis 25:20-27; 26:1-11) Nonetheless, the motive behind this upright tactic could well have been the same as Abraham's. During a famine Isaac and his family were residing in the territory of the Philistine king named Abimelech. If he realized that Rebekah was married to Isaac, Abimelech might have pursued a murderous course against all the rest of Isaac's family, which could have meant death for Jacob. In this case too, Jehovah intervened to protect his servants and the line of the Seed.

* The translation by J. B. Rotherham reads: "Wherefore saidst thou, My sister she; and so I was about to take her to me to wife?"

In Our Next Issue

Can Images Draw You Closer to God?

Islands of the Indian Ocean Hear the Good News

Treasure From Egyptian Garbage Heaps

"The Power Beyond What Is Normal"

HOW much suffering can a Christian endure? Today, Christians around the world face poverty, family disruption, emotional trauma, sickness, wars, and persecution. Is it reasonable to expect them to keep integrity in spite of all of this? The apostle Paul said it was. He wrote: *"For all things* I have the strength by virtue of him who imparts power to me."—Philippians 4:13.

History has shown that strength from Jehovah really is sufficient for all things. For example, during the Nazi regime in Germany, Jehovah's Witnesses suffered vicious persecution. Did they endure? The book *Les Bibelforscher et le nazisme* (The Bible Students and Nazism) says: "Despite all the beatings, threats, and bans, despite the public humiliations, the imprisonments and detention in concentration camps, Bible Students [Jehovah's Witnesses] never allowed themselves to be 'reeducated.'"

In concentration camps, the Witnesses were identified by small purple triangles on their sleeves and were singled out for special brutality. Did this break them? Psychologist Bruno Bettelheim noted that they "not only showed unusual heights of human dignity and moral behavior, but seemed protected against the same camp experience that soon destroyed persons considered very well integrated by my psychoanalytic friends and myself."

Yes, they had 'strength for all things.' Why? because they relied on Jehovah. Paul said: "We have this treasure in earthen vessels, that the power beyond what is normal may be God's and not that out of ourselves." (2 Corinthians 4:7) If you should meet up with a trialsome situation, look confidently to Jehovah for help. Strengthened by the power beyond what is normal that he provides, you will be able to endure.—Luke 11:13.